

For: FFAS Employees

**Background Investigations for FFAS Federal and
Non-Federal FSA County Office Employees Currently on Board**

Approved by: Deputy Administrator, Management



1 Overview

A Background

EPD conducted an extensive review of FFAS personnel records and found that a significant number of personnel do not have a current background investigation on record or the investigation that is on record is not at the level required for the position.

EPD’s personnel security staff is responsible for ensuring that all FFAS personnel, except for FAS personnel who are required to complete a public trust or higher background investigation, complete the appropriate background investigation upon entry into their position or as soon as it is discovered that the background investigation is not on file or needs updating.

Therefore, in the upcoming months, EPD will be contacting FFAS employees whose investigations:

- are due for updating
- require an upgrade because of a new position assignment or sensitivity level review
- cannot be located in the FFAS or OPM databases.

EPD will provide employees with the appropriate steps required to complete/update their background investigation.

Note: For FSA Federal State and non-Federal County Office employees, EPD will contact the employees through the FSA State Office.

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Disposal Date | Distribution |
| February 1, 2013 | All FAS, FSA, and RMA employees; State Offices relay to County Offices |

Notice SEM-14

1 Overview (Continued)

B Purpose

This notice:

- provides authority for conducting background investigations
- identifies types of investigations
- clarifies the investigation process – Step by Step
- provides EPD Security Contacts.

2 Background Investigations Requirements

A Authority

Executive Order 10450, Security Requirements for Government Employees, requires that persons employed by the Government shall be trustworthy, of good conduct, and of complete and unswerving loyalty to the United States. The appointment of each civilian employee in any department or agency of the Government is subject to an investigation. The scope of the investigation depends on the nature of the position and the degree of harm that an individual in that position could cause. FSA's HRD makes this determination in the position classification process for GS employees and State Office Human Resources staff for non-Federal employees.

OPM's Federal Investigative Services is responsible for conducting and administering over 90 percent of background investigations for the Federal Government.

B Types of Investigations and Security Levels

The following describes the type of investigation required based on employee security level designations.

| Security Level Designation | Type of Investigations |
|----------------------------|--|
| Low Risk | National Agency Check with Inquiries - (NACI) |
| Moderate Risk | Moderate Risk Background Investigation - (MBI) |
| High Risk | High Risk Background Investigation - (BI) |
| Noncritical Sensitive | Access National Agency Check with Written Inquiries - (NACI) |
| Critical Sensitive | Single Scope Background Investigation- (SSBI) |
| Special Sensitive | Single Scope Background Investigation - (SSBI) |

Notice SEM-14

3 Background Investigation Process

A Initial Process

The following provides steps for the background investigation process and pertains to all Federal and non-Federal County Office employees **currently on-board**.

| Step | Action |
|-------------|--|
| 1 | Receive a Security Request for Information - The individual will be contacted by EPD personnel requesting information that is needed to begin the background investigation process. |
| 2 | <p>Receive an Invite E-mail - The individual will receive an invite e-mail from EPD personnel. The invite e-mail will provide the employee with detailed instructions about the requirements of undergoing a background investigation.</p> <p>Notes: Employees will be required to be fingerprinted (by EPD personnel) and individuals must submit the following forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fair Credit Reporting Act • Declaration for Federal Employment (OF-306). <p>In addition, if no prior NACI or higher investigation can be validated, employees will also be required to submit the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declaration for Federal Employment (OF-306) • Resume or Optional Application for Federal Employment (OF-612). <p>For individuals not located in Washington, DC, or Kansas City, MO, fingerprint cards and instructions will be provided for completion at a law enforcement agency.</p> |
| 3 | <p>Complete Electronic Questionnaires for Investigation Processing (e-QIP) -The individual will be required to complete and submit the on-line security questionnaire within 10 calendar days of receiving the invite e-mail.</p> <p>Note: A link to the e-QIP web site will be provided in the invite e-mail.</p> |
| 4 | Provide Security Documents - The individual must complete, sign, and submit the appropriate security documents to EPD personnel. The documents are needed to process the background investigation. |
| 5 | Submit e-QIP Application to OPM - Once the individual has completed the e-QIP application, submitted the appropriate security forms, and submitted the on-line questionnaire to EPD personnel, EPD will forward the on-line questionnaire to OPM, and if required, to the USDA Personnel and Document Security Division (PDSD) to begin the investigation process. |

Notice SEM-14

3 Background Investigation Process (Continued)

B OPM's Initial Review

Upon receipt of the e-QIP application, OPM will conduct an investigation on the employee. Upon completion of the investigation, OPM will forward the results of the investigation to either EPD or USDA's PDSD for security personnel to conduct suitability adjudication.

C Suitability Adjudication

EPD conducts suitability adjudications for FFAS personnel in low risk positions. PDSD conducts adjudications for employees in all other positions.

All favorable suitability adjudication certifications of investigations/certificates are forwarded to FSA's HRD or to the State Offices to be placed in the employee's Official Personnel Folder.

All unfavorable suitability adjudication cases are reviewed by FSA's HRD, Employee/Labor Relations and Benefits Branch.

D Security Contacts

If there are questions about this notice, contact Kathy Kroening, Lead Security Specialist by either of the following:

- e-mail at kathy.kroening@kcc.usda.gov
- telephone at 816-926-1180.