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Illinois Expedites Health Care Waiver Application Process for Applicants with Arrests or Convictions

Human Resources & Employment

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker has signed into law an amendment to the Health Care Worker Background Check Act, which provides an expedited process for applicants with arrest or conviction records to seek a waiver to work in the healthcare industry. Over the next 10 years, the healthcare field is projected to be the fastest growing sector in Illinois.

Previously, the process of conducting a background check would only begin once the prospective healthcare employer made a conditional offer of employment. If the background check revealed a record of conviction for certain offenses, then the conditional offer could be terminated unless the applicant obtained a statutory waiver.

Now under the new provisions effective as of July 31, 2019, both “workforce intermediaries” (like a job training program) and pro bono legal service organizations may initiate a background check on behalf of an applicant before any conditional offer of employment being made. This will allow the applicant to seek a waiver without having to wait for the healthcare employer.

As one of the bill’s sponsors explained, “By getting these background checks done upfront, we provide a greater level of transparency between applicants and employers, avoid wait times and help Illinoisans with criminal records have a better shot at getting a job.”