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SCREENING SERVICES • VERIFICATION • DATA

SCREENING METHODS

Professional Background Screening vs. Fingerprint Screening

What each approach checks, where each is commonly used, and how they work together.

Both approaches look for criminal history, but they search different sources, match records differently, and serve different purposes. Understanding each helps you choose the right screening for the role.

Side by side

	Professional background screening	Fingerprint screening
WHAT IS SEARCHED	Court records at the county, state, and federal level, plus registries, watchlists, and databases selected for the package.	State criminal history repositories and/or the FBI's national fingerprint-based records, built from arrests submitted with fingerprints.
HOW RECORDS ARE MATCHED	Name plus identifiers such as date of birth and address history, then confirmed with the source.[1]	Biometric comparison of fingerprints to records in the repository.
CASE OUTCOMES	Researchers can confirm the current status and final outcome of a case directly with the court.	Depends on arrests being fingerprinted and on outcomes being reported back, so some records may be incomplete.[3]
BEYOND CRIMINAL HISTORY	Can add employment, education, and license verification, driving records, and references.	Focused on criminal history records.
COMMON USES	Employment, tenant screening, volunteers, contractors, and vendors.	Positions and licenses where federal or state law requires a fingerprint check.
RULES & RIGHTS	Regulated by the FCRA: consent, accuracy, and dispute rights.[2]	Access limited to purposes authorized by law; applicants can review and challenge their FBI record.[3,4]

SOURCES

1 FCRA §607(b), reasonable procedures to assure maximum possible accuracy, 15 U.S.C. §1681e. www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/15/1681e

2 FCRA §604, permissible purposes, disclosure, authorization, and pre-adverse action, 15 U.S.C. §1681b. www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/15/1681b

3 28 CFR §50.12, exchange of FBI identification records. www.law.cornell.edu/cfr/text/28/50.12

4 FBI CJIS, Electronic Departmental Order (request your Identity History Summary). www.edo.cjis.gov/

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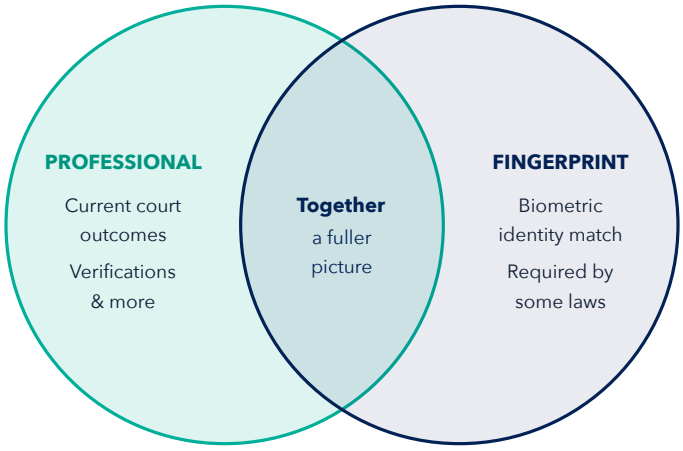
Better together



How they complement one another

Identity meets detail

A fingerprint match ties reported arrests to a person; a court search confirms how each case was resolved.

Records at the source

Court searches can surface cases that may not appear in a fingerprint repository, such as those never submitted.

More than criminal history

Professional screening adds verification of employment, education, licenses, and references.

Choosing the right approach

Does a law or licensing body require fingerprints?

Yes – complete the required fingerprint check. Many organizations add professional screening for current court detail and verification.

No fingerprint requirement?

Professional screening tailored to the role – with FCRA consent, accuracy, and dispute protections built in.[2]

Source Data LLC provides professional background screening. Ask us how it can complement any fingerprint requirements your organization has.

SOURCES

1 FCRA §607(b), reasonable procedures to assure maximum possible accuracy, 15 U.S.C. §1681e. www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/15/1681e

2 FCRA §604, permissible purposes, disclosure, authorization, and pre-adverse action, 15 U.S.C. §1681b. www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/15/1681b

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