# THE ARMY SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS

## WHAT is a Security Clearance?

A security clearance certifies that an individual can have access to classified information or be assigned to a highly sensitive job.

## WHO qualifies for a Security Clearance?

Army civilians, military, and contractor personnel who require access to classified information to perform their job.

## HOW do I get a Security Clearance?

Employees nominated by employers can apply for a security clearance through their local Security Manager. See 3-Step Process below.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- **SF-86: Standard Form 86**
  A questionnaire to capture relevant information on a person's background.
- **Security Manager**
  Responsible for operating and managing all aspects of a security program.
- **eQIP: Electronic Questionnaire for Investigations Processing**
  Online questionnaires for background investigation.
- **PSI-CoE: Personnel Security Investigation - Center of Excellence**
  Reviews questionnaires for completeness and correctness.
- **OPM: Office of Personnel Management**
  The agency that receives questionnaires and conducts background investigations.
- **DoD CAF: Department of Defense Central Adjudication Facility**
  The agency that receives investigations and grants, revokes, or denies security clearances.
- **National Adjudicative Guideline**
  Government standards used to grant, revoke, or deny security clearances.

## STEP 1: INITIATION

### Automated Application Process

1. Security Manager notifies the employee of security clearance requirement.
2. PSI-CoE receives a clearance request from the Security Manager, and sends an eQIP notification email to the employee.
3. Once notified, the employee has 18 days to gather information and submit the completed eQIP questionnaire. After 18 days, the employee will be locked out of eQIP.
4. PSI-CoE reviews the eQIP questionnaire for completeness and forwards it on to OPM. Additional information may be requested from the employee.

### Questions: Contact PSI-CoE Customer Support Center

Phone: 410-278-4194
DSN: 298-4194

***NOTE:*** *The number of days for each phase depends on the type of security clearance investigation submitted.*

## STEP 2: INVESTIGATION

- Credentialed investigators at OPM conduct background investigations, and perform financial, criminal and past employment checks. Interviews may be conducted.
- Investigation results are sent to the Department of Defense Central Adjudication Facility (DoD CAF).

## STEP 3: ADJUDICATION

- The DoD CAF reviews the background check in accordance with the National Adjudicative Guidelines, and makes a security clearance decision.
- Security Manager notifies the employee of security clearance decision.

## TIME LINE

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SECRET | ~ 24 Days | ~ 10 Days |
| TOP SECRET | ~ 74 Days | ~ 15 Days |