

**USDA HSPD-12
Applicant Adjudication
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)**

Prepared for



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

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1.0	Unknown	Initial FAQs created
2.0	Unknown	Updated FAQs
3.0	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 or 1-833-682-4675

1 In addition to answering the SF-85 questions, is there other information I need to provide?

Yes. If you have been the victim of identity theft, it will help during identity proofing if you provide the approximate date of the theft and status of resolution. Also, do not omit any name(s) you have used in your lifetime when replying to SF-85 Question 5, “Other Names Used.”

2 What background investigations are required?

LincPass: A Tier-1 (Low Risk) investigation is the minimum accepted BI for LincPass issuance. This includes:

1. A search of the fingerprint and investigative files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and other records held by Federal agencies such as the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and
2. Written inquires of your current and past employers, schools attended, references, and local law enforcement authorities.

AltLinc: A minimum of an FBI fingerprint check is required for AltLinc issuance.

3 Do I need another background investigation if I already have one completed?

LincPass: Agencies can leverage an existing Tier 1 (Low Risk) or higher investigation if they have one on file AND the employee/non-employee has less than 2 years break in service.

AltLinc: Agencies can leverage an existing FBI fingerprint check or higher background investigation if they have one on file AND the temporary employee has less than 1-year break in service. (Note: existing FBI fingerprint checks should be no more than 120 days old). Otherwise, you must complete a new fingerprint check.

4 What if I need a national security clearance and certificate to hold a public trust position?

You must complete either a SF-86, Questionnaire for National Security Positions, or SF-85P, Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions, and a more in-depth background investigation (not a Tier 1/Low Risk) will be scheduled with OPM. You are not required to complete the SF-85.

5 Who has access to my Tier 1 (Low Risk) investigation results?

USDA agency adjudicators and their supervisors are the only individuals authorized to see your background investigation results. USDA Department-level personnel security specialists and their supervisors will see your background investigation results if, in addition to the PIV ID Badge, your position requires a national security clearance or public trust suitability determination.



6 Can I see my Tier 1 (Low Risk) investigation results?

You may request a copy of your investigation file under the provisions of the Privacy Act. For an Office of Personnel Management (OPM) investigation request, write to OPM-CIS, FOIP, Post Office Box 618, Boyers, PA 16018-0618. You must include your full name, Social Security Number, date and place of birth, and you must sign your request.

Visit the OPM website for additional information http://www.opm.gov/efoia/html/foia_contacts.asp.

7 What are examples of potentially disqualifying information?

- Use, possession, supply, or manufacture of illegal drugs in the last year. See Q14 on the SF-85 for examples of illegal drugs.
- Conviction, imprisonment, probation, or parole during the last 10 years (includes felonies, firearms or explosive violations, misdemeanors, and all other offenses. See Q9 on the OF-306.
- Conviction by military court-martial in the past 10 years. See Q10 on the OF-306. Currently under charges for any violation of law. See Q11 on the OF-306.
- Fired from any job during the last 5 years. See Q12 of the OF-306 for conditions involving separation from employment that must be reported.
- Current delinquency on any Federal debt. See Q13 on the OF-306 for a specific explanation of the kind of delinquencies that must be reported.

8 What are implications of submitting false information for my background investigation?

If you knowingly and intentionally put false information on your form, an adjudicator may determine that you are unreliable and dishonest. In fact, a PIV ID Badge could be denied for withholding information or purposely lying, even though what you were seeking to conceal would not have resulted in a PIV ID Badge denial.

Even if you obtain a PIV ID Badge, the initial adjudication decision could be overturned at a later date, and your PIV ID Badge revoked, when it is revealed that you lied or concealed information. Federal agencies generally fire or disqualify employees who have materially and deliberately falsified such information. In addition, if you knowingly and willfully make material false statements, you may be subject to Federal prosecution for violating Title 18, U.S. Code, section 1001.

If a question on a form requires you to report information you believe may be potentially disqualifying, the best approach is to (1) answer all questions about the potentially disqualifying information fully and truthfully; (2) include a written explanation with your forms describing the circumstances surrounding the information of concern and any mitigating factors present; and (3) if you have not already done so, begin action immediately to correct the concern whenever possible. Below is an example of taking immediate action to correct a concern:

Prior to your seeking employment with USDA, the U.S. Internal Revenue Service (IRS) issued a tax lien against you for failure to pay taxes. You have not yet had time to resolve or dispute the lien. Because you will be required to report the lien (see Question 13 on the OF-306), you should contact the IRS to



either arrange a satisfactory payment plan (and honor it) and/or dispute the lien. When you complete the OF-306, include an explanation of the current status of the lien. To speed up the adjudication, you may provide copies of your IRS correspondence.