

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
FBI Federal Criminal History Records for Prospective Employees
December 1, 2008

Act 114 of 2006, Section 111 of the Pennsylvania Public School Code outlines background check requirements for student teachers and the employees of public and private schools and their contractors.

The Act requires that all student teachers (participating in classroom teaching, internships, clinical or field experience) and prospective employees (including, but not limited to: administrators, teachers, substitutes, janitors, cafeteria workers and office employees) of public and private schools, Intermediate Units and area vocational-technical schools, including independent contractors and their employees and bus drivers who have direct contact with children.

Employees must provide to their employer a copy of their Federal Criminal History Record that cannot be more than one (1) year old. This applies to employees hired on or after April 1, 2007.

The Process

1. The fingerprint-based background check is a multiple-step process:

The applicant must register prior to going to the fingerprint site. Walk in service without prior registration will not be provided at any fingerprinting location. Registration is completed online or over the phone. Registration is available online 24 hours/day, seven days per week at www.pa.cogentid.com Telephonic registration is available at 1-888-439-2486 Monday through Friday, 8am to 6pm EST. During the registration process, all demographic data for the applicant is collected (name, address, SSN, etc.) so there is no data entry required at the fingerprint collection site.

2. The applicant will pay a fee of \$28.75 for the fingerprint service and the CHRI. The new system provides the CHRI online to the employer and all applicants will receive a paper copy of the report at no additional cost.
3. Applicants may make their payment online at www.pa.cogentid.com using a credit card or debit card. Money orders or cashiers checks payable to 3M Cogent will be accepted on site for those applicants who do not have the means to pay electronically. **No cash transactions or personal checks are allowed.**
4. The applicant proceeds to the fingerprint site of choice. Location of fingerprint sites and days and hours of operation for each site are posted on 3M Cogent's website at www.pa.cogentid.com. The location of fingerprint sites may change over time; applicants are encouraged to confirm the site location nearest to their location.
5. At the fingerprint site the Applicant Livescan Operators (ALO) manage the fingerprint collection process.
6. The fingerprint transaction begins when the ALO reviews the applicant's qualified State or Federal photo ID before processing the applicant's transaction. A list of approved ID types may be found on 3M Cogent's website at www.pa.cogentid.com. Applicants will not be processed if they cannot produce an acceptable photo ID.
7. After the identity of the applicant has been established, all ten fingers are scanned to complete the process. The entire fingerprint capture process should take no more than three to five minutes.

8. For individuals fingerprinted on and after December 1, 2008 –

The process was redesigned with approval from the Pennsylvania State Police and the FBI. The time for processing is anticipated to take no longer than two days.

- Applicants' scanned fingerprints will be electronically transmitted to the FBI by 3M Cogent.
- The FBI will electronically transmit the CHRI to 3M Cogent, where the CHRI will be stored in a secure server.
- The CHRI will be available online for the School Administrator to review. Administrators receive login and password information from 3M Cogent.
- The CHRI that is available for review online constitutes the official record. Applicants give permission for the School Administrator to review the report during the registration process.
- The School Administrator will review the CHRI to make a determination as to the fitness of the applicant to work in the position in which they will have contact with children.
- If the applicant is hired for the position, the School Administrator will print a copy of the CHRI for the school's files.
- Applicants may request a paper copy of the CHRI when they register to be fingerprinted. This will be the applicants' only opportunity to request a copy.
- The paper copy will be mailed to these applicants by 3M Cogent. The "unofficial" paper copy is a copy of the CHRI that the School Administrator will review online.
- The applicant may share the paper copy of the CHRI with prospective employers. However, the School Administrator is required to review the official CHRI online and print a copy of the CHRI if the applicant is hired by the public school or private school or their contractor, or if the applicant is approved for student teaching.

Provisional Employment

The Act allows Administrators to employ applicants on a provisional basis for a single period not to exceed ninety (90) days, except during a lawful strike proceeding under the provisions of the act of July 23, 1970, known as the "Public Employee Relations Act", provided all of the following conditions are met:

- The applicant has applied for the information required under subsection (b) and, where applicable, under subsection (c) or (c.1), and the applicant provides a copy of the appropriate completed request forms to the Administrator.
- The Administrator has no knowledge of information pertaining to the applicant which would disqualify them from employment pursuant to subsection (e).
- The applicant swears or affirms in writing that they are not disqualified from employment pursuant to subsection (e).
- If the information obtained pursuant to subsection (b), (c), or (c1) reveals that the applicant is disqualified from employment pursuant to subsection (e), the applicant shall be suspended and subject to termination proceedings as provided for by law.
- The Administrator requires that the applicant not be permitted to work alone with children and that the applicant work in the vicinity of a permanent employee.

Fingerprint Corrections and Resubmissions

In circumstances where a classifiable fingerprint record was not or cannot be obtained and immediately upon indication, 3M Cogent will take corrective action to re-submit, or re-print the applicant at no cost to the applicant. This corrective action will be completed at the earliest possible time, and when applicable, that is convenient for the applicant. 3M Cogent will contact the applicant directly should this occur. NOTE: Reprinting can be applied to each applicant one time only. If fingerprinting must take place a third time the applicant must pay the full fee.

Confidentiality (Security) of Applicant Information

On-site access to the Livescan equipment, and the data traveling from the equipment, is comprehensively secured and regulated by both 3M Cogent and the regulations governing the use of that data.

Security - The computer system is housed within a secured network that is protected by firewall devices configured explicitly to allow only permissible protocols and traffic. 3M Cogent ensures that all devices procured under this process continue to adhere to the Commonwealth's Security requirements. The systems are configured to provide a point of defense with controlled access from both inside and outside the network. The Livescan systems are configured to support logging and audit capability. Furthermore, the Livescan solution will support 128 bit encryption.

Inquiries and Questions

Information regarding process, policy, and fingerprinting locations may be found at www.pa.cogentid.com

Fingerprint applicants should contact Denise Wolfgang at (717) 783-3750 or dwolfgang@state.pa.us