



Washington State Department of **CHILDREN, YOUTH & FAMILIES**

Portable Background Check

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. What is the Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) background check process?

In 2011 the Washington State Legislature passed a bill that required the Department to create a portable background registry by July 1, 2012. Background checks are important to protect the safety and welfare of Washington's children.

All applicants associated with or applying to work or volunteer in an early learning program or who reside in a child care setting with unsupervised access to children must submit a completed background check. This includes:

- The licensed provider.
- Anyone who cares for or has unsupervised access to children in early learning programs.
- Anyone age 13 or older who live in the licensed family child care home.

A Managed Education and Registry Information Tool <https://apps.dcyf.wa.gov/MERIT/Home/Welcome?ReturnUrl=%2fmerit> account and STARS ID is required to begin the background check process.

- A background check application submitted either online or by paper, is processed through the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Background Check Central Unit (BCCU), the Washington State Patrol (WSP) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). Results are then submitted to DCYF's Background Check Unit.
- DCYF's Background Unit Staff review the BCCU results, complete a character, competency and suitability determination and issue a final determination of **cleared** or **disqualified**. Completed results are emailed to the applicant. Results of the background check are in MERIT.

Q. What does "unsupervised access" mean?

A. Washington Administrative Code ([WAC 110-06-0020](#)) defines unsupervised access as follows: (a) An individual will or may have the opportunity to be alone with a child in child care at any time for any length of time; and (b) Access that is not within constant visual or auditory range of the licensee an employee authorized by DCYF, nor a relative or guardian of the child in child care."

Q. What is a character, competency and suitability determination?

A. The term "character, competency and suitability" is often used to describe the overall suitability of an applicant to provide child care services. An applicant may not have a criminal background history or any substantiated findings from CPS or DLR/CPS. However, the applicant may have had their foster care license revoked for improper care. DCYF may decide that the applicant does not have adequate "character, competency and suitability" to be a child care provider.

Q. What is the difference between a local criminal history background check and a fingerprint check?

A. A local criminal history background check is performed through the WSP. The results will identify if the applicant has a criminal history in Washington State. *In other words*, any arrests and convictions in Washington are listed on the report.

A fingerprint check is required for individuals who apply for the first-time to have a DCYF background check clearance. Fingerprints are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for a nationwide criminal history background check. An applicant who has been fingerprinted will have their entire criminal history (arrests and convictions) sent to DCYF for further character, competency and

suitability determination. Applicants who are fingerprinted will also have the basic WSP criminal history background check performed.

Q. What are the fingerprint requirements?

A. A fingerprint-based background check is required for individuals who apply for the first time to have a DCYF background check clearance. The Federal Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) Act was signed into law in 2014 and became effective in 2016. States were given waivers through Sept. 30, 2021, to comply with the expanded background check requirements. Everyone now must complete fingerprints and reprint no less than every five years as required by the CCDBG Act. If DCYF has no fingerprint history for an applicant they will be required to complete the fingerprint requirement. Fingerprints are sent to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for a nationwide criminal history background check. Applicants who are fingerprinted will also have the basic WSP criminal history background check performed.

Q. If a person does not live in Washington, but works in Washington; do they need to have a fingerprint check?

A. Yes, if a person is living in another state, but will have unsupervised access to children in a licensed child care in Washington, a fingerprint check has to be completed, regardless of how long they have worked in Washington ([RCW 43.215.215](#)).

Q. What is the process for fingerprinting with IdentoGO?

A. A fingerprint appointment form is sent to the applicant by email. The applicant must then contact [IdentoGo](#) to schedule an appointment at one of the statewide processing sites.

- Same day appointments are not typically available. Approximately 24 hours is needed to ensure the applicant's personal information is validated in IdentoGO's system before you can schedule an appointment.
- Appointments take about 15 minutes and must be scheduled in advance. If the applicant shows up without an appointment or shows up late, IdentoGO will not complete the fingerprint process.
- If either the WSP or FBI rejects the fingerprints, a reject letter will be sent to the office that requested the prints. When fingerprints are rejected, the applicant will need to be fingerprinted again. There is no limit to the number of times fingerprints can be rejected by the WSP. The FBI will only reject prints two times before they will complete a national name and date of birth check.

Q. If an individual has had an FBI check completed for an agency other than DCYF, are new fingerprints required?

A. Yes. Current laws prevent sharing of fingerprint results between different state agencies.

Q. Does the applicant receive a confirmation once the appointment is completed?

A. An email confirmation will be sent to the applicant after the appointment confirmation is completed.

The applicant may need to check their spam/junk mail accounts as many email providers filter emails that appear to be system generated. Email confirmations will be from the following email address: noreply@morphotrust.com

Q. What is a LiveScan Machine?

A. A LiveScan Machine is a small photocopy machine. It scans your fingerprints and creates electronic copies without the mess of ink and paper cards.

Q. What is the benefit of LiveScan fingerprinting?

A. LiveScan fingerprinting helps to reduce the number of fingerprint rejections and speeds up the process by allowing fingerprints to be sent electronically rather than through the mail.

Q. What forms of identification can be used for identification at the fingerprint appointment?

A. Identification must be a government-issued identification and have a clear photo of you and your signature in order to be a valid form of identification. In addition to what is listed on the fingerprint appointment form, the Identogo technicians are allowed to accept:

*Driver's License issued by a state or outlying possession of the U.S.

- Driver's License PERMIT issued by a state or outlying possession of the U.S.
- Driver's License PAPER/TEMPORARY issued by a state or outlying possession of the U.S.
- Enhanced Driver's License (EDL)
- Commercial Driver's License issued by a state or outlying possession of the U.S.
- Commercial Driver's License PERMIT issued by a state or outlying possession of the U.S.
- ID card issued by a federal, state or local government agency or by a Territory of the U.S.
- Enhanced Tribal Identification Card (for federally recognized U.S. tribes)
- Department of Defense Common Access Card
- Uniformed Services Identification Card (Form DD-1172-2)
- U.S. Military Identification Card
- U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card
- Military Dependent's Identification Card
- U.S. Passport
- Foreign Passport
- Permanent Resident Card or Alien Registration Receipt Card (Form I-551)
- Employment Authorization Card/Document (I-766) that contains a photograph
- Canadian Driver's License
- Foreign Driver's License (Mexico and Canada Only)

*U.S. Visa issued by the U.S. Department of Consular Affairs for travel to or within, or residence within, the U.S.

If an applicant's ID document has a different name, the following Name Linking Documents can be presented along with the Primary Document:

- Original or certified copy of a court-ordered name change document, including Marriage certificate or Divorce decree

Q. How long will a fingerprint appointment take?

A. Appointments take about 15 minutes and must be scheduled in advance. Applicants must be on time for their appointment. If an applicant walks in without an appointment or shows up late, Identogo will not complete the fingerprint process. Some of the fingerprinting sites **do not** allow children to be in the printing facility. Please call Identogo for more information: 1.888.771.5097.

Q. Is personal information safe?

A. Identogo encrypts data before sending it over a secure network. In addition, Identogo utilizes industry standard full disk encryption to insure that personal information is secure on all LiveScan devices. Unused information is deleted from the system.

Q. How will I know when my prints have been rejected by the WSP or the FBI?

A. If either the WSP or FBI rejects your fingerprints, a email notification will be sent to you with rejection information. When your fingerprints are rejected, you will need to be fingerprinted again.

When fingerprints are rejected by the WSP or the FBI, call the scheduling call center to make an appointment to be re-fingerprinted: 1-877-771-5097. An appointment for reprinting cannot be scheduled online. Tell the call center staff that you are calling to schedule an appointment for reprints, and provide them with the OCA (Inquiry ID) number listed on your reject letter.

Q. How many times can my fingerprints be rejected?

A. There is no limit to the number of times that prints can be rejected by the WSP. The WSP will continue to reject fingerprints until they determine they have the best set of fingerprints possible. The FBI will only reject prints two times before they will complete a national name and date of birth check. Contact the DCYF Background Check Unit office for more information.

Q. How is the status of the fingerprint results shared with the applicant or licensee?

A. Contact the DCYF Background Check Unit office.

Q. Can prints be reused for other background checks or resubmit them to the WSP if they were accepted the first time but rejected by the FBI?

A. No. Once fingerprints have been processed by the WSP, they cannot be used again. If your fingerprints are rejected by the FBI, you will need to be printed again.

Q. Is there anything an applicant can do to improve the fingerprint scan?

A. The most common reason for rejected fingerprints is a lack of ridge detail in the scanned image. As people get older, fingerprints become lighter and more difficult to capture. Ridge detail can be affected by many things such as continued use of paper products, chemical use, gardening, pottery, or continued exposure to water. To help combat this problem, the applicant needs to hydrate their skin for several consecutive days before their appointment with a water-based lotion. On the day of the appointment, do not use the lotion.

Q. Where can I find more information regarding the fingerprinting process?

A. Contact the DCYF Background Check Unit at:

- Email: backgroundcheck@DCYF.wa.gov
- Call: 1.800-998-3898 option 4
- Website: <https://www.dcyf.wa.gov/services/early-learning-providers/background-checks>

Or contact IndentoGO at:

- Website: <https://www.ibtfingerprint.com/locations/?st=wa#PUGET>
- IndentoGO Call center: 1.888.771.5097