CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK PROCESS (NEW)
as of June 4, 2012

The Older Adults Protective Services Act (OAPSA), requires applicants/employees who wish to work in specific facility types (see listing below) to have criminal history background checks completed in an effort to protect vulnerable and care-dependent individuals.

To facilitate a more efficient background check process, the Pennsylvania State Police (PSP) has selected Cogent Systems, a private contractor, to perform electronic fingerprinting on behalf of the PSP. Under the same outsourcing process that is in place for a number of other state agencies, the applicant's fingerprints are acquired by Cogent Systems and submitted electronically to the PSP and then to the FBI.

Other state agencies are already utilizing the Cogent Systems to ensure easy access (via internet), accuracy, efficiency, and a more timely response for employers and applicants. This change will expedite the submission and processing of both the PSP and FBI background check requests.

Background

The OAPSA requires that two types of background checks be completed, those completed through the PSP and those completed through the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI). Please note the following requirements:

- ALL applicants **must** submit to a PSP background check using the PA Access to Criminal History by visiting https://epatch.state.pa.us.
- Applicants who have not been a PA resident for the past two (2) consecutive years **must submit** to a FBI background check processed by Cogent Systems **in addition** to the PSP check by visiting www.pa.cogentid.com.

Based on the results of these background checks, employment determinations are made by either facility staff or the Pennsylvania Department of Aging (PDA). Please note that facility staff review and make employment determinations for applicants required only to have PSP background checks done. However employment determinations for FBI background checks are made by PDA.

New Process:

Applicants will now be required to register online at www.pa.cogentid.com or by calling 1 (888) 439-2486 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST). Following registration, applicants will be provided with a registration number that they will take with them when they go to the Cogent site for fingerprinting. Applicants must be registered with Cogent Systems prior to arriving at a fingerprinting site.

When registering on-line, applicants must select the PA Department of Aging icon. Fingerprinting requests processed through any other agency will not be accepted. If an applicant mistakenly registers through a different department, the registration must be cancelled. The applicant must restart the registration process by clicking on the Aging icon. Note: this must be completed prior to being fingerprinted. Once fingerprinted, registration and/or results cannot be transferred to another state agency.

To Facilities and/or Agencies

If your agency chooses to be billed for fingerprinting, Cogent Systems allows the fee to be billed to the facilities/agencies address. In order to use this course of action, the facility/agency must complete and submit the Cogent Systems' Agency Billing Agreement. The agreement is available on the Cogent website at www.pa.cogentid.com. The billing account should be established prior to sending applicants to the fingerprint site.

Fees

The new fee for an FBI background check is **$34.25.** Payment can be made during on-line registration by using a credit or debit card, or in-person at the fingerprinting site with a money order or cashier's check made payable to Cogent Systems. No cash transactions or personal checks will be accepted.

Fingerprint Sites

Since April 2007, Cogent Systems has established more than 110 sites across the commonwealth. We encourage all facilities to direct perspective applicants to the most convenient fingerprint service site. Visit www.pa.cogentid.com to find a location.

FBI Reports

Cogent Systems will forward the applicant's fingerprints electronically to the FBI. Responses from the FBI will be sent to the PA Department of Aging for analysis. The Department of Aging will review the results to determine if any convictions listed under OAPSA would prohibit the applicant/employee from being employed. The Department of Aging will send employment determination letters to both the facility and applicant. Employment determinations from any other source are not acceptable under the law.

Security of Applicant Information

Data collected during the fingerprinting process is secured and regulated by both Cogent Systems and the regulations governing the use of that data. The computer system is housed within a secured network that is protected by firewall devices configured to allow only permissible protocols and traffic. Cogent Systems has ensured us that all devices procured under this process continue to adhere to the Commonwealth's Security requirements.

Inquiries or Questions: Individuals who are seeking additional information regarding the process and print locations may contact Cogent Systems by visiting their website at at www.pa.cogentid.com or by calling 1 (888) 439-2486 (Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. EST).

For all other information, please contact the criminal history background checks unit at (717) 265-7887.

Facilities/Agency listing (as specified within the OAPSA)

- Adult Daily Living Center
- Assisted Living
- Birth Center
- Community Homes for Individuals for Individuals with Mental Retardation – Group Home/Community Living Arrangement
- Community Residential Rehabilitation Services
- Domiciliary Care
- Family Living Home
- Home Care Agency or Registry (defined to include agencies licensed by the Department of Health and any public or private organization which provide care to a care-dependent individual in their place of residence).
- Home Health Care Organization or Agency
- Hospitals (only those with a LTC unit, skilled transitional unit, or extended care unit AND you must be employed in or potentially rotate to one of these units.
- Hospice
- Intermediate Care Facilities for Individuals with Mental Retardation
- Living Independence for the Elderly
- Long-Term Structured Residence
- Nursing Home/LTC Nursing Facility
- Office of Long-Term Living/Waiver Program
- Personal Care Home
- Nursing Schools (for students doing an internship or clinical rotation, or any other individual, who has been granted access to the facility to perform clinical services).
- State Mental Hospital
- South Mountain Restoration Center

- Staffing Agency – entity that supplies, arranges for, or refers their employees to provide care in other OAPSA facilities.