



3-step plan to stop missing records

Your guide to help close common gaps in your background checks.



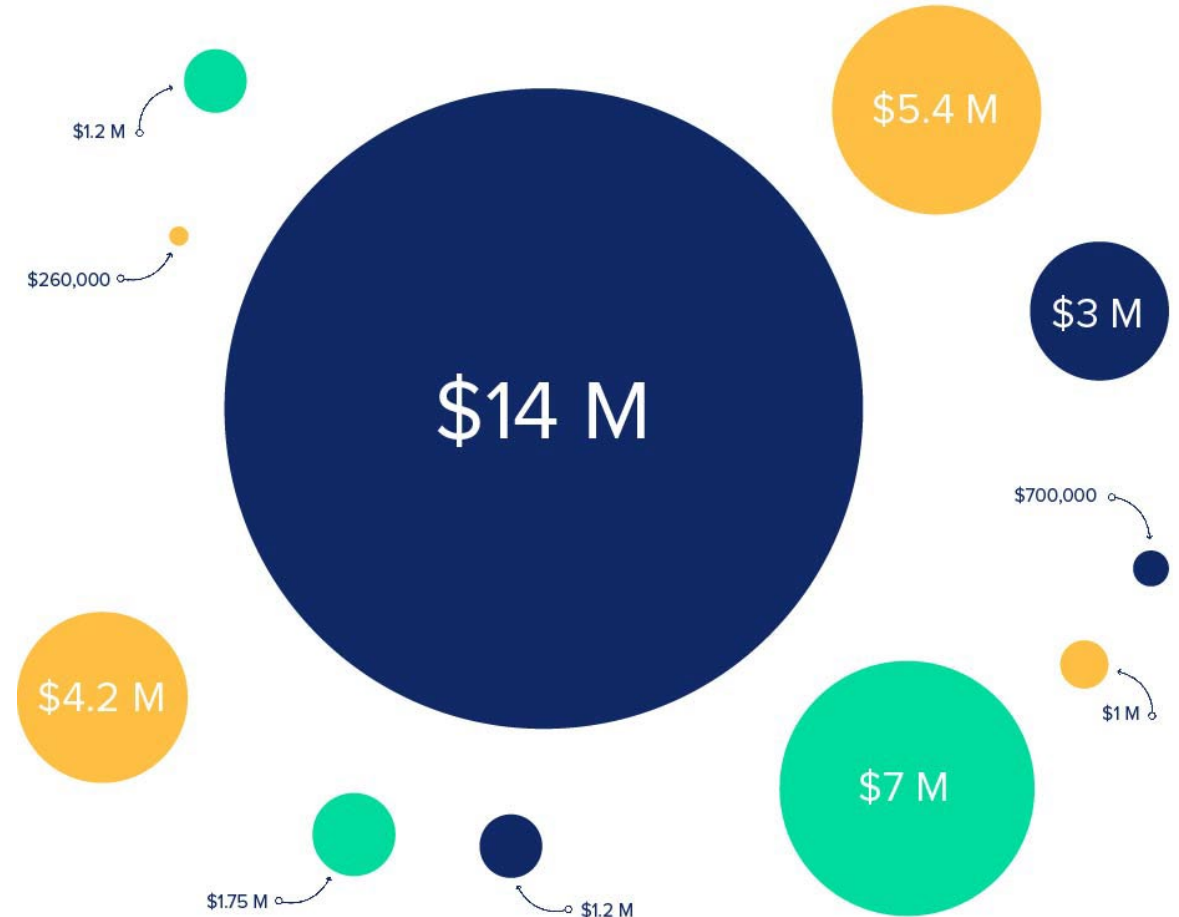
Eyes-wide-open screening strategy: Knowing the risks of missing records

Background screening can take many forms. There are checks to verify all kinds of information like criminal history, academic history, employment history, driving record, residency status, license status, and substance use. These use a variety of methods to verify information, including database checks and phone calls. "Records" are generally the results generated by any of these screening activities. And despite the various methodologies used, if you're not utilizing the right types of searches and verifications, you can miss records that may be vitally important to your business.

Missing records can potentially hurt your company in several ways, from the subtle to the severe. A new hire may be a bad fit for the company, or there could be the potential for workplace violence. But the biggest threat to your company comes in the form of negligent hiring lawsuits, which can result in shocking losses. The median cost of a negligent hiring lawsuit involving failure to conduct comprehensive background checks is approximately \$1.2 million. And chances are your company will lose.

What could you be risking?

Example negligent hiring settlements from the 2010s



How gaps occur

Conducting pre-employment background checks is one way to mitigate potential risks to the company. The goal is to have a complete picture of your candidate's risk and qualifications, but sometimes things fall through the cracks. Depending on how you choose to conduct your background screening, you could miss important information about potential candidates. To protect your company from risk, you need to know where gaps in background checks can occur and how you can prevent them. And oftentimes, there are three main reasons where gaps occur:



Not searching broadly enough



Not searching enough sources



Not searching often enough

Let's take a look at each of these areas and how you can adapt your screening processes to ensure you don't miss records and leave your company in jeopardy.





POTENTIAL GAP #1 Not searching broadly enough

There are over 3,000 counties in the United States, and the average person has been to 12 or more states. The truth is, crimes can be committed anywhere. So, if you're only focusing on local searches, like state or county criminal searches where a candidate currently lives, you could be overlooking records.

A "broad" background search is one that is as expansive as possible and can be determined by the number of locations searched, names used, how many attempts are made to verify information, and more. The quality of information you receive in a candidate's background report can be directly affected by how you address these areas in your background checks. Not considering these factors can potentially limit what you search for, and more importantly, what you find.



Solutions for expanding scope:

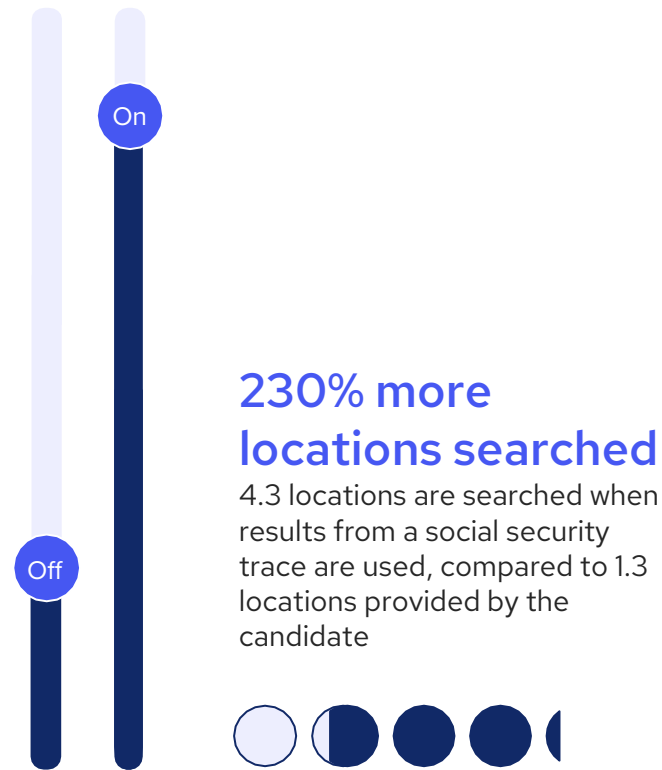
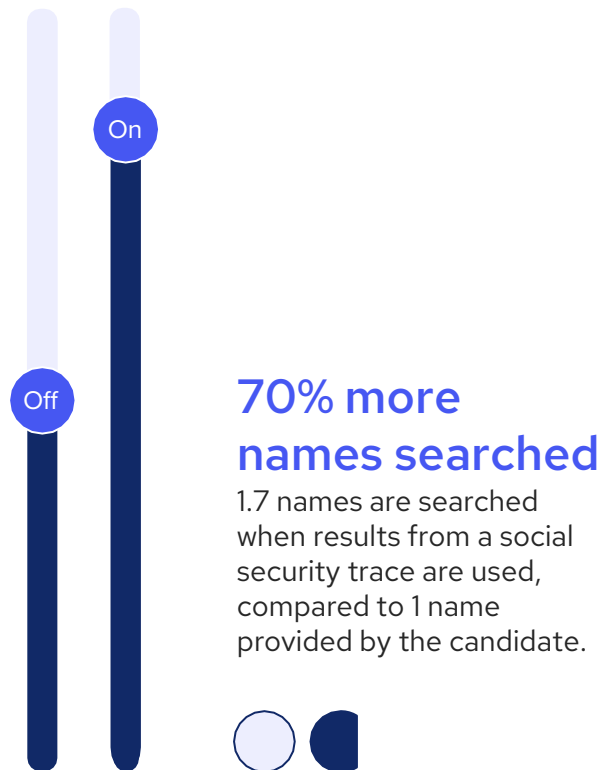
[Multiply potency of criminal checks with more names and addresses >>](#)

[The back-up plan: Casting a wide net nationwide >>](#)

[One way or another, verification attempts are going to get you >>](#)

Multiply potency of criminal checks with more names and addresses

Another way to broaden the reach of your background check is by running a Social Security trace to expose more locations to be searched, as well as additional names not disclosed by applicants. The average applicant will disclose about one name. But when you include a Social Security trace, the number of names increases to 1.7. That means nearly every other applicant screened will have a name that was not disclosed on their application. That's a noteworthy increase, finding 70% more relevant names. Those previously undisclosed names and aliases can now be used in other background checks to uncover easily identifiable records that would otherwise go undiscovered.



The back-up plan: Casting a wide net nationwide

Genuine efforts to find every record possible means your criminal search matrix is developed to catch those relevant locations, just like the ID trace helps you do. But every great mastermind has a safety net, a catchall for a blind spot. A great way to broaden your background checks is to use a national criminal database that looks at a vast number of multi-state resources. These may include record repositories from states and some counties, departments of correction and probation, sex offender registries, information from state-level agencies, Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC), fugitive lists, and even the FBI. This variety of sources provides an extra layer of scrutiny and can go beyond an applicant's self-disclosed address history to help reveal undisclosed locations where crimes may exist.

When companies conduct nationwide criminal database searches, 63% of potential records they find are committed in locations not disclosed by applicants. That means over half of possible criminal records that exist are outside of where an applicant lives. By using a national criminal database check, you achieve an extra level of insight to find those diverse sources in locations that would otherwise remain unknown to you.

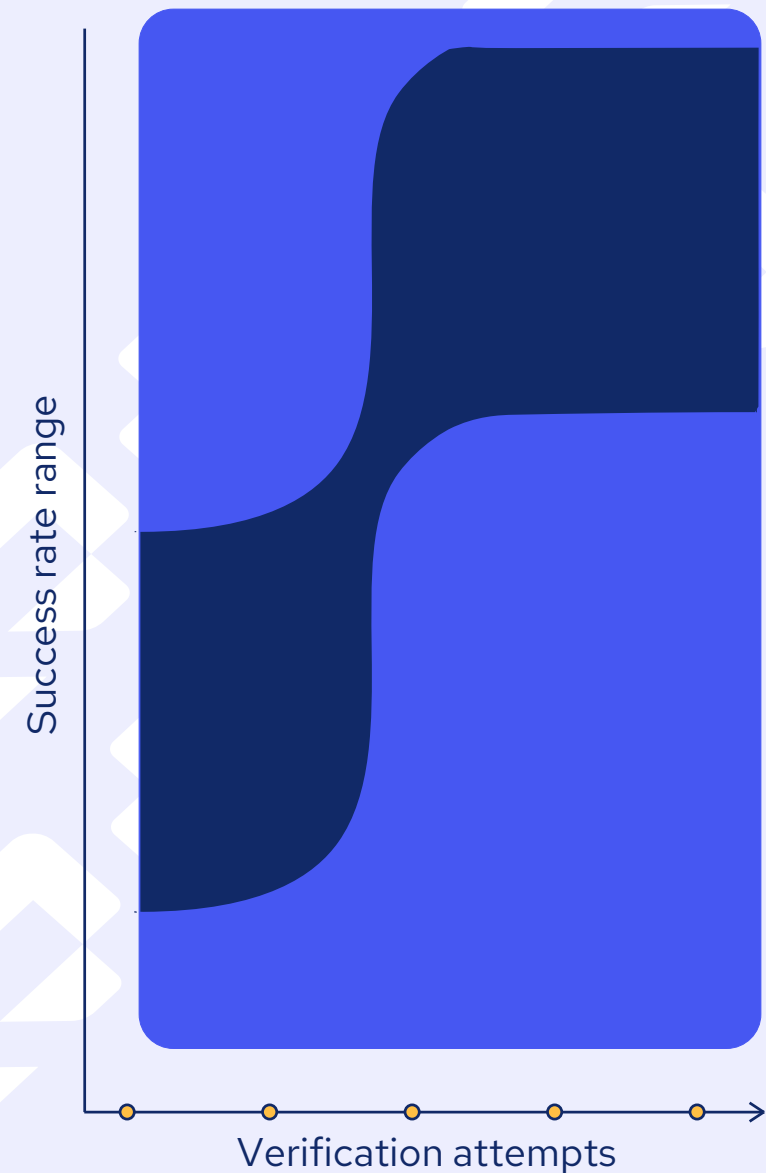


63% of records found
are outside of disclosed locations

One way or another, verification attempts are going to get you

In the background screening world, some records can be accessed and are undeniable (e.g., criminal records), while others require manual verification (e.g., employment history). It's not uncommon for some background screening companies to limit verification attempts to just three phone calls. They may also stop trying to contact an organization after the first 72 hours. That means a few phone calls and emails go out, and if there's no answer, they consider the case closed.

But when given a choice, many employers want their background screening company to keep trying to complete the verification. When employers keep verifications open and most often do, they see 99.7% of verifications completed. When it comes to verifications, at least, closing background check gaps sometimes takes a little extra effort.





POTENTIAL GAP#2:
**Not searching
all sources**

Local criminal record searches are generally the focus of any background check, and rightly so. People tend to commit crimes in areas where they spend the most time. But there are three other information sources – federal criminal sources, driving reports, and the sex offender registry – that can contain information not often included in local criminal history checks. Failure to properly search these sources can cause gaps in your background reports and open your company to potential liability.

Solutions for expanding sources:

[Don't let label confusion cause FOMO for federal crimes >](#)

[Driving records find more than just speeding tickets >](#)

[Not layering sources may let sex offenders stay in the shadows >](#)

Don't let label confusion cause FOMO for federal crimes

In discussing federal criminal searches, it's essential to recognize that there's a difference between "national" and "federal" searches. While not a comprehensive source for all records, the National Criminal Database search is a database resource for tips and leads from various sources across the United States, while a federal criminal history search provides records from federal level crimes. Specifically, federal searches access Federal District courthouse records, which contain only federal offenses from the 94 Federal jurisdictions across the United States. Serious federal crimes that can go undiscovered with other searches include offenses like cybercrimes or hacking, bank robbery, child pornography, drug trafficking, and many more. So it's clear to see why conducting a federal criminal search is so essential for filling gaps in your background checks.

When you consider federal crimes can intersect and divide states and counties, it can be hard to know which district to search. Verified Credentials has a way you can survey all 94 federal districts at once, so you don't have to choose or take a gamble. By searching all 94 districts in one sweep, you don't limit the scope to locations provided in a candidate's address history.

Driving records find more than just speeding tickets

A dive into Motor Vehicle Records is another underutilized background check. In some cases, driving record searches may find offenses that might otherwise go undiscovered with other criminal searches. Driving related offenses may include serious, sometimes fatal offenses, such as Driving Under the Influence (DUI). According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, there are states where DUIs are classified as traffic offenses and only reported on the driving record. Other times, a criminal driving violation might not have been reported to the National Criminal Database yet, but it would appear on their driving record. Therefore, a search of the database wouldn't reveal a potentially severe and disqualifying offense that could be uncovered using driving records.

Even if you don't have employees who drive on company time, is an irresponsible or reckless pattern of driving something you would like to know about an applicant or employee? Because of their ability to uncover otherwise hidden offenses, driving record checks can be a great way to fill gaps in your background screening processes.



Locate potentially serious offenses

In some states, DUIs are classified as traffic offenses that only show up on driving records.

Not layering sources may let sex offenders stay in the shadows

Sex offenses can be some of the most egregious and horrifying crimes, and these types of records are ones you certainly don't want to miss. But too often, these serious offenses can remain undiscovered through criminal history background checks. There are a few reasons for this. For starters, sex offenders often relocate, sometimes frequently. Therefore, a search targeting specific county criminal records or a single state's sex offender registry may create gaps in your background check reports.

The age of the offense also matters. Consider a registered sex offender, someone on the registry for life, who committed a crime more than seven or ten years ago. The current status as a registered sex offender could be easily uncovered by checking the sex offender registry, even if the criminal record cannot be reported due.

Leveraging a National Sex Offender Registry search along with your other criminal searches creates more chances to find a sex offender who may fall through the gaps in limited source background check. While a National Criminal Database will include state sex offender registries, there is no substitute for a National Sex Offender Registry, since it is a live feed of sex offender data from partnering state and local registries. It's the most up-to-date source for sex offender data to cinch up the loose edges of a screening package.

850,000

Registered sex offenders in U.S.

Find more with a national sex offender registry

1

Centralized
search

Live

Data
feed

Older

Records
found



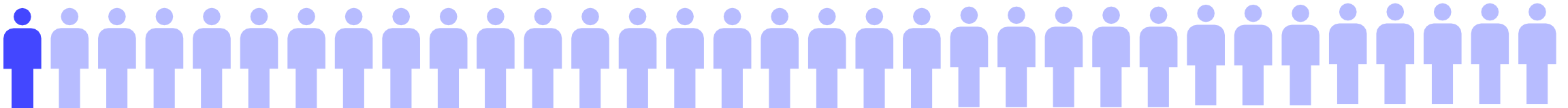
POTENTIAL GAP #3:
**Not searching
often enough**

While most HR professionals rightly concentrate on pre-employment screenings, you may want to consider expanding your efforts. More and more companies are now electing to re-screen employees regularly as a way of ensuring they don't miss new records.

More companies retread current employees through screening requirements

In the last five years alone, there's been a nearly 500 percent increase in recurring background checks. Why? It turns out that one out of every 33 employees has a record that occurred after their hiring date. If around 3% of your employee population could have potentially disqualifying records, wouldn't you want to know?

Recurring record checks work in almost the same way that pre-employment screenings do, checking criminal records, driving records, and more. The main difference is that you likely wouldn't recheck their employment history or other established information that is highly unlikely to change upon a second screening. Rechecks are important because negligent retention lawsuits can be just as costly as negligent hiring suits. In other words, background screening isn't any less critical after you hire someone. So, to ensure your organization stays as protected as possible, you may want to consider adding employee rechecks to your screening processes.



1 in 33 employees have a record that occurred after their hire date

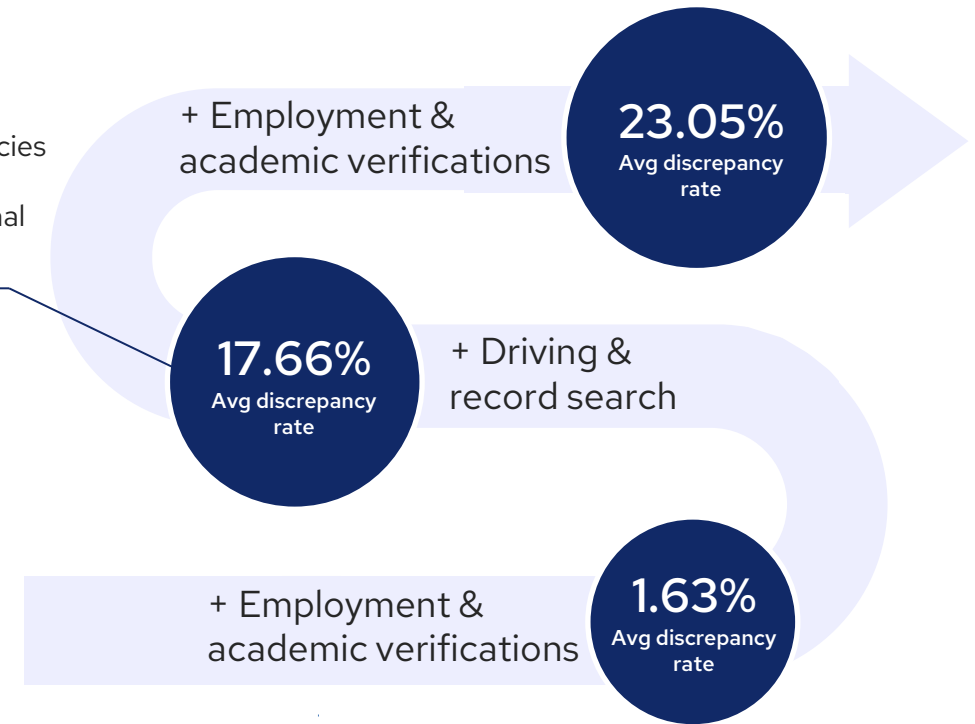
Closing gaps to help find more records

What does layering background checks look like and how does it change how many records your background check finds? A more comprehensive background check may help you find more records. If a particular check applies to a position, then bringing it into the fold can provide a more in-depth picture of your candidate. And what does that look like? One of the most obvious changes is seeing a distinct change in the number of discrepant records in background reports.

Even if you don't have employees who drive on company time, is an irresponsible or reckless pattern of driving something you would like to know about an applicant or employee? Because of their ability to uncover otherwise hidden offenses, driving record checks can be a great way to fill gaps in your background screening processes.

There's an old saying that goes, "You don't know what you don't know." Background screening reports with incomplete information may give HR professionals false confidence, but may unknowingly be missing records. The key to identifying and closing these gaps comes down to how you conduct your background checks. By taking a thoughtful assessment of your current background screening process and making sure you're searching broadly and often enough, you can help close those gaps and limit risk for your organization.

16.03% more discrepancies are found when an MVR search is added to criminal record searches!



Layering background checks increases the likelihood that you will discover discrepancies. When additional searches are added, more records are found.

Verified Credentials, LLC is a leading background screening company. Since 1984, we've helped validate and secure relationships through our comprehensive screening solutions. We offer a wide variety of background checks, verifications, and innovative screening tools.

Trusted by thousands of organizations across all industries, we use our experience and innovative spirit to help organizations create, manage, and streamline their background screening programs. If you're ready to improve your background screening processes, [contact us](#) or [schedule a consultation](#)



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Sources

Proprietary statistics from Verified Credentials User Report, 2019 // Median negligence value based on judgements/settlements from the following sample lawsuits: Rebecca Dow (Sierra County, NM 03-02-2017); Jones Express Inc. v. Edward E. Jackson, Sr., et al.; Erika Cadriel, et al. v. Woven Metal Products Inc.; City of Duluth & St. Louis County (St. Louis County, MN 07-12-2017); Doe v. MCLC; Allgeier v. MV Transportation Inc.; Janice H. v. Here Lounge; Reagan et al. v. Dunaway Timber Company et al; Baggett v. Total Transportation, New Mountain Holdings LLC // National Conference of State Legislatures, "Criminal Status of State Drunken Driving Laws" <http://www.ncsl.org/research/transportation/criminal-status-of-state-drunken-driving-laws.aspx> // National Sex Offender Public Registry, <https://www.nsopw.gov/> // Livability, "How Many States Has the Average American Visited?" <https://livability.com/topics/business/how-many-states-has-the-average-american-visited>



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