

RCW 43.20A.710 Investigation of conviction records or pending charges of state employees and individual providers. (1) The secretary shall investigate the conviction records, pending charges and disciplinary board final decisions of:

(a) Any current employee or applicant seeking or being considered for any position with the department who will or may have unsupervised access to children, vulnerable adults, or individuals with mental illness or developmental disabilities. This includes, but is not limited to, positions conducting comprehensive assessments, financial eligibility determinations, licensing and certification activities, investigations, surveys, or case management; or for state positions otherwise required by federal law to meet employment standards;

(b) Individual providers as defined in RCW 74.39A.240 and providers who are paid by home care agencies to provide in-home services involving unsupervised access to persons with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities or mental illness, or to vulnerable adults as defined in chapter 74.34 RCW, including but not limited to services provided under chapter 74.39 or 74.39A RCW; and

(c) Individuals or businesses or organizations for the care, supervision, case management, or treatment of children, persons with developmental disabilities, or vulnerable adults, including but not limited to services contracted for under chapter 18.20, 70.127, 70.128, 72.36, or 74.39A RCW or Title 71A RCW.

(2) The secretary shall require a fingerprint-based background check through both the Washington state patrol and the federal bureau of investigation as provided in RCW 43.43.837. Unless otherwise authorized by law, the secretary shall use the information solely for the purpose of determining the character, suitability, and competence of the applicant.

(3) Except as provided in subsection (4) of this section, an individual provider or home care agency provider who has resided in the state less than three years before applying for employment involving unsupervised access to a vulnerable adult as defined in chapter 74.34 RCW must be fingerprinted for the purpose of investigating conviction records through both the Washington state patrol and the federal bureau of investigation. This subsection applies only with respect to the provision of in-home services funded by medicaid personal care under RCW 74.09.520, community options program entry system waiver services under RCW 74.39A.030, or chore services under RCW 74.39A.110. However, this subsection does not supersede RCW 74.15.030(2).

(4) Long-term care workers, as defined in RCW 74.39A.009, who are hired after January 7, 2012, are subject to background checks under RCW 74.39A.056, except that the department may require a background check at any time under RCW 43.43.837. For the purposes of this subsection, "background check" includes, but is not limited to, a fingerprint check submitted for the purpose of investigating conviction records through both the Washington state patrol and the federal bureau of investigation.

(5) An individual provider or home care agency provider hired to provide in-home care for and having unsupervised access to a vulnerable adult as defined in chapter 74.34 RCW must have no conviction for a disqualifying crime under RCW 43.43.830 and 43.43.842. An individual or home care agency provider must also have no conviction for a crime relating to drugs as defined in RCW 43.43.830. This subsection applies only with respect to the provision of in-home services funded by medicaid personal care under RCW

74.09.520, community options program entry system waiver services under RCW 74.39A.030, or chore services under RCW 74.39A.110.

(6) The secretary shall provide the results of the state background check on long-term care workers, including individual providers, to the persons hiring them or to their legal guardians, if any, for their determination of the character, suitability, and competence of the applicants. If the person elects to hire or retain an individual provider after receiving notice from the department that the applicant has a conviction for an offense that would disqualify the applicant from having unsupervised access to persons with physical, mental, or developmental disabilities or mental illness, or to vulnerable adults as defined in chapter 74.34 RCW, then the secretary shall deny payment for any subsequent services rendered by the disqualified individual provider.

(7) Criminal justice agencies shall provide the secretary such information as they may have and that the secretary may require for such purpose.

(8) Any person whose criminal history would otherwise disqualify the person under this section or RCW 43.43.842, from a position which will or may have unsupervised access to children, vulnerable adults, or persons with mental illness or developmental disabilities shall not be automatically disqualified if:

(a) The department of social and health services reviewed the person's otherwise disqualifying criminal history through the department of social and health services' background assessment review team process conducted in 2002 and determined that such person could remain in a position covered by this section;

(b) The conviction is no longer automatically disqualifying pursuant to RCW 43.20A.715;

(c) The applicant has received a certificate of restoration of opportunity for the convictions pursuant to RCW 9.97.020, and the department of social and health services has not disqualified the applicant based on character, competence, and suitability review; or

(d) The conviction or disposition has been the subject of a pardon, annulment, or other equivalent procedure.

(9) The department may not consider any founded finding of physical abuse or negligent treatment or maltreatment of a child made pursuant to chapter 26.44 RCW that is accompanied by a certificate of parental improvement or dependency as a result of a finding of abuse or neglect pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW that is accompanied by a certificate of parental improvement when evaluating an applicant or employee's character, competency, and suitability pursuant to any background check authorized or required by this chapter, RCW 74.39A.056 or 43.43.832, or any of the rules adopted thereunder. [2021 c 219 § 4; 2020 c 270 § 10; 2014 c 88 § 2; 2012 c 164 § 505; 2011 1st sp.s. c 31 § 16; 2011 c 253 § 1; 2009 c 580 § 5; 2001 c 296 § 5; 2000 c 87 § 2; 1999 c 336 § 7; 1997 c 392 § 525; 1993 c 210 § 1; 1989 c 334 § 13; 1986 c 269 § 1.]

Rules—Conflict with federal requirements—2021 c 219: See notes following RCW 43.20A.715.

Effective date—2020 c 270: See note following RCW 74.13.720.

Finding—Intent—Rules—Effective date—2012 c 164: See notes following RCW 18.88B.010.

Intent—2001 c 296: See note following RCW 9.96A.060.

Finding—Intent—1999 c 336: See note following RCW 74.39.007.

Short title—Findings—Construction—Conflict with federal requirements—Part headings and captions not law—1997 c 392: See notes following RCW 74.39A.009.

Prospective application—1993 c 210: "This act applies prospectively except individuals who currently employ individual providers paid by the state may be given the option to request a state background check during reassessment for services." [1993 c 210 § 2.]

Children or vulnerable adults: RCW 43.43.830 through 43.43.842.

Employees with unsupervised access to children—Rules for background investigation: RCW 41.06.475.

State hospitals: RCW 72.23.035.