



## **FINGERPRINTING & CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECKS**



### **Pre-Employment Investigations**

#### ***Why Do I Need To Be Fingerprinted?***

Many jobs today require potential employees to have a "clean background" before they can be hired.

Child Care Workers, Teachers, Taxi Drivers, Fire Fighters, Security Guards, Special Police Officers, etc., are just some of the positions that require an applicant to submit to a Background Check, in order that the potential employer can verify that the applicant meets certain requirements in filling a vacant position.

The purpose of the Background Check is to ensure that applicants, employees and designated service providers do not have a disqualifying criminal or social services background that would prohibit their employment with Baltimore County Public Schools. Maryland has established its own laws requiring people to undergo background checks before being employed by an agency where any access to children may occur, or volunteering their services in schools, or in other capacities in which unsupervised access to children may occur.

In the State of Maryland, all law enforcement agencies submit arrest information to two agencies that maintain data banks of all criminal history information; the FBI in Washington, DC, and The Maryland Criminal Justice Information System, also known as CJIS, located in Pikesville, Maryland. CJIS is a division of the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services.

Information from both agencies is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, to police departments and the court system for the purposes of criminal investigation and sentencing only. The computers that access this information in police stations and courthouses cannot be used to obtain criminal history information for background checks, unless the applicant is applying for a position with a criminal justice agency. (Police Department, Corrections, Court System, etc.)

### *So Why Do I Need To Be Fingerprinted .....*

When a person is arrested in most states, he or she is usually taken to a police station and processed, before being taken before a magistrate or other judicial officer for a bail bond review. The term "processing" simply means having one's fingerprints and photographs taken. The fingerprint card itself is important because it not only records the arrested person's fingerprints in ink, but also contains the facts surrounding the arrest. It is this information that is stored in computers at both the FBI and CJIS.

Have you ever heard the expression that "*No two people have the same fingerprints?*" It's true, and since it is conceivable that individuals may lie about their name, address or date of birth to conceal a criminal past, they will not be able to lie about their fingerprints! (*And this is why prospective employees have to be fingerprinted.*)

In order to obtain a Criminal History Check from CJIS and the FBI, (CJIS makes the request to both agencies) the applicant must fill out a "CJIS Application for Criminal History Report," which is actually a large orange-colored fingerprint card. (Police agencies often refer to this application as the "orange card.") In addition, Baltimore County Public Schools also submits requests to the FBI to do a national background check. The smaller blue-colored fingerprint card (FBI FD-258), also referred to as the blue card, must be filled out during this portion of the application process.

## What is the Fingerprinting Process?

At the time of application, BCPS advises the applicant of background check requirements prescribed under Maryland Law and follow-up procedures



Applicant completes background check form and is fingerprinted on, or before the first day of employment.

In the case of volunteers, unpaid coaches and similar personnel, the background check process will commence before any access to students is granted



The background check is sent to the Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS), the FBI, and a request may also be made through a consumer reporting agency for information



Results are reported, and if no disqualifying information is received, the Applicant is issued a Fingerprint Identification Card



The background check information remains active as long as the applicant remains employed by BCPS (and no other school district) as long as there is no break in service greater than 365 days



If the applicant is transferring from another school district within the State of Maryland AND the applicant was previously screened within 180 days of their arrival at the BCPS Fingerprinting Office, then the applicant may be eligible to apply for a transfer of their previously completed background check



BCPS administratively withdraws the applicant if background check reveals disqualifying information.

The applicant is notified of the findings and given the right to contest the findings and present additional facts

**For more information about the fingerprinting process, please see: Frequently Asked Questions**

***The following text is reproduced from a section of the CJIS / DPSCS Website:***

<http://www.dpscs.state.md.us/cjis/>

Criminal History:

Does Maryland have a sex offender registry?

Yes. The Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services and local law enforcement agencies are required to provide a list of certain types of sex offenders maintained by the state to any person who submits a written request. Residents cannot make individual requests to see if their neighbor, for example, is a sex offender. More information can be found on the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services' Crimes Against Children and Sexual Offender Registry Unit web site or by calling 410/764-5665.