

What to Expect and How to Prepare for a Background Check as Part of the CSLB Licensing Process

Getting a Contractor's State License Board (CSLB) license is an important step for any construction professional. However, before you can get licensed, you need to undergo a background check. This process can seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. In this guide, we'll take a look at what you can expect and how you can prepare for a background check as part of the CSLB licensing process.

What to Expect

When you apply for a CSLB license, you will need to provide personal information, such as your name, address, and Social Security number. The CSLB will use this information to conduct a criminal background check. Here's what you can expect during the process:

1. Fingerprinting

As part of the background check, you will need to get fingerprinted. The CSLB will send you a fingerprint kit after you submit your application. You can either take the kit to a law enforcement agency or use a live scan service provider to get your fingerprints taken. The live scan service provider will electronically transmit your fingerprints to the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) for processing.

The Live Scan Process

If you choose to use a live scan service provider, you will need to schedule an appointment with them. When you arrive at the provider, you will need to provide your valid form of identification and pay the live scan processing fee. The provider will then take your fingerprints using a digital scanner, which will capture an electronic image of your fingerprints. The image will be electronically transmitted to the DOJ and FBI for processing.

The DOJ and FBI will process your fingerprints and provide a response to the CSLB. The processing time for fingerprints can vary, but typically takes between two and three weeks. If you have a criminal history, the processing time may take longer.

2. Criminal History Review

The CSLB will review your criminal history to determine if you have any convictions that could affect your ability to get licensed. They will look at both misdemeanor and felony convictions, as well as any pending cases.

3. Personal and Professional References

As part of the background check, the CSLB will also contact your personal and professional references. They will ask about your character, work history, and any criminal convictions you may have.

How to Prepare

To ensure a smooth background check process, you should be prepared to provide the following documents:

1. Identification

You will need to provide a valid form of identification, such as a driver's license or passport, when you get fingerprinted. This is only to confirm your identity – they won't be taking either for any amount of time.

2. Court Documents

If you have any criminal convictions, you should gather all court documents related to those convictions. This includes sentencing documents and proof of completion of any court-ordered programs. Any information you can provide that shows that you are following court guidelines will help your case.

3. Professional and Personal References

Pick a few people that you know you can trust from both your professional and personal worlds. Ask them ahead of time if they can be contacted as part of your background check, and make sure you have their contact information if they agree. These references can go a long way, so choose people you think would paint a good picture of your character.

4. Business Documents

If you own a business, you will need to provide documents related to your business, such as your business license and articles of incorporation. An organized person has organized paperwork, and is always ready to show receipts. It's always better to be prepared with the necessary documents, rather than having to hunt something down when it's requested.

5. Application Fees

There are fees associated with the background check process. You will need to pay the fingerprint processing fee and the application fee when you submit your application. What those fees are varies depending on the status of your application, but generally hovers around \$50 at the time of writing.

Conclusion

Getting a CSLB license is the biggest step for anyone in the construction industry. While the background check process may seem daunting, it's a necessary step to ensure the safety of the public.

The live scan process for fingerprinting is a quick and easy way to get your fingerprints taken and processed electronically. By being prepared and providing all the necessary documents and fees, you can help ensure a smooth and successful background check. Good luck to you as you jump through the (necessary) hoops to getting your license!