

*NINE AGENCIES. ONE PLATFORM.
MILLIONS OF VULNERABLE FLORIDIANS PROTECTED.*

AHCA'S BACKGROUND SCREENING & DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION INTEGRATION



**FLORIDA'S AGENCY
FOR HEALTH CARE
ADMINISTRATION:**

**CARE PROVIDER
BACKGROUND
SCREENING UNIT**

CATEGORY:

Cross-Boundary Collaboration

PROJECT DATES:

2025, Ongoing

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND SCREENINGS ARE REQUIRED FOR INDIVIDUALS WORKING IN FLORIDA'S AGENCY FOR HEALTH CARE ADMINISTRATION'S (AHCA) LICENSED FACILITIES AND MEDICAID PROVIDER ENROLLMENT TO ENSURE THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF THE POPULATION THEY SERVE.

In 2025, Florida successfully integrated the Florida Department of Education (DOE) into the Florida Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse, extending the nation's most comprehensive multi-agency background screening infrastructure to cover every school district and every classroom across the state, including sixty-seven school districts. **In the first year of implementation, 538,790 screenings were processed, extending protection to more than 1 million Florida students.** This project was a full-scale, statutory implementation that has proven effective, and was built on a foundation that has been operating, expanding, and delivering results since 2013.

The Florida Care Provider Background Screening Clearinghouse, established under section 435.12(2)(c), Florida Statutes, unifies nine state agencies under a single technology platform, shared screening infrastructure, and common performance standards. Eight other Health and Human Service Agencies all operate through one system, eliminating redundant screenings, duplicated costs, and jurisdictional gaps that once created real risk for Florida's most vulnerable citizens.

Since 2013, this collaborative model has **saved Florida more than \$220 million** by eliminating redundant screenings, with **\$50 million saved in FY2026 alone**. AHCA, the parent of the Clearinghouse, processes more screenings than all other Clearinghouse agencies combined. The Clearinghouse is not a pilot, a proof of concept, or a bilateral agreement, it is a statutory, permanent, and expanding cross-boundary infrastructure that protects Florida's most vulnerable citizens while driving operational excellence across nine agencies and multiple workforce sectors.

THE CLEARINGHOUSE DID NOT JUST DIGITIZE A PROCESS, IT REIMAGINED ACCOUNTABILITY ACROSS NINE AGENCIES AND MULTIPLE WORKFORCE SECTORS, PRODUCING \$220M IN SAVINGS AND PROTECTING MILLIONS OF FLORIDIANS.



IDEA

The Problem This Project Addresses

Before the Clearinghouse, Florida's background screening system was fundamentally fragmented. Nine agencies operated independently, with no shared data, no shared standards, and no visibility into what another agency had already determined. A care worker cleared by one agency could obtain a disqualifying criminal record and remain unknown to every other agency that had not independently re-screened them. Duplicate screenings, redundant fees, and inconsistent eligibility outcomes were common. Florida's existing systems had not yet provided the infrastructure needed to fully support vulnerable populations.

The 2012 Florida Legislature directly addressed this through **section 435.12, Florida Statutes** creating the Clearinghouse mandate with AHCA as the parent. But the initial implementation left DOE overseeing all employees and hundreds of thousands of volunteers across 67 districts outside the framework. DOE relied on a separate, antiquated system, leaving school hiring offices to manage parallel processes and school districts to absorb duplicative costs.

Launched in 2023 and operational as of April 7, 2025, the DOE integration project completed the Clearinghouse's founding vision: one platform, serving every regulated sector of Florida's care and education workforce.



Why It Matters

Prior to the DOE integration, every school district in Florida conducted background screenings independently, with no shared infrastructure, no centralized records, and no mechanism to ensure consistent eligibility outcomes across districts. This changed on April 7, 2025. All school personnel screenings now flow through a single centralized database accessible to all 67 school districts, eliminating duplication and closing gaps that independent screening created.

This was more than a technology upgrade thanks to AHCA's background screening staff who are experienced reviewers with a proven record of accuracy and statutory precision. Initial eligibility reviews for every school personnel screening are processed through the Clearinghouse. Every district receives the same rigorous, informed determination rather than outcomes that vary based on local capacity or interpretation.

The protection does not stop at the point of hire. If any individual connected to a Florida school district is arrested anywhere in the state, every district that individual is affiliated with receives an automatic arrest notification from the Clearinghouse system. That continuous monitoring capability, combined with AHCA's centralized review, means Florida's school children are protected not just on the day someone is hired, but every day after.



What Makes it Different

- **Statutory Permanence:** Unlike voluntary interagency arrangements that may change with leadership changes, the Clearinghouse is embedded in Florida Statutes (s.435.12; s.1012.32). It is accountable, and permanent.
- **Cross-Sector Architecture:** The DOE integration did not require a new platform. It extended the existing Clearinghouse infrastructure to a new sector. This interoperability approach is unique nationally and demonstrates a scalable model for cross-sector expansion.
- **Shared Savings at Scale:** The Free Agency Review model, where cleared applicants moving between sectors or employers receive no-cost re-verification, **saved \$47.4M in the last year alone**. This collaborative cost-sharing mechanism is unmatched in any state screening program.
- **Transparent Cross-Agency Performance:** AHCA's cross-agency dashboard makes each participating agency's screening volume, turnaround time, and cost visible to all partners an unusual accountability mechanism that drives continuous improvement across agency lines.

What Makes it Universal

Every state operates health care and education background screening, though almost none do it on a unified platform. Florida's model provides a replicable framework:

- A statutory centralized network clearinghouse framework designed for seamless adaptation across states with screening mandates
- Cross-sector expansion methodology (healthcare to education) demonstrating how a single platform can serve multiple regulated workforce categories
- Free Agency Review concept: cost-saving re-verification mechanism applicable in any multi-agency environment
- Alignment with NASCIO's CIO Top Ten Priorities: shared services, cross-boundary collaboration, and workforce modernization

IMPLEMENTATION

Roadmap and Governance Architecture

The Clearinghouse operates through a statutory centralized model. AHCA owns the platform developed through a contracted staff project team; multiple state agencies, including DOE coordinate through it.

The DOE integration was executed in three phases to ensure compliance, adoption, and technical readiness.

FY2023: FRAMEWORK & PILOT	AHCA and DOE established the statutory framework under s.1012.32. Employer enrollment workflows developed. FDLE pipeline extended to cover DOE applicant fingerprint submissions.
FY2024: STATEWIDE ROLLOUT	All 67 Florida school districts enrolled. DOE-specific employer portal access activated. Cross training delivered to district HR offices and approximately 11,000 system users.
FY2025-FY2026: SCALE & OPTIMIZE	DOE fully operational at 538,790 screenings and counting. Florida Arrest Hit Notifications (RAP Back) monitoring extended to DOE employers for ongoing notifications. Performance dashboard updated to include DOE as a specified agency. DOE integration contributes to \$50M+ in system savings. Free Agency Review extended to education sector allowing school district hires to leverage existing active Clearinghouse screenings.



Who Was Involved

STAKEHOLDER GROUP	ROLE IN THE PROJECT
AHCA BACKGROUND SCREENING UNIT	Project ownership, strategy, technology, and execution; DOE partnership lead
FLORIDA DEPT. OF EDUCATION (DOE)	Regulatory alignment, district enrollment, employer adoption (67 districts)
FDLE	Fingerprint processing pipeline, RAP Back event notifications
FLORIDA LEGISLATURE	Statutory authority (s.435.12; s.1012.32) and Clearinghouse policy approval
67 FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICTS	End-user adoption — teachers, staff, volunteers screened via the platform
4K+ ENROLLED EMPLOYERS	Healthcare and education providers across all Clearinghouse agency types

How We Did It

The Clearinghouse's cross-boundary model was built on a principle of interoperability without rebuilding. AHCA extended the existing platform rather than procuring a new one, a decision that saved millions in development costs and accelerated the DOE rollout timeline.

- **Technology:** Clearinghouse applications support background screening, provider access, internal analyst processing, and data exchange. This is existing, proven, scalable technology with expansive real-time API allowing for easy integration with legacy systems. Custom-built web service to allow for real-time data exchange with Clearinghouse and Livescan vendors. Customizable CJIS-compliant enterprise workflow management system used to process background screenings.
- **Governance:** Standing interagency coordination group chaired by AHCA; DOE Clearinghouse coordinator role established at state and district level
- **Stakeholder Adoption:** AHCA-led onboarding for DOE HR offices; employer enrollment support for 67 school districts, private, specialty, and charter schools; communications plan co-developed with DOE to reach district superintendents and school principals
- **Financial:** Legislatively approved budget for contract project staff and 10 FTE's for DOE Criminal History review section.
- **Legislative:** AHCA actively engaged the Florida Legislature on both the original Clearinghouse statute and the DOE expansion ensuring that the collaboration has permanent legal standing, not just administrative agreement.

IMPACT

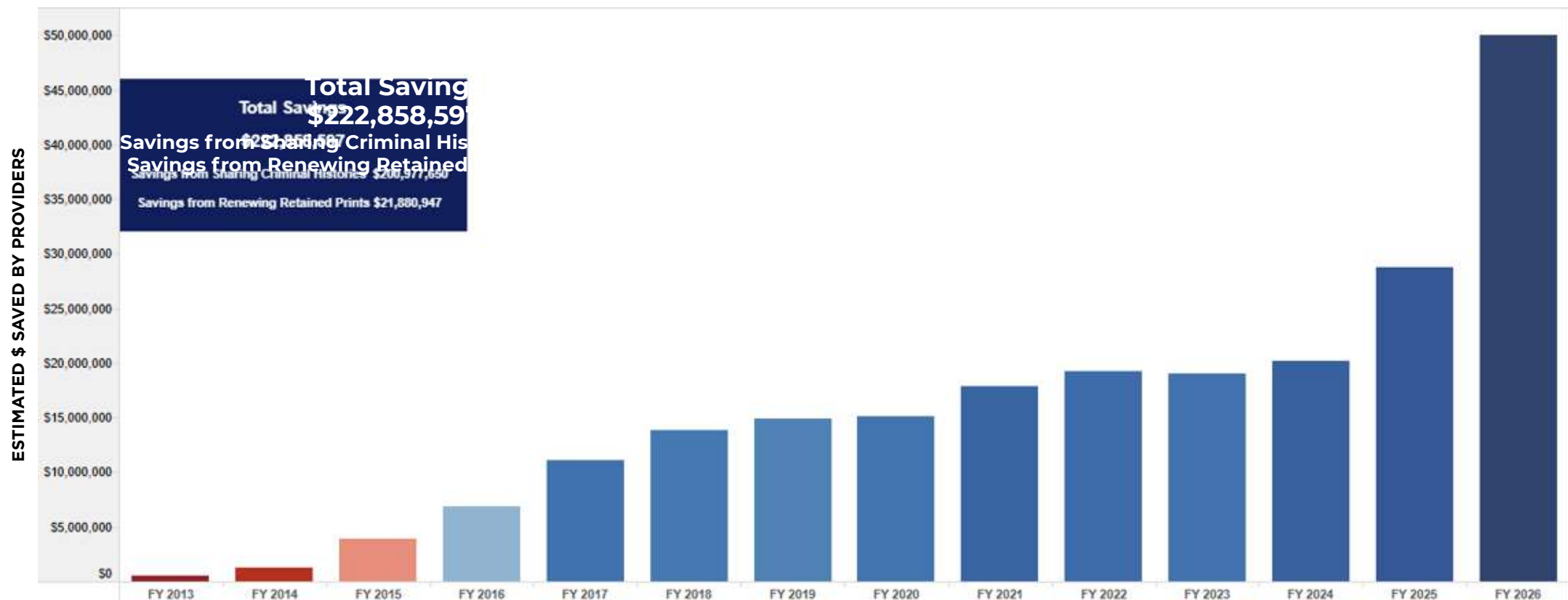
What This Project Made Better

The cross-boundary model's impact depicts results and improvements in every sector it touches:

METRIC	BEFORE DOE INTEGRATION	AFTER DOE INTEGRATION	IMPACT
DOE SCREENINGS ON PLATFORM	0	538,790 (FY2026)	ENTIRE NEW SECTOR ON BOARD
SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED	0	67 OF 67 FLORIDA DISTRICTS	100% STATEWIDE ADOPTION
STUDENTS PROTECTED (ONGOING MONITORING)	GAP: DOE OUTSIDE OF CLEARINGHOUSE NOTIFICATIONS	1M+ STUDENTS COVERED	SAFETY GAP ELIMINATED
CROSS- SECTOR FREE AGENCY REVIEWS	NOT POSSIBLE	EDUCATION ↔ HEALTHCARE CLEARANCES SHARED	COST SAVINGS EXTENDED
TOTAL ANNUAL SCREENINGS (PLATFORM)	~670K (AHCA ONLY)	1.17M+ (AHCA + DOE)	+75% VOLUME SERVED
LIFETIME SYSTEM SAVINGS	GROWING	\$220M+ SINCE 2013	CATEGORY-DEFINING ROI



Annual Cost Savings: Clearinghouse System-Wide:



How Do We Know? – Quantitative Evidence

The data shows large-scale, multi-agency screening activity, major cost savings, and faster processing times across the shared platform.

INDICATOR	FY2026 RESULT
DOE SCREENINGS PROCESSED	538,790
AHCA SCREENINGS PROCESSED	841,162
ALL OTHER AGENCIES COMBINED	718,754
TOTAL PLATFORM SCREENINGS	1,170,000+
ENROLLED EMPLOYERS (ALL SECTORS)	4,000+
ACTIVE RECORDS IN DATABASE	10M+
FREE AGENCY REVIEW SAVINGS	\$47,366,550
TOTAL SYSTEM SAVINGS (FY26)	\$50,071,758
YOY SAVINGS GROWTH (FY-FY26)	+74% (\$28.8M→\$50M)
LIFETIME SAVINGS GROWTH	\$220M+
AHCA AVERAGE TURNAROUND	1.5 DAYS (FROM 11-14 DAYS)
CALL CENTER WAIT TIME (AHCA)	UNDER 7 MINUTES (FROM 120M+ MIN)
STUDENTS PROTECTED BY ONGOING MONITORING	1,000,000+



What Now? Future of the Cross-Boundary Model

- **NATIONAL RAP BACK PARTNERSHIP:** AHCA is pursuing an FBI CJIS National RAP Back program, extending ongoing monitoring to out-of-state criminal events across ALL Clearinghouse agencies. A teacher who commits an offense in another state would trigger notifications to their Florida school district employer. This expands the cross-boundary model beyond state lines.
- **APPLICANT SELF-INITIATION:** Allowing applicants to pre-screen before arriving at an employer, eliminating a structural friction point for both healthcare and education hiring pipelines and benefiting both sectors simultaneously.
- **DIGITAL EXPERIENCE MODERNIZATION:** Mobile-responsive portal enhancements and real-time applicant status notifications, extending digital equity to school districts and rural healthcare employers accessing the platform.

FLORIDA'S CLEARINGHOUSE IS NOT A COMPLETED PROJECT. IT IS A LIVING, EXPANDING INFRASTRUCTURE. THE DOE INTEGRATION PROVED THAT A SINGLE PLATFORM CAN GROW ACROSS SECTOR LINES WITHOUT REBUILDING. THE NATIONAL RAP BACK INITIATIVE WILL PROVE IT CAN GROW BEYOND STATE LINES. THE INVESTMENT IN THIS CROSS-BOUNDARY MODEL HAS COMPOUNDED RETURNS ACROSS EVERY AGENCY THAT JOINS IT, AND FLORIDA'S TRAJECTORY IS CLEAR: EVERY NEW PARTNER STRENGTHENS THE SAFETY NET AND DEEPENS THE SAVINGS FOR ALL.

6 Agencies | 67 School Districts | 10M+ Active Records | \$220M+ Saved | 1M+ Students Protected