

VIRGINIA ACTS OF ASSEMBLY — CHAPTER

An Act to amend and reenact §§ 19.2-389 and 37.1-197.2 of the Code of Virginia, relating to criminal background checks.

[H 1336]

Approved

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That §§ 19.2-389 and 37.1-197.2 of the Code of Virginia are amended and reenacted as follows:**

§ 19.2-389. Dissemination of criminal history record information.

A. Criminal history record information shall be disseminated, whether directly or through an intermediary, only to:

1. Authorized officers or employees of criminal justice agencies, as defined by § 9-169, for purposes of the administration of criminal justice and the screening of an employment application or review of employment by a criminal justice agency with respect to its own employees or applicants, and dissemination to the Virginia Parole Board, pursuant to this subdivision, of such information on all state-responsible inmates for the purpose of making parole determinations pursuant to subdivisions 1, 2, 3, and 5 of § 53.1-136 shall include collective dissemination by electronic means every thirty days;

2. Such other individuals and agencies which require criminal history record information to implement a state or federal statute or executive order of the President of the United States or Governor that expressly refers to criminal conduct and contains requirements and/or exclusions expressly based upon such conduct, except that information concerning the arrest of an individual may not be disseminated to a noncriminal justice agency or individual if an interval of one year has elapsed from the date of the arrest and no disposition of the charge has been recorded and no active prosecution of the charge is pending;

3. Individuals and agencies pursuant to a specific agreement with a criminal justice agency to provide services required for the administration of criminal justice pursuant to that agreement which shall specifically authorize access to data, limit the use of data to purposes for which given, and ensure the security and confidentiality of the data;

4. Individuals and agencies for the express purpose of research, evaluative, or statistical activities pursuant to an agreement with a criminal justice agency which shall specifically authorize access to data, limit the use of data to research, evaluative, or statistical purposes, and ensure the confidentiality and security of the data;

5. Agencies of state or federal government which are authorized by state or federal statute or executive order of the President of the United States or Governor to conduct investigations determining employment suitability or eligibility for security clearances allowing access to classified information;

6. Individuals and agencies where authorized by court order or court rule;

7. Agencies of any political subdivision of the Commonwealth for the conduct of investigations of applicants for public employment, permit, or license whenever, in the interest of public welfare or safety, it is necessary to determine under a duly enacted ordinance if the past criminal conduct of a person with a conviction record would be compatible with the nature of the employment, permit, or license under consideration;

8. Public or private agencies when and as required by federal or state law or interstate compact to investigate applicants for foster or adoptive parenthood subject to the restriction that the data shall not be further disseminated by the agency to any party other than a federal or state authority or court as may be required to comply with an express requirement of law for such further dissemination;

9. To the extent permitted by federal law or regulation, public service companies as defined in § 56-1, for the conduct of investigations of applicants for employment when such employment involves personal contact with the public or when past criminal conduct of an applicant would be incompatible with the nature of the employment under consideration;

10. The appropriate authority for purposes of granting citizenship and for purposes of international travel, including but not limited to, issuing visas and passports;

11. A person requesting a copy of his own criminal history record information as defined in § 9-169 at his cost, except that criminal history record information shall be supplied at no charge to a person who has applied to be a volunteer (i) with a Virginia affiliate of Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America, (ii) with a volunteer fire company or volunteer rescue squad, or (iii) with the Volunteer Emergency Families for Children;

12. Administrators and board presidents of and applicants for licensure or registration as a child

welfare agency as defined in § 63.1-195 for dissemination to the Commissioner of Social Services' representative pursuant to § 63.1-198 for the conduct of investigations with respect to employees of and volunteers at such facilities, caretakers, and other adults living in family day-care homes or homes approved by family day-care systems, and foster and adoptive parent applicants of private child-placing agencies, pursuant to § 63.1-198.1, subject to the restriction that the data shall not be further disseminated by the facility or agency to any party other than the data subject, the Commissioner of Social Services' representative or a federal or state authority or court as may be required to comply with an express requirement of law for such further dissemination;

13. The school boards of the Commonwealth for the purpose of screening individuals who are offered or who accept public school employment and those current school board employees for whom a report of arrest has been made pursuant to § 19.2-83.1;

14. The State Lottery Department for the conduct of investigations as set forth in the State Lottery Law (§ 58.1-4000 et seq.);

15. Licensed nursing homes, hospitals and home care organizations for the conduct of investigations of applicants for compensated employment in licensed nursing homes pursuant to § 32.1-126.01, hospital pharmacies pursuant to § 32.1-126.02, and home care organizations pursuant to § 32.1-162.9:1, subject to the limitations set out in subsection E;

16. Licensed homes for adults, licensed district homes for adults, and licensed adult day-care centers for the conduct of investigations of applicants for compensated employment in licensed homes for adults pursuant to § 63.1-173.2, in licensed district homes for adults pursuant to § 63.1-189.1, and in licensed adult day-care centers pursuant to § 63.1-194.13, subject to the limitations set out in subsection F;

17. The Alcoholic Beverage Control Board for the conduct of investigations as set forth in § 4.1-103.1;

18. The State Board of Elections and authorized officers and employees thereof in the course of conducting necessary investigations with respect to registered voters, limited to any record of felony convictions;

19. The Commissioner of the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for those individuals who are committed to the custody of the Commissioner pursuant to §§ 19.2-169.2, 19.2-169.6, 19.2-176, 19.2-177.1, 19.2-182.2, 19.2-182.3, 19.2-182.8 and 19.2-182.9 for the purpose of placement, evaluation, and treatment planning;

20. Any alcohol safety action program certified by the Commission on the Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program for (i) assessments of habitual offenders under § 46.2-360, (ii) interventions with first offenders under § 18.2-251, or (iii) services to offenders under §§ 18.2-51.4, 18.2-266 or § 18.2-266.1;

21. Residential facilities for juveniles regulated or operated by the Department of Social Services, the Department of Education, or the Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services for the purpose of determining applicants' fitness for employment or for providing volunteer or contractual services;

22. The Department of Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Substance Abuse Services and facilities operated by the Department for the purpose of determining an individual's fitness for employment pursuant to departmental instructions;

23. Pursuant to § 22.1-296.3, the governing boards or administrators of private or parochial elementary or secondary schools which are accredited by a statewide accrediting organization recognized, prior to January 1, 1996, by the State Board of Education;

24. State-supported colleges and universities for the purpose of screening individuals who are offered or accept public employment;

25. Executive directors of community services boards *or the personnel director serving the community services board* for the purpose of determining an individual's fitness for employment pursuant to § 37.1-197.2;

26. Executive directors of behavioral health authorities as defined in ~~§ 45.1-1677~~ *37.1-243* for the purpose of determining an individual's fitness for employment pursuant to § 37.1-197.2;

27. The Commissioner of the Department of Social Services for the purpose of locating persons who owe child support or who are alleged in a pending paternity proceeding to be a putative father, provided that only the name, address, demographics and social security number of the data subject shall be released; and

28. Other entities as otherwise provided by law.

Upon an ex parte motion of a defendant in a felony case and upon the showing that the records requested may be relevant to such case, the court shall enter an order requiring the Central Criminal Records Exchange to furnish the defendant, as soon as practicable, copies of any records of persons designated in the order on whom a report has been made under the provisions of this chapter.

Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter to the contrary, upon a written request sworn to before an officer authorized to take acknowledgments, the Central Criminal Records Exchange or the

criminal justice agency in cases of offenses not required to be reported to the Exchange, shall furnish a copy of conviction data covering the person named in the request to the person making the request; however, such person on whom the data is being obtained shall consent in writing, under oath, to the making of such request. A person receiving a copy of his own conviction data may utilize or further disseminate that data as he deems appropriate. In the event no conviction data is maintained on the data subject, the person making the request shall be furnished at his cost a certification to that effect.

B. Use of criminal history record information disseminated to noncriminal justice agencies under this section shall be limited to the purposes for which it was given and may not be disseminated further.

C. No criminal justice agency or person shall confirm the existence or nonexistence of criminal history record information for employment or licensing inquiries except as provided by law.

D. Criminal justice agencies shall establish procedures to query the Central Criminal Records Exchange prior to dissemination of any criminal history record information on offenses required to be reported to the Central Criminal Records Exchange to ensure that the most up-to-date disposition data is being used. Inquiries of the Exchange shall be made prior to any dissemination except in those cases where time is of the essence and the normal response time of the Exchange would exceed the necessary time period. A criminal justice agency to whom a request has been made for the dissemination of criminal history record information that is required to be reported to the Central Criminal Records Exchange may direct the inquirer to the Central Criminal Records Exchange for such dissemination. Dissemination of information regarding offenses not required to be reported to the Exchange shall be made by the criminal justice agency maintaining the record as required by § ~~15.1-135.1~~ 15.2-1722.

E. Criminal history information provided to licensed nursing homes, hospitals and to home care organizations pursuant to subdivision A 15 shall be limited to the convictions on file with the Exchange for any offense specified in §§ 32.1-126.01, 32.1-126.02 and 32.1-162.9:1.

F. Criminal history information provided to licensed adult care residences, licensed district homes for adults, and licensed adult day-care centers pursuant to subdivision A 16 shall be limited to the convictions on file with the Exchange for any offense specified in §§ 63.1-173.2, 63.1-189.1 or § 63.1-194.13.

§ 37.1-197.2. Background checks required.

A. Every community services board and behavioral health authority shall, on and after July 1, 1997, require any applicant who accepts employment in any direct client care position with the community services board or behavioral health authority to submit to fingerprinting and provide personal descriptive information to be forwarded through the Central Criminal Records Exchange to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for the purpose of obtaining national criminal history record information regarding such applicant.

The Central Criminal Records Exchange, upon receipt of an individual's record or notification that no record exists, shall submit a report to the requesting executive director *or personnel director* of the community services board or the behavioral health authority. If any applicant is denied employment because of information appearing on the criminal history record and the applicant disputes the information upon which the denial was based, the Central Criminal Records Exchange shall, upon request, furnish the applicant the procedures for obtaining a copy of the criminal history record from the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The information provided to the executive director *or personnel director* of any community services board or behavioral health authority shall not be disseminated except as provided in this section.

B. The community services boards and behavioral health authorities shall also require, as a condition of employment for all such applicants, written consent and personal information necessary to obtain a search of the registry of founded complaints of child abuse and neglect maintained by the Department of Social Services pursuant to § 63.1-248.8.

C. The cost of obtaining the criminal history record and search of the child abuse and neglect registry record shall be borne by the applicant, unless the community services board, *or the local government in those localities in which the community services board is a department of local government*, or behavioral health authority, at its option, decides to pay such cost.

D. As used in this section, the term "direct client care position" means any position with a job description that includes responsibility for (i) treatment, case management, health, safety, development or well-being of a client, or (ii) immediately supervising a person in a position with such responsibility.