



*A program of Jewish Family Service
of Greater Harrisburg, Inc.*

Background Check Requirements for Adoptive & Resource Family Profiles/Home Studies

Pennsylvania Child Protective Service law requires that many members of your household complete background checks prior to approval as an adoptive resource. The following list is provided to help you get started on these requests.

Pennsylvania Child Abuse Clearances:

Each household member over 18 years old, including any adult children who are in the home for more than thirty (30) days each year must complete a Pennsylvania ChildLine clearance. The cost is \$10 for each clearance. There are two ways to get this form:

- Your adoption coordinator will provide the form to you. Mail one in for each person requesting clearance, with a \$10 money order to the address on the form. You may send multiple forms in the same envelope with a money order for all requests.
- You can also download the form to print and mail in. To find the form, go to www.dpw.state.pa.us, click on "Find a Form" or "Most Downloaded Forms." Click on "Child Abuse History Clearance Form," for instructions, and the form (CY-113) to mail in.
- You can access the online form at www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis. This is an electronic self-service portal which allows applicants to pay by credit card online, view, and print their results.

Child Abuse Clearances from Other States

If anyone in the household has lived outside of Pennsylvania in the past five (5) years (since age 18 if you are adopting internationally), then they must obtain a child abuse clearance from that state also.

There are some important steps to this process:

1. Ask the adoption coordinator for a list of child abuse clearances for other states.
2. Complete the form for a child abuse check in that state, and
3. Mail the completed form, a cover letter, and any required fees to The Department of Public Welfare at DPW, P.O. Box 8170, Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170. A sample cover letter is offered below. The Department of Public Welfare will obtain the other state's results and interpret them based on Pennsylvania law, and the results will be mailed to you.
4. **Your home study will not be approved until we get a letter from DPW saying they have cleared the other state's clearance.**

To find another state's child abuse form and process, go to:

http://www.hunter.cuny.edu/socwork/nrcfcpp/downloads/policy-issues/State_Child_Abuse_Registries.pdf

Sample Cover Letter for other state child abuse clearance

Department of Public Welfare
P.O. Box 8170
Harrisburg, PA 17105-8170

To whom it may concern;

I am applying to adopt a child. I have lived in Virginia and North Carolina in the past few years, and need to obtain child abuse clearances for these states. I am enclosing the completed forms for each state, along with a money order for North Carolina, per their instructions. Please obtain these clearances for each state and verify them for me.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or concerns about this request. I may be reached at (717) XXX-XXXX or you may contact my JFS adoption caseworker at (717) 233-1681.

Child Abuse clearances from Other Countries

IF you have lived abroad in the past five years, (since age 18 if adopting internationally) you must obtain a letter from the United States Embassy in that country. They need to provide information about both criminal and child abuse conduct by you during your time in that country.

For a list of embassy's go to www.usembassy.gov

Sample letter for embassy clearance from a foreign country:

United States Embassy,
Paris, France

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Heddy LaMar, and my date of birth is 4/25/1959. I lived in France from June 2005 until April 2007. My address was 5 Rue de Croissant, Paris, France. I am in the process of adopting a child and need verification of my criminal and child abuse activities in France during the period I lived there. If you need further information feel free to contact me at 2551 Pine Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17111. Thank you for your time.

Pennsylvania State Police Criminal Clearances

Each household member over 18 years of age, including adult children who are in the home for more than thirty (30) days each year, must complete a request for Pennsylvania State Police Background Check. The cost is \$10 for each clearance. You have two choices to obtain this clearance:

- Mail the form and a money order to cover each request to the state police
- Go on-line to <http://epatch.state.pa.us/Home.jsp>, which allows you to download the clearance and pay by credit card or request the clearance on-line. You can then print the clearance by clicking on the control number.

FBI Fingerprint clearance.

Each adult over 18 years of age, including adult children who are in the home for more than thirty (30) days each year, must complete an electronic fingerprint card at a COGENT site near them. The instructions for pre-registration by phone or on line are attached, along with a list of area COGENT sites. The cost is \$25.75 per person. The electronic fingerprints are sent to the State Police to be run and the results are forwarded to the Department of Public Welfare, who interprets them. **The letter they issue is required for approval to adopt.**

If you are adopting internationally, the COGENT fingerprints must be done in addition to fingerprint cards that is submitted to USCIS.

INSTRUCTIONS to complete Cogent fingerprints

- 1) **Register:** The applicant must first register with Cogent by calling 1-888-439-2486 or go through the website, www.pa.cogentid.com , Click on "DHS" to register and pay electronically.
- 2) **Payment:** The applicant will pay a \$25.75 fee for the fingerprint service and to secure their criminal history record. No cash transactions or personal checks are allowed. Applicants can make their payment online using a debit or credit card or can pay using a money order or business check onsite when they have their fingerprinting completed. Applicants will not be permitted to have fingerprinting scanned without fully completing the registration process.
- 3) **Go to fingerprint site:** The applicant will then proceed to a fingerprint site that is convenient for them. Locations and hours for these sites can be found on the website by selecting *Print Locations and Hours* under *Print Site Locations*.
- 4) **Get fingerprinted:** The applicant will need to present an approved type of photo identification. Approved types of identification include a current, valid and unexpired picture identification document. As a primary form of picture identification, a state-issued driver's license must be presented by an applicant when being fingerprinted. Other forms of Identification are listed on the website.
- 5) **Wait for results:** After the process is complete, the applicant's scanned fingerprints will be electronically transmitted to the Pennsylvania State Police, who in turn submit the fingerprints and demographic information to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The Department of Public Welfare will receive the completed federal criminal history record check from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. ChildLine will then forward a letter with the results to the applicant. If the applicant does not receive the Criminal History Record from DPW within three weeks after being fingerprinted, they should call (717) 783-6211.
- 6) **Give letter to your Adoption Coordinator:** The letter is an official record and needs to be given to your adoption/foster care coordinator for your file. You cannot receive approval as either a foster parent or adoptive parent without this document.

Where do I go to get my fingerprints taken?


The following are local sites where you go to get your fingerprints taken electronically. Remember that you must register with Cogent Systems, either by phone or on line, before you go to the site. Also, new sites are to be added, so you may want to check the website map to see if there is one nearer you.

Dauphin and Cumberland County:


- UPS Store # 0698, 4900 Carlisle Pike, Mechanicsburg, PA 17050 (717-731-0555). This center is open for walk in Monday thru Friday 9am – 5:30 pm and Saturday from 9am – 1:30 pm.
- UPS Store, 950 Walnut Bottom Road, Carlisle. This store is open Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-5 p.m. & Saturday 9 a.m.-1:30 p.m.
- Family Financial Centers, 2721 Agate St. Harrisburg, PA 17110. (717)233-5000. The store is open Monday-Friday 9-5 and Saturday 10-1.

Lancaster County:


- UPS Store #3413, Stone Mill Plaza, 1390 Columbia Avenue, Lancaster (717-299-9269). This site is open Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. and Saturday 9:00 a.m.-3 p.m.
- The UPS Store #3230, 108F N Reading Road (Cloister Shopping Center), Ephrata. This site is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-6 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

 **Adams County:** Lincoln Intermediate Unit 12, 65 Billerbeck Street, New Oxford (717-624-4616). This site is open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.




 **York County:** York C. School of Technology, 2179 S. Queen St. York 717-718-5800. This site is open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

- Family Child Resources, Inc. 39995 East Market St., York, This site is open Monday-Friday 9am-pm.

 **Franklin County** The intermediate unit also has sites at the Franklin Learning Center 2397 Loop Road, Chambersburg, PA, (717-263-2700). This site is open Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.

 **Berks County:** Mail N Ship 4 U, 1812 State Hill Rd, Wyomissing. (610-376-3805). This site is open, Monday–Friday 9:00a.m. - 6:00p.m., and Saturday 10:00a.m.- 3:00p.m.

- Berks County Intermediate Unit, 1111 Commons Boulevard, Muhlenberg Township, Reading. This site is open Monday-Friday 8 a.m.-4 p.m. but appointments are preferred.

 **Lebanon County:** DB Fisher Tour and Travel, 1715 Grace Ave., Lebanon. This site is open Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 10:00a.m.-12:00p.m. and 1:00p.m.-4:00p.m.

Schuylkill County:

- Schuylkill Intermediate Unit 29, Education Center for Exceptional Children Center, 17 Maple Ave. MarLin. This site is opened Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m. –3:00 p.m.
- Life Long Learning Center, 438 Schuylkill Mall, Frackville, (570-544-9131). This site is opened Monday-Friday 8:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.