

AmeriCorps Community Fellows Instructions for Background Checks 2011-2012

As per AmeriCorps Provisions, as well as Pennsylvania state law, all AmeriCorps members must apply for and pass the:

1. FBI Criminal Background Check
2. Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Registry Check
3. Childline Child Abuse Clearance
4. National Sex Offender Public Registry Search

A print-out of the FBI Criminal Background Check, a copy of the Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Registry Check, a copy of the Childline Child Abuse Clearance, as well as a printout from the National Sex Offender Public Registry Search should be included in the member's enrollment packet. If the completed check is not yet available, a photocopy of the application for the background check must be submitted in its place. When the completed check becomes available, a copy should be mailed to Pennsylvania Campus Compact.

NOTES:

- **HOME STATE CHECKS:** If the member's state of residency was a state other than Pennsylvania at his or her time of recruitment, then a Home State Criminal Registry Check needs to be conducted on behalf of the member. For more guidance on this process, please call Meghan.
- **COSTS OF CHECKS:** While members may need to up-front the cost of the background checks they must ultimately be reimbursed by the campus. Costs for background checks cannot be passed on to members. Pre-existing background checks performed earlier than one year prior to the member's start date cannot be accepted.

1). FBI Criminal Background Check

Application Process: There are two parts to the FBI Clearance Process. During Step 1, the campus administrator or member registers with the Cogent system online. In Step 2, the member visits an authorized location to be fingerprinted. Once both steps are completed, the results will be sent to you.

Cost: There is a \$35.50 non-refundable fee for each request, regardless of outcome.

Payment Options:

- Member can use his/her own credit card and get reimbursed by the campus
- Campus Administrator can use the institution's credit card
- Your campus can register as an agency with Cogent for direct billing. To do this, visit https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pde.htm Click on "Agency Enrollment" on the main page. You will then be given a code that your students can use in place of their own credit card. This means that Cogent will bill your campus. NOTE: Your Education Department may already be set up to do this.

Step 1: Online Registration

- Visit https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pde.htm

- Click on "Register Online" in the top right-hand corner of the page
- Read and agree to the Dissemination Disclaimer
- Complete the fields with the member information
- NOTE: When asked DO YOU REQUEST AN UNOFFICIAL COPY OF YOUR CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECK? Indicate Yes, I request a copy of the report be mailed to the address on my application; there is \$2.50 processing fee.
- Verify that the information is correct
- Indicate the appropriate payment information
- Click submit, print the final confirmation page, and have the member bring it to the fingerprinting location

Step 2: In-person Fingerprinting

- Visit https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_pde.htm to find a Fingerprinting Location near you
- Bring the confirmation page from Step 1

Results Sent: To member's address on the form

SPECIAL NOTE: As a result of the passage of Act 52, which placed more stringent requirements on individuals working in schools, it is highly likely that your campus has already figured this process out – particularly your Education Department and those who handle student teacher placements. If you are not familiar with the FBI Clearance process, contact your colleagues in the Education Department who can likely assist you.

2). Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Registry Check

Application Process: Members apply online at <https://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>, print out the results, and include them with their enrollment packet.

Cost: \$10.00 non-refundable fee for each request, regardless of outcome. Payment is accepted by credit card or by billing a pre-established account. Customers will be charged for misspelling, duplicate submissions and other user errors.

The following criminal history information will be released by the Pennsylvania State Police Central Repository upon proper request:

1. All convictions.
2. All charges that are less than three years from the date of arrest and for which the Central Repository has not received a disposition.
3. All charges for which a warrant of arrest has been issued and the Central Repository has been notified of such warrant.

It is the responsibility of both registered and non registered users to obtain the assigned control number at the time requests are submitted. Immediately after submission of the requests one of the following statuses will be assigned to the request:

1. **No Record:** If this status is assigned to the request it is the user's responsibility to double click on the control number. This will take the user to the details screen where the user will double click on the

blue hyper link, "Certification Form", near the center of the page. By clicking on "Certification Form", a certified no record form will be displayed in PDF format. This form must be printed.

2. **Request under Review:** If this status is assigned to the request, the user must periodically check the PATCH web site to determine the final status of the request. A status of "Request Under Review", will result in one of the following final status:
 - No Record: Follow the instructions above for a no record response.
 - Record: Indicates the person has a record and a record response has been mailed to the address provided.
3. **Pending:** This status is occasionally assigned when traffic is extremely heavy and requires the user to check back at a later time. A request should not remain in pending status for more than 24 hours. If a request remains in pending status for more than 24 hours call the PSP PATCH help desk at 1-877-777-3375.

Results Sent: Not sent via mail; accessible online, using the control number

3). Childline Child Abuse Clearance

Application Process: Members visit

http://www.dpw.state.pa.us/ucmprd/groups/webcontent/documents/form/s_001762.pdf, print out an application, complete it, and mail it to the Department of Public Welfare. The results will then be mailed to the members' address or the campus (depending on whether the waiver, discussed below, is used). A photocopy of the results should be then sent to PACC.

Reason for Check: "**School**"--will not go through if you indicate "Volunteer"

Cost: \$10.00 non-refundable fee. The fee should be sent as a money order for \$10 made payable to "Department of Public Welfare" and included with the paper application.

This clearance can take up to six (6) weeks to process. It is recommended that your prospective member start the application as soon as s/he is recruited.

To Expedite the process: It is possible to get the clearances returned directly to your office. In order for the checks to get sent directly to your office:

- Download the Sample Waiver for Childline Child Abuse Clearance (.doc) and the Sample Cover Sheet for the Childline Child Abuse Clearance (.doc) at www.paccompact.org/cfcampusadministrators
- Update both documents with your campus' information
- Ask your students to each sign a waiver to have the clearance sent directly by to you
- Compile all applications and corresponding waivers and add the cover sheet
- Send packet--including cover letter, applications, waiver, and money order to:

Childline and Abuse Registry
Department of Public Welfare
P.O. BOX 8170
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170
ATTN: Tracy Isolm

Results Sent: To member's address on the form **OR** to campus, if wavier is utilized

4). National Sex Offender Public Registry Search

Application Process: The National Sex Offender Registry Search is completed by the campus administrator online at www.nsopr.gov. Students fill out the Member Contract form (provided by PACC) and the campus supervisor enters the member's name (and any aliases) in the database. Both the Member Contract Form and the printout produced by the registry need to be sent to PACC with the other enrollment paperwork.

Cost: This search is free.

Instructions: The campus administrator should:

1. Go to www.nsopr.gov
2. Click on the "Search" tab in the toolbar at the top
3. After reading the disclaimer, click on "I Agree"
4. Type in the access code when prompted
5. Enter the student's last name and first name in the appropriate boxes
6. Click on "Search"

The search results will appear on the following screen. Typically, there are no hits, and the campus administrator can simply print the screen demonstrating that result. Attach the printout to the Consent & Release Form and include both in the enrollment packet.

If the search result does turn up results, the campus administrator will need to go through them and verify that those individuals are not the members in question. This can usually be done by looking at the middle name, state of origin, birth dates, and photos. Once the campus administrator has done that, print the screen and make a hand-written notation confirming that none of the results are a match. Initial that notation.

If certain jurisdictions are not available, you need to re-visit the site at a later time and continue the search, so that all 50 States and U.S. Territories are searched. Please do not submit checks with unavailable jurisdictions.

Results Sent: Available online immediately