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**By
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ANSWER

A third-party vendor is usually a for-profit organization or business that conducts background checks or a range of background check services for a fee for other organizations. When a National Service Criminal History Check is not directly performed by a grantee, subgrantee, placement site, volunteer station or other partner responsible for the oversight and management of AmeriCorps members, we consider that a third-party vendor criminal history check.

QUESTION

No. The Corporation does not anticipate approving or endorsing specific background check vendors. In addition to the legal issues that might rise from a government agency approving vendors, the Corporation believes attempting to maintain vendor approvals given that services offered can change rapidly is not feasible.

QUESTION

Grantees who would like to use a third-party vendor should ensure that the vendor:

- is familiar with the Corporation's regulations;
- performs the two components of the required checks [National Sex Offender Public Registry check (NSOPR) and the State criminal registry searches];
- follows the procedures described in the regulations, including allowing the grantee and the Corporation access to the records; and,
- makes a clear commitment under contract to perform specific services that would meet the Corporation's requirements.

We strongly advise grantees to ensure that they differentiate between a vendor's marketing information which may be general and non-specific,

versus the vendor's specific commitment to perform a background check process. Some vendors indicate they conduct national searches, but those national searches are not conducted by reviewing each state's criminal registry repository and, therefore, do not meet the Corporation's requirements.

Background Checks

It depends. Using a vendor that meets the regulatory requirements, and provides the required records to the grantee does not need the Corporation's approval. Using a vendor that does not follow all of the Corporation's regulations requires advance approval as an "alternate search protocol" (ASP). The same advance ASP approval is necessary if a grantee, subgrantee, placement site, volunteer station or other partner is not following all of the regulation's requirements when they directly perform the background checks.

Background Checks

Relying upon a school system to perform background checks requires the Corporation's approval of an alternate search protocol. Grantees may assume that the Corporation will approve any public school system's process as an ASP if the school system follows its state and local governmental regulations. While the Corporation does not need detailed information on the public school system's processes, the grantee must commit to ensuring that the schools follow their own procedures. A request to use a non-public school system's background check process is evaluated based on how the activities are performed.