



PDSD

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Newsletter

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE

<http://www.dm.usda.gov/ohsec/pdsd/>

ePSF and eDelivery now LIVE in PDSB

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) e-Clearance initiative, part of the overall e-GOV initiative, utilizes information technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the personnel security investigations process.

One component of e-Clearance is eDelivery, where paper investigative records are converted to electronic records and delivered to agencies through a secure connection. Obtaining the investigative records electronically speeds up the receipt time and provides a more efficient business practice in an environment of strict adjudicative timeliness goals.

PDSB worked with Rural Development (RD) to build the ePSF module within the Enterprise Content Management (ECM) system. ECM is a web-based application, with role based security, currently being used at USDA that allows users to manage documents and workflows. This includes document scanning, work assignment and routing, user workflow inbox, query and retrieval, and monitoring and reporting.

ePSF will receive closed investigations from OPM via eDelivery. Once in ePSF, the closed investigations can be routed to the appropriate adjudicator electronically. Workflows are established to route closed investigations to the assigned adjudicator to begin the adjudication process. Management will be able to use ePSF to monitor the status and timeliness of adjudications. The adjudicator will also be able to automate the business process by routing letters that require supervisory review and signature through ePSF to their supervisor.

PDSB will begin to transition hard-copy Personnel Security Folders to electronic versions in ePSF in FY13. Moving these files to an electronic version will speed the retrieval process, along with eliminating filing errors, possible damage, and future space concerns.

PDSB went live with ePSF and eDelivery on June 11th! After a period of monitoring and working out any kinks, we will begin plans to pilot test with 1-2 field offices.

OPM Audit Completed

OPM completed their program review of personnel security and human resource functions under Departmental Management (DM) and PDSB on May 3rd in the areas of:

1. Security and Suitability Adjudication (to include due process and appeals)
2. Validate Need
3. e-QIP (initiating, reviewing, approving)
4. Reporting of Suitability Determinations
5. Position Risk/Sensitivity Designation
6. HSPD – 12 (investigation compliance, process for vetting and issuing credentials)

Although the final report is still pending, OPM gave high marks and praise during the debriefing process. Additional offices at USDA will be reviewed in the future.

Political Appointee Investigation Process

PDSB recently distributed a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) guide on the background investigation process for Political Appointees (PA).

As a reminder, agencies will be responsible for providing the Request for Personnel Security Services form (AD-1187) and the Justification for Requested Security Clearance form (AD-1188) to PDSB upon notification of a new PA. PDSB will then handle the initiation process in e-QIP and the adjudication. Please refer to the SOP for further guidance.

If you have any questions regarding any of the information in the new SOP, please contact Political Appointee POC for PDSB, Valerie Ramirez at Valerie.ramirez@dm.usda.gov.

DIRECT FORM SUBMISSION TO OPM

Improving Initiation Timeliness

Since late 2011, PDSD has worked with nearly all field offices to allow them to submit investigation requests in e-QIP on public trust positions (SF85P) directly to OPM, bypassing PDSD as the middle man. This change is intended to improve the investigation initiation timeframe between USDA and OPM to consistently meet the 14 day goal.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been established with each of the following offices or mission areas: FFAS (FSA, RMA, FAS), MRP (AMS, APHIS, GIPSA), NFC, FNS, FSIS, FS, RD, and REE (ARS, NIFA, ERS, NASS).

We are now prepared to extend this authorization to investigation request for national security positions (SF86). PDSD will continue to handle all adjudications.

NOTE: Anyone who has already been initiated in e-QIP prior to the completion of the MOU will still be processed by PDSD.

Agency points-of-contact should contact Carrie Moore at carrie.moore@dm.usda.gov for additional information.

REVISED OF-306

Federal Investigations Notice (FIN) 12-06: *Revised Optional Form 306, Declaration for Federal Employment*

The 2011 version of the OF306 is now being accepted by OPM. The 2001 version will be phased out sometime in 2013.

For investigation submissions that require a 306, if the Subject has not already completed the form, please direct them to the 2011 version.

You can view all OPM FIN's at:

<http://www.opm.gov/investigate/fins/2012.aspx>

AGE RESTRICTIONS

Background Investigations on Minors

Some agencies have inquired with PDSD about conducting background investigations on minors, such as interns. Per OPM, there is no restriction on the age of an individual for OPM to be able to conduct a background investigation; however, there are several other limitations that restrict the age of who can be investigated.

The first is that no one under the age of 16 can use the e-QIP system (anyone under the age of 16 who requires an investigation will need to be submitted via a hardcopy form.) The second limitation is the amount of coverage we can provide. For anyone under the age of 18, we can only provide a maximum 2 years of coverage in the investigation, no matter the case type.

Certain state laws also restrict how old a child must be in order to be fingerprinted for employment, but that is not monitored by OPM, it is the responsibility of the agency to know the restrictions set forth by the state laws.

DIRECT SUBMISSION REMINDERS

Most agencies are now releasing their own submissions to OPM for public trust investigations. If you have any questions about the process, please contact Kim Elosser at kim.ellosser@dm.usda.gov.

e-QIP Processing Reminders:

- Please ensure INS checks are requested as needed in section B (Extra Coverage) of the Agency Use Block (AUB). Code **"H" for Subject** and code **"I" for Spouse**.
- Please ensure that you enter your agency's **Submitting Office Number (SON)** in section J of the AUB.
- Please ensure that you are listing PDSD's Security Office Identifier (SOI) (**AG00**) in section L of the AUB. This will ensure that closed cases are forwarded to our office for adjudication purposes. ****This is a critical item****
- Put your Requesting Official information in section P of the AUB. This will ensure that corrections calls are forwarded to your office. Please ensure that correction calls are followed-up on within OPM's time frame in an effort to avoid cases being returned unacceptable

webSETS Reminders:

- Ensure that a record is created for all contractor or applicant employees that are not already in the system.
- Complete the Place of Birth along with Country of Birth
- Complete the Security Package screen. Note that the "Received by PDSD" field should be left blank as our office will not be involved in the security package processing. Put your agency's SON in the "Submitting SON" field. All other fields should be completed by your agency.
- PDSD will enter the investigation information on the investigation tab in webSETS once we receive the AD-1187 from your agency.

AD-1187 and Releases:

- Please submit an AD-1187 and all release pages to PDSD for all investigations submitted to OPM once a week. The release pages will include the three signature pages, fair credit release, 306 and resume/612.
- OPM will not accept the Authorization for Release of Medical Information if it has been completed by the practitioner(s) on the bottom portion of the form for National Security request.

Fingerprints

- Fingerprints will only need to be sent to PDSD if the first print was unclassifiable and your agency did not send out the second print to OPM.

Financial Responsibility



IS YOUR HOUSE IN ORDER?

Filing your taxes and the consequences of being delinquent

Office of Government Ethics regulation 5 C.F.R. Section 2635.809 requires all Federal employees to "satisfy in good faith their obligations as citizens, including all just financial obligations, especially those such as federal, state, or local taxes that are imposed by law."

Failure to pay properly owed taxes can negatively affect an employee's suitability and ability to hold a security clearance. Additionally, employees who deliberately fail to pay their just tax obligations are subject to appropriate administrative action up to and including disciplinary and/or adverse action. Employees may receive assistance with filing tax returns or resolving the balance owed by visiting their local tax offices or by calling the IRS toll-free at 1-800-829-1040.

On March 14th, a bill, S. 1813, to reauthorize Federal-aid highway and highway safety construction programs, and for other purposes, passed the Senate. The bill includes a section to authorize the "denial, revocation, or limitation of a passport" for anyone with "a seriously delinquent tax debt in an amount in excess of \$50,000." The bill has yet to pass the House of Representatives.

TOP REASONS FOR REJECTION FROM OPM

The Defense Security Service (DSS) posted an article on the top reasons OPM rejects an investigation request. You can read it at: <http://www.dss.mil/documents/disco/Comm-on-Reasons-Clearance-Request-Is-Unacceptable.pdf>