

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE
Pursuant to P.A. 124 of 2007
Section 418(2)
Process Developed with MDCH to Obtain Birth Certificates

The Department of Community Health (DCH) and the Department of Corrections (DOC) are in agreement with a process which will allow prisoners through a central point of contact within the DOC and the DCH to obtain copies of their birth certificates. It is anticipated the draft of a Director's Office Memorandum will be finalized for an effective date of May 1, 2008.

Prisoners arriving at the reception centers will be asked whether they have birth certificates, driver's licenses, social security cards, etc. and advised the Department will store these documents for them during their incarceration. If they do not have a birth certificate staff will assist the prisoner in completing an application for obtaining one through the DCH's Vital Records Division. The Department will loan prisoners the funds for the applications if they do not have sufficient funds in their account (\$26 in most cases).

The staff member who assists the prisoner with the application for a birth certificate will send the completed application to the Central Records Division in Jackson for processing to the DCH. The functions for this position will include verification of true identity through comparison with available records, i.e., LEIN and DOC files. The applications are batched and sent to the central point at DCH for processing.

Staff from the DCH Vital Records Division have indicated that there will often be verification questions that must be answered before a certificate will be issued, i.e., parents' birthplace or middle names. The agreement with DCH for central points of contact recognizes the difficulty involved in their locating and contacting prisoners across the state following applications that were generated at the reception centers. The central position in DOC for this function will coordinate the questions to the prisoners' counselors and the replies back to DCH.

In addition to inquiries for identification and assistance with applications at reception centers, DOC staff will question the prisoner again at the time of the Parole Eligibility Report which occurs approximately 7 months before the minimum release date. Staff will again assist with the application process and the Department will loan funds for this purpose. The Parole Board will be advised as part of the parole eligibility reporting process whether the prisoner has obtained his or her birth certificate and other identification.