

2014 SUPPLEMENTAL BUDGET

CENTRALIZE BACKGROUND CHECKS

Request	FY14	FY15	13-15
FTE	0	18.0	9.0
GF-State	\$0	\$1,086,000	\$1,086,000
Total	\$0	\$1,410,000	\$1,410,000

DECISION PACKAGE SUMMARY

The Children's Administration (CA) requests additional staff to create a consolidated and dedicated background check unit. By funding this request, CA is expected to create a streamlined process for handling background checks to enhance child safety through consistent checking of placements and bringing CA into compliance with existing state and federal statutes and regulations.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

CA conducts over 4,000 background checks a month using 96 different staff within CA to enter background check information into an electronic web application. Staff conducting checks may be deployed full time to that activity but most conduct background checks in addition to their existing work duties. Due to the lack of dedicated staff, CA uses a variety of positions from clerical to social workers to contract managers to perform background check duties. CA is required to run the name and date of birth or fingerprint checks depending on what level of access and supervision the person has to the children in care. CA staff submit background checks requests to the DSHS Background Check Central Unit (BCCU). BCCU receives the request and returns criminal and negative action histories to CA and other DSHS programs. CA staff check other systems including out of country/state criminal and child abuse/neglect databases and CA specific records. As of July 31, 2013, CA had over 5,000 fingerprint background checks that were not completed.

In addition, staff are required to document completion of the background check and results in FamLink and other systems. This documentation is not being completed consistently. This documentation requirement was also part of a corrective action plan from an internal audit. Additional requirements that are not consistently followed include conducting out-of-state Child Abuse/Neglect (CA/N) history background checks, notifying applicants of the criminal results within 10 days, and following the administrative review process for overriding disqualifying criminal histories. Not having consistent dedicated staffing for this activity has created a host of other problems including:

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- Inability to implement consistent processes;
- Inconsistent application of background check policies/requirements;
- Duplicate entries (and associated charges) for the same person; and
- Incomplete searches of relevant databases.

Attempts at establishing processes have failed due to the large number of staff working on background checks and high turnover in those background check liaison positions. CA lacks the resources to accommodate these additional FTEs within its current resources.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

CA requests funding to hire 18 FTE's beginning July 1, 2014 to form the central background check unit. This will consist of 16 background check leads and two supervisors, who will process all background checks for contracts, children and family services, and licensed resources. They will be co-located with newly dedicated staff working on emergent placement background checks. This plan will free up staff time to focus on other important tasks in adoption, contracts, home studies, and foster care, all of whom are currently responsible for completing background checks. In addition, the new unit will ensure that background check results are being provided to the person being checked, which is mandated under RCW 43.43.834, and that any applicant who is denied will be told the reason for their denial (per SB 5565). The supervisors and staff can track administrative reviews and ensure that reviews are processed before placement of a child.

EXPECTED RESULTS

CA will be able to process background checks in a timely manner and be compliant with state statutes and federal regulations. This will reduce CA's risk of giving unsuitable persons unsupervised access to children in our care. With a more efficient process, CA will eliminate the backlog of background checks and ensure that administrative reviews are being conducted appropriately. Clients will receive information regarding their criminal background checks and be given reasons for possible denials (as required by law). Potential foster parents and contractors will experience a more consistent approach to background checks and potential issuance of denials or exceptions.

This request supports Results Washington Goal 5 of Effective, Efficient and Accountable Government. Funding this request will result in an increase in on-time delivery of state services and the removal of waste in processes.

STAKEHOLDER IMPACT

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Stakeholders including foster parents and contractors should support this consolidation effort because it will result in quicker placements, consistent processing of criminal histories, and result in safer placements for children.