Caregiver Screening and Health Clearance: A National Practice Module

Screening caregivers before and after hire.

Why this module matters. Caregivers have unsupervised access to vulnerable people. Background checks, registry and exclusion screening, and health clearance are basic protections and are required in most states.

About this module

This module gives teams a shared, evidence-based approach to screening caregivers before and after hire. It draws on current federal rules and national guidance, and it ends with a checklist that agencies, clinicians, and families anywhere in the United States can adopt.

Item	Details
Who it is for	Agency owners, HR staff, supervisors, and families hiring privately
Format	6 units, case scenarios, a knowledge check, and a national checklist
Time	About 1 to 1.5 hours
How to use it	HR and leaders use all units. Families use Unit 6.

Learning objectives

After completing this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain why screening matters.
2. Describe federal and state screening requirements.
3. Run checks step by step.
4. Monitor workers after hire.
5. Apply checks fairly.
6. Guide families hiring privately.

Scope. This module explains national rules in plain language. It is not legal advice. Rules change, and state rules vary, so confirm requirements with your state agency or a qualified adviser.

Unit 1. Why screening matters

Home care workers have unsupervised access to vulnerable people, their homes, and their belongings. Screening before hire is a basic protection for clients and a legal requirement in most states.

Measure	Figure	Source
Direct care workers in the United States	Nearly 5.4 million (2024)	PHI, 2025
States awarded funds under the National Background Check Program	28 states, more than $65 million	CMS
Fraud losses reported by people 60 and older (2024)	Nearly $4.9 billion	FBI IC3, via AARP

Unit 2. The national framework

Check	What it is	Basis
Criminal background check	State and often FBI fingerprint-based checks for workers with direct access	State law; CMS National Background Check Program
State registries	Nurse aide registry, home care aide registry where the state has one, and abuse or neglect registries	State law; 42 CFR 483.156 (nurse aide registries)
Exclusion screening	OIG List of Excluded Individuals and Entities (LEIE) and state Medicaid exclusion lists, before hire and monthly	OIG; Social Security Act §1128
Sex offender registry	National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) and state registries	State law; best practice
Tuberculosis screening	Baseline screening at hire: risk assessment, symptom check, and a blood test (IGRA) or skin test (TST). No routine yearly testing unless exposed or at higher risk.	CDC 2019 recommendations; state law
Hepatitis B vaccination	Must be offered to workers with blood exposure risk	OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030
Employment eligibility	Form I-9	Federal law
Driver checks	License and insurance if the worker drives clients	Agency policy; insurer

> **State rules decide the details.** The National Background Check Program, created by the Affordable Care Act, covers home health agencies, hospice, and personal care providers among others, but each state sets its own process and disqualifying offenses.

Unit 3. Running the checks: step by step

1. Get written consent and give required notices, including under the Fair Credit Reporting Act if using a consumer reporting agency.
2. Submit fingerprints or name-based checks as your state requires.
3. Check every required registry and exclusion list, and print or save results.
4. Complete TB screening and health clearance as required.
5. Review results against state disqualifying offenses. Follow state rules on provisional employment.
6. If a result may disqualify the person, follow the adverse action steps required by law.
7. Keep all records securely and confidentially.

Unit 4. Ongoing monitoring

Check	How often
OIG LEIE and state exclusion lists	Monthly
State registries	Yearly, or as required; some states send alerts
Criminal background	As required by state law; some states use “rap back” alerts
Licenses and certifications	Before expiration
Driver’s license and insurance	Yearly
TB	After a known exposure, or yearly symptom checks for untreated latent TB

Unit 5. Fairness and legal limits

- Apply the same checks to all applicants for the same role.
- Follow federal equal employment rules and state “fair chance” laws on when and how to consider records.
- Consider whether an offense is relevant to the job and how long ago it occurred, where state law allows.
- Give the applicant a chance to respond to errors.

Unit 6. For families hiring privately

Families hiring a caregiver directly do not get the agency's screening. They can:

- Ask for consent and use a reputable background check service.
- Check state registries and the OIG LEIE online.
- Check references from previous clients.
- Ask for TB test results and proof of training.
- Consider using an agency or a registry that screens caregivers.

Case scenarios

Case 1. Monthly screening finds a match

A caregiver's name appears on the OIG LEIE in a monthly check.

- What should the agency do?

Discussion: Confirm the match, remove the person from federally funded work, consult counsel on any billing affected, and document.

Case 2. A positive TB test

A new hire with no symptoms has a positive TB blood test.

- What happens next?

Discussion: A clinician evaluates for active TB, usually with a chest X-ray. If latent TB, treatment is strongly encouraged; the worker can usually work while being treated.

Knowledge check

1. How often should exclusion lists be checked? *(Before hire and monthly)*
2. Does CDC recommend routine yearly TB testing for health care workers? *(No, unless exposed or at higher risk)*
3. Which law created the National Background Check Program? *(The Affordable Care Act)*
4. Which vaccine must be offered to workers with blood exposure risk? *(Hepatitis B)*
5. What must a family do before running a background check? *(Get the caregiver's written consent)*

National Caregiver Registry and Health Clearance Checklist

This checklist turns federal and common state screening requirements into one tool for agencies and families. The “National basis” column shows where each item comes from. Adapt it to your state rules and policies.

Name or ID	Date	Completed by and role
Agency or organization	Reviewed by	Next review date

A. Before hire

Action	National basis	Done	Notes
Written consent and required notices	FCRA; state law	☐	
Criminal background check as required by state	State law; National Background Check Program	☐	
State aide, abuse, and neglect registries checked	State law	☐	
OIG LEIE and state exclusion lists checked	OIG	☐	
Sex offender registry checked	NSOPW; state law	☐	
Baseline TB screening completed	CDC 2019; state law	☐	
Form I-9 completed	Federal law	☐	
Driver’s license and insurance verified, if driving	Agency policy	☐	

B. After hire

Action	National basis	Done	Notes
Hepatitis B vaccine offered if at risk	OSHA 29 CFR 1910.1030	☐	
Monthly exclusion screening	OIG	☐	
Registries and licenses rechecked on schedule	State law	☐	
Records stored securely and confidentially	Best practice	☐	

C. Fairness

Action	National basis	Done	Notes
Same checks for all applicants in a role	EEOC guidance	☐	
State fair chance and adverse action rules followed	FCRA; state law	☐	

Completed by: signature	Printed name and title	Date
Reviewed by: signature	Printed name and title	Date

Sources and further reading

CMS: National Background Check Program (cms.gov)

CDC: TB screening of health care personnel, 2019 (MMWR) (cdc.gov)

Crowell: OIG General Compliance Program Guidance (crowell.com)

PHI: Direct Care Workers Key Facts 2025 (phinational.org)

AARP: FBI report on 2024 fraud losses (aarp.org)

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