

Agency Report
Department of Human Services
Ready to Work Registry

Analyst: Laurie Byerly

Request: Acknowledge receipt of a report on a ready to work registry.

Recommendation: Acknowledge receipt of the report.

Analysis: The budget report for HB 5201, the omnibus budget reconciliation bill for the 2014 regular session, included a budget note directing the Department of Human Services (DHS) to report during the 2015 Legislative Session on the “ready to work” registry required under HB 4151 (2014). Along with other provisions related to elder abuse investigation, that bill directed the agency to implement a registry of persons working or seeking to work in elder care facilities by January 1, 2015.

After the bill’s passage, DHS worked with stakeholders to identify roles for inclusion in the registry; these include direct care workers, volunteers, contractors, and licensees. As the registry augments the existing criminal background check system, the agency also worked with federal and system partners to make appropriate system changes. Some challenges faced in determining how to best structure the registry include varying certification periods and differing recheck requirements. The registry became operational at the beginning of January 2105.

As of April 23, 2015, there were 19,868 people listed on the registry, and employers had avoided 1,133 duplicative background checks by using the registry. This also reflects participation by 780 private, nonprofit, and public organizations.

The agency is continuing to work with stakeholders to improve the registry, evaluate its performance, and implement business tools. DHS also completed an initial assessment for the feasibility of developing a comprehensive and multipurpose care worker registry. The review indicated that while criminal records checks have become standardized over time, the rules, policies, and other guidance governing how entities certify, license, and track their professionals are not in alignment. Work on standardization of these activities would likely need to occur before a multipurpose registry could be developed.

The Legislative Fiscal Office recommends acknowledging receipt of the report on a ready to work registry.