

Frequently Asked Questions about Rapback

The Ohio Department of Education takes very seriously the safety of Ohio's children in our schools. One of the ways the Department does this is by ensuring educators complete required background checks and enrolling them in the Rapback system. Recently, the Department found a small percentage of licensed educators who are not enrolled in the Bureau of Criminal Investigation's Rapback system. New legislation in Ohio House Bill 49, effective on Sept. 29, 2017, requires the Department to notify all licensed educators who are not enrolled in the Rapback system that it must inactivate their credentials unless the educators complete a new BCI criminal background check within 15 days of receiving the final formal notification.

What is the Rapback System?

The [Rapback program](#) began in 2007 with the passage of Ohio Senate Bill 97. The intent of the program is to protect Ohioans by providing additional safeguards against allowing convicted criminals to remain in positions of trust (for example, school teachers or foster parents).

For enrolled individuals, the Ohio Attorney General's Bureau of Criminal Investigation stores fingerprints captured as part of the employment screening process in a separate retained applicant fingerprint database. These prints are searched against all new criminal prints and prints are submitted to BCI as part of a court disposition process. When a match is found, BCI provides rap sheet information back ("rap back") to the Department.

From Rapback, the Department provides notifications about criminal arrests or convictions of licensed educators and pupil transportation drivers to the school districts where they are employed. The Department also determines whether the arrest or conviction affects the educator's licensure status.

Who is required to be enrolled in Rapback?

Ohio educators and school bus drivers submit fingerprints through the BCI background check process as a condition of their initial employment or licensure. During BCI background checks, the bureau compares applicant fingerprints against a database of criminal fingerprints to determine if there are matches.

After the Department approves educator license applications, the Office of Professional Conduct enrolls the newly licensed educators in the Rapback service. The Office of Pupil Transportation enrolls employed school bus drivers once their school districts enter their names into the Department's School Foundation Payment System.

Where can I complete my background check?

There are several resources available to assist with finding a fingerprint check location. You can contact your employing school or call an educational service center in your area. Alternatively, the [Ohio Attorney General's website](#) provides a list of webcheck locations that you can search by county or by ZIP code. The URL for this website is: www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Business/Services-for-Business/WebCheck/Webcheck-Community-Listing

If I live out of state, how can I do a fingerprint check?

You need to obtain fingerprint cards directly from the Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI). You can call BCI toll-free at (877) 224-0043 to request they mail you an Ohio fingerprint card and instructions.

I am an aide (or a coach or a volunteer) and not a licensed educator. Does the Department still need to enroll me in the Rapback service?

The term licensed educator includes anyone who holds any license, permit or certificate that the Ohio Department of Education issues. If the Department cannot enroll a licensed educator (including a coach, aide,

licensed school support staff member, etc.) into the Rapback service, the individual must complete a new BCI criminal background check.

If I am a licensed educator who is not currently enrolled in the Rapback system, is a BCI criminal background check mandatory?

Yes. New legislation effective on Sept. 29, 2017, requires the Ohio Department of Education to notify all licensed educators who are not enrolled in the Rapback system that we must inactivate their credentials unless they complete new BCI criminal background checks within 15 days of receiving the final formal notification.

Why do I need to redo my BCI criminal background check if I have already completed all my required criminal background checks to obtain my licensure?

Ohio law requires that you have baseline BCI and FBI criminal background checks no older than one year (365 days) at the time you apply for your first Ohio educator license, certificate or permit. According to Ohio law, if you then reside continuously in Ohio, you do not need to update the BCI criminal background check, but must obtain an updated FBI criminal background check once every five years. There are several reasons why an educator cannot be enrolled in the Rapback even if he or she completed all these required background checks:

- The background check may have resulted in poor quality fingerprints;
- The educator may have obtained the most recent BCI criminal background check more than one year prior to attempted enrollment; or
- An educator may have allowed his or her license to lapse. When an educator enrolled in the Rapback service allows his or her license to expire, the Department withdraws the individual from the Rapback service as required by Ohio law. When the person renews the license, the Department often cannot re-enroll the educator in the Rapback service because the BCI criminal background check is more than a year old. The educator will need to obtain a new BCI criminal background check so the Department can enroll the person in the Rapback service.

What happens if my credentials expired while I was not working in education, but now I want to renew my credentials? Do I need another BCI background check?

When your educator license or permit expired, the Department withdrew your name from the Rapback service. If you wish to renew your credentials, you will need to have a new BCI criminal background check that is no more than 365 days old. After your renewal application is approved, the Department will then re-enter your name in Rapback.

If I have had an FBI criminal background check done in the last year, can the Department use this to enroll me in the Rapback service?

No. It's true that the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Identification and Investigation (BCI) administers both BCI and FBI background checks. Rapback enrollment, however, requires a **BCI** criminal background check within the previous 365 days. Even if a licensed educator has had an FBI criminal background check done in the last year, the Department cannot use this information to enroll the individual in the Rapback service.

If I am not currently enrolled in the Rapback service, will I receive notice from the Department before my license is inactivated?

Yes. In compliance with Ohio House Bill 49, the Department will send out a written notice that you must provide a BCI criminal background check by a specified date. If you do not comply, the Department will send a second notice indicating that if you do not submit a BCI criminal background check within 15 days, your license will be inactivated. If you do not comply after the second written notice, you will receive a final written order inactivating your license.