



DCS Practice SOP Background Checks

13.10: Evaluating Checks – Foster Licensing

Related Policy: [13.10](#)

Effective Date: January 1, 2026

Version: 1

Roles

- Licensing Worker
- Central Office Background Check Unit (COBCU)

Procedure

The Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS) evaluates background checks for all foster family home license decisions. This helps keep children safe and promotes well-being in foster care.

General Documentation

1. Save all background check results and waiver letters in the licensing file.
2. Upload all documents to the case management system and attach them to the person's profile.
3. This includes scanned copies of:
 - a. Fingerprint-Based Status Letters
 - b. Waiver notices
 - c. Other background check documents

Fingerprint-Based Check

The licensing worker will:

1. Make sure all required background checks are done; and
2. Review the Fingerprint-Based Check Status Letter received from COBCU for each check:
 - a. Give a copy to the person (subject of the check),
 - b. If the result is "Incomplete – Documentation Necessary", tell the person to contact the COBCU Consultant and send the needed documents within 10 business days,
 - c. If the result is "Disqualified", contact the COBCU Consultant to see if the person can apply for a waiver (see References),
 - d. If the person already lives in the foster home and is disqualified or conditionally disqualified, put a placement hold in the case system and follow steps b and/or c.

Note:

- A criminal history waiver is required before a new household member moves in if they have a criminal history.
- A waiver is also needed if new history is found during licensing or relicensing.
- Waivers are only valid for the purpose they were granted. A new waiver is needed for each new purpose.
- If a foster child is already placed in the home, notify the child's Family Case Manager (FCM) about the disqualified or incomplete status and any license revocation plans.

The DCS COBCU will:

1. Review the Fingerprint-Based Check results; and
2. Email the Fingerprint-Based Check Status Letter to the assigned contact person at the DCS local office or LCPA (see References).

Child Protective Services (CPS) History Check

The licensing worker will:

1. Use the Combined Application for Criminal and Child Protection Service (CPS) History Searches form to review CPS history results from Indiana and all other states the person lived in during the past five (5) years; and
2. If there is substantiated CPS history, request a waiver from COBCU for licensing or relicensing.

Note: A CPS waiver is required before a new household member with CPS history moves in. Waivers are only valid for the purpose they were granted. The applicant must pay for out-of-state CPS checks, if needed. Without a waiver, the person cannot be a:

- Foster parent;
- Household member in a foster home; or
- Employee or volunteer in the foster home.

Local Criminal Records Check (Initial and Relicensure)

The licensing worker will:

1. Review the Local Criminal Records Check (see Resources); and
2. If the status is qualified but the Local Criminal Records Check shows any of the following, contact the COBCU Consultant listed on the Fingerprint-Based Check Status Letter within five business days:
 - a. A felony,
 - b. A total of four or more misdemeanors, or
 - c. A misdemeanor related to the health and safety of a child.

Note: The applicant must pay for any Local Criminal Court Records check fees.

The DCS COBCU will:

1. Re-review the Fingerprint-Based Check Report; and
2. Send an updated Fingerprint-Based Check Status Letter, if needed (see References).

National Sex Offender Registry Check

The licensing worker will:

1. Check the results of the National Sex Offender Registry Check for a match;
2. If there is a match, do not license the home or recommend revocation; and
3. Contact COBCU via email (see Resources) for help if the Fingerprint-Based Status Letter was qualified.

The DCS COBCU will:

1. Re-review the Fingerprint-Based Check Report; and
2. Send an updated Fingerprint-Based Check Status Letter, if needed (see References).

Annual Review

The licensing worker will:

1. Compare MyCase results to past Local Criminal Records Checks (see Resources);
2. If unknown convictions are found, have the person complete a new Fingerprint-Based Check for the purpose of foster family home licensing (see References); and
3. Contact COBCU if the new Fingerprint-Based Check is qualified, but MyCase shows:
 - a. A felony,
 - b. A total of four (4) or more misdemeanors, or
 - c. A misdemeanor related to the health and safety of a child.

The DCS COBCU will:

1. Re-review the Fingerprint-Based Check Report; and
2. Send an updated Fingerprint-Based Check Status Letter, if needed (see References).

Definitions

- [Household Member Staying in the Home](#)
- [Licensing Worker](#)

Resources

- [Assessment of Alleged Child Abuse or Neglect \(SF 113\)](#)
- Background Check Matrix for Unlicensed Placements Desk Guide – Available on the [Background Check Resources SharePoint](#)
- Central Office Background Check Unit (COBCU) email - COBCUinquiry@dcs.in.gov
- [Combined Application for Criminal and Child Protection Service \(CPS\) History Searches \(SF 57332\)](#)
- Local Criminal Records Check Instructions – available on the [Background Checks website](#)

Additional Information

- [Disclosing Fingerprint-Based Check Information](#)

References

- [Policy 13.09 Conducting Checks – Foster Licensing – Related Practice SOP](#)
- [Policy 13.15 Fingerprint-Based Checks – Related Practice SOP](#)
- [Policy 13.16 Waivers \(Background Checks\) – Related Practice SOP](#)