National Background Check Program
State of Michigan

Project Abstract

The Michigan Workforce Background Check program (MWBC) was created in response to growing concerns about the safety of elderly persons and other adults receiving services in long term care facilities and home health agencies. In 2005, Michigan was one of seven states that received funding from the Department of Health and Human Services, through the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), to design and implement an economical, effective and efficient program of background checks for direct care workers. Michigan's Department of Community Health partnered with Michigan State University to solicit broad support for the expansion of background check requirements and the development of a Web-based system for conducting background checks from health care providers, advocacy groups and recipients of long term care services, and commitment from the Michigan State Police, Department of Community Health, Department of Information Technology, and Department of Human Services to implement an innovative system of communication between the state agencies and employers. Since April 1, 2006 approximately 500,000 prospective and existing employees have submitted fingerprints. As of October 19, 2012, 17,597 individuals have been disqualified from employment.

The current solicitation, the National Background Check Demonstration Project (NBCP), seeks to build on the successes of the pilot program by providing funding to pilot states to enhance existing programs and expand the scope of background check requirements to include personal care workers and agencies. The Michigan team has identified four projects that meet the objectives of the NBCP that will evolve the MWBC:

1) Extend the protections of background checks to recipients of personal care services by conducting a pilot program of background checks using the standards and procedures outlined in the present legislation to inform a statewide expansion;
2) Prepare for the FBI rap back program by developing and/or upgrading communication protocols for receipt of FBI records, validating and enrolling legacy records, to include a pilot of the FBI rap back when possible;
3) Create a national abuser list from State Nurse Aide Registries and integrate the search process; and
4) Convene a legislative advisory committee comprised of representatives from the long term care community (providers, advocacy groups, recipients of long term care and state agencies) to present and review system data and research to determine the feasibility of a legislative effort to include a waiver process to supplement the current appeal process.

The Michigan program is positioned for success in participating in the NBCP. The state of the art online system provides the infrastructure that enables processes for continuous validation and verification of records for state and federal rap back and is equipped to provide real-time and cumulative reports on system activity. In addition, the Michigan team has a proven record of innovation and successful implementation of an efficient and effective processes and continuous improvement. Many of the key personnel responsible for the Michigan's successful pilot program have been actively involved in post-pilot development and enhancement to the system and improving processes, and the collaborations among state agencies and stakeholders are productive and remain intact.