

# City of Ridgecrest

## **BACKGROUND INVESTIGATOR**

### **DEFINITION**

Under direction of the Chief of Police, conducts background investigations of applicants to determine suitability of employment; and performs other and related work as required.

**Summary of Duties:** A Background Investigator conducts and compiles personal and professional background investigations for public safety candidates by interviewing employers, co-workers, neighbors, law enforcement officials, military personnel, members of the candidates' family and personal references; prepares reports on findings; makes recommendations as to background findings; may supervise or act as a lead worker to staff involved in the above work; and performs other related duties.

**Essential Functions:** A Background Investigator:

- Reviews completed background interview forms of public safety candidates with each candidate, checking for inconsistencies, errors, omissions, falsifications and minimum requirements to ensure accuracy and completion before beginning initial candidate interview;
- Obtains and reviews records from Federal Bureau of Investigation, Department of Justice, and State and Municipal law enforcement records, where candidate has resided to determine if candidate was a witness, victim, suspect or perpetrator of any crime;
- Obtains and reviews arrest reports, witness statements, and other relevant documents to determine candidate compliance with Ridgecrest Police Department policies;
- Obtains and reviews reports from credit reporting agencies in order to evaluate candidate's financial responsibility;
- Conducts background investigations by interviewing employers, co-workers, neighbors, law enforcement officials, military personnel, members of the candidate's family and personal references;
- Makes additional inquiries to assist in determining credibility of statements;
- Observes each person being interviewed for the presence or absence of physical indicators of intoxication, the use of controlled substances, truthfulness, etc.;
- Prepares detailed and complete interview statements for each person being interviewed in order to allow a reviewer to draw reasonable and logical conclusions about the prospective candidates;
- Prepares final background investigation package for presentation to supervision and management by organizing all investigative material in accordance with established procedures;
- Meets regularly with management and/or candidate in order to keep them apprised of the status of the investigation;
- Prepares detailed summary of adverse information based upon objective analysis and evaluation of candidate's background, and interviewee statements, as measured against requirement standards as set forth by the Civil Service Commission;
- Completes background packages for review and final recommendation;
- May train new investigators in the techniques and concepts of administrative background investigation;
- May supervise or act as a lead worker to staff involved in the above duties;

## City of Ridgecrest

- May occasionally be assigned to other duties for training purposes or to meet technological changes or emergencies.

**Qualifications:** It is desirable that a Background Investigator have the following knowledges and abilities:

### **Knowledge of:**

- Required Peace Officer Standards and Training (P.O.S.T.) documentation;
- Confidentiality laws and issues such as confidentiality of personnel records, handling requests for information on candidates from operating departments, public, or the media;
- Rationales for confidentiality sufficient to ensure the integrity and personal privacy of candidate background investigation file and all information contained therein;
- Principles and practices of confidentiality sufficient to recognize actions that may compromise the integrity of investigation or investigation file documents;
- Various technical specialists available to assist in an investigation and when to request such assistance;
- Objective symptoms of use of alcohol and commonly used controlled substances, sufficient to recognize when a person may be under the influence.

### **The ability to:**

- Read, comprehend and interpret detailed, complex written material;
- Prepare clear, concise written reports;
- Analyze complex ideas or activities into smaller parts; simultaneously consider numerous facts, perceive patterns and relationships, develop theories about past occurrences based on numerous small bits of information or evidence, compare and interpret information, recognize and examine discrepancies, and draw logical conclusions;
- Manage time sufficient to prioritize and combine investigations when practicable to ensure timely completion;
- Handle several cases at one time;
- Utilize appropriate investigative techniques for administrative investigation to frame a reflective image of the candidate's background;
- Communicate and deal tactfully, persuasively, and effectively with coworkers, supervisors, management and the public;
- Demonstrate cultural sensitivity through tact and courtesy when dealing with individuals from various social, cultural, racial, and economical backgrounds;
- Work cooperatively as part of a team;
- Remain calm and focused when interviewing distraught, angry, or combative persons;
- Demonstrate effective interpersonal skills required to discuss matters which are of a sensitive and sometime inflammatory nature with candidates, supervisors and management;
- Listen, in person and on the telephone, as required to pay close attention to what is being said and ask follow-up questions;
- Develop pertinent questions for interviews, perceive when the person being interviewed has not understood, rephrase/clarify questions, follow-up on unanswered questions or conflicting statements and keep the interview focused on the material to be covered. Persons with

## City of Ridgecrest

disabilities may be able to perform the essential duties of this class with reasonable accommodation.

Reasonable accommodation will be evaluated on an individual basis and depends, in part, on the specific requirements for the job, the limitations related to the disability, and the ability of the hiring department to reasonable accommodate the limitations.

**Minimum Requirements:** Any combination of training and/or experience which is equivalent to:

- High School graduation or equivalent.
- One year performing employment applicant investigative work in a government or contract investigative agency; or three (3) years' experience as a full-time paid peace officer conducting investigations; or six (6) years' experience as a reserve peace officer conducting investigations.
- Completion of a Peace Officers Standards and Training POST approved Background Investigator course preferred. This course must be completed within the first three months of employment.

**License:** Possession of a valid California driver's license.