

Saving **Time** with Background Checks

Background checks used to take six months, until the Family Care Safety Registry figured out how to do them in zero to 18 days.

If you need a background check on an employee, the Family Care Safety Registry can do it in roughly zero to 18 days. That's about six months faster than what it used to take.

The registry has developed a new, online system that can deliver electronic background screening results much faster to child care centers, long-term care facilities and providers who request them.

"We are rather proud of that," says Melanie Madore, chief of the registry.

The quick turnaround has actually been years in the making. Since 2007, Madore says the registry has been improving performance, one step at a time. "We knew we had a backlog problem, and we knew we had to increase performance."

A Bit of Background on Background Checks

Many factors contributed to the backlog. Demand for background checks spiraled as five registry employees were laid off and others took long-term leave. Those who remained had to pick up extra duties and use a cumbersome system to perform background screenings.

"The system was especially challenging if caregivers had several names or nicknames, which is often the case," Madore says. "For instance, in the case of a caregiver named 'Lila (Lil for short) Jones-Cooper,' our employees had to do four different background screenings. First they had to check for 'Lila Jones'; then for 'Lila Cooper'; third for 'Lil Jones'; and finally for 'Lil Cooper.' Then they had to merge those four different screenings into one. The process was extremely time consuming."

Now with the registry's Web-based electronic system, a computer automatically checks for a caregiver's multiple names.

"That saves our employees an incredible amount of time," Madore says.

To save even more time, the registry cut three hours daily from the call center.



Jennifer Taube (l), assistant chief of the Family Care Safety Registry, and Kay Robinson (r), health program representative II, discuss a background check.

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The Family Care Registry staff

“At first, there was almost a collective gasp when we cut hours,” says Madore. “But we wanted to provide our staff more protected time to process the paper background screening requests and applications we still receive.” The registry call center is open from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. But staffers actually work from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. They use the extra hours in the morning and afternoon to process requests.

Background screening requests continue to rise. Last year, requests jumped 10 percent—to 305,196 from 277,557 in 2010. And the requests are expected to climb another 10 percent this year.

Madore says the demand will continue to soar because the population is aging and needs more care.

The registry now receives 46 percent of background screening requests online. That figure is up from 23 percent in 2010. Online requests reduce staff time and the paper backlog.

“That is good news for us,” says Madore.