

Background Check Guidance

Direct care workers and, effective February 1, 2024, new authorized representative (AR) candidates of Veteran Directed Care (VDC)-enrolled Veterans are required to undergo and pass a background check in accordance with policies as outlined in the [VDC Operations Manual](#) and state policies and as specified by the VDC provider to be hired as a worker or designated as a Veteran's AR. This guidance does not apply to ARs previously approved.

The background check should be conducted prior to a worker being hired or a representative being formally authorized. A background check may include, but not be limited to, a state level or federal fingerprint background check, in addition to a search of the National Sex Offenders System, professional/occupational registries, and others, as applicable.

The cost of background checks varies by type and state and are paid for in a few different methods, depending on local VDC provider procedures. Background checks may be paid for:

1. Out of the Veteran's budget (preferred way)
 - a. The VDC provider must discuss the cost of the background check with the Veteran and include it in the Veteran's spending plan.
2. By the VDC provider
 - a. The VDC provider absorbs the cost of the background check.
 - b. The VDC provider pays for the background checks through the monthly VF/EA FMS fee.

Any direct care worker or representative candidate who has a felony for fraud, abuse or exploitation of an individual may not be hired to provide services to or be authorized as a representative for a Veteran.

Results from a direct care worker or representative candidate's background check are reported to the VA VDC Program Coordinator. The Veteran is notified about whether their direct care worker or representative candidate has passed the criminal background requirement or not. The Veteran's Person Centered Counselor at the VDC provider then will have a discussion with the Veteran to review their options for selecting another direct care worker to hire or representative. Additional information on VDC workers may be found in the [February 2022 VDC Educational Webinar](#).