



Tennessee Department of Children's Services

## Protocol for Delegated Authority Vendor Application Process

Supplemental to DCS Policy: N/A

The purpose of this protocol is to establish guidelines and explain procedures adhered to in the identification, review of program/service content, verification of credentials and background checks as required in the Delegated Authority (DA) Vendor Application Process.

While specific needs cannot be determined in advance, the DCS Office of Child Mental Health, Vendor Application Unit identifies and maintains listings of medical care/treatment, behavioral health and other support service providers appearing capable of delivering the type of services, authorized in the DCS Delegated Authority Contract with Central Procurement Office (CPO) and that fall outside the scope of DCS residential/performance-based contracts.

### **The DA Vendor Application Process pertains to the following services:**

Anger Management/Conflict Resolution  
Alcohol and Drug Assessment  
Alcohol and Drug Treatment  
Intensive Outpatient Alcohol and Drug Treatment  
Assessment for Children with Sexual Behavior Problems  
Intensive In-Home Family Services  
Mental Health Assessment  
Mental Health Case Management  
Parenting Capacity Assessment  
Psychosexual Assessment- Adolescent (ages 13-17)  
Psychological Assessment (child/youth)  
Psychological Assessment (adult)  
Psychoeducational Assessment  
Psychotherapy or Counseling  
Psychotherapy or Counseling for Sex Offender Treatment  
Psychosexual Assessment- Adult  
Neuropsychological Assessment-child  
Neuropsychological Assessment-adult  
Alcohol and Drug Assessment with a Mental Health Assessment  
Parent Education/Class  
Sitter Services  
Homemaker Services  
On-site Interpreter

ASL Interpreter  
Prevention & Diversion Case Management

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Word Translation

Urine Analysis

Extended Panel Urine

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Fingernail Analysis

Medical Review of Drug Screen

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**Vendors may be referred to the DA Vendor Pool by any one of the methods listed below:**

- 1) Referred by Regional Administrators, Fiscal Directors and/or their designees; with vendor information to include:
  - ☐ Business name, address, phone number, email, contact person(s); and
  - ☐ Services needed by the region
- 2) Via the [DCS website](#)-self-referrals from interested vendors.
- 3) Vendor Application Unit may contact potential local service providers to discuss the service needed and the service provider's qualifications, willingness, and availability to provide the service as required in the application Service Description Guideline and Criteria document.

**DA Applicant/Vendor Pool consists of the following:**

- ☐ New vendors
- ☐ Approved Vendors (previously approved, existing vendors, going through the renewal process; and
- ☐ Vendors already approved through TennCare

**Overview of the Phases of the DA Vendor Application Process:**

**Phase 1** - Within five (5) business days of receiving information from the region, the Vendor Application Unit sends the vendor an application packet. The vendor must return the application packet within 30 days. A staff member

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from the Office of Child Mental Health conducts an initial review to make sure all the required material is included. If additional material and/or clarification is needed, a staff member from the Office of Child Mental Health contacts the applicant.

**Phase 2** - Once the Vendor Application Unit receives a complete application packet from the vendor, the packet is submitted to the appropriate party for review. Within 30 days from receipt, the reviewer conducts the review and reports back to the Vendor Application Unit.

**Phase 2-Guidelines for TennCare Providers, seeking to be approved as DA vendors:**

- ☐ TennCare approved vendors will be required to provide their letter of acceptance or approval from TennCare.
- ☐ The Department requires background checks on vendor staff working with DCS clients. TennCare approved vendors are to send an overview of their hiring practices including all preemployment checks their organization does on employees. The overview should include any routine checks completed after hiring and how often those are completed. Vendor is to specify what background checks and web-based database searches are conducted.
- ☐ To assess the quality of service provided by vendors whose approval was adopted from TennCare; at the three (3) month period, a randomized pull of completed assessments representative of each service type the vendor was approved for, occurs and the respective content expert reviewer/clinician evaluates the work sample to ensure compliance with the established criteria for each service type. The Department reserves the right to ask for work samples at any time.
- ☐ If an approved TennCare provider is applying to provide services under the DA that are not among the services they are approved by TennCare to provide, the provider needs to undergo the full DCS DA Vendor Application Process.

**Phase 3** - Once the reviewer determines that the service(s), for which the vendor is seeking approval as a DCS DA vendor, meets the criteria established in the Service Description Guideline and Criteria, the following ensues:

**Rate Negotiations:**

The Vendor Application Unit obtains the vendor's proposed rates for the services they are applying to provide. Approval of rates is valid for two (2) years from the date of final approval email sent to the vendor, Regional Administrators, and Fiscal Directors.

**Request Vendor ID# and Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System (TFACTS) Resource ID:**

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A [W-9](#) is required from all entities providing services to the state and is a requirement of the vendor approval process. The vendor's [W-9](#) is submitted to the state Supplier Maintenance team, which establishes and maintains vendor information in DCS' payment system. Once the W-9 has been processed, a Vendor ID is established.

Vendor's approved service(s), service area and contact information is entered in TFACTS and vendor is assigned a TFACTS Resource ID number.

**Background Checks & Documentation Requirements:**

DCS requires the following background checks on all vendor agency owners/employees whose position involves direct contact with children:

- a) Criminal records check from local law enforcement records or county court records for all residences of employee within the immediate six (6) months preceding application for employment. *(vendor conducts this on their own or through a private agency)*
- b) TBI/FBI fingerprint check. Please contact Donovan Haynes by email at [Donovan.Haynes@tn.gov](mailto:Donovan.Haynes@tn.gov) to request an Originating Case Agency (OCA) number in order to obtain fingerprint checks for each staff on your Staff Roster providing services to DCS clients.
- c) Driving records check to include current valid driver license and a check of moving violations records. *(vendor conducts this on their own or through a private agency)*

Note: If proof of a valid driver's license is not a requirement of the job description and vendor will not be transporting DCS clients, the DL/MVR check is not required.

- d) A National Sexual Offender Registry Clearance- The address is:  
<https://www.nsopw.gov/en/Search/Results> *(vendor conducts this web-based search on their own).*
- e) Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance- The address is:  
<https://apps.health.tn.gov/AbuseRegistry/default.aspx> *(vendor conducts this web-based search on their own).*
- f) DCS Database records check of the Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System, or TFACTS (form [Database Search Results, CS-0741](#)). All vendor agency owners/employees whose position involves direct contact with children must be cleared through this database. Requests should be submitted on form [CS-0741](#) to [Child Mental Health staff](#).

**For new vendors:** the background checks and web-based searches (a-f) cited above, cannot be more than 1 year old.

**For TennCare Providers, seeking to be approved as DA vendors:** TennCare approved vendors are to send an overview of their hiring practices including all pre-employment checks their organization does on employees. The

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overview should include any routine checks completed after hiring and how often those are completed. Vendor is to specify what background checks and web-based database searches are conducted.

**For existing approved vendors, seeking renewal:** If it has been more than one (1) year since the web-based searches (Drug Offender Registry Clearance, TN Felony Offender Database Clearance, A National Sexual Offender Registry Clearance, Tennessee Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance) were done, they must be done again.

Initial local law enforcement record, driving record check, TBI/FBI fingerprint check, and [Database Search Results, CS-0741](#) record check conducted at initial hire will be accepted. However, if these background checks have never been done by the renewing agency for staff providing services to DCS clients, then these checks are to be completed.

**For all vendors:** The applying or renewing vendor should provide the verification (via DCS form [CS-0687, Background Check History and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#)) of required background checks and web-based searches, listed above, to the Vendor Application Unit:

- ☐ Indicate on form [CS-0687](#) the date each required check/search was conducted or results received, sign and date in the section where it says, "Results Reviewed by" (right above "Central Office Use Only").
- ☐ File completed [CS-0687](#) form in your or your employee's personnel file (with supporting documentation of results).
- ☐ Please email a copy of the completed form [CS-0687, Background Check History and IV-E Eligibility Checklist](#) to [Child Mental Health staff](#). It is not required that you submit the actual search/background results\*. The department only requires page 1 of form CS-0687; the signature on the form verifies that you and/or your agency representative has reviewed the results and the individual for whom the checks were conducted: 1) meets your employment requirement 2) is free from a criminal or abuse history that could pose a safety risk to children 3) can work with sensitive or confidential information

**\*Note: If you are a sole proprietor and signing DCS form [CS-0687](#), please submit the actual search/background results with form [CS-0687](#).**

**Service type exemptions due to the nature of the service rendered:**

**Specimen Collection/Drug Testing Vendors:**

When DA vendor protocols require that minors must always be accompanied by a guardian, a vendor may conduct a named-based TBI/FBI or National Criminal Background Check in lieu of the fingerprint check.

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**On-site Language Interpreters and American Sign Language (ASL) Interpreters:**

Due to the nature of the work environment requirements of interpreters and the fact that interpreters are not alone with DCS clients, DA vendors of these services are not required to complete, maintain, or submit the background checks (a-c) cited above. However, a National Sexual Offender Registry Clearance, Department of Health Abuse Registry Clearance, DCS Database records check of the Tennessee Family and Child Tracking System (TFACTS), are required to be conducted by the applying or renewing vendor.

The Department is cognizant that the list of required background and web-based checks cited above (a-f) is not an exhaustive list; if your agency requires other checks that you are requesting the Department to accept in lieu of a required check, please submit a request and justification for reconsideration to the [Executive Director of Child Mental Health](#). The Department reserves the right to deny any such request deemed non-justifiable.

**Final Approval:**

The Vendor Application Unit sends an approval email to the vendor, the Regional Administrator and Fiscal Director that includes the following information:

- ☐ Individual vendor name or agency
- ☐ Location of main office
- ☐ Service area (region, county and/or city) in which vendor is approved to provide service(s)
- ☐ Service(s) the vendor is approved to provide
- ☐ Contact person
- ☐ Notice that approval of service type(s) and rate (s) is valid for two (2) years from the date of the approval email.
- ☐ Information on whether vendor accepts TennCare and/or private health insurance.
- ☐ Notice that being an approved vendor does not guarantee the utilization of said services by any DCS region.

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- ☐ Notice the Department considers all monitoring information and any reported concerns in the assessment of the vendor's performance. The Vendor Application Unit reserves the right to request and review vendor work samples at any time. Reported concerns of vendor's work quality will be referred to the Office of Continuous Quality Improvement/ Community Service Quality Team for review and corrective action.
- ☐ Notice the Department reserves the right to withdraw approval at any time if a vendor fails to meet the qualifications specified in the application and/or agreement. Moreover, the Department reserves the right to withdraw approval at any time.

**Note:** Due to fiscal authorization schedules, when an existing vendor's application is renewed/ approved on a date before the 15th of the month, any new rates for service(s) will not be effective until the first day of the following month following the vendor's approval date. If an existing vendor is approved on the 15th or after, they continue to provide services under the old rate until two months following the approval email. Also, any authorizations accepted by a vendor prior to the approval or renewal date will be under the old rate.

**Renewal:**

Approval of service type(s) and rate(s) is valid for two (2) years from the date of the approval email. On or shortly after two (2) years from approval as a DA vendor, the DA vendor or Vendor Application Unit will initiate the renewal process. The Vendor Application Unit: ☐ Obtains an updated staff roster from the vendor.

- ☐ Verifies the web-based searches were updated annually for vendor staff on the initial staff roster submitted at the time of application. The Drug Offender Registry Clearance, TN Felony Offender Database Clearance, National Sexual Offender Registry Clearance, and the TN Dept. of Health Abuse Registry Clearance will be conducted annually for all staff providing services.

The results of local law enforcement record, driving record check, TBI/FBI fingerprint check, and DCS Database Search submitted at the time of application will be accepted for staff on initial staff roster.

- ☐ Verify vendor conducted all required background checks and web-based search on new staff, not on the initial staff roster. Web-based searches identified under bullet 2 will be updated on an ongoing basis every year.
- ☐ Confirm or update contact information.
- ☐ Confirm that approved service types and service areas are correct.
- ☐ Re-negotiate rates.
- ☐ Reserves the right to request work samples at renewal. Moreover, the Vendor Application Unit reserves the right to request and review vendor work samples at any time.

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**Reinstatement of Terminated Delegated Authority (DA) Agreements:**

Any DA vendor whose DA agreement was terminated due to service delivery and/or quality issues, will need to wait at least one (1) year before reinstatement will be considered. Furthermore, before a DA vendor can be reinstated:

- ☐ The Vendor Application Unit will need to verify that the issues leading to termination have been rectified.
- ☐ The Office of Continuous Quality Improvement/ Community Service Quality Team will need to review and recommend reinstatement.

**Maintenance of Delegated Authority (DA) webpages in the DCS website:**

The Office of Child Mental Health, Vendor Application Unit, maintains updated resources for the DA Process that can be found at the following links:

Caseworkers Toolkit: <https://www.teamtn.gov/dcs/caseworkers-toolkit/da.html>: an internal facing page geared for frontline staff and regional leadership.

Prospective Vendors: <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/for-providers/prospective-providers.html>: an external facing page with information targeted for prospective vendors.

Information for Existing Delegated Authority Vendors: <https://www.tn.gov/dcs/for-providers/existingda-providers.html>: an external facing page for existing DA Vendors.