checkr

6 Metrics Staffing Firms Should Track to Improve Time to Placement

Monitoring these six metrics and applying the insights you gather can help you streamline your background check process, speed time to placement, and hone your staffing agency's competitive edge.

A tight labor market and unpredictable economy continue to pose challenges for staffing firms. Although 40% of firms enjoyed revenue growth in 2024, according to the GRID 2025 Industry Trends Report from Bullhorn, that's down from 68% in 2022. Competition for candidates remains stiff: Some 43% of staffing agencies of all types cite the talent shortage as the top challenge facing the industry in 2025, according to Bullhorn's 2024 Industry Vs. Talent Comparison.

Among the hardest roles to fill are those in healthcare, manufacturing, and retail, the 2024 US Mercer Turnover Survey reports. Hourly wage roles, in particular, are suffering high turnover rates, with the voluntary turnover rate for retailing at 24.9%, the highest of any industry Mercer polled.

As staffing firms fight to attract and retain clients, efficiency is essential to delivering value and keeping clients satisfied. But even small slowdowns during the hiring process, like delays in criminal background checks or drug testing, can result in late starts and unhappy customers. Monitoring key metrics can uncover hidden hiring bottlenecks, helping you fine-tune your recruiting process and provide faster placement, even with a lean team.

One phase of hiring that's ripe for review: the background check process.

A poor candidate experience, incomplete forms, missing consents, high dispute rates, or delays in collecting data from courthouses can all slow down background checks, negatively impacting candidate conversion and time to hire. Tracking key metrics in your background check process can identify potential areas for improvement, helping your staffing organization to increase efficiency, speed time to placement, and boost customer satisfaction.

We've identified six key metrics that staffing firms need to measure. Here's a closer look at each, including what you should track, how to measure it, and why these metrics matter.

Learn about these 6 metrics, then dig deeper with our guide to better ROI

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Turnaround time

Turnaround time indicates the total time it takes to process the background check, starting when the candidate provides their consent and ending when you receive results for review. Understanding your average turnaround times can help you set both internal and client expectations for how long various kinds of background checks will take. Track turnaround times by client, background check package, and type of search (national criminal search, employment verification, etc.

By tracking the turnaround times for all of the different background screenings you provide, for all of your clients, you can further fine-tune your screening process and adjust time-to-hire goals. Armed with insight into turnaround times, you can more accurately set expectations for both clients and candidates. Finally, transparency into how long the background check process will take helps keep candidates happy and prevent dropoff.

Measuring turnaround times for each type of screening reveals where bottlenecks may be occurring so you can work with your background check provider to address these issues. Excessive delays might also indicate that you need to find a provider that can deliver faster results. A background check provider that measures turnaround time in weeks can put your organization at a disadvantage. Instead, look for a provider that measures turnaround time in days—or even hours.

METRIC 2

Time to complete

Time-to-complete measures the time between your team initiating the background screening and the candidate getting the forms, to receiving the candidate's consent. If your background check solution integrates with your ATS, you're typically able to access date stamps to measure this metric. Useful ways to break down time-to-complete include:

- By client

- By position

- By background check package

- By location

Review your time-to-complete data to determine where problems are occurring and identify solutions. For example, if candidates aren't opening their invitation emails, consider a solution that automates candidate communications. This can speed time-to-complete by automatically sending an email invitation to kick off the background check, plus follow-up communications to remind the candidate of next steps. The option to brand and customize candidate communications offers the additional advantage of associating your clients' brands with a positive candidate experience.

A background check provider that offers a modern, mobile-first candidate workflow and easy-to-complete consent and authorization forms can help eliminate roadblocks that slow your screenings down. Integration with your ATS or HRIS system can also help reduce time-to-complete by automatically syncing candidate information to the background screening platform.

METRIC 3

Number of background checks

Complete, accurate background checks help safeguard both your organization and your clients, but overscreening with unneeded checks costs you (and your clients) time and money. To see if you're striking the right balance between savings and safety, monitor the type and number of background checks you run for each client.

Track the number of screenings by type, recording consents received, clear results, results with hits, and disputes. Then evaluate the following metrics:

- **Percentage of checks canceled or expired:** Excessive canceled or expired screenings can indicate that your candidate communication needs improvement. How quickly were candidates notified to complete forms or provide consent? Were instructions clear and candidate support readily available?

- **Percentage of clear checks vs. percentage with hits:** Track hits by type of record—for example, felony, misdemeanor, and so on. If your screenings disqualify too many candidates, it may be time to reevaluate your recruiting channels, your adjudication guidelines, or the types of searches you're conducting to ensure they're aligned with the position so you aren't over-screening.

Assessing this information enables you to determine the ideal number of background check components based on clients' industries, locations, and roles. Conducting the appropriate background screening packages for each client's position types helps accelerate time-to-fill.

METRIC 4

Adjudication results

Monitor the percentage of adjudication results in each of these categories: "hire," "ineligible for hire," and "requires review." A high percentage of ineligible candidates could signal a need for new recruiting avenues or better job descriptions.

If too many results require further review, or a certain result regularly needs adjudication, you may need to modify your adjudication criteria. A background screening provider with a robust suite of adjudication tools can streamline the adjudication process. Look for a solution that lets you customize adjudication filters and set rules for each client based on roles and locations. With less need to manually review and clear results that aren't relevant to the role, your team can be more efficient and fill roles faster.

Discrepancy and dispute rate

When candidates provide inconsistent or unverifiable information, background check discrepancies can occur, delaying screening completion and costing you valuable time. Inconsistencies may be due to simple errors, such as candidates mistyping information or forgetting dates of employment. Track the percentage of:

- All screening results with discrepancies

- Discrepancies for each type of screening component

Evaluate the common types of discrepancies, then adjust your adjudication criteria so discrepancies that aren't disqualifying don't return hits (for example, employment start dates that are within 30 days of the date provided). A similar name or mistyped Social Security number or birth date could return the wrong records, but a background screening provider that flags input errors in the candidate workflow can minimize such inaccuracies.

Also examine dispute rates as a high dispute rate for criminal records could delay onboarding candidates, frustrating clients seeking to hire quickly. If your dispute rates seem excessive, ask your provider how records are verified and what processes exist to reduce disputes.

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Impact of manual processes on productivity

Improving your team's efficiency is key to streamlining your background check process. Track how many hours per week are spent on manual processes related to background screenings. That might include communicating with candidates to prompt them through the screening process, answering candidates' or clients' questions, reviewing results against your adjudication matrix, initiating adverse action or managing vendors.

Knowing how much time your team spends on manual work related to background screenings can pinpoint potential productivity gains. A screening platform that automates manual processes can help you fill open roles for clients faster. For example, automated reminder communications and a self-service portal that provides estimation completion times and answers candidates' questions keeps the screening process moving—and keeps candidates engaged. Automated, repeatable workflows save you time on vendor management too.

Start tracking metrics with a modern background check provider

Monitoring these six metrics and using the insights you uncover can help you streamline your background screening process, accelerate time to placement, and give your staffing agency an edge in an increasingly competitive market.

Make measuring metrics easy by working with a modern background check provider that offers robust reporting and analytics tools. Access to advanced analytics within your screening platform can help you identify roadblocks that can cause candidate dropoff, discover new opportunities to widen your talent pool, and optimize your background check process to improve productivity and reduce costs.

Working with a background check partner that uses advanced automation and AI can help you eliminate the bottlenecks in your background screening process. Look for a provider that automates workflows, adjudication, and candidate communications, while offering the flexibility and customization you need to meet each client's diverse needs. A background check platform offering easy integration with your preferred ATS and HRIS systems will help you automate many time-consuming processes and make your team even more efficient.

Choose Checkr's advanced background check platform for fast, accurate, and compliant background checks, and you'll be ready to fill your clients' staffing needs quickly and confidently.

Learn more about how to improve efficiency and speed time to placement | GET THE GUIDE →

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