Background Check Turnaround Times

Due to the pandemic, 2021 proved to be a tough year for the background screening industry. The last 12 months have brought on various new laws and other challenges. The team at Backgrounds Online worked tirelessly to complete reports in a timely manner and we're focused on how we can make things even better in the coming year.

COVID-19 Closures

The pandemic caused organizations throughout the country to shut down. Many have re-opened, thankfully, but these closures have made it difficult to perform criminal research at some courthouses and verify employment or degrees from businesses and educational facilities. Even organizations that only closed briefly are typically dealing with personnel shortages and more demand than they can handle.

Notable Court Delays

Michigan. Following a ruling by the Michigan Supreme Court, several courthouses in the state stopped allowing research using Date of Birth (DOB). Every court within the state was originally ordered to do the same prior to some changes to the ruling. Consumer Reporting Agencies (CRAs), like Backgrounds Online, rely on personal information to confirm identities when running background checks. We've supported efforts to change this ruling and are happy to see positive results. The order was delayed until April 2022 and Michigan legislators are working on a system that will allow us to conduct searches using DOBs.

Los Angeles And Beyond. The Riverside County Court was ordered to stop allowing online searches using an individual's personal data and several California courthouses have opted to do the same. CRAs generally use full name and DOBs at minimum to finalize criminal research and without these identifiers we've seen extensive delays in these locations. This has become such a problem that a few CRAs refuse to run reports in these areas. Backgrounds Online continues to operate throughout Los Angeles and work closely with our industry towards creating a solution.

Cook County, Illinois. Courthouse administrators in these courts have limited the number of researchers allowed inside at the same time due to COVID restrictions. In addition, Cook County courthouses have also reported a 30% increase in the requests they've received this year. Criminal research may take up to several weeks in this location until the court reopens to full capacity and works through their backlog of requests.

What Backgrounds Online Is Doing

Our team has persisted throughout these challenges and we've found new ways to obtain the records our clients need.

We:

• Partnered with a large network of professional researchers, including a service that sends workers to courthouses at night to greatly increase productivity.

• Gained access to more databases that provide accurate, reliable statewide data.

• Implemented new methods to communicate delays so you always know what to expect.

• Collaborated with the Professional Background Screening Association (PBSA) and other organizations to remediate these situations.

• Utilized our large, experienced in-house team to handle verifications quickly and efficiently.

What You Can Do

To help, you can:

• Request background checks as early as possible, especially if you need records from counties that have longer turnaround times.

• Use our applicant self-submittal feature which asks the people you screen to send their information directly to us - or provide as many details as possible when placing an order yourself so we may get started right away.

• Keep in mind that a delay doesn't necessarily mean an applicant has potentially adverse information. There are many reasons a report can take longer than expected.

• Watch for emails and other communications from us that inform you of delays and options on how to proceed.

Moving Forward Together

Despite these complications, our team remains dedicated to providing first-class service and products that help you build strong teams and maintain safe workplaces. We continue to be here for you Monday through Friday from 5am to 6pm PT.