



*A New Day for the Civil Service*



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# **The Security Clearance and Investigation Process**



# OPM's Mission

***OPM's Mission is to Recruit, Retain and Honor  
a World-Class Workforce to Serve the  
American People***

OPM's Federal Investigative Services (FIS) is responsible for providing investigative products and services for over 100 Federal agencies to use as the basis for security clearance or suitability decisions as required by Executive Orders and other rules and regulations

Over 90% of the Government's background investigations are provided by OPM



# Background Investigations

## Conducted for

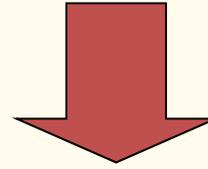
- National security
- Public trust
- Basic suitability/identity verification
- Positions regulated by the Government

## Conducted on

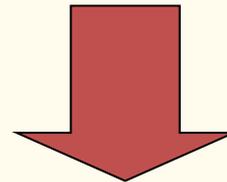
- Federal applicants and employees
- Active military personnel
- Government contractors
- Private sector employees in positions regulated by the Government

# The Security Clearance and Investigation Process

STEP 1: INDIVIDUAL IS OFFERED A POSITION REQUIRING A SECURITY CLEARANCE AND COMPLETES THE QUESTIONNAIRE TO INITIATE THE INVESTIGATION



STEP 2: INVESTIGATION CONDUCTED



STEP 3: INVESTIGATION ADJUDICATED AND CLEARANCE GRANTED





# STEP 1: Selection and Form Submission

- Individual is selected for a position that requires a security clearance
- Security clearances are granted on a need to know basis when there is a demonstrated need for access to classified information
- The employing or sponsoring Federal agency decides the level of clearance needed and requests the appropriate level of investigation



# Types of Security Clearances and Background Investigations

Clearance	Investigation	Years of Coverage
Top Secret; Department of Energy (DOE) "Q"	Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI)	10 years
Confidential/Secret; Department of Energy (DOE) "L"	National Agency Check with Law and Credit (NACLC) or Access National Agency Check with Inquiries (ANACI)	5 years

Special Access Programs, including Sensitive Compartmented Information (SCI), are usually based on the SSBI and may also include a polygraph examination and psychological evaluation

# Completing the Security Questionnaire

The employing or sponsoring Federal agency has the individual complete the Standard Form (SF) 86 – *Questionnaire for National Security Positions*, releases, certification form, and fingerprint card

- The SF 86 is completed by using the Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP) system
- Fingerprints may be submitted by hardcopy or electronically





## Questions on the SF 86

- The applicant will be required to provide information about residences, employments, military service, education, spouse, relatives, and associates
- The applicant will be asked questions relating to mental health, criminal activity, drug/alcohol use, credit, and allegiance to the United States
- The applicant will also be asked to sign a form allowing the investigator to access personal records

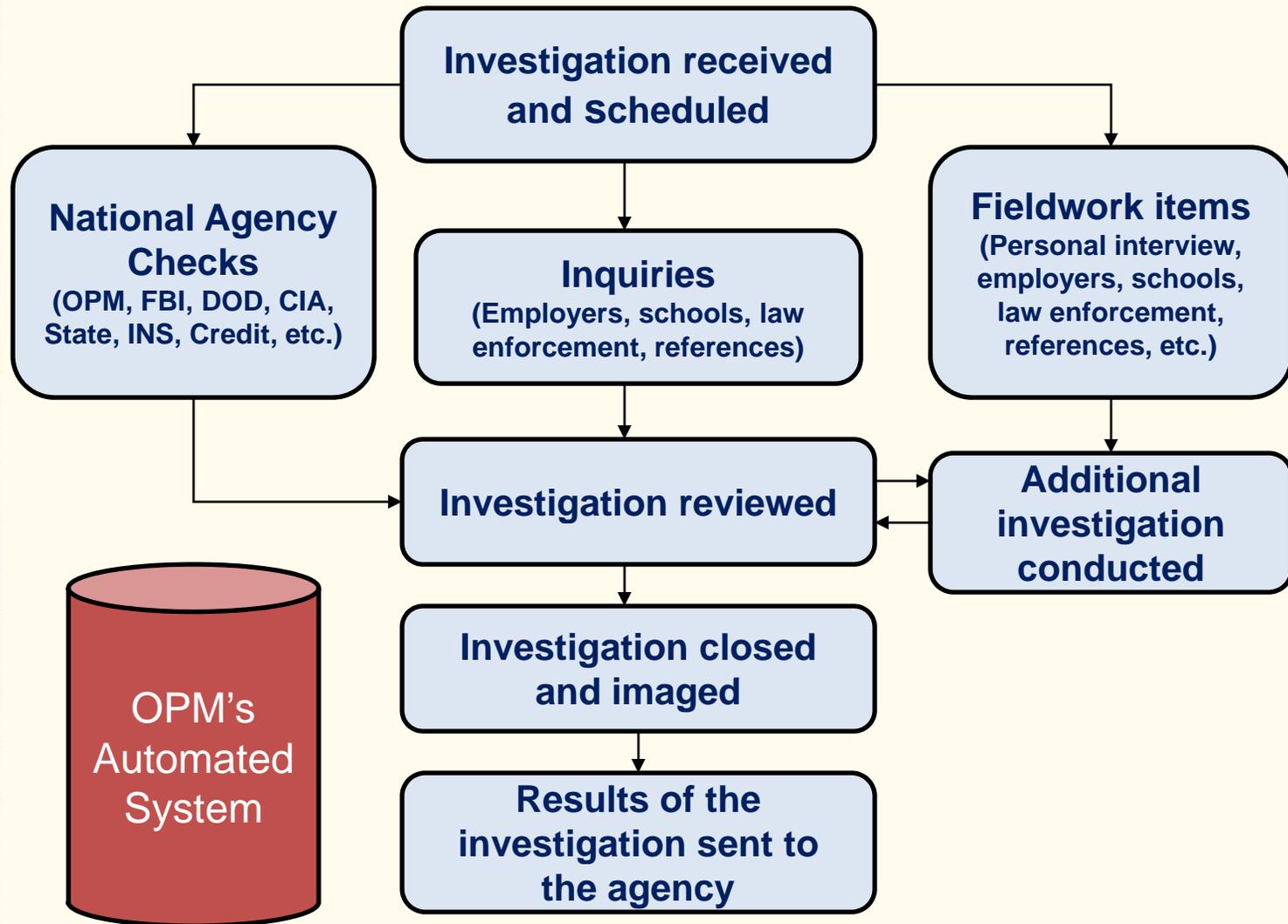
**PREPARATION IS KEY**



# Warning!

- Provide true, complete, and correct information when completing the SF 86. Failure to do so may delay the investigation or the adjudication of the case, and may raise questions concerning eligibility for a security clearance
- The applicant may also be denied employment, fired from the job, or debarred from Federal employment for making false statements

# STEP 2: The Investigation





# Investigation Workloads

Case Type	FY 09
Initial Security Clearance Investigations	636,873
Periodic Reinvestigations for Top Secret	98,211
Public Trust Investigations	222,339
Suitability Investigations	165,476
Other	924,326
Total	2,047,225



# Single Scope Background Investigation

- Used to support a Top Secret clearance
- Covers the last 10 years of a person's background
- Includes a Personal Subject Interview (PRSI) and interviews with neighbors, employers, educators, references, and spouses/cohabitants
- Also includes record checks with local law enforcement where the individual lived, worked, or went to school in the past 10 years



# National Agency Check with Law and Credit

- Used to support a Secret security clearance
- Includes record checks with local law enforcement where the individual lived, worked, or went to school in the past five years
- May include a special interview with the subject of the investigation to resolve issues developed in the investigation



## **STEP 3: Adjudication and Clearance Granted**

- Results of the investigation are sent to the requesting agency's security office for adjudication
- The employing or sponsoring agency is responsible for determining an individual's eligibility for a security clearance
- Interim vs. final security clearance decisions



## Adjudicative Guidelines for Determining Eligibility for Access to Classified Information

- a) Allegiance to the United States
- b) Foreign influence
- c) Foreign preference
- d) Sexual behavior
- e) Personal conduct
- f) Financial considerations
- g) Alcohol consumption
- h) Drug involvement
- i) Emotional, mental, and personality disorders
- j) Criminal conduct
- k) Security violations
- l) Outside activities
- m) Misuse of Information Technology Systems

Source: Executive Order 12968 and supplemental guidance



# Additional Considerations

- 1) The nature, extent, and seriousness of the conduct
- 2) The circumstances surrounding the conduct, to include knowledgeable participation
- 3) The frequency and timeframe of the conduct
- 4) The individual's age and maturity at the time of the conduct
- 5) The voluntariness of participation
- 6) The presence or absence of rehabilitation and other permanent behavioral changes
- 7) The motivation for the conduct
- 8) The potential for pressure, coercion, exploitation, or duress
- 9) The likelihood of continuation or recurrence

# Reinvestigations

Security Clearance	Investigation	When the Reinvestigation Occurs
Top Secret; DOE "Q"	SSBI-Periodic Reinvestigation (SSBI-PR) or the Phased Periodic Reinvestigation (PPR)	Every 5 years
Secret; DOE "L"	NACLC or ANACI	Every 10 years
Confidential	NACLC or ANACI	Every 15 years



# Reciprocity

- Agencies are required to accept a security clearance granted by another Federal agency
- This ensures background investigations are only conducted to grant new security clearances
- Agencies record their security clearances in central databases



# How long will the investigation take?

The Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) included timeliness requirements for the security clearance process

- By December 2009, 90% of initial security clearance determinations must be completed within an average of 60 days
  - 40 days for investigative phase
  - 20 days for adjudicative phase



# Investigations Processing Timeliness for All Agencies

In Fiscal Year 2009, OPM completed 645,924  
initial security clearance investigations

80% were completed in an average of 36 days  
(65 days for Top Secret and 33 days for  
Secret/ Confidential)

90% were completed in an average of 41 days  
(70 days for Top Secret and 36 days for  
Secret/ Confidential)



# What can be done to expedite the investigation process?

- Collect the information needed on the security questionnaire in advance
  - [www.opm.gov/forms](http://www.opm.gov/forms) - download copy of SF 86
- Provide true, correct, and complete information on the forms and during the interview
- Respond to investigator's request for information promptly
- Keep the agency and/or investigator aware of your current address and contact information



# Can I pay for my own investigation?

- There are no procedures in place to allow individuals to request or pay for their own background investigation
- Clearances are granted on a need-to-know basis when there is a demonstrated need for access to classified information
- The employing or sponsoring agency decides whether the position requires a security clearance and the level of investigation needed



# Who can I contact for the status of my OPM investigation?

- Contact OPM's Freedom of Information/Privacy Act (FOI/PA) Office
  - Phone: (724) 794-5612, ext 7000
  - Mail: Include full name, address, date and place of birth, and social security number
    - OPM-FIS-FOI/PA, PO Box 618, Boyers, PA 16018-0618
    - FAX: (724) 794-4590
- Check with the employing or sponsoring agency's security office
  - Contractor personnel can also check with their company's Facility Security Officer (FSO)



# Contact Information

U.S. Office of Personnel Management  
Federal Investigative Services  
1137 Branchton Road  
PO Box 618  
Boyers, PA 16018-0618  
(724) 794-5612

[www.opm.gov](http://www.opm.gov)

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