

Is the use of a third-party vendor to process clearances acceptable?

Third-party vendors may be used to process Child Abuse, PSP and FBI clearances using the steps established above. They are **not** permitted to conduct background checks or clearances through other databases in lieu of the steps outlined above. In addition, persons responsible for the selection of volunteers remain responsible for selection decision based upon the information obtained.

How much do the clearances cost?

- The PSP clearance costs \$10
- The Child Abuse clearance costs \$10
- The FBI clearance costs \$27.50 through the Department of Human Services
- The FBI clearance costs \$28.75 through the Department of Education

Who pays for clearances?

The volunteer is responsible for paying the cost of the required clearances. However, some agencies choose to pay for clearances for their volunteers and are able to establish business accounts to pay for clearances. The only time an agency is required to bear the cost of the clearance is when there is reasonable belief that the volunteer was arrested or convicted of an offense that would deny participation or named as a perpetrator in an indicated or founded report. In these situations, the agency must immediately require the volunteer to obtain their clearances.

Can an agency or organization pay for clearances?

Child Abuse clearances:

Yes, agencies and businesses can pay for child abuse history clearances by registering for a Business Partner User account using the "Organization Account Access" link on the Child Welfare Portal, www.compass.state.pa.us/Lewis. The business account will allow organizations to purchase Child Abuse clearance payment codes to be distributed to applicants or employees. Individual applicants or employees will then go onto the Child Welfare Portal to apply for the clearance using the code. The pre-purchased codes can only be used once and allows the organization to have access to the applicant's Child Abuse clearance results once those results are processed.

FBI clearances:

An agency pay agreement/business account can also be created between an organization and the FBI, or its authorized agent, for payment of FBI clearances. Information on creating an agency pay agreement for FBI clearances through the Department of Human Services can be found at https://www.pa.cogentid.com/index_dwnNew.htm.

PSP clearances:

An agency business account can be requested from the Pennsylvania State Police to pay for clearances in bulk by calling 1-888-783-7972 and selecting option 6. Organizations are, also able to pay an for applicant's PSP clearance on an individual

basis by using a credit card if applying online or submitting a paper check if applying by mail.

Do I still need to submit a copy of my PSP or FBI clearance results when applying for my child abuse clearance?

Beginning December 31, 2014, volunteers are no longer required to submit a copy of their PSP or FBI clearances with their Child Abuse application. If the department receives copies attached to the child abuse application we will not return those copies and they will be shredded due to the confidential nature of the information contained on the clearances.

Are there any other requirements?

If a volunteer is arrested for or convicted of an offense that would constitute grounds for denying participation in a program, activity or service, or is named as a perpetrator in a founded or indicated report, the volunteer must provide the administrator or their designee with written notice not later than 72 hours after the arrest, conviction or notification that the person has been listed as a perpetrator in the statewide database.

A volunteer who willfully fails to disclose information as required above commits a misdemeanor of the third degree and shall be subject to discipline up to and including termination or denial of a volunteer position.

What is the provisional clearance requirement for volunteers?

Individuals who reside in another state or country may serve as a volunteer for no more than 30 days as long as they provide clearances from their state or country of residence. If the individual will be volunteering for more than 30 days, they must obtain clearances as outlined above under "Which clearances are needed." Volunteers who reside in Pennsylvania do not have a provisional period and must obtain clearances as outlined above under "Which clearances are needed."

Is the person responsible for acceptance of volunteers required to keep a copy of my clearances?

Yes, pursuant to § 6344 (b.1), the employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for employment decisions or acceptance of the individual to serve in any capacity requiring clearances, shall maintain copies of the required information and require the individual to produce the original documents prior to employment or acceptance to serve in any such capacity, except provisional employees for limited periods as described in § 6344.2 (f) and outlined above. An employer, administrator, supervisor or other person responsible for selection of volunteers that intentionally fails to require an applicant to submit the required clearance before the applicant's hiring commits a misdemeanor of the third degree. Agencies are reminded that the Child Abuse clearance information is confidential and may not be released to other individuals.

Can an agency or organization institute additional standards?

Yes, nothing prohibits an organization from requiring additional information as part of the clearance process.