

BACKGROUND CHECKS

ICHAT OFFERS NO-FEE MICHIGAN CRIMINAL HISTORY BACKGROUND CHECKS TO GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND NON-PROFIT CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS.

If your government agency or non-profit charitable organization would like to screen employees and/or volunteers the State of Michigan offers a fee-waived service to do so. If your program utilizes volunteers or members who work with vulnerable populations such as children or the frail elderly, it is important to perform a criminal history background check on every person who works with them. This is necessary both for the safety of those you serve and for the credibility of your program.

The Michigan State Police provides the Internet Criminal History Access Tool, or ICHAT, which allows you to instantaneously access the criminal history records of individuals who have been convicted of a crime in Michigan, as well as for individuals who have pending criminal cases. ICHAT is an easy way to access this information, and the fee is waived for government agencies screening employees and volunteers.

To access ICHAT type www.michigan.gov/ichat in your browser. If you have not used ICHAT before you will need to register yourself and your agency. For each entry, you will need the subject's full name (including aliases and/or maiden names), sex, race, and date of birth. The response will provide all personal descriptors on file and a list of convictions and/or pending cases involving the subject.

Please note that this search will only include convictions recorded in Michigan and reported to the Michigan State Police. Suppressed records and warrant information are not available through ICHAT. Also not included are federal records, tribal records, and criminal history from other states. A search for a record that may be in another state requires that you correspond with that state directly.

To obtain a government/charitable Agency Code (necessary to perform the checks at no charge) you will need to fax the following information to the ICHAT Coordinator at 517-241-0866:

- Agency name, address, and phone number
- Federal ID number
- Name and e-mail address of contact person
- Number of additional users
- Estimated number of annual searches
- 501c3 letter from the IRS documenting your non-profit status (if not a government agency).

Please allow two to three weeks for a response.

Please note that other types of searches by government agencies and non-profit charitable organizations – such as on housing, license, or student applicants or on non-staff physicians and other sub-contractors – still require payment of the \$10-per-search fee as set by state law. Our office recommends that agencies needing to run both fee-paid and fee-waived searches establish multiple ICHAT accounts: one or more with the code to waive the fees for screening employees and volunteers, and one or more accounts without a code for all other searches which will be charged.

For more information about ICHAT you may call the ICHAT Coordinator at 517-241-0713 or e-mail MSP-CRD-ACCTHELP@michigan.gov. For information about more in-depth criminal history searches, visit www.michigan.gov/msp, and click on "Criminal History Records" in the Quick Links section of the right-hand column.