

Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)
FBI Federal Criminal History Records for Prospective Employees
March 13, 2007 (Updated 12/1/2008)

Act 114 of 2006, Section 111 of the Public School Code was amended effective April 1, 2007. **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, 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, must provide their employer **a registration number so that the employer may obtain an electronic copy** of their Federal Criminal History Record that cannot be more than one (1) year old. This only applies to employees hired on or after April 1, 2007. Employees hired prior to April 1, 2007, are only required to provide the Federal Criminal History record if they have lived outside of the state for at least two years immediately preceding their application for employment.

Implementation Timeline

PDE contracted with Cogent Systems to manage this program for the Commonwealth. The management process includes establishing a website, manning a help desk, and establishing fixed site locations for the taking of and transmitting of applicants' fingerprints. These services **were** operational on Friday, March 30, 2007. **The on-line access for employers to obtain Federal Criminal History Records will be effective December 1, 2008. There no longer will be a paper copy of the Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) for employers to obtain from potential employees.**

The Process

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

1. 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 **\$36.00** for the fingerprint service, **if the applicant wants a paper copy for his/her use there will be a cost of \$2.00. This copy will be marked "Not an official copy – for applicant use only"**. 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 Cogent Systems 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.**

3. The applicant proceeds to the fingerprint site of their choice for fingerprinting. The location of the fingerprint sites and days and hours of operation for each site **are** posted on Cogent Systems' website at www.pa.cogentid.com. The location of fingerprint sites may change over time so applicants are encouraged to confirm the site location nearest to their location.
4. At the fingerprint site the Applicant Livescan Operators (ALO) manage the fingerprint collection process.
5. 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 the Cogent Systems' website at www.pa.cogentid.com. Applicants will not be processed if they cannot produce an acceptable photo ID. **The applicant must retain their registration number to provide their potential employer.**
6. 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.
7. The applicant's scanned fingerprints will be electronically transmitted to the Pennsylvania State Police, who in turn submits the fingerprints and demographic information to the FBI as required by federal statute.
8. **Employers will have access to the Federal CHRI within 48 hours after the applicant is fingerprinted. Access to that record will be available for one year after the fingerprinting process is complete.**

Under no circumstances can the hiring entity provide a copy of the CHRI to the applicant.