

PDSD FALL NEWSLETTER

Welcome FY12

A YEAR IN REVIEW

What a busy and productive year! Although the Personnel Security Branch (PSB) has not been staffed at full capacity all year, we have been able to increase our investigation initiation and adjudication timeliness on public trust and national security positions in FY11. For the first time in February 2011, we met the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) adjudication goal of 20 days or less on initial national security cases. As of August 2011, we are completing initial national security adjudications in 11 days on average (goal of 20 days) and public trust adjudications in 63 days on average (goal of 90 days). We received nearly 300 more closed investigations from OPM this fiscal year than in FY10.

We are in the final programming stage for the new electronic Personnel Security Folder (ePSF) that will electronically store current hard copy files and retrieve electronic copies of background investigations from OPM via e-Delivery. We look forward to piloting the new system with other agencies in mid-2012. In May, we transitioned to the new 2010 version of the SF86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions, in the electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP) system. PSB is working with the Identity, Credential, and Access Management (ICAM) team to link adjudication results from webSETS to Person Model to eliminate duplicative entries and streamline the process for LincPass card issuance. We continue to modernize the web-based Security Entry Tracking System (webSETS) with Phase 4 changes currently underway. We will provide an updated webSETS user guide and training module in AgLearn in 2012.

We appreciate all of the hard work and cooperation we receive from the agency point-of-contacts in the field. We look forward to working with all of you in 2012 as we continue to modernize and improve the personnel security processes at USDA!

Departmental Management (DM)
Office of Homeland Security &
Emergency Coordination (OHSEC)
Personnel & Document Security
Division (PDSD)

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OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Federal Investigations Notices (FINs) in FY12

FIN 11-07 Discontinuing the 2008 Standard Form (SF) 86: Implementing the Fully Electronic 2010 SF86

<http://www.opm.gov/investigate/fins/2011/fin11-07.pdf>

This FIN details how the 2008 SF86 form will be discontinued on 10/1/11. On this date, any SF86 initiations in e-QIP will need to be done on the 2010 version of the form (the 2008 version will no longer be available for initiation in the system) and OPM will no longer accept hardcopy versions of the SF86 form. USDA implemented the 2010 version in May 2011.

FIN 11-06 Special Agreement Price Schedule <http://www.opm.gov/investigate/fins/2011/fin11-06.pdf>

This FIN details the pricing structure for checks done through the Special Agreement Check (SAC) product.

FIN 11-05 Investigations Reimbursable Billing Rates for FY12 <http://www.opm.gov/investigate/fins/2011/fin11-05.pdf>

This FIN details the billing rates that will be used for investigations conducted by OPM in FY12. Prices have not increased for FY12, and OPM is absorbing third party user fees.

FIN 11-04 Continuous Efforts to Align with Reciprocity Goals and Timeliness Standards

<http://www.opm.gov/investigate/fins/2011/fin11-04.pdf>

This FIN details some of the product line changes that will be enforced beginning 10/1/11 to align with the joint OPM and DNI reform goals to further reciprocity. Effective October 1st, OPM will no longer accept investigation requests that do not align with the August 2010 standards.

PDSO STAFF DIRECTORY

Who's Who in PDSO

Please join us in welcoming new members to our team and congratulating new promotions!

PDSO Chief: William Cody Allers joins us from NASA

PDSO Secretary/Assistant: Peter Yang (contractor) joins us on a temporary assignment. Kelly Panganiban is joining the Strategic Information team with OHSEC as a 9/11.

Senior PerSec Advisor/Analyst: Carrie Moore returns to her promotion position (GS-14) received in early 2011

Intern: Danielle Duckett (extended through 2011)

InfoSec Chief: Keith McElfresh

Senior InfoSec Specialist: Karen Maguire

PerSec Chief: Brodrick Carlton Wilcox, Sr. joins us from DOD CAF

Senior Personnel Security Specialist: Valerie Ramirez received a promotion to the GS-13 level

Personnel Security Specialist: Opal Jones received her promotion to a GS-12 in 2011 (Currently out on maternity leave)

Personnel Security Specialist: Kim Elosser received her promotion to a GS-11 in 2011

Personnel Security Assistant: Lucy Lew. 38 years at USDA and counting!

FREE OPM TRAINING

[http://www.opm.gov/investigate/
events/index.aspx](http://www.opm.gov/investigate/events/index.aspx)

Central Verification System (CVS)

Nov 7th & Dec 6th

Arlington, VA

Position Designation Automated Tool

Nov 10th & Dec 5th

e-QIP Trainer - 2-day course

Nov 8th & Dec 7th

Online End User e-QIP Training

<http://www.opm.gov/investigate/training/eqip>

Autumn 2011



Initiation timeliness and low e-QIP submission error rates depend on complete and accurate Request for Services (AD-1187) packages.

- Records must be updated or created (non-Fed) in webSETS upon e-QIP initiation and continued through until submission to PDSD or OPM for tracking purposes. Requests that are not properly updated in webSETS in FY12 will be rejected back to the agency.
- All requests for security clearances, including via reciprocity, must include a Justification (AD-1188) form.
- Submission timeliness is based on the CERTIFY date in e-QIP, not the date the Subject signs their release pages. On SF86's, the certify date should be within 7 calendar days to allow for processing at PDSD and meet the required 14 calendar day deadline to OPM.
- Reviewers must ensure the forms are accurate before releasing to PDSD. Forms that are not accurate and complete will be rejected back to the agency for correction.
- Fingerprint Reminders: Please provide (2) sets of fingerprint cards with each security package. Note: If you are using a Fingerprint SAC as the fingerprint requirement; do not submit a SAC that already shows the prints as unclassifiable. If the SAC shows results as unclassifiable, submit a new fingerprint chart to be submitted to OPM. Child care (code H) investigations require 2 additional fingerprint charts.
- Please be sure scanned images are clean and clear. We have noticed lately that OPM has rejected forms that have lines running down the page, for example.
- Question #13 on the OF-306: Please ensure that if this question is answered positively, Subject must provide additional information in section #16 to include type of debt, length of debt, and amount of the delinquency or default, and steps that they are taking to correct the error or repay the debt.
- OF-306 (general): Please ensure all questions are answered on the OF-306. If the Subject answers some questions positively, they must provide additional information as requested per question.
- Please ensure Subject fills in all blanks on the signature pages. It is not acceptable to only put your last 4 digits of SSN; the complete SSN must be listed.
- Please ensure employments listed on the resume include the complete mailing address for each employer.
- If Subject crosses out any dates, please ensure they initial the correction. Please note that OPM has informed PDSD that ONLY Subject can make corrections and initial on the signature pages. Agencies may no longer make the correction by using the FIPC 391 form.
- A user will be locked out of e-QIP after 35 days of inactivity.
- Resumes are not required for contractors. If one is submitted, it must include all information or OPM will call for corrections.

webSETS CORNER



Gaining Access

If your official duties require access to webSETS to complete your duties, complete the webSETS User Request & Acknowledgement form at <http://www.dm.usda.gov/ohsec/pdsd/forms.htm> and fax it to PDS&D at 202-720-1689. Only PDS&D can authorize access to webSETS. If approved, the user will receive a notification to complete training in AgLearn and to sign the Rules of Behavior form.

Creating a New Record

webSETS is the system of record for all background investigations at USDA. Non-federal employees, such as contractors, must have a record in webSETS. If one does not exist, select the “Add Non-Fed” button on the Home page to create a record. Ensure you are entering the correct SSN. If an error is made, delete the record and start over. As non-fed’s leave USDA, Agency POC’s must enter the “Separation Date” on the Employee Details screen to inactivate the record.

Entry on Duty Screen

This screen is used by HR on Low Risk positions. Actions taken on public trust or national security positions are tracked on the Security Package screen and should not be entered here. Enter the “**Employee Tasked**” date when an applicant or employee has been initiated in e-QIP. The Adjudicator must ensure an adjudication date and decision is selected on this screen to proper record the completed action. Proper entry is essential for report accuracy.

Security Package Screen

This screen is used to track SF85P and SF86 forms status. Agency POC’s must begin tracking on this screen when an individual has been initiated in e-QIP. Entries on this screen are required before PDS&D receives the package to process to OPM. If PDS&D is the submitter to OPM, the SON will always be AG00. If your office is approved to release directly to OPM, please enter your SON.

Reciprocity Actions

Reciprocity requests for Moderate Risk or higher positions are tracked on the Investigations screen by PDS&D. Since there are no new forms going to OPM to request a new investigation, there are no entries on the Security Package screen. Reciprocity requests can only be requested when the prior investigation is the right level, current, and has a record that it was favorably adjudicated.

Reports

A variety of reports are available for each agency to use, with several more coming in Phase 4. The accuracy of the reports is dependent on proper data entry on each screen in webSETS. Agencies are encouraged to utilize the Periodic Reinvestigation to plan their budget and initiations each fiscal year to ensure investigations do not lapse on security clearance holders.



Terms, Forms, and Acronyms

Suitability: A person's identifiable character traits and conduct sufficient to decide whether an individual's employment or continued employment would or would not protect the integrity or promote the efficiency of the service.

Security Determination: A decision that a person's access to classified information is or is not clearly consistent with the interests of National Security.

Adjudication: An examination of a person's character or conduct over time, resulting in a favorable or unfavorable determination of their employment suitability, eligibility for access to classified information, or their retention in Federal employment.

Public Trust: The category of positions at the moderate or high risk levels involving a significant degree of public trust (policy making, fiduciary responsibility, law enforcement, etc.)

Nexus: A direct or logical connection between a person's character or conduct and the integrity or efficiency of the service.

CCT: Case Closing Transmittal. An OPM form providing the investigation activity summary, results, and closing action.

Derogatory Information: Information which potentially justifies an unfavorable suitability or security adjudication.

Due Process: An opportunity to respond to derogatory information or an unfavorable decision that includes a reasonable amount of response time and appeal rights, if any.

MSPB: Merit Systems Protection Board

NACI: National Agency Check and Inquiries. The minimum level of investigation required for entry into the Federal service.

Applicant Suitability Screening: Occurs prior to selection by HR and involves a review of the application, OF 306, and any other application-related information to identify any potentially disqualifying suitability issues. Can include minimal investigative checks such as fingerprint results.

FROC: Failure to Respond to Official Correspondence. A failure to provide information after a reasonable, specific time frame has been given with written notice that failure to respond may result in negative action.

AD-1187: Request for Personnel Security Services

AD-1188: Justification for Requested Security Clearance

OF 306: Declaration for Federal Employment

SF86: Questionnaire for National Security Positions

SF85P: Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions

SF85: Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions

INV Form 79A: Report of Agency Adjudicative Action on OPM Investigations

REINVESTIGATIONS PLANNING

Agencies are encouraged to begin their national security reinvestigations within 3-6 months of their due date.

Authorized users can access webSETS to run the Periodic Reinvestigations report by clearance level to plan accordingly for the year.

OPM is finalizing their policy that will require public trust positions to undergo a reinvestigation every 5 years. Stay tuned for more guidance on implementing this new effort. Phase 4 of webSETS updates (underway) will include a new reporting capability to pull this data.

RECIPROCITY & “PLEASE CALL”

Agency points-of-contact are reminded that prior to submitting an individual for a new background investigation, it is required that CVS be verified to ensure that the Subject does not have a previous background investigation that can be transferred via reciprocity to USDA.

If it is determined that the Subject has a previous investigation that meets all requirements (appropriate investigation type, form type, etc.), please ensure that the investigation was favorably adjudicated and that there are no please call indicators or other negative actions shown on the CVS record. If a “please call” notification is marked on an individual’s record, this cannot be ignored. The Agency POC must contact the provided information to verify the nature of the please call.

Note: Any actions taken by an agency from the 79A with a response of 4 through 11 will automatically generate a “please call” indicator in CVS.

For additional information, please see the OPM link below (Guidance on Implementing Executive Order 13488, “Granting Reciprocity on Excepted Service and Federal Contractor Employee Fitness and Reinvestigating Individuals in Positions of Public Trust”)

<http://www.chcoc.gov/Transmittals/TransmittalDetails.aspx?TransmittalId=2518> or PDSD’s Bulletin on reciprocity (#10-02).

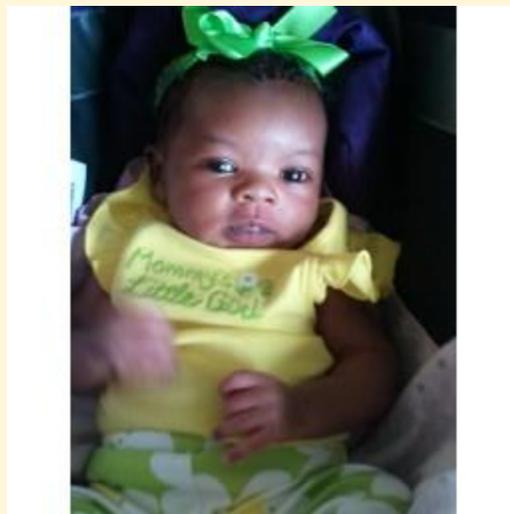
PASSING SECURITY CLEARANCES

Any employee attending a meeting or training at other Federal facilities wherein classified information is being discussed *must* have their security clearance information forwarded to the host Agency through PDSD.

Employees are not authorized to pass their own clearances. Clearance verifications should be faxed to 202-720-1689 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting. The official request form (AD-1189) can be found at:

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

Introducing Jordyn Noelle! Congrats Opal!



Opal Jones gave birth to her baby girl in September weighing in at 7lbs 4oz and 19 ½ inches long. Mommy and baby are doing great!

THIRD-PARTY DATA ENTRY (3PDE)

The Third Party Data Entry (3PDE) role was developed in the electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP) version 2.00.20 as an alternative to allow agency users to enter data directly into e-QIP on behalf of an applicant who is unable to access e-QIP. 3PDE also gives agency users a means to enter Standard Form (SF) information into e-QIP for Foreign Nationals who do not have a Social Security Number (SSN). At the current time, 3PDE is to be used only for the 2010 SF 86. The 3PDE role is limited to users who have a favorably adjudicated Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI). See the new 3PDE Job Aid in the Portal for more information. Questions can be directed to Kim Elosser at kim.ellosser@dm.usda.gov.

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