



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

JOSH STEIN • Governor

DEVPUTTA SANGVAI • Secretary

LISA TUCKER CAULEY • Division Director, Human Services

August 21, 2025

**DEAR COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

**ATTENTION: DIRECTORS, CHILD WELFARE PROGRAM ADMINISTRATORS, PROGRAM MANAGERS, SUPERVISORS, SOCIAL WORKERS, AND CHILD PLACING AGENCIES**

**SUBJECT: FOSTER PARENT FINGERPRINTING PROCESS UPDATE**

**REQUIRED ACTION:** ☐ Information Only ☒ Time Sensitive ☒ Action Required

This letter serves as an update to DCDL [CWS-86-2024](#) issued November 15, 2024, regarding the foster parent fingerprinting process. In June 2025, House Bill 576 amended N.C.G.S. 131D-10.3A(f) to allow a prospective foster parent(s) to receive a copy of their criminal background history for the purpose of reviewing or challenging the accuracy of the criminal background history.

**Effective immediately**, the foster parent fingerprinting process is revised to allow the Department of Child Development and Early Education (DCDEE) to send the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) fingerprint results directly to the prospective foster parent(s). The amendment streamlines the process by eliminating the need for a prospective foster parent(s) who have criminal history to be re-fingerprinted. It will be the responsibility of the prospective foster parent(s) to provide their supervising agency with the SBI results.

The foster parent fingerprinting process is as follows with the changes to the process indicated in red:

1. The fingerprint process begins with securing consent from the applicant to conduct the criminal records check based upon fingerprints. The Notice to Foster Home of Mandatory Criminal History Check (DSS-5280), must be read and signed by the applicant and by any other person aged 18 or older living in the home. This form gives the details of the criminal records search as well as what the person may do if the search reveals something with which the person disagrees. Each person must sign his or her own form. Secure consent from the applicant to conduct the criminal records check based on fingerprints.
2. Applicants and adult household members can be fingerprinted by the supervising agency by using the ink fingerprint cards or they can be electronically fingerprinted by an approved law enforcement agency. To complete the ink fingerprint cards, the supervising agency can obtain fingerprint cards and bubble sheets from: Applicants and adult household members may use ink fingerprint cards or be electronically fingerprinted by an approved law enforcement agency.  
The supervising agency may obtain fingerprint cards and bubble sheets from:

**NC Department of Health and Human Services  
Criminal Record Check Unit | DSS MSC 2201  
Raleigh, NC 27699-2201**

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LOCATION: 820 S. Boylan Avenue, McBryde Building, Raleigh, NC 27603

MAILING ADDRESS: 2401 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-2401

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3. The fingerprint card or electronic fingerprint form and a bubble sheet need to be completed for each applicant and adult household member. The supervising agency will mail one fingerprint card or electronic fingerprint form and the bubble sheet to the NC DHHS Criminal Record Check Unit address listed above.
4. DCDEE will process the documents then forward them to the SBI for the state check. If the fingerprints are of sufficient print quality, the SBI will process and forward them to the FBI for the national check. Criminal history is returned to the SBI then to the DCDEE.
5. Sometimes there are issues with insufficient print quality, which results in the fingerprint card or electronic submission and a letter being returned to the supervising agency informing them the prints are unclassifiable. The applicant will need to complete another set of fingerprints. If after the third attempt of completing fingerprints are returned, the DCDEE automatically resubmits to the SBI asking for "name search only".
6. **After reviewing the fingerprint checks, DCDEE sends the SBI criminal history results and a letter stating "no criminal history or criminal history found to each applicant and adult household member."**
7. Once the criminal histories are received by the licensing agency, the agency must review the criminal history to determine if the applicant had convictions that would prohibit the applicant from being a foster parent based on NCGS § 131D-10.3A. If the agency and applicant decide to proceed with the application, the agency must provide a written explanation for all convictions and a letter of support from the agency, signed by the director. The licensing agency will submit the DCDEE letter, **SBI criminal history**, the written explanation for each conviction, and the letter of support with the licensure application.
8. **A foster home application packet must be submitted within 180 days of the SBI criminal results.**
8. After the licensing authority receives and reviews the entire licensure packet, the applicant will receive a letter that indicates if the applicant meets or does not meet the criteria to be a foster parent. The licensing authority will provide a copy of the license of approved foster parents to the licensing agency. The licensing authority will not pre-staff criminal histories prior to the submission of a completed application.

Attached is an updated flowchart outlining the new process for reference. If an applicant misplaces or does not receive the SBI criminal record from DCEE, they will have 90 days from the processed date to request a duplicate copy. After 90 days, the results are no longer available and cannot be reissued. At that point, the applicant will need to be re-fingerprinted and submit a new application to obtain updated results. Agencies

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should ensure that applicants are informed of this requirement. For questions, please reach out to Foster Home Licensing Manager, Jenny Millsaps at [jenny.millsaps@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:jenny.millsaps@dhhs.nc.gov)

Sincerely,

*Kimaree Sanders*

Kimaree Sanders, MSW, MPA  
Section Chief for Regulatory and Licensing  
Division of Social Services, Child Welfare  
North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services

Cc: Lisa T. Cauley, Division Director, Human Services, Child, Family, and Adult Regional Support  
Adrian Daye, Deputy Director for Child Welfare Practice  
Donna Fayko, Deputy Director for County Operations  
Kathy Stone, Section Chief for Safety  
Peter West, Section Chief for County Operations  
Heather McAllister, Section Chief for Child and Family Services

Attachment: Foster Parent Fingerprint Process Flowchart

CWS-58-2025

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