

BACKGROUND CHECK DELAYS

Addressing the Human Service Workforce Crisis

ONE PAGER

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BACKGROUND

The Illinois Department of Children and Family Services' (DCFS) has interpreted the Family First Prevention Services Act (FFPSA) to require an adjustment to the State's policy for employee background checks.

Prior to FFPSA, DCFS contracted community-based organizations were permitted to offer "conditional employment". This allowed agencies to make employment offers with a starting date, while a background check was pending. Those hires were allowed to begin the onboarding process, under the direct supervision of a full-time staff member. However, broad application of this policy change along with limited access to fingerprinting services and long periods to attain background clearance, has resulted in significant delays in onboarding leading many candidates to find other jobs.

Impacted Providers: Child Caring Institutions, Group Homes, Child Welfare Agencies, DHS-funded youth services programs, day care providers, and early childhood education providers.

THE PROBLEM

Process Delays:

- Providers and potential employees may wait **several weeks** to receive results/clearance information back on applicants.
- After receiving clearance from the Background Check, new hires may then wait **several weeks or even a month or more** to be enrolled in required training, further delaying when a ready-to-hire candidate can become a full-time staff member.
- Only **one** company in the entire state is contracted to perform fingerprinting services (Accurate Biometrics) with a **limited number of locations and operating hours**.

Provider & Employee Experience:

- Candidates for employment do not have adequate access to the facilities and services needed to complete the hiring process.
- There are **no** Accurate Biometrics facilities in Aurora, the 2nd largest city in the state.
- Without conditional employment, applicants are withdrawing their applications before receiving results because they cannot afford to wait for results.
 - e.g. One provider has reportedly **lost 45 prospective hires**, withdrawing their applications in the middle of the process.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Clarify the **precise federal requirements** as prescribed in the FFPSA that Illinois and other states must follow.
- Reinstate conditional employment with clearly established guidelines (i.e. no direct contact with youth or families). This will allow employees to be officially hired so they can complete training/onboarding while background clearances are being obtained.
- Establish uniform procedures, timeframes, and accountability for returning background information. Greater standardization will reduce uncertainty and enable agencies to provide potential hires with firmer timelines.



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- Allow the Illinois State Police (ISP) to support providers in conducting fingerprinting independently. With the support of ISP, capacity will be expanded allowing prospective hires greater access to fingerprinting through operating hours and more convenient locations including mobile options to reduce unnecessary delays.
- Create portable on-site fingerprinting locations. DCFS already uses these during hiring events to expedite candidate applications. Greater access will reduce delays.

For reference: [FFPSA Program Instructions](#) from the Administration for Children and Families

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