

Online Clearance System Terms and Conditions

Purpose:

Section 424-a of the Social Services Law defines the entities who are permitted to inquire of the New York State Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) whether and individual is the confirmed subject of an indicated child abuse report maintained by the statewide central register of child abuse and maltreatment (“clearance request”).

The OCS is a web-based application that supports this mandate through the electronic submission of clearance requests by entitled organizations (“agencies”) to the Bureau of Clearances and Records (BCR) within OCFS.

Jurisdiction/Governing Law:

<http://public.leginfo.state.ny.us/>

Laws > Laws of New York > SOS (Social Services) > Article 6 Title 6 > 424-A

Scope:

The agency will submit all clearance requests to the BCR using the OCS. The BCR will return the results of all clearance requests to agencies using the OCS.

The OCS will also serve as a communication platform between agencies submitting a clearance request and the BCR. Any questions about an individual clearance request will be transmitted from the BCR to agency through the OCS.

Processing Fee:

There is a \$25 processing fee for each prospective employee clearance. Acceptable forms of payments are credit card, agency check, and bank or postal money order. Checks and money orders will be sent to:

New York State Office of Children and Family Services
52 Washington Street, South Building Room 204
Bureau of Financial Operations/Accounting and Revenue Collection
Rensselaer, NY 12144

No additional fees will be assessed for utilizing a credit card for payment. The credit card statement will reflect a charge from “New York State OCFS”.

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If an error is made during the data entry of a database check or the BCR has questions regarding a request, the BCR will return the request to the agency's OCS Queue. Returned requests will need to be reviewed and corrections will need to be made before re-submitting the request to the BCR for processing. If your agency fails to correct the error(s) after three attempts, the request may be removed. If this occurs, your agency will need to submit a new request and may need to pay an additional \$25 fee if clearing the individual under a fee-paying category.

Records Retention/Agency Responsibility:

Clearance results in the OCS will only be stored for six (6) months following the request completion date. Information regarding clearances submitted by your agency will be purged from OCS through an automated quarterly record retention program. All Database Checks that have been in a "completed" Status for six months or greater will be expunged. Completed status means that the BCR has completed the processing of the clearance including sending the electronic notification to the agency. If your agency is required to maintain its own copy of the clearance results, they will need to be saved to the agency computer system (not the OCS), or printed, by your agency prior to the purge.

Non-Disclosure Agreement:

The OCS can only be used in accordance with Section 424-a of the Social Services Law where an agency submits a clearance request pursuant to that statute.

Upon completion of the registration process, OCFS will create an account for the Agency Liaison designated on the "Online Clearance System Registration Form" (attached). The Agency Liaison will have responsibility for granting access to other agency workers who need access to the OCS. Access must only be granted on a "need to know" basis. Only when it is determined that an employee's job duties require access to the OCS should the employee be granted access.

The Agency Liaison is also responsible for terminating access when a worker leaves the agency or has a shift in job responsibility that no longer requires that they access the system.

Under no circumstances should individual user account and password information be shared among employees or with other individuals. OCFS may suspend or terminate access to the OCS in response to a breach of confidentiality and/or use of the OCS outside the scope of Section 424-a of the Social Services Law.

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Contact Details:

For technical assistance and support regarding the OCS, please contact the BCR at ocfs.sm.OCS.user.assistance@ocfs.ny.gov or 518-474-1567 between the hours of 9:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday.