



## VECHS program: Who qualifies? How to proceed?

In 2018, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation (BCI) made internal changes to the way it processes background checks conducted under the National Child Protection Act of 1993 (NCPA) and its subsequent amendments. This program is now commonly referred to as the NCPA/VCA.

This federal law authorizes certain nongovernmental organizations to conduct a fingerprint- based national criminal history background check to determine the fitness of an individual to care for the well-being of children, the elderly or people with disabilities. It allows qualifying organizations to ability to make that determination based on national criminal history record information (CHRI) provided by the FBI through BCI. Qualifying organizations must meet specific criteria to obtain FBI CHRI and adhere to provisions governing the use of that information.

Ohio has implemented the Volunteer and Employee Criminal History System (VECHS) program, through which BCI and the FBI provide state and national criminal history information on applicants, employees and volunteers to qualifying organizations in Ohio. This program allows organizations to more effectively identify current/prospective volunteers and employees who are not suited for contact with children, the elderly or people with disabilities.

To qualify to participate in the VECHS program, an organization (public, private, profit or nonprofit) must provide “care” or “care placement services” – as defined by the amended NCPA – to children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

The VECHS program is **not** available to governmental organizations currently required to obtain criminal history checks on employees under statutory provisions of the Ohio Revised Code. Such organizations must continue to follow the statutory mandates that apply specifically to them, including performing background checks on prospective employees and/or volunteers and maintaining background information for current employees and/or volunteers.

To become an approved VECHS recipient and obtain criminal history information through the VECHS program, an organization must:

• **Complete a VECHS application.**

- The application must be completed in full, including an explanation of the functions performed that involve children, the elderly, or people with disabilities. If the application is approved, it has been determined that your organization meets the program qualifications.
- The completed application can be mailed to Ohio BCI – VECHS at the address below or emailed to [VECHS@OhioAGO.gov](mailto:VECHS@OhioAGO.gov).

• **Sign a User's Agreement and Waiver.**

- Before submitting any requests for background checks, the approved VECHS recipient must sign a User's Agreement and Waiver, which is provided by BCI.
- The User's Agreement contains provisions governing the use of state and national criminal history information that must be adhered to.
- The completed User's Agreement can be mailed to Ohio BCI – VECHS at the address below or emailed to [VECHS@OhioAGO.gov](mailto:VECHS@OhioAGO.gov).

• **Begin requesting background checks.**

- The first step in requesting a background check is to obtain a signed consent form (waiver) from the subject authorizing a search of the BCI and FBI national criminal history databases. The consent form must specifically authorize the release of any criminal history information that might exist about the applicant from any agency, organization, institution, or entity having such information on file.
- All requests must be fingerprint-based and submitted electronically via WebCheck. To learn about WebCheck sites near you, [click here](#).

• **Recognize that these background checks are limited to specific types of Ohio employment.**

- BCI and FBI fingerprint-based criminal history inquiries can be submitted for current and prospective employees of the qualifying entity, and for individuals (such as volunteers) who may provide unsupervised care to children, the elderly, or people with disabilities.

• **Look for BCI's response.**

- All BCI and FBI criminal history responses are forwarded to the approved VECHS recipient, not the WebCheck location or vendor.
- The approved VECHS recipient will receive either a letter stating the applicant has no criminal history or the criminal history record (RAP sheet) for the applicant.

Any FBI background check submitted for a reason requiring the VECHS approval process must have an approved VECHS application on file; otherwise, the process may be delayed until all requirements have been fulfilled.

All documents are available on the Ohio Attorney General's website at:

<http://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Business/Services-for-Business/WebCheck>

Please direct all questions regarding the VECHS Program to the Civilian Unit of the Identification Quality Assurance Unit at 740-845-2605 or by email at [VECHS@OhioAGO.gov](mailto:VECHS@OhioAGO.gov)