**Nathan Deal, Governor**                                    **Clyde L. Reese, III, Esq., Commissioner**

Georgia Department of Human Services • Family & Children Services • Ron Scroggy, Acting, Director
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**DHS**
Georgia Department
of Human Services

## Memorandum

**To:**      State /Tribal Child Welfare Departments, Child Placing Agencies, Child Caring Institutions and Individuals Pursuing Private Adoptions

**From:**    Katherine Herren, Acting Deputy Director
             Division of Family and Children Services

**Date:**    April 16, 2012

**Re:**      Criminal Records and Child Protective Services History Requests

The purpose of this memo is to provide guidance regarding the processing of criminal records checks (CRC), child protective services (CPS) history on prospective foster and adoptive parents and CPS screening of employees who perform services under a contract with DHS.

Included under the umbrella of the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) are the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) and the Office of the Inspector General (OIG). DFCS is responsible for child protective services (CPS) history checks whereas OIG manages criminal records checks.

The OIG is authorized to provide fingerprint based criminal history checks and fitness determinations for prospective foster or adoptive parents of DHS Licensed Child Placing Agencies if the prospective child to be placed is in the custody of DFCS. The OIG is also authorized to provide fingerprint based criminal records checks for DFCS or other state/tribal child welfare agency's foster or adoptive parents residing in the state of Georgia for active Interstate Compact for the Placement of Children (ICPC) cases if the prospective child to be placed is in the custody of GA DFCS or another state/tribal child welfare department.

Georgia DFCS does not have a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry and therefore cannot process requests under the Adam Walsh Act. Additionally, DFCS is not authorized to screen prospective foster or adoptive parents through its CPS records if the prospective child to be placed is not in the temporary or permanent custody of DFCS or another state / tribal child welfare department. The single exception is if an adoption petition has been filed with a Superior Court. In that situation, DFCS may share CPS information with an investigator appointed by the court to investigate the pending petition.

Finally, DFCS is not legally authorized to screen a contractor's employees for CPS history.

Attached are the forms to use to request criminal records checks or child protective services history. If you have any questions or need further assistance, please contact the appropriate contact as indicated on the chart attached.

cc.  Regional / County Directors
     DHS State Office Staff

### Georgia Department of Human Services
### Criminal Records Checks and Child Protective Services Screening Grid

|  | Child **IS** in the temporary or permanent custody of Georgia DFCS or another state child welfare department | Child is **NOT** in the temporary or permanent custody of Georgia DFCS or another state child welfare department | Child is **NOT** in the permanent custody of Georgia DFCS or another state child welfare department **BUT** the petition to **finalize** the adoption has been filed. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Criminal Records Checks (CRC) | The fingerprint based check will be conducted by the DHS, Office of Inspector General (OIG), Live Scan Section. The process is described at the OIG website accessible at www.dhr.state.ga.us Go to "About Us": Divisions/Offices, Offices and Office of Inspector General. | The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is not authorized to provide criminal record checks unless court ordered and the court's ORI number is provided. | The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is not authorized to provide criminal record checks unless court ordered and the court's ORI number is provided. |
| Child Protective Services History (CPS) | The CPS screen will be conducted by DFCS. The agency must submit the request using the CPS History Request Form. | DFCS is not authorized to complete the CPS screen. | The CPS screen will be conducted by DFCS and sent directly to an investigator appointed by the court. |
| Adam Walsh Act (AWA) | DFCS does not maintain a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry and thus cannot do an AWA screening. . | DFCS does not maintain a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry and thus cannot do an AWA screening. | DFCS does not maintain a Child Abuse and Neglect Central Registry and thus cannot do an AWA screening. |
|  |  |  |  |
| CPS History of CPA / CCI Employees | DFCS is not authorized to screen CPA or CCI employees for CPS history. | | |

| Georgia DHS Contact Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| In-State Agency Requests for CPS History | Katrina Bryant, DFCS, Office of Provider Management | cpsscreening@dhr.state.ga.us 404-463-5498 | |
| Out-of-State Agency and Individuals with Adoption Finalization Pending CPS History Requests | Yvonne Davenport DFCS, Constituent Services | customer_services_dfcs@dhr.state.ga.us 404-651-9361 | |
| Georgia DHS Licensed Child Placing Agencies and Child Caring Institutions Criminal Records Checks Requests | Denise Matthews DHS, Office of the Inspector General | dmmatthews@dhr.state.ga.us 404-463-1883 | |
| Georgia foster and adoptive parent fingerprinting | DHS, Office of the Inspector General Live Scan Section. | cwwilson@dhr.state.ga.us 404-463-1167 | |

**DHS Procedures for using GAPS**

The Georgia Bureau of Investigation has awarded Cogent Systems the contract to provide electronic fingerprint submission services to applicants in the State of Georgia. The Department of Human Services Regulatory Child Care licensees may utilize the new services by enrolling with Cogent Systems for the Georgia Applicant Processing Services (GAPS) for applicants that DHS provides the fitness determination.

The following are guidelines to follow in order to use the Georgia Applicant Processing Services (GAPS).

**Enrollment Process**

All Georgia Agencies interested in using the GAPS service for applicant background checks must enroll online at www.ga.cogentid.com or over the phone at 1-888-439-2512 Monday thru Friday, 8AM to 6PM EST, prior to using GAPS.

Enrollment is completed in two steps.

- **Step 1 -** The agency must complete the GBI agreement. This agreement can be found by clicking the Agency Enrollment link. The agency must complete the form which is the last page of the agreement and **mail** it to GBI at the address shown. The agency must have an ORI or OAC number which should be entered in the ORI/OAC field on the form. **If your agency does not have an ORI or OAC, leave the field blank. When GBI receives the form an ORI or OAC will be affixed to the form and the form will be returned to the agency. The agency must wait until the form is returned by GBI with an ORI or OAC number before going to the next step**. If your agency already has an ORI or OAC you may continue to the next step after mailing the completed form to GBI.

- **Step 2 -** The agency must complete the GAPS on-line enrollment form which is Step 2 on the Agency Enrollment screen. Once you complete the information on the on-line screen, click 'Save'. You must PRINT the form that is displayed, and then have your agency head to SIGN the form. The original form with the signature must be sent to Cogent Systems at the Dublin Ohio address shown on Step 2 on the Agency Enrollment screen. For expedited enrollment you may fax a copy to Cogent Systems at 614-718-9694, but the original signed copy must be mailed to Cogent Systems within seven (7) days.

- **Step 3 –** You should receive an email confirmation from Cogent Systems within 10 business days. The email confirmation will have any necessary Usernames and Passwords based on what your agency selected for enrollment type during the registration **You can not continue to the next step until you receive the email confirmation from Cogent Systems.**

- **Step 4 –** Once you receive email confirmation form Cogent Systems your enrollment process is completed. You can now begin to register applicants by clicking on Single Registration or Multiple Registration which is found on the main GAPS website page. (**DHS is requiring that all contractors register the applicants rather than the applicants registering themselves).**

    All of the fields on the registration screen that have a '**red (\*)** must be completed. Near the end of the registration screen you will see '**Transaction Information'.** You must click on the drop box next to **Reason** and select the appropriate reason for the applicant to be fingerprinted (refer to **DHS Reasons Fingerprinted** below for guidance**). An example of this portion of the screen can be found on page 3.**

    o You must click on the drop box next to **Payment** and select the appropriate payment option. If the applicant is paying, select credit card or money order. If your agency is paying and you enrolled as Agency Pay Only or Agency Pay and View Results, you should select Agency from the drop box. A field for Agency Code and Agency Password will appear if this option is selected. You should enter the Agency Code and Agency Password provided by Cogent Systems in the email confirmation (Ex: R081PT0908, Password— P081PT0908)

- You must enter your ORI or OAC in the field **ORI/OAC**.  You should enter your agency's Verification Code in the **Verification field**. This code can also be found in the email confirmation.

- You must click the box '**Does another agency make the fitness determination?** '**Choose Agency'** will appear, click the drop box, then select **DHS**. In the box next to "**If yes, enter determining agency's ORI,** you should enter **GA920280Z.**

- You should click **Next** at the bottom of the page, on the next screen, if all of the information that displays is correct, click **Next.**  At the end of the registration a **Registration ID** number will be given.  The **Registration ID** number should be given to the applicant to provide to the operator at the nearest GAPS Print Location.

- **NOTE:**  Some of you may have been using **GA920290Z** on the hard copy cards; DHS is requiring everyone to use the **GA920280Z** when using GAPS.

**DHS Makes The Fitness Determination For Your Agency**

**NOTE:**   The search results should be available to DHS to retrieve from the GAPS website within 48 hours after the applicant is fingerprinted at the GAPS Print Location. This process does not mandate the amount of time it will take for DHS to send your agency a determination clearance letter.  You may contact DHS to verify the results have been received**. Note: If you are a Residential Child Caring Institution (RCC) or Child Placing Agency (CPA), you must still submit your Office of Residential Child Care notarized record check applications to DHS before a determination clearance letter is sent to your agency.**   If you do not receive the determination clearance letter within seven (7) business days you must contact DHS at 404-463-7801 or 404-463-1883.

DHS Office of Inspector General
Attn: Background Investigations Unit
Two Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 30.286
Atlanta, GA 30303-3142

**DHS REASONS FINGERPRINTED GUIDELINES**:

- **Select the appropriate reason code below from the drop down menu.**

- **DHS Residential Child Care Institutions (RCC), (RCC)  or Child Placing Agencies (CPA) The owner of a CCI or CPA Facility Reason Fingerprinted Code to use is: (DHS-Licensing Child Welfare Agency (Licensee) 49-2-14.1 #3**

- **DHS Residential Child Care Institutions (RCC), (CCI) or Child Placing Agencies (CPA) Employees of a CCI or CPA. Reason Fingerprinted Code to use is: DHS Licensing Child Care Center (Director/Employees) and DHS Foster Care Placement (49-5-64)**

**Remember to check the box: THE DHS is the agency who makes the fitness determination**

**THE DHS Unique ORI number to use is GA920280Z**

**EXAMPLE** of bottom portion of registration screen:

### Transaction Information

Reason
DHS-Licensing Child Care
Center (Director/Employees). *
(EXAMPLE)

Payment
| Agency ▾ | *

ORI/OAC
| GAP12345 | * Use the agencies
assigned OAC number. (EXAMPLE)

Verification Code
| P123456 | (case sensitive)*
(EXAMPLE)

Agency Code
(Mandatory if Payment
is Agency)
| R081PT9099 | (EXAMPLE)

Agency Password
(Mandatory if Payment
is Agency)
| |

**Does another agency
make the fitness
determination?**
☑

Choose Agency :
| DHS ▾ | *

If yes, enter
determining agency's
ORI :
| GA920280Z | * RCC Facilities must enter
the DHS ORI GA920280Z. (EXAMPLE)

Note: Highlighted fields are required and marked by a *.

| Next | | Reset |