

Single Contact Repository

The state's Single Contact Repository (SCR) allows health care facilities licensed under Iowa Code Chapter 135C to obtain information via the Internet needed to assist them in the hiring of prospective employees. House File 439 created the SCR in 1997, an act relating to the development of a repository for criminal history, abuse and sex offender registries, and nurse aide and other health profession certification and licensing information. The bill further required that the Department of Inspections and Appeals (DIA) to "lead a joint effort with the Departments of Human Services, Public Health, Elder Affairs, and Public Safety to plan the development of a single contact repository to permit employers, political subdivisions, and state agencies to obtain ... information with one contact."

During the summer of 1997, an Abuse Information Repository Workgroup met to discuss the implementation of a centralized database similar to that described in HF 439. Following an analysis of existing databases and the various possibilities for accessing the information, the Workgroup supported a recommendation from the Office of Information Technology Services (ITS) that would split the SCR into two separate components: A front-end processing system, and a back-end data access system. ITS estimated an initial start-up cost of approximately \$259,000 with an annual maintenance cost of \$32,500.

Funding

Funding for the start-up costs of the SCR were divided between two fiscal years. The initial program funding was provided in 1998 in House File 2395. The bill appropriated \$125,000 to the Department of General Services, division of information technology services, for development and other start-up costs to establish a single contact repository. Funding for this portion of the project came from excess lottery revenues. During the following Legislative Session, an additional \$152,000 was appropriated to the Department of Inspections and Appeals for the SCR in House File 762. The source for the second-year funding was the Reversion Technology Initiatives Account. For Fiscal Year 2001, \$60,000 in federal funding was made available to support the ongoing costs associated with the SCR.

Implementation

Currently, all 135C-licensed health care facilities have this service available for use. The facilities and entities having access to the Repository's information includes:

- 420 nursing facilities,
- 52 skilled nursing facilities,
- 286 residential care facilities,
- 140 intermediate care facilities for persons with mental illness or the mentally retarded,
- 180 home health agencies, and
- Numerous elder group homes, assisted living facilities, adult day care providers, and providers of services under federal medical assistance home and community-based services waivers.

The Repository contains information from 50 different and distinct state data bases, including 45 professional licensing data bases, the Nurse Aide Registry, the Dependent Adult and Child Abuse registries, the DCI's criminal history data, and the Sex Offender Registry. The Repository is designed to display up-to-date data so that the user will know immediately if an applicant has passed all the background checks. An applicant who has either an abuse or criminal history record will still have to be evaluated for employment by the Iowa Department of Human Services (DHS).

The advantages to a nursing facility of using the Single Contact Repository include:

- Faster response to initial inquiries,
- One free maiden name search without charge,
- Lower fees for criminal history background checks (\$10 versus \$13 for manual checks), and
- Instant access to multiple data bases.

Use of the Single Contact Repository satisfies both State and Federal requirements for obtaining a criminal history and abuse background check on potential employees. Facilities can document these checks by simply 'screen printing' the responses from the system.

During the current fiscal year, the SCR has logged 134,563 inquiries.

Introduction to the Single Contract Repository (SING)

The Single Contract Repository (SING) is an Internet application that allows registered users to perform background checks on potential employees. The application lets a user check criminal history, three abuse registries (child, dependent adult, and sex offender), and over 40 professional license types from a single web screen. This data resides on various platforms within state government, including a mainframe and several departmental LAN servers.

The SING web site is a secured site - only registered users can access the information.

Prior to the implementation of SING, employers were required to mail, phone, or fax their requests to several different state agencies. The turnaround time for background checks was often days, or even weeks. Approximately 89% of background checks reveal no potential impediment to employment. For those 89%, the turnaround time via SING is now only a few seconds. Since SING is fully automated, it also frees up state employees' time so that they can provide a quicker turnaround on the 11% of background checks that require further investigation.

Sample Screen 1

On the screen below, we see the results of a background check for John Doe, who is applying for a job as a physical therapist. Mr. Doe has an active physical therapist license, but there is a possibility of dependent adult abuse and criminal history. For the potential dependent adult abuse, the employer is directed to call for more information. For the potential criminal history, a request for further information has automatically been faxed to the Department of Public Safety.



Single Contact License & Background Check

Enter Information

Last Name
Maiden Name
First Name
SSN
DOB
Male Female
Professional License Type
Professional License #
Abuse Registries Check
Criminal History Check (\$)
Volunteer

Session Will Time Out At 8:52:40 AM

Physical Therapists License					
Name	SSN	Address	City	State	Zip
DOE, JOHN	111-11-1111	311 N W 56ND ST	DES MOINES	IA	50312
License #	Status	Issued			
00010	Can Practice.	1965-11-08			

Abuse Registries Background Check				
	Last Name	First Name	DOB	SSN
Selection Criteria	doe	john	1950-January-01	111111111
Registry	Results			
Sex Offender	Not found in Registry			
Child Abuse	Not found in Registry			
Dependent Adult Abuse	Call DHS: (515)281-5582			

Criminal History Background Check				
	Last Name	Maiden Name	DOB	SSN
Selection Criteria	doe		1950-January-01	111111111
Results	Possible hit - Research request has been sent.			

Background Check Complete As Of 7/28/00 8:48:44 AM

Sample Screen 2

On the screen below, we see the results of a background check for Jane Roe, who is applying for a job as a doctor. Ms. Roe checks out cleanly on the abuse and criminal history registries. However, she is not licensed to practice medicine in the state of Iowa.



Single Contact License & Background Check

Enter Information

Last Name
 Maiden Name
 First Name
 SSN
 DOB
 Male Female

Professional License Type
 Professional License #
 Abuse Registries Check
 Criminal History Check (\$)
 Volunteer

Session Will Time Out At 8:52:40 AM

Medical License	
Status	Description
Record Not Found	This individual is currently ineligible to work in Iowa. This individual is not found on the Iowa Medical License Database. Please contact the Iowa Board of Medical Examiners at 515-281-0948, or email to ibme@bon.state.ia.us .

Abuse Registries Background Check				
	Last Name	First Name	DOB	SSN
Selection Criteria	roe	jane	1950-January-01	111111222
Registry		Results		
Sex Offender	Not found in Registry			
Child Abuse	Not found in Registry			
Dependent Adult Abuse	Not found in Registry			

Criminal History Background Check				
	Last Name	Maiden Name	DOB	SSN
Selection Criteria	roe	doe	1950-January-01	111111222
Results				
Not found in Database				

Background Check Complete As Of 7/28/00 8:58:23 AM

FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions)

When did SING become available?

SING was implemented in the spring of 2000. It is currently processing about 1,000 queries a day.

Who can use SING?

In its pilot program, SING was limited to Iowa health care facilities. We are now starting to add additional groups of employers. Priority will be given to employers who a) are required by Iowa law to do background checks, and b) are regulated by state agencies.

Is the information kept current?

Unlike many Internet applications, SING does not rely on replicated (copied) data. There is no need to wait for a nightly or weekly refresh. This ensures that employers will be able to make hiring decisions based on accurate, timely information.

Isn't some of that information confidential?

Yes, it is. Not all employers will have access to all of the information.

If a person gets a "potential hit" on the criminal history or abuse registries, does

that mean that they should not be hired?

No. It only means that further investigation is needed. There are many reasons why a person could get a potential hit. An applicant may have the same name and birth date as an abuser. A criminal may have used someone else's social security number. The applicant may in fact be on the registry, but their crime may be irrelevant to the job. Calling the number(s) indicated will provide the employer with the details necessary to make the decision.

Has SING won any awards?

(This isn't really a frequently asked question, but we like to brag a little.) The State of Iowa was nominated for a Computerworld Smithsonian Award for SING's innovative use of technology. If you want to know more, please link to this site: [Computerworld Smithsonian 2000](#)

What is innovative about SING?

Iowa is the only state to provide its employers with the capability of performing so many different background checks from a single web screen. SING performs its background checks against the original registries, rather than using point-in-time copies, which become out-of-date between refreshes. In addition to ensuring that employers receive up-to-date information, SING's technique provides an extra measure of security. Each confidential database is stored in its original secure location, and no where else. No data resides on the web server itself. This means that SING must communicate with multiple databases (from different vendors) on multiple platforms (also from different vendors).

SING Architecture

