

**USDA HSPD-12 ADJUDICATOR  
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Prepared for



**United States Department of Agriculture  
Office of Safety Security and Protection (OSSP)**

Version 2.0

June 2020



## Revision Information

Version	Date	Revision Notes
1.0	Unknown	Initial FAQs created
2.0	June 2020	Revised FAQs to make current for 2020

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For any questions not covered by this FAQ, please contact the HSPD-12 Helpdesk at [usdahspd12help@usda.gov](mailto:usdahspd12help@usda.gov) or 1-833-682-4675

## 1 How do you become an adjudicator?

Adjudicator requirements are as follows:

- EmpowHR:
  - Be a Federal Employee
  - Complete EmpowHR Adjudicator training in AgLearn
  - Have a User ID and password for EmpowHR
  
- Person Model:
  - Be a Federal Employee
  - Complete Person Model Adjudicator training in AgLearn
  - Have a User ID and password for EmpowHR (Person Model is a module of EmpowHR)
  
- USAccess:
  - Have a LincPass
  - Be designated as an Adjudicator in USAccess by your Agency Role Administrator

## 2 What happens if a LincPass/AltLinc applicant has unfavorable fingerprint results or Background Investigation during the adjudication process?

All applicants will be given an opportunity to respond to allegations of derogatory information prior to a final determination. Employees may appeal an unfavorable determination through the same process afforded them in employee misconduct situations.

## 3 What are examples of potentially disqualifying information that the Adjudicator may need to review?

Examples of disqualifying information during the background investigation include the following:

- Misconduct or negligence in employment
- Criminal or dishonest conduct
- Material, intentional false statement or deception or fraud in examination or appointment
- Refusal to furnish testimony as required by §5.4 of Title 5, C.F.R.
- Alcohol abuse of a nature and duration which suggests that the Applicant or appointee would be prevented from performing the duties of the position in question, or would constitute a direct threat to the property or safety of others

- Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances, without evidence of substantial rehabilitation
- Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force
- Any statutory or regulatory bar which prevents the lawful employment of the person involved in the position in question
- Financial problems that are linked to gambling, drug abuse, or alcoholism

#### **4 What is the minimum Background Investigation for a LincPass/AltLinc cardholder?**

LincPass: The minimum required background Investigation includes a Tier one (T1) low risk public trust check with an FBI FP Check. It is the responsibility of the Adjudicator at the agency to review and then either favorably or unfavorably adjudicate the Tier one (T1) low risk public trust check results.

AltLinc: The minimum required background investigation for an AltLinc is an FBI FP Check. It is the responsibility of the Adjudicator at the agency to review and then either favorably or unfavorably adjudicate the FBI FP Check.

#### **5 When can the Adjudicator enter the Adjudication results?**

If the identity has been created in EmpowHR/Person Model, the Adjudicator can input the results in the system and then the data will transmit to USAccess once the person is sponsored. If the Applicant has already been sponsored, enter the results in EmpowHR/Person Model when you receive them. The Applicant's adjudication results will flow over to USAccess during the next data push. Alternately, if the applicant has an approved Adjudication result from a prior agency, those results should be entered into EmpowHR/Person Model and will also transmit into USAccess marking the applicant record as Adjudicated.

#### **6 How can the Adjudicator find out if the Applicant has completed Sponsorship?**

Check the Applicant Status Report; if the Sponsorship Status = SPONSORED, then the record is Sponsored. At that time, you can enter the adjudication results in EmpowHR/Person Model which will transmit into USAccess for the applicant. If you need access to the Applicant Status Report, contact your Agency Role Admin to have the USAccess Report Portal role applied.

#### **7 Should Adjudicators call Applicants to discuss arrest information?**

Calling Applicants is not recommended due to possible errors in interpreting or documenting the Applicants' comments. All communication between Applicants and Adjudicators should be done in writing.

#### **8 Are agencies authorized to conduct background investigations on USDA employees and contractors?**

No. Only OPM, or government agencies with delegated investigative authority from OPM, are authorized to conduct background investigations on USDA employees and contractors. Agencies have the authority to send a Letter of Intent (LOI), obtain court records, and interview Applicants to resolve issues. Once the



Applicant begins work for USDA, credible allegations of misconduct are subject to agency misconduct procedures or USDA Office of the Inspector General inquiries or investigations.

**9 Does Security Office Identifier/Submitting Office Number (SOI/SON) and related information need to be entered?**

Only if the Applicant is initiating a background investigation. If they already have one on file, this is not needed.

**10 Why can I not access USAccess?**

Please validate the following requirements for USAccess:

1. You must have an active LincPass/AltLinc to access USAccess
2. Make sure the Role Administrator has designated you as an Adjudicator. If they have not, contact the Role Administrator for your agency.
3. If you are having troubles logging into USAccess, ensure you have no other USAccess portal browsers open. Close out your browser completely and reopen in a new browser if you are receiving USAccess error messages while logging in.
4. If you continue to have issues, you can contact the USDA HSPD-12 Help Desk for further assistance.