



Child Abuse Registry Annual Report

June 2023

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Executive Summary:

Iowa Code 235A.14 requires the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to organize and staff a central registry for child abuse information.

Iowa Code 235A.23 requires HHS to issue an annual report on the central registry regarding its administrative operation and data relevant to child abuse information.

Introduction:

Iowa Code 235A.23, requires HHS to issue an annual report on its administrative operation, including information as to the number of requests for child abuse data, the proportion of requests attributable to each type of authorized access, the frequency and nature of irregularities, and other pertinent matters.

Overview:

The Central Abuse Registry is an electronic database used to store report data and disposition data, in accordance with Iowa Code section 232.71D, relating to a particular case of alleged child abuse which has been determined to be founded (confirmed and placed on the registry). This database is part of the Statewide Tracking of Assessment Reports (STAR) system, which was converted on January 1, 2014 into a web-based application within the Child Welfare Information System, referred to as JARVIS, which stands for Joining Applications and Reports from Various Information Systems. HHS maintains the Registry at central administrative offices in Des Moines, Iowa.

HHS collects, maintains, and disseminates child abuse information from the Registry as provided in Iowa Code chapter 235A. The Registry contains report data and disposition data, which includes the names of child abuse victims and the names of persons responsible for the child abuse and links these names to the type of abuse identified in the Child Protective Assessment report.

The existence of the Registry is imperative for the protection of victims and potential victims of child abuse by serving as a single, statewide source of child abuse data. This data is also used to facilitate research on child abuse and as an employment-screening tool for authorized employers and licensing boards. Iowa Code sections 135C.33 and 235A.15 define who has authorized access to the child abuse data listed on the Registry.

As a central, front door component of the Registry, HHS maintains a toll-free telephone line (1-800-362-2178), which is available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, including holidays. HHS staff and all other persons may use this line to report cases of suspected child abuse.

Upon receipt of a report of suspected child abuse, the records of the Registry are searched to determine if the records reveal any previous report of child abuse involving the same child, or any other child in the same family, or the person alleged responsible, or other pertinent information with respect to those individuals. This information is provided to the appropriate HHS personnel and law enforcement if applicable.

History and Law Changes Impacting Child Abuse:

1989 through 1995

The Automated Child Abuse and Neglect (ACAN) system was used to store only Registry data (founded child abuse reports) for all Child Abuse Investigations prior to the full implementation of STAR in 1997.

August 1996

The STAR system was developed to store all child abuse data. Prior to this time, 19 counties had implemented Child Protective Assessments (replacing Child Abuse Investigations) and entered child abuse data into Starbase, Starbase was an interim data base system utilized from December 1995 to August 1996. On August 19, 1996, the remaining counties also began implementing Child Protective Assessments and entering child abuse data in the STAR system.

July 1997

Child abuse data for all incidents reported statewide, with an intake date of July 1, 1997 or later, were entered in the STAR system. The ACAN system continued to be utilized for child abuse record checks for incidents prior to July 1, 1997.

Child Protective Assessments were fully implemented statewide during fiscal year 1998 (July 1, 1997 - June 30, 1998). Polk County was the exception, postponing implementation until September 1998. Child Protective Assessments eliminated the use of Child Abuse Investigations and drastically changed the legacy agency DHS approach to allegations of child abuse by creating a more positive and strength-based approach to working with families.

Iowa Code amendments in 1997 resulted in a differentiation of findings or outcomes of Child Protective Assessments and a determination made as to whether the incident would be placed on the Registry. This resulted in a significant change in the maintenance of case records, authorized access, and dissemination procedures. Cases where the abuse was not confirmed and cases where abuse was confirmed but not placed on the Registry were not maintained on the Registry. Rather, these cases were maintained at the local county offices and collectively within the STAR system.

July 1999

STAR programming had not been completed for the production of cumulative statewide reports on all data elements as reported on the A-4 report produced from ACAN data for the past decade. The five regions were providing monthly STAR data to the program manager for data needs until STAR reports were fully available.

July 2000

STAR data became accessible as a test site on the DATA Warehouse link.

July 2005

Child abuse data became available on the legacy agency Department of Human Services (DHS) website, currently located at: <https://hhs.iowa.gov/reports/child-abuse-statistics>

July 2011

Iowa Acts 2011, chapter 28/House File 562:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to add medical or mental health treatment, and supervision and modified the standard for failure to provide adequate supervision to mean “the person failed to provide proper supervision of a child that a reasonable and prudent person would exercise under similar facts and circumstances and the failure resulted in direct harm or created a risk of harm to the child”.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to clarify that “child abuse” or “abuse” shall not be construed to hold a victim responsible for failing to prevent a crime against the victim.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.71D to restrict the name of an alleged perpetrator of sexual abuse who is age thirteen or younger from being placed on the central abuse registry and with a court order finding good cause, to restrict the name of an alleged perpetrator of sexual abuse who is age fourteen through seventeen from being placed on the central abuse registry.
- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.19 to change the timeframe to appeal a child abuse report from six months to ninety days.
- Directed legacy agency DHS to continue work to ensure the due process rights of a person alleged to have committed child abuse are addressed in a timelier manner while also ensuring that children are protected from abuse. As a result, the following actions were put into place:
 - The legacy agency DHS director agreed to add a staff position to process appeals from the proposed administrative law judge decisions filed and taken by the legacy agency DHS to the director.
 - The Attorney General's Office and the Department of Inspections and Appeals implemented procedure to expedite appeals in cases where employment is at risk, offering the parties the opportunity to have an appeal heard as quickly as six weeks after notification of the appeal.
 - The Attorney General's Office agreed to temporarily shift resources to add additional assistant attorneys if necessary to prevent back logs and delays in expedited appeals (those having employment implications).

July 2012

Iowa Acts 2012, chapter 1082/House File 2226:

- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.19 to require that any proposed decisions made after July 1, 2012 will be the final decision after 45 days if there is not a final decision made prior to that time.

- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.18 to require that a person named on the Registry as having abused a child shall have their name removed from the Registry if that person has not had another founded subsequent report within the ten-year period.
- Directed legacy agency DHS to provide recommendation to the General Assembly regarding the length of time a person named in a child abuse report as having abused a child should remain on the registry and the circumstances under which the legacy agency DHS may remove the name of a person named in the report as having abused a child from the report and disposition data prior to the expiration of a ten-year period.
- Charged the legacy agency DHS with completing a comprehensive review to determine whether to recommend implementation of a differential response to child abuse reports. Upon implementation, a differential response system would ultimately decrease the number of persons listed on the Registry for less serious types of abuse.

January 2014

Iowa Acts 2013, chapter 115/House File 590:

- Amended Iowa Code chapter 232 to implement a differential response system to include two discrete pathways to respond to accepted reports of child abuse. The child abuse assessment pathway requires a determination of abuse and a determination of whether criteria for placement on the Registry are met. The family assessment pathway identifies the families' strengths and needs, connects the family to the appropriate services needed, and does not include a determination of abuse or a determination of whether criteria for placement on the Registry are met. The federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act (CAPTA) also support the use of Differential Response Systems.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.71D to require the child abuse information from a confirmed report of abuse to be placed in the Registry as a case of founded child abuse if the person responsible has a previous confirmed or founded case within the previous 5 years.
- Amended Iowa Code section 235A.18 to require a person's name to be removed from the Registry after 5 years if that person committed physical abuse, denial of critical care (DCC), or presence of illegal drugs in a child's body (PIDS) and the child abuse did not result in the child's death or serious injury and that person has no further abuse within that 5-year period.

July 2016

Iowa Acts 2016, chapter 1063/Senate File 2258:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 232.2, 232.58, 232.68, 232.70, 232.71B, 232.102, 232.104, 232.127, 232.183, 237.1, and 237.14A to:
 - Implement federal requirements from the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183) which required:
 - Efforts to combat Human Trafficking
 - Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard for Foster Care
 - Another Planned Permanent Living Arrangement for only those 16+
 - Transition Planning for 14+
 - Implement federal requirements from the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act of 2015 (P.L. 114-22, an amendment to the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act), which required:

- Child Sex Trafficking to be a new type of child abuse
- Workers to identify, assess, and provide services for victims of sex trafficking
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to modify the child abuse definition of sexual abuse to include a perpetrator as any person who resides in a home with the child.
- Directed a stakeholder workgroup be established to address Drug Endangered Children.

July 2017

Iowa Acts 2017, chapter 86/House File 543:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.2 to modify the definition of child in need of assistance to include cocaine, heroin, and other synthetic opioids to the list of dangerous substances for which a child could be adjudicated as a child in need of assistance.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to expand the child abuse category “Manufacturing/Possession of a Dangerous Substance with intent to manufacture” now referred to as “Dangerous Substance” to include cocaine, heroin, and other synthetic opioids to the list of dangerous substances for which a Child Abuse Assessment is required to be assigned, rather than a Family Assessment.
- Amended Iowa Code section 232.77 to require healthcare providers involved in the delivery or care of an infant affected by any substance abuse or withdrawal symptoms resulting from prenatal drug exposure or Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, to notify legacy agency DHS.

Iowa Acts 2017, chapter 117 /House File 526:

- Amended Iowa Code section 709.21 to modify the definition of Invasion of Privacy-Nudity (sub-category of Sexual Abuse) reflecting that a person no longer has to have knowledge of being viewed, photographed, or filmed to meet the definition.

July 2018

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1165/Senate File 2418:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.68 to:
 - Modify the child abuse definition of Sexual Abuse to apply to a caretaker or a person who is 14 years or older and resides in a home with the child.
 - Modify the child abuse definition of Allows Access by a Registered Sex Offender and clarify exceptions.
- Established a Mandatory Reporter Workgroup to make recommendations relating to mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse reporter training and certification requirements.

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1050/Senate File 360:

- Amended Iowa Code section 233, the Newborn Infant Custody Release Procedures (Newborn Safe Haven Act), to:
 - Allow parents to release a newborn infant up to 30 days of age.

- Allow parents to utilize 911 to relinquish physical custody to a first responder and provide for confidentiality of any transcripts of recording.
- Provide direction for the first responder to:
 - Perform any reasonable acts necessary to protect the physical health or safety of the newborn infant.
 - Transport the newborn to the nearest institutional health facility.
 - Provide any parent identification or medical history information to the institutional health facility.
 - Notify the legacy agency DHS of the newborn released under the Act.
- Require the first responder who assumes custody of a newborn be provided notice of any hearing held concerning the newborn and may provide testimony.

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1137/House File 2445:

- Amended Iowa Code to repealed section 232.80, which required Homemaker Home Health Aide Services to be provided prior to removal of a child.
 - These services have not been available since 2005 when the current service array was established yet some courts were still upholding this reasonable effort standard since the requirement had not been removed from the law.

Iowa Acts 2018, chapter 1113/House File 2444:

- Amended Iowa Code section 232.69 to add an employee, owner, operator, or other person who performs duties for a Children's Residential Facility as a mandatory reporter.

July 2019

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 114/House File 224:

- Amended Iowa Code section 709.14 to expand the definition for the sexual abuse sub-category, lascivious conduct with a minor.

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 47/Senate File 346:

- Amended Iowa Code section 708.16 to add female genital mutilation (also known as FGM, female genital cutting, and female circumcision) to the criminal code, requires the Crime Victim Assistance Division of the Office of the Attorney General to initiate an educational campaign to create awareness, and requires the University of Iowa hospitals and clinics to develop educational programming, including protocols for physicians to provide safe health care and treatment for victims of FGM.

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 125/House File 642:

- Amended Iowa Code section 217.30 to provide for the legacy agency DHS to share confidential information outside of the 20-day child abuse assessment period with the Central Iowa Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Multi-Disciplinary Team (CICSEC MDT).
 - This CICSEC MDT exists to identify services for children who are victims of, and children at risk of becoming victims of, human trafficking.
 - This CICSEC MDT currently operates in Polk County.
 - This CICSEC MDT is the only MDT that meets the legal requirements to share confidential information outside of the 20-day assessment period.
 - All other legacy agency DHS MDTs with valid MDT Agreements are bound by Iowa Code chapter 235A and Iowa Administrative Code section 441-175.36.

Iowa Acts 2019, chapter 91/House File 731:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 232.69 and 235B.16 to modify mandatory child abuse and dependent adult abuse reporter training requirements as follows.
 - Removed the legacy agency Department of Public Health's responsibility to review and approve mandatory reporter training curricula.
 - Required the legacy agency DHS to develop and provide the core training curriculum, including the initial training as well as the additional training, for all mandatory reporters in Iowa.
 - Allowed for an employer to provide supplemental training as it relates to their professional practice, in addition to the core training curriculum provided by the legacy agency DHS.
 - Maintained that every mandatory reporter must complete two hours of training within six months of employment or self-employment, but required additional training every three years (as opposed to every five years).
 - The child and dependent adult abuse trainings can no longer be combined into one two-hour course. Both the child and dependent adult abuse core trainings are two hours each.
 - All mandatory reporters are required to take the initial two-hour training once, but will be allowed to take a one-hour recertification training (also provided by the legacy agency DHS) every three years thereafter so long as they do so prior to the three-year expiration period.
 - Clarified that all valid mandatory reporter training certificates issued prior to July 1, 2019 remain effective for five-years.
 - Additional relevant information:
 - The initial 2-hour trainings are hosted on the legacy agency DHS Learning Management System, linked on the legacy agency DHS website, and available by July 1, 2019.
 - The additional 1-hour recertification trainings are available by July 1, 2022.
 - The trainings are free.
 - The trainings are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- Pre and post tests are required to ensure competencies are attained.
- Upon completion of the training, a certificate of completion will be available to the participant.
- See the HHS mandatory reporter webpage for more information:
<https://hhs.iowa.gov/child-welfare/mandatoryreporter>

The Family First Prevention Services Act (as part of Division E in the Bipartisan Budget Act of 2018, with implementation dates in 2019)/H.R. 1892:

- Amended federal law to:
 - Support prevention services.
 - The law gives states and tribes the ability to target their existing federal resources into an array of prevention and early intervention services to keep children safe, strengthen families and reduce the need for foster care whenever it is safe to do so.
 - Provide support for kinship (relative) caregivers.
 - Provides federal funds for evidence-based Kinship Navigator programs that link relative caregivers to a broad range of services and supports to help children remain safely with them and requiring states to document how their foster care licensing standards accommodate relative caregivers.
 - Establishes requirements for placement in residential treatment programs and improves quality and oversight of services.
 - Allows federal reimbursement for care in certain residential treatment programs for children with emotional and behavioral disturbance requiring special treatment.
 - Improves services to older youth.
 - Allows states to offer services to youth who have aged out of foster care up to age 23, along with adding flexibility to the Education & Training Voucher (ETV) program.

July 2021

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 40/House File 260:

- Amended Iowa Code section 237A.1 to define “child care home” and “child development home” as follows:
 - 6. “Child care home” means a person or program providing child care to any of the following children at any one time that is not registered to provide child care under this chapter, as authorized under section 237A.3:
 - a. Five or fewer children.
 - b. Six or fewer children, if at least one of the children is school-aged.
 - 7. “Child development home” means a person or program registered under section 237A.3A that may provide child care to seven or more children at any one time.

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 123/House File 452:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 152C.5B, 152C.5C, 157.4A, 157.4B, and 710A to create four new sections relating to certain civil and criminal enforcement activities involving the practice of massage therapy and cosmetology to discourage activities involved in human trafficking and amends human trafficking laws to align with these new sections.

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 78/House File 710:

- Amended Iowa Code section 726.6 to allow for a sex offender to be criminally charged with child endangerment if he or she has control of or unsupervised contact with a minor who is not the sex offender's child or step-child.
 - This amendment did not change legacy agency DHS practice as child abuse laws already address this situation and applies the same exceptions, under child abuse allegations of Allows Access to a Registered Sex offender.

Iowa Acts 2021, chapter 161/House File 743:

- Amended Iowa Code section 13B.9 to provide that where the public defender has provided representation in a Chapter 232 proceeding which has ended in termination of parental rights (TPR), the "local public defender office shall represent in a subsequent adoption proceeding any indigent party who files an adoption proceeding pursuant to section 600.3 to adopt" the child who was subject to the TPR action. If a conflict arises, the public defender's office is to fund outside representation by a contracted attorney.

Iowa Acts 2021/Senate File 253:

- Amended Iowa Code sections 692A.102, 709.3, and 709.4 to define "sexual abuse in the second degree" and "sexual abuse in the third degree" as follows:

709.3 Sexual abuse in the second degree.

1. A person commits sexual abuse in the second degree when the person commits sexual abuse under any of the following circumstances:

- a. During the commission of sexual abuse the person displays in a threatening manner a dangerous weapon, or uses or threatens to use force creating a substantial risk of death or serious injury to any person.*
- b. The other person is a child.*
- c. The person is aided or abetted by one or more persons and the sex act is committed by force or against the will of the other person against whom the sex act is committed.*

2. Sexual abuse in the second degree is a class "B" felony.

709.4 Sexual abuse in the third degree.

1. A person commits sexual abuse in the third degree when the person performs a sex act under any of the following circumstances:

- a. *The act is done by force or against the will of the other person, whether or not the other person is the person's spouse or is cohabiting with the person.*
 - b. *The act is between persons who are not at the time cohabiting as husband and wife and if any of the following are true:*
 - (1) *The other person is suffering from a mental defect or incapacity which precludes giving consent.*
 - (2) *The other person is fourteen or fifteen years of age and any of the following are true:*
 - (a) *The person is a member of the same household as the other person.*
 - (b) *The person is related to the other person by blood or affinity to the fourth degree.*
 - (c) *The person is in a position of authority over the other person and uses that authority to coerce the other person to submit.*
 - (d) *The person is four or more years older than the other person.*
 - c. *The act is performed while the other person is under the influence of a controlled substance, which may include but is not limited to flunitrazepam, and all of the following are true:*
 - (1) *The controlled substance, which may include but is not limited to flunitrazepam, prevents the other person from consenting to the act.*
 - (2) *The person performing the act knows or reasonably should have known that the other person was under the influence of the controlled substance, which may include but is not limited to flunitrazepam.*
 - d. *The act is performed while the other person is mentally incapacitated, physically incapacitated, or physically helpless.*
2. *Sexual abuse in the third degree is a class "C" felony.*

July 2022

Iowa Acts 2022, chapter 1115/House File 2420:

- Extended the safe haven law to a newborn infant who is, or appears to be ninety days of age or younger. This is extended from what was thirty days.

Iowa Acts 2022, chapter 1078/House File 2168:

- Added massage therapists as mandatory reporters of both child abuse and dependent adult abuse and required each hour of completed training to be included toward the annual continuing education requirement.

Iowa Acts 2022, chapter 1066/House File 803:

- Addressed duties performed by physician assistants, including the responsibility to take referrals by the legacy agency DHS for a physical examination of a child and report back regarding the examination within twenty-four hours; the responsibility to conduct outpatient physical exams as ordered by the juvenile court, the ability to take a child into custody without court order, and the authorization to provide medical or surgical procedures to safeguard the child's life or health.

Iowa Acts 2022, chapter 1153/House File 2589:

- Included amendments to juvenile delinquency, child in need of assistance and family in need of assistance proceedings, juvenile justice reform, and juvenile court expenses and costs:
 - Amended definition to court appointed special advocate (CASA), fictive kin, foster care, guardian ad litem (GAL), neglect, putative father, relative, siblings (recognizing siblings as blood relatives even after termination of parental rights), and safety plan (clarifying that a safety plan is not a removal).
 - Moved the Child In Need of Assistance (CINA) citations from section 232.2 to 232.96A.
 - Required an allegation of Denial of Critical Care or an allegation of Dangerous Substance to be reported within five years to qualify as child abuse.
 - Removed the requirement for a written report of suspected abuse to be submitted within 48 hours of the oral report and maintains that only an oral report is required.
 - Updated the provision for multidisciplinary teams to allow for them to be utilized during ongoing case management services as well as during a child protective assessment.
 - Amended CINA proceedings as it relates to temporary custody of a child, judicial proceedings, termination of parent-child relationship proceedings, and family in need of assistance proceedings to promote initiatives of the Family First Prevention Services Act, including:
 - A requirement that the GAL must be an attorney and not a CASA,
 - An addition of “objective criteria” to be used in GAL recommendations,
 - A presumption that it is in the best interest of children 10 years and older to attend court,
 - Allows for the removal of “domestic abusers” from the residence pursuant to a court order,
 - An underscoring of the harm caused by removal of a child and that it must be weighed against the potential harm in allowing a child to remain with the child’s family,
 - A prioritization of relatives and fictive kin as preferred placements,
 - Providing notice to adult relatives, even if the custody is not transferred to legacy agency DHS,
 - Permission for legacy agency DHS to share information necessary to explore potential relative placement,
 - A focus on family interaction even when parents fail to comply with court requirements, so long as it’s not detrimental to the child, and
 - Reasonable efforts to place siblings together.
 - Provided that unused funds for decategorization services remain available for expenditure for the next three succeeding fiscal years.
 - Transferred oversight and responsibility of the maintenance of cost of juvenile homes as well as early intervention/graduated sanctions from legacy agency DHS to Juvenile Court Services, beginning July 2023.
 - Transferred oversight and authority of Juvenile Detention Home Funds to the Department of Human Rights, beginning July 2023.

Iowa Acts 2022, chapter 1141/House File 2591:

- Omitted “for a limited period of time” from the eligibility for child care assistance, raises foster care eligibility to 21 years of age for foster family and Supervised Apartment Living (SAL) settings, obsoletes the requirement for an annual report on spending for independent living, adds additional requirements to ensure sibling contact post adoption, opens adoption and termination of parental rights records upon request of the adopted adult, and provides the legacy agency DHS the ability to

communicate with financial institutions and the Social Security Administration during a dependent adult abuse assessment or evaluation and provides financial institutions and the Social Security Administration with independent access to dependent adult abuse information.

Iowa Acts 2022, chapter 1055/House File 2390:

- Clarified the duties of a court appointed special advocate, adds a definition for “fictive kin”, provides direction regarding duties of the state board, including foster care registry and local citizen foster care review boards, and amends case permanency plan expectations to include a child’s fictive kin.

July 2023

See [2023 Law Changes Impacting Child and Dependent Adult Welfare](#)

Child Abuse Record Checks

In accordance with Iowa Code, HHS processes Registry requests for child abuse background checks for employers, licensing, registration, and certification as well as other state child welfare agencies. In addition, HHS completes background checks for the general public with signed authorization of the individual being checked. In 2022, HHS manually processed a total of 50,129 requests and authorizations for child abuse information.

In addition to Registry requests manually processed, authorized employers have access to the Single Contact Repository (SING)* application to perform background checks. A search of the Child Abuse Registry on SING provides whether there is or is not a "hit" on the Registry for the potential employee. SING does not provide the details as to the type of abuse or the circumstances surrounding the abuse. If the potential employers of a statutorily defined program requests approval to hire, HHS will review criteria as defined in Iowa Administrative Code and indicate whether the employee is or is not prohibited from serving in the specific employment role based upon the registry placement. In 2022, there were 264,553 total requests through SING.

Considering both Registry requests and SING requests, there were a total of 314,682 requests for child abuse information in 2022. This is an increase from calendar year 2021, which totaled 256,917 in 2021. HHS is also responsible for the Registry of Dependent Adult abuse record checks and record maintenance. This information is available in the Dependent Adult Abuse Registry Annual Report.

*SING is an internet application originally developed and sponsored by the State Department of Administrative Services until 2014. The Office of the Chief Information Officer and the Information Technology Enterprise currently sponsor SING. SING allows registered users to perform background checks on potential employees, volunteers, and students doing clinicals, from a single web screen. The application lets a user check Iowa criminal history, the sex offender registry, two abuse registries (child and dependent adult abuse), and over 40 Public Health professional license types from one click on the screen.

A historical overview of how the record check process has evolved over time is provided by State Fiscal Year (SFY):

SFY 1996

- The field offices opted to process child abuse record checks in the local county offices for day care registration, day care center licensure, adoption and foster care. This process became necessary as a result of the significant time for the Registry to process the employment checks due to the increasing volume of checks.
- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to implement the Open Registry law. This law allows anyone to check the child abuse record of another with that person's authorization. Data regarding this access and usage method by the public is provided in the table below entitled " Authorizations to Release Child Abuse Information".

SFY 1999

- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to include access to child abuse information for the Department of Justice, Prosecutors Review Committee and for the general public to have access to child abuse information in cases of child fatalities and near fatalities.
- The implementation of the STAR system is the only automation change for the Registry since ACAN was implemented in 1989. Microfilm continued to be a method of storage.

SFY 2001

- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to add school districts to the authorized list of entities with access for employee and volunteer record checks. Access was also added for professional licensing boards.

SFY 2002

- Iowa Code chapter 235A was amended to increase access to the Registry. The child abuse record checks for childcare staff employment was centralized to a single unit (from field offices to the central office) after reorganization January 14, 2002.
- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was also amended to add hospitals to the authorized list of entities with access for current and prospective employee record checks.

SFY 2004

- Iowa Code section 235A.19 was amended to eliminate the Registry review requirement in the appeal process. A person appealing a founded abuse report is no longer required to have a

Registry review decision in order to proceed to an administrative hearing. All appeals are processed through the legacy agency DHS Appeals Division.

SFY 2005

- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to allow access by providers of care for children who are victims of abuse or to the records of persons responsible for abuse. Access was also added for the Early Access services, or a federal, state or local governmental unit or agency of the unit that has a need for information in order to carry out its responsibilities under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.

SFY 2006

- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended to allow access by nursing school programs and mandate the Board of Educational Examiners to submit child abuse record checks.

SFY 2012

- Iowa Code section 135C.33 (Senate File 2164) was amended to allow for an exemption from requirements of reevaluation of record checks for health care facility employment if an evaluation by the legacy agency DHS previously approved employment and current record checks do not indicate a crime was committed or founded abuse record was entered subsequent to that evaluation.
- Iowa Code section 237A.5 (Senate File 2164) was amended to add that a person employed by a child care facility or child care home provider who is hired by another child care facility or child care home provider, shall be subject to a record check. This amendment also allowed for an exemption from any requirements for reevaluation of record checks if an evaluation by the legacy agency DHS previously approved employment and current record checks do not indicate there is a transgression that was committed subsequent to that evaluation.

SFY 2013

- Iowa Code chapters 135B and 135C (Senate File 347) were amended to allow for conditional employment in a hospital or a health care facility and also for conditional participation in a training program for up to 60 calendar days pending completion of the evaluation. These amendments established that if an evaluation was previously performed by the legacy agency DHS and the legacy agency DHS determined the person's criminal and abuse backgrounds did not warrant prohibition of employment a person who is or was employed by a hospital and is hired by another hospital the person may commence employment or a new employee may commence employment after 30 days, if the conditions specified in the Act are met.

SFY 2017

- Iowa Code chapter 135C.33 was amended (2017 Iowa Acts, chapter 58/House File 576) to require temporary staffing agencies to conduct criminal, child abuse, and dependent adult abuse record checks and have an evaluation completed by the legacy agency DHS prior to hiring certain health care providers.
- Iowa Code 217 was modified (2017 Iowa Acts, chapter 57/House File 547) to add a new section, (217.45) allowing the legacy agency DHS to conduct background investigations on potential employees and contractor, vendors, or employees with access to federal tax information. The investigation must include a work history, state and national/FBI criminal history, which requires fingerprinting.

SFY 2018

- Iowa Code chapter 235A.15 was amended (2018 Iowa Acts, chapter 1104/House File 2427) to allow free clinics (as defined in Iowa Code section 135.24A) to have independent access to child abuse information for the purpose of record checks of potential volunteers and existing volunteers at the free clinic.

SFY 2019

- As noted in the “Law Changes Impacting Child Abuse” section, Iowa Code section 217.30 was amended (2019 Iowa Acts, chapter 125/House File 642) to provide for the legacy agency DHS to share confidential information outside of the 20-day child abuse assessment period with the Central Iowa Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Multi-Disciplinary Team (CICSEC MDT).

SFY 2020

- Iowa Code chapter 217 was amended (2020 Iowa Acts, chapter 1112/Senate File 2360) to add a new section (217.44) to require the legacy agency DHS to conduct criminal and child and dependent adult abuse record checks of current and potential employees and volunteers who have direct contact with the department’s clients. These persons are also subject to the record check evaluation process.
- Iowa Code section 235A.15 was amended (2020 Iowa Acts, chapter 1102/House File 2585) to clarify the access to child abuse information was to the superintendent of the Iowa school for the deaf rather than superintendent of any school for the deaf.
- Iowa Code section 135C.2 was amended (2020 Iowa Acts, chapter 1029/Senate File 2299) to add a new subsection defining “comprehensive preliminary background check” to include a criminal history check of all states in which the applicant has worked or resided over the seven-year

period immediately prior to submitting an application for employment that is conducted by a third-party vendor.

- Iowa Code section 135C.33 was amended (2020 Iowa Acts, chapter 1029/Senate File 2299) to allow a health care facility or provider (as defined in Iowa Code section 135C.33(5)) to utilize a third-party vendor to perform a comprehensive preliminary background check.

Data Summary

In Calendar Year (CY) 2022, HHS processed 7,059 requests for entities with authorized access for employment and licensure. This request includes a check and documentation on an individual's abuse record or provision of the written report. The following table indicates the types of requests received.

Requests for Child Abuse Information

Year	Employment	Child Care *	School/ College	Foster Care *	Adoption *	CCR&R	Medical Facility	Volunteer	Church	Other **	Total
2022	1,172	1,225	898	409	224	79	67	40	18	2,927	7,059

*Many record checks for child care home providers and licensed center staff are processed by county offices and are not included in the totals indicated in the table above. The foster parent and adoptive parent record checks processed by county offices are also not included in the total number of requests for child abuse information.

** Other includes other state child welfare agency requests.

The public is allowed to submit a request for information on an individual if that individual provides signed authorization. In CY 2022, HHS processed 43,070 requests from the entities identified in the table below. Authorizations received since SFY 1998 are included.

Authorization for the Release of Child Abuse Information

Year	Employment	Child Care *	School/ College	Foster Care *	Adoption *	CCR&R *	Medical Facility	Volunteer	Church	Other **	Total
2022	20,087	910	13,948	559	255	72	69	2,902	4,141	127	43,070

*Child care, foster care, adoption, and CCR&R subcategories generally do not require authorization unless the checks are accessed via SING.

** Other includes persons in addition to the subcategories listed who do not have independent access.

General Child Abuse Data Findings

HHS generates statistics for child abuse and neglect. The following table provides the total number of reports of suspected abuse that were accepted for assessment of child abuse and the breakout of findings for those assessments.

Calendar Year	Assessments	Abuse Founded	Abuse Confirmed	Abuse Not Confirmed	Family Assessments
2022	34,512	7,010	1,507	19,693	6,302
2021	35,593	6,966	1,577	20,323	6,727
2020	30,151	6,398	1,537	15,766	6,450
2019	33,004	6,891	1,623	17,947	6,543
2018	35,029	7,286	1,057	19,328	6,958
2017	33,418	7,023	1,535	17,724	7,136
2016	25,707	5,266	1,218	11,766	7,457
2015	24,298	4,811	1,231	10,787	7,469
2014	23,562	4,380	1,154	10,259	7,769
2013	26,129	6,678	2,233	17,218	NA

The data counts each accepted child protective assessment, which may include one child or multiple children per assessment. This data counts only the assessment and not individual children.

Conclusion

The Child Abuse Registry is a statewide listing of persons who were found to have abused or neglected a child. Access to the Registry is limited to persons or entities with authorized access, as provided by Iowa law. The annual Child Abuse Registry Report provides the General Assembly with non-confidential data related to the purpose of the Registry and serves as a tool for ongoing data analysis.

Please see the Child Welfare Data and Reports on the HHS website for more information on topics including child abuse statistics, outcomes, and Differential Response: <https://hhs.iowa.gov/reports/child-welfare-data-and-report>