



DCS Practice SOP Background Checks

13.03: Conducting Checks – DCS Contractors	Related Policy: 13.03
Effective Date: January 1, 2026	Version: 1

Roles

- DCS Staff

Procedure

Background Checks are conducted to ensure all employees, volunteers, and interns of DCS contractors (see Definition) meet state standards.

All required background checks must be completed prior to the contractor submitting the contract/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Agreement for State/County/Agency signature.

Exception: Background Checks are **not required** if all the following criteria are met:

1. Service is needed right away due to an emergency and it is not expected to happen again;
2. There is not enough time to complete the background check before the service is needed; and
3. A DCS contractor, who has already passed all required background checks, will be with the person providing the service.

Fingerprint-Based Checks conducted for one (1) contractor and purpose may not be used for another (see policy 13.15 and related practice SOP).

Contractors - Direct Child Contact (A-1 Level)

A background check will consist of the following for initial award of a DCS contract:

1. A CPS History Check: Everyone age six (6) and older in every state they have lived in the last five (5) years;
2. A National Sex Offender Registry Check: Everyone age 14 and older on all possible aliases in every state they have lived in the last five (5) years;
3. A Local Criminal Records Check: Everyone age 18 and older in every criminal court jurisdiction they have lived in the last five (5) years; and
4. A Fingerprint-Based Check: Everyone age 18 and older and returned with qualified results.

Contractors - Record Access Only (A-2 Level)

A background check will consist of the following for initial award of a DCS contract:

1. CPS History Check in every state they have lived in the last five (5) years; and
2. National Sex Offender Registry Check in every state they have lived in the last five (5) years for all possible aliases.

Any staff person who might serve as a substitute for a Covered Personnel, even in emergency circumstances, must pass the same checks. Managers of Covered Personnel are also Covered Personnel, even if they do not complete the activities that require background checks.

Once a contractor has an effective DCS contract, all background checks must be completed and passed before Covered Personnel start working.

Four (4) Year Check Requirement

The required background checks must be performed every four (4) years from the date of the first check.

DCS will check for the DCS Contractor's compliance with completion of the following for all Covered Personnel:

1. Verify the identity of each subject of the check, regardless of age (see Practice SOP Verifying Identity);
2. Have them complete, sign, and date the Application for Criminal History Background Check (SF 53259), and place in their personnel file;
3. Register for the Fingerprint-Based Check for anyone age 18 and older;
4. Conduct a National Sex Offender Registry Check, using the Dru Sjodin National Sex Offender Public website, for anyone age 14 years and older;
 - a. Each name or combination of names used within the subject's lifetime must be searched individually,

Note: When searching a common name, if the results show multiple matches, narrow the search by state and search every state they have lived during the last five (5) years.

- b. The results must be printed, signed and dated by the reviewing DCS Contractor Agency worker,
- c. The reviewer will write "NO MATCH" if there is no match.

Note: If there is a match, the person cannot be hired or volunteer. If they are already employed or volunteering, then they must be dismissed. See policy 13.04 and related Practice SOP for additional guidance.

5. Conduct a CPS History Check for all persons by:
 - a. Initiating the necessary search for a CPS History Check in Indiana by utilizing the CPI/CPS electronic portal submission;

Note: If the person has not lived in Indiana during the last 5 years a CPS History Check in Indiana is not required.

- b. Conducting a CPS History Check search for every state the person has lived for the past five (5) years, if applicable (see Resources), and
- c. Referring to policy 13.16 Waivers if the person has CPS history in any state.

6. Conduct a Local Criminal Records Checks by completing a court record search, using their name and all aliases, within each county court and applicable city courts in jurisdictions they have lived in the last five (5) years (see Resources).

Inaccurate Criminal Records

If any of the Fingerprint-Based Criminal Checks reveal an inaccurate record, the record may be formally challenged.

- Indiana: Made to the Indiana State Police (ISP)
- Other states: Made to the Law Enforcement Agency (LEA) that posted the record

Definitions

- [Contractor](#)
- [Covered Personnel](#)

Resources

- [Application for Criminal History Background Check \(SF 53259\)](#)
- Central Office Background Check Unit (COBCU) email - cobcuinquiry@dcs.in.gov
- Local Criminal Records Check Instructions – available on the [Background Checks website](#)
- Out-of-State CPS Contact List – available on the [Background Checks website](#)
- [Request for a Child Protection Services \(CPS\) History Check \(SF 52802\)](#)

Additional Information

- [Notifying DCS of Substantiation of CA/N, Arrest, or Convictions](#)

References

- [Policy 13.04 Evaluating Checks - DCS Contractors – Related Practice SOP](#)
- [Policy 13.15 Fingerprint-Based Checks – Related Practice SOP](#)
- [Policy 13.16 Waivers – Related Practice SOP](#)
- [Practice SOP 2.09 Verifying Identity and Relationship](#)