

Certificate of Parental Improvement (CPI)

❖ **Read this only if** you live or have lived in the state of Washington and have a finding of child abuse or neglect against you here.

Should I read this?

Yes, if both of these are true:

- You have a founded finding of child abuse or neglect in Washington State, especially one that caused you to lose work because you could not pass a background check due to a CPS finding.
- 5 years have passed since the finding was made.

A CPI could help you also if you were in a dependency and the court found that you abused or neglected your child.

What does a CPI do?

It can make it easier to work with children or vulnerable adults, such as in day care or in health care, or be a foster care placement if you can show that the reasons for the findings are no longer problems for you.

For example, you may have CPS findings because of old criminal convictions. After some time, these convictions may be expunged (removed) from your record. You might have completed all the requirements of their sentence. The issues that led to the criminal conduct no longer exist. They should not keep you from working.

Why is CPS doing this now?

NJP filed a lawsuit because people of color were more likely than others to be investigated and have founded findings. Because of a settlement with NJP and the state, the Legislature passed this law to give people with older founded findings a chance to work.

Am I eligible to get a CPI?

Yes, **if all these are true:**

- It's been 5 years since you last had a founded finding from CPS.
- It's been more than 2 years since you had a CPI denied.
- Your finding did not involve certain kinds of physical abuse of a child (shaking, use of a deadly weapon).
- You haven't already been issued a CPI and then had another finding of abuse of neglect afterward.
- You don't have any of these types of felony convictions on your criminal record.
 - Any felony offense involving the physical neglect of a child under chapter [9A.42](#) RCW;
 - Any felony offense under chapter [9A.32](#) or [9A.36](#) RCW involving a physical injury or death of a child;
 - Any felony domestic violence offense committed against a family or household member as defined in chapter [10.99](#) RCW;
 - A felony offense against a child under chapter [9.68A](#) RCW;
 - Any felony defined under any law as a class A felony or an attempt to commit a class A felony;
 - Criminal solicitation of or criminal conspiracy to commit a class A felony;
 - Manslaughter in the first or second degree;
 - Indecent liberties;
 - Kidnapping in the second degree;
 - Arson in the second degree;
 - Extortion in the first degree;
 - Robbery in the second degree;
 - Drive-by shooting; and
 - Vehicular homicide.

How do I get a CPI?

You make an application to the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). They have 60 days to review and make a decision. If they deny (turn down) the application, you can appeal to a judge.

CPS will consider if you are now safe to work with children or vulnerable adults. They look at records they have and records or information you give them. It is important to show how your life has changed for the better. Examples might include:

- showing that you've finished school to work as a nursing assistant
- records showing you've gotten mental health or substance use treatment that may have been the cause of your CPS involvement
- you have had no criminal convictions or other problems with the law
- you volunteer or help other people in your community
- recommendations from people who know you and know you could do the work safely
- Any other information or statements from people that show that you can safely work with children and adults or have overcome the issues that led to your CPS involvement

❖ Any person or employer who completes a DSHS or state background check can still see that you have a founded finding, but they are no longer barred from hiring you if you have a CPI.

Does a CPI guarantee I will get a job?

No. Employers do not have to hire you even if you have a CPI. The finding may still show up on your background check.

Does a CPI destroy my CPS records?

No. CPS will still have records from the investigation and the founded finding.

Can I get a CPI for APS founded findings?

No.

How do I ask DCYF for a CPI?

- CPS has created forms for you to use.
- You can also go to this link to apply: www.dcyf.wa.gov/safety/can-founded-findings/cpi.
- There is no cost to apply for one. You may need to get copies of records to support your application. Those may cost money.
- You may need to email records to CPS to prove you should get a CPI. **Make sure you give CPS these records with your name and contact information** so CPS doesn't lose track of them.

What if I am denied?

- You have the right to appeal.
- You must appeal within 45 days of the date of the denial. CPS must get your request before 45 days has passed.
- If you don't appeal, you can't apply for another CPI for two years.

Where can I read the CPI law?

Here: RCW [74.13.720](#) and [730](#). Agency rules will be coming soon.



www.WashingtonLawHelp.org

Get Legal Help

Outside King County, call the CLEAR Hotline at 1-888-201-1014 weekdays between 9:15 am - 12:15 pm.

In King County, call 2-1-1 weekdays between 8:00 am - 6:00 pm. They will refer you to a legal aid provider.

Seniors (age 60 and over) can also call CLEAR*Sr at 1-888-387-7111, statewide.

You can also apply online with CLEAR*Online: nwjustice.org/get-legal-help.

This publication provides general information concerning your rights and responsibilities. It is not intended as a substitute for specific legal advice.

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