

The Department of Early Learning (DEL) is required by law to conduct background checks of applicants for employment or volunteer work in any licensed child care facility.

People who need a background check may apply online or submit a paper application. Each applicant, whether using an online or paper application, must have an account in Washington's child care professional registry (MERIT). Cleared background checks are good for three years in Washington, and are "portable" (the individual may use their clearance to work in multiple child care settings).

The **name/date-of-birth background check** steps are:

- Applicant submits an online or paper application.
- Applicant's information submitted to DSHS for processing (includes criminal history check, inquiries into state court data system, sexual offender registry, and other state agency indices around professional licensing histories).
- DSHS returns results to DEL.
- DEL licensing staff review the applicant's character and suitability by reviewing FamLink system child abuse/neglect information. If the applicant is disqualified, the process ends here.
- DEL verifies the applicant has paid the processing fee.
- If the applicant clears the background check, the process ends here.

Anyone over 16 years old who is new to the child care field or has lived in Washington for fewer than three consecutive years must also have a **fingerprint check** done. DEL contracts with a vendor that collects the electronic fingerprints and sends them to the Washington State Patrol, which works with the FBI to process the fingerprints. The results are sent to DEL.

The fees, paid to the vendor, for a fingerprint-based background check are \$43.50 for licensees, employees and household members and \$42.50 for volunteers.

Licensed child care providers are required to report resignation or termination of employees to DEL within 24 hours if it involves negative actions and/or criminal history.

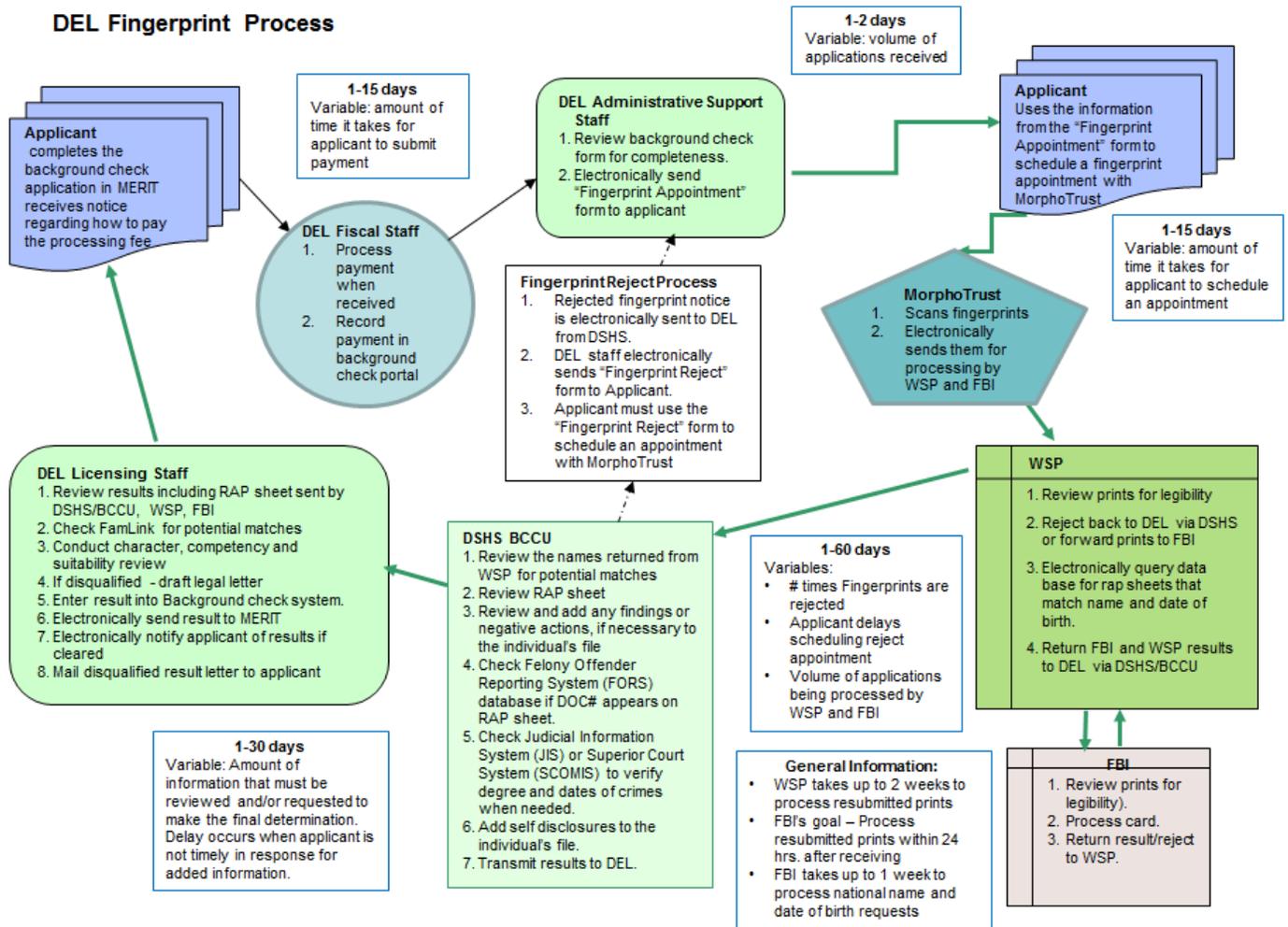
Disqualifications and reconsiderations in background checks

DEL background check rules are used in conducting background checks, disqualifying individuals, and in reconsidering the decisions to disqualify.

In state fiscal year 2014:

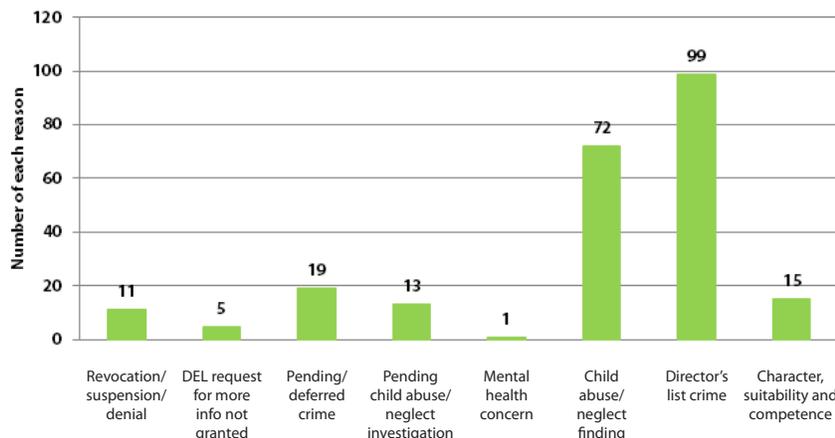
- 17,956 background checks
- 235 disqualifications (1.3% of total applications)
- 27 reconsideration requests, 10 approved (37%)

DEL's background check rules contain a provision for disqualified individuals to request reconsideration. The Statewide Child Care Licensing Administrator is the DEL designee for reconsiderations. Decisions are made after a disqualification has occurred. The reconsiderations are at the discretion of DEL and are therefore not subject to formal administrative hearing appeal.



8.12.2014

Reasons for Disqualifications



Fiscal year 2014