

Background Check Requirements for School Contractors

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Dr. Linda Rhen, Director, School Services Unit

Background Check Requirements for School Contractors



Edward G. Rendell, Governor

Dr. Gerald L. Zahorchak, Secretary of Education

www.pde.state.pa.us



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Overview

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- *Fingerprint Channeling*
- *Access to Online System*
- *Applicant Registration Process*
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Act 114 Requirements

(Act of 114 of 2006, Sec 1-111 of the PA Public School Code)

- Requires prospective employees or their contractors' employees to submit reports of criminal history, including:
 - PA State Police Criminal Check
 - DPW Child Abuse Check
 - Federal Criminal History Record Information (CHRI) (April 1, 2007)
- Background check reports must be no more than one year old at time of hire
- Reports must be submitted PRIOR to employment
- Prohibits hiring individuals who have been convicted of specified offenses within 5 years of conviction

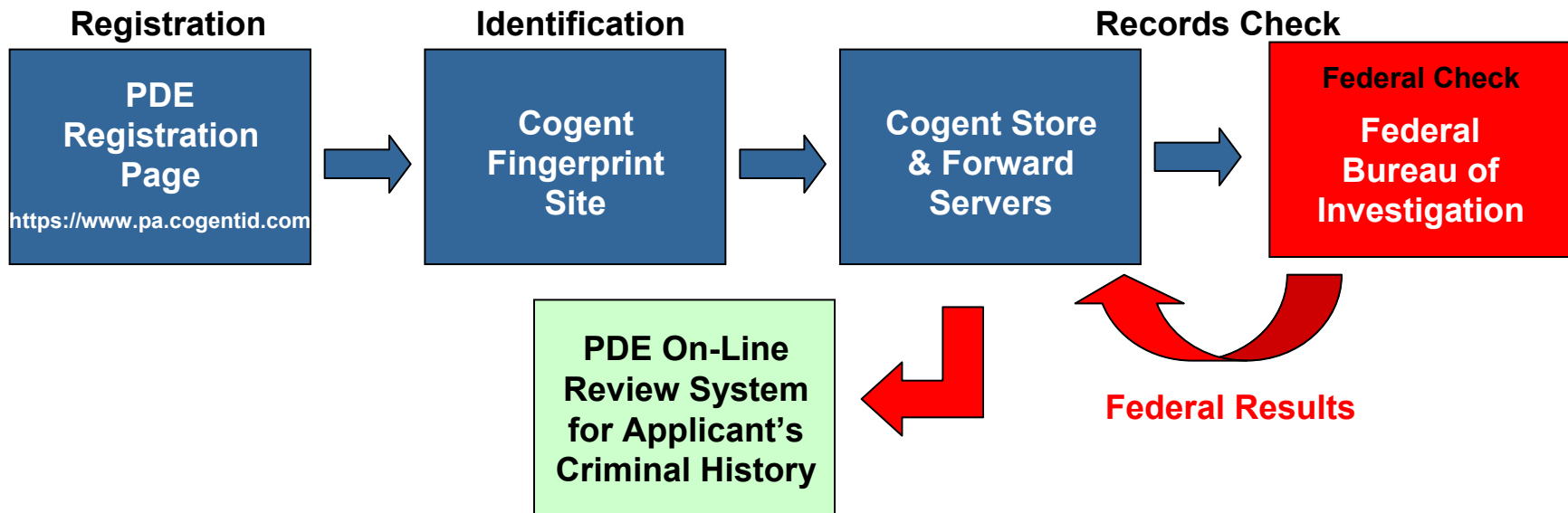
ALL Public & Private Schools

- Must review the reports and make the “fitness determination”
 - Determine whether an applicant is fit to work in a position in which they will have direct contact with children
 - Must be completed PRIOR to hire
- The school administrator is required to maintain a copy of the reports

Contractors

- Applies to independent contractors and their employees who have direct contact with children
- Includes bus drivers
- Employee remains an employee of the contractor, although the school entity determines who may work in direct contact with children

Fingerprint Channeling



Registration – Applicant must register and pay prior to being fingerprinted

Identification – Applicant's fingerprints will be collected and forwarded to the FBI

Records Check – Applicant images will be compared to those images contained in FBI and State criminal databases

Results – Federal results of the background check will be available for on-line review by PDE-approved hiring entities. CHRI are stored for 12 months on Cogent System's secure server.

Access to Online System

Approved School Entities



- Are provided online access
- PDE-approved school entities:
 - Public schools
 - Private schools
 - Higher Education institutions with a teacher training program
- School entities are responsible for making the “*fitness determination*” - whether an applicant is fit to work in a position in which they will have direct contact with children, based on:
 - Act 114 of 2006, section 1-111 of the PA Public Code, and
 - Any additional restrictions as defined by the individual school entity

Contractors



- Independent contractors do *not* have access to the on-line system for review of CHRI reports
- School contractors must provide background check information to the school entity in order for the school entity to make the “*fitness determination*” regarding the application
- Although the school entity makes the “*fitness determination*” as to who will work in direct contact with children, the employee remains an employee of the contractor

Online system in place December 1, 2008. It expedites report processing.

Applicant Registration Process

1. Visit secure site: <https://www.pa.cogentid.com>
2. Select: Department of Education icon.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying <https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm>. The website header features the Cogent Systems logo and the tagline "Beyond Comparison". Below the header, the main navigation bar reads "Applicant Fingerprinting Services Online Registration".

On the left side, there is a "Contact Information" section with the following details:
Cogent Systems
5450 Frantz Rd
Dublin OH 43016

Below the contact information is a "Useful Links" section with the following links:
Cogent Website
Applicant System

The main content area contains a heading: "Click below for information pertaining to background checks for". Below this heading, three departmental logos are displayed, each with a red arrow pointing to it:

- 1** (points to the address bar) → <https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index.htm>
- 2** (points to the Department of Education icon) → [Department of Education\(PDE\)](#)
- [Department of Public Welfare\(DPW\)](#)
- [Department of Banking\(DOB\)](#)

Applicant Registration Process (cont)

3. Select: Registration → Register Online.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pde.htm. The page header includes the Cogent Systems logo with the tagline "Beyond Comparison™" and the Pennsylvania Department of Education logo. The main heading is "Applicant Processing Service".

The page is divided into several sections:

- Contact Information:** Cogent Systems, 5450 Frantz Rd, Dublin OH 43016.
- Useful Links:** PA Applicant System, Changes to PDE Background Services effective 12/1/2008, PDE Communication to Schools concerning online review of applicant federal criminal history review, General Administrator's Guide to Adding New Users.
- General Information:** How to Become a Print Location, PDE FBI background checks are \$36.00.
- Print Site Locations:** Print Locations & Hours, What to Bring, Proof of Transaction (Receipts), Reprints (Did you get an FBI Rejection?).
- FAQ'S:** Who to Call/Results, FAQ'S - Answers to common question.
- Registration:** Registration Procedures, Register Online (highlighted with a red circle and a red arrow pointing to it with the number 3), Modify Registration, Cancel Registration, Registration Status.
- Agency Use:** Agency Billing Agreement (PDF).
- Site Use:** Login (Fingerprint Sites Only), PDE Hiring Entities may retrieve CHRI at www.cogentresults.com.

Applicant Registration Process (cont)

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the following elements:

- Header:** COGENT SYSTEMS Beyond Comparison™ on the left and Pennsylvania Department of Education on the right.
- Section:** Applicant Processing Service
- Title:** Dissemination Disclaimer
- Form:** A checkbox is checked, followed by the text: "By checking this box I hereby grant the Pennsylvania Department of Education the authority to electronically disseminate my Federal Criminal History Record Information Report, as authorized by the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006, Section 153, to any school entity to which I apply for employment, student teaching or work as a contractor. The school entity will review the report online to make a determination concerning my suitability for employment in the position for which I have applied."
- Buttons:** "Continue" and "Back" buttons are located at the bottom right. The "Continue" button is circled in red.
- Footer:** Home | Back links and a copyright notice: COPYRIGHT © 2000-2008 Cogent, Inc. All rights reserved.

A red arrow points from the "Continue" button back to the checked checkbox.

4. Review the disclaimer (box must be checked to continue with registration) and click <Continue>.

Applicant Registration Process (cont)

COGENT SYSTEMS
Beyond Comparison™

Pennsylvania
Department of
Education

Applicant Processing Service

Applicant Registration for Department of Education

Step 1 - Please Enter Your Information

Transaction Information

Payment Type: Applicant Credit Card *

Reason: SELECT *

Fingerprinted: SELECT *

Personal Information

Last Name: *

First Name: *

Middle Name: *

Date of Birth: (MMDDYYYY) *

Place of Birth: SELECT *

SSN(no dashes): *

Reenter SSN: *

Sex: SELECT *

Race: SELECT *

Eye Color: SELECT *

Hair Color: SELECT *

Height: SELECT *

Weight: *

Country of Citizenship: SELECT *

Driver's License No: *

Address: *

City: *

State: SELECT *

Zip: *

Phone #: *

E-Mail Address: *

DO YOU REQUEST AN UNOFFICIAL COPY OF YOUR CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK?
(This will be your only chance to request this document)

I request a copy of the report be mailed to the address on my application; there is \$2.00 processing fee.

I do not request a copy of the report, and I am aware that this is my only opportunity to request a copy.

Next Reset

Note: Highlighted fields are required and marked by a *

[Home](#) | [Back](#)

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5. Fill out the required applicant information. Registration fee: \$36

6. Requirements regarding an unofficial paper copy of your criminal history are addressed on the next slide. Additional fee for paper copy: \$2

Requesting a Paper Copy

- For contractors that wish to see a copy before sending information to a school, the applicant may request an unofficial paper copy during registration. Registration fee is \$36.
- The paper copy costs an additional \$2 and is mailed from Cogent to the applicant's home address.
- Mailing takes up to two weeks, so please ensure that employees are fingerprinted at least two weeks in advance of needing the report (if you choose this option).
- **Registration is the ONLY opportunity for a paper copy to be requested. A copy cannot be provided by the PDE or Cogent at a later date.**

DO YOU REQUEST AN UNOFFICIAL COPY OF YOUR CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK?

(This will be your only chance to request this document)

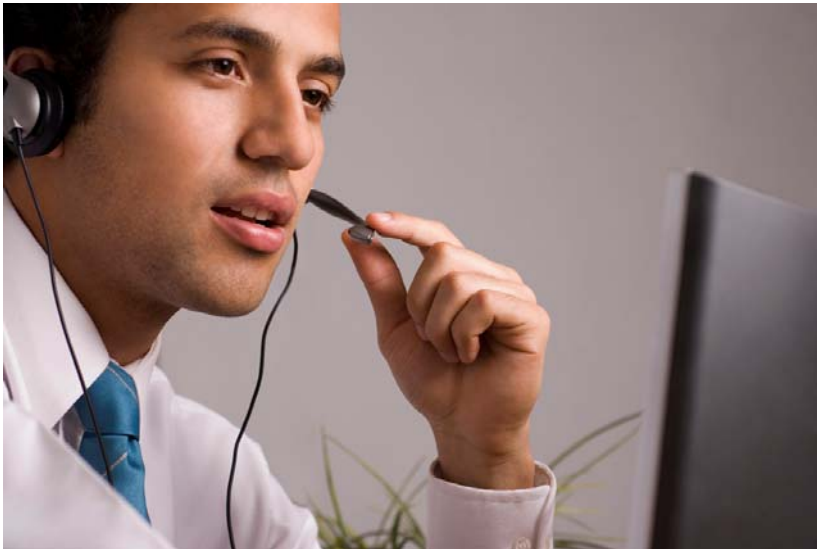
I request a copy of the report be mailed to the address on my application; there is \$2.00 processing fee.

I do not request a copy of the report, and I am aware that this is my only opportunity to request a copy.

Next

Reset

Registration & Printing Errors



- Any error with the applicant's registration must be corrected **before** being fingerprinted
 - This includes a failure to request a paper copy
- Registration errors must be corrected through Cogent System's applicant registration by phone or online:
 - Phone: 888-439-2486
 - www.pa.cogentid.com
- Applicants **cannot** change registration information at the fingerprint site.
- Applicants should review the form for accuracy before submitting registration

The “Name Check” Process

(what to do if the applicant has not received the requested paper copy)

- Access the proof of transaction online to confirm that the applicant’s prints were taken and submitted
 - If the proof of print indicates that the individual has been successfully printed, contact the school and request that the school look up the report

- The school will either be able to review the report, or in a small number of cases, will see an error message that indicates the fingerprints could not be processed
 - This error is called a “rejection” and results in a rejection notification from Cogent. The applicant would receive the rejection notice in the mail at their home address
 - An applicant who receives a rejection notification will take their rejection letter and be printed a second time at no charge
 - If the prints are rejected a second time, PDE is notified
 - A “name check” is performed directly through the FBI at the request of PDE
 - This manual process could take 3-4 weeks
 - When results are returned to the PDE, a results letter is mailed from PDE to the applicant at their home address. This letter will be presented in lieu of the original FBI report

The “Name Check” Process (cont)



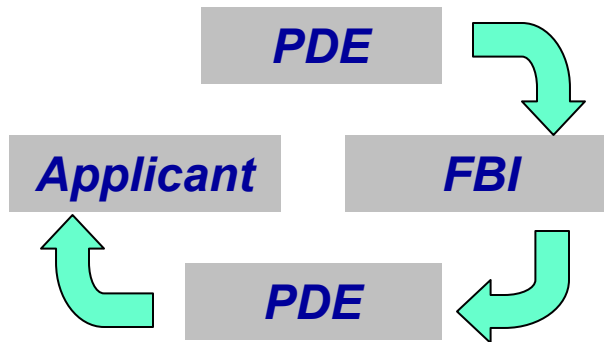
1. Prints are captured electronically at a local Cogent printing location.

2. Unreadable cannot be processed properly using the electronic system.

3. Cogent mails a rejection letter to the applicant, which is taken to a print site for a second printing at no charge.



4. A second print rejection requires a **name check**. If this is necessary, PDE will call to notify the applicant.



5. The PDE requests a name check from the FBI. When FBI results are returned, the PDE issues a results letter to the applicant via mail.

STEP 5 OF THE NAME CHECK PROCESS CAN TAKE 3-4 WEEKS.

Please allow ample time for printing in case this occurs.

Preparing to Place an Employee

Provide the school with the following items:

1. Employee name
2. Employee's Registration ID*
3. Copies of employee's state clearance and Child Abuse History clearance

**The Registration ID is vital for the school to review a report. It is the number associated with that employee's personal report. (See illustration.)*



COGENT SYSTEMS
Beyond Comparison™

PA

Applicant Background Check Services

Check CHRI | PDE Report | School Accounts | My Account | Logout

Applicant Rapsheet Query

Enter the registration ID of the applicant:

REG ID PAE08CJ4355G126Z

Query Clear

Preparing to Place an Employee (cont)

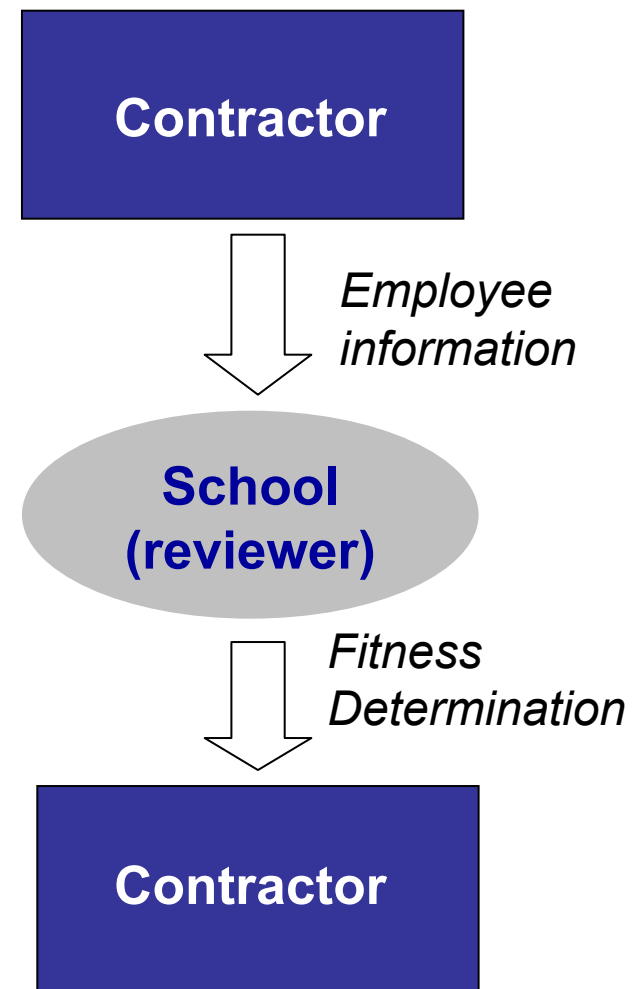
Retrieving a forgotten Registration ID

The first screenshot shows the main Cogent Systems website with the 'Applicant Fingerprinting Services Online Registration' section. A red circle highlights the 'Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE)' logo, with a red arrow pointing to it. The second screenshot shows the 'Applicant Processing Service' page. A red circle highlights the 'Print Site Locations' section, with a red arrow pointing to the 'Print Location' link. Below this link, the text 'Proof of Transaction (Receipts)' is circled in red.

- Access Cogent secure registration site:
<https://www.pa.cogentid.com>
- Select icon: Department of Education
- Select on the homepage: Proof of Transaction (Receipts)
- Enter applicant name, last 4 digits of SSN, and date of birth to obtain their personalized Registration ID

Reviewing the CHRI

- Contractors provide information to the school
 - Applicant's name
 - Registration ID
 - File with the applicant's State Police criminal check and DPW Child Abuse check
- School retrieves the CHRI in the online system and reviews the applicant's report
 - Independent contractors do not have access to view the official on-line report
- School administrator makes the *fitness determination*
 - Whether the applicant should work in a position where they will have direct contact with children
- School administrator advises the contractor of the determination
- School maintains copy of CHRI report for applicants that are hired
 - A copy of the CHRI will NOT be provided to the contractor



Who to Contact



- **Policy questions: PDE**
 - Phone: 717-772-3618
 - Email: RA-PDE-SchoolService@state.pa.us
- **Technical questions: Cogent**
 - Includes ABID account inquiries
 - Phone: 614-718-9691
- **“Name Check” and report questions: Denise Wolfgang**
 - Phone: 717-783-3750
 - Email: RA-PDE-SchoolService@state.pa.us
- **Missing paper report: Cogent**
 - Phone: 614-718-9691, extension 3304
- **Missing Registration ID:**
 - Contact the applicant, or
 - Visit the Cogent registration website to obtain a forgotten Registration ID number

Questions?



Thank You for Attending!

Diane Castelbuono, Deputy Secretary
Office of Elementary/Secondary Education

Phone: 717-787-2127

Email dcastelbuo@state.pa.us

Linda Rhen, Director

School Services Unit

Phone: 717-425-5041

Email lrhen@state.pa.us