

# Background screening

Human Services 62A-2-120 HB468



*Better criteria and language for screenings of those with lived experience in substance use and mental health adult-only programs. Strengthen the screenings and clarify the authority for foster parents, youth congregate care, and adoption applicants, clean up processes, and clarify interpretation.*

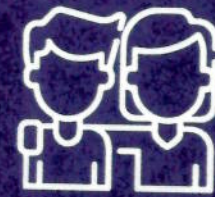
## Summary

The Office of Background Processing (OBP) needs to make more separations for background screening clearances rather than having one clearance for all the different Human Services licensees and programs. Specifically, the clearances were a hindrance to peer supports who use their lived experience in recovery from mental illness or substance use disorder to deliver services promoting recovery and resiliency. The proposed changes to subsection (6) will help us better understand the circumstances of the criminal and neglect history for a defined length of time for a person or a department contractor who provides services in an adults-only substance use disorder program.

In conjunction with this, subsection (13) was bolstered since it applies to those applying to be foster parents, adoptive parents, or employed at a congregate care youth facility. OBP wants to make sure we are reviewing the circumstances of criminal and neglect history in these instances without timeframes.

With the consolidation of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) duplicate processes were identified. Any employees, volunteers, or contracted employees of DHHS operational units have been removed from this statute.

- ✓ Better criteria for peer support working in substance use and mental health adult-only programs.
- ✓ Changes authority to OBP for access and review of criminal and non criminal records.
- ✓ Background screenings on DCFS or JJYS employees, volunteers, or contracted employees do not fall under this statute.



## Intent

Background screening is an important aspect of helping to create a safe environment for vulnerable populations. As part of the Department of Health and Human Services, we also support change and rehabilitation in offenders.

These changes will help us provide second chances and celebrate the success of rehabilitation, while also striking the balance of protecting vulnerable populations when offenses pose too great a risk for a person to be entrusted with their 24/7 care.