General HSPD-12 FAQs can be found online at:
http://lincpass.usda.gov/faq.html

HSPD-12 Policy/Business Process

1. **How long is the entire process for Non-Employees?**
   After enrollment, applicants should receive their LincPass within approximately ten (10) business days. Before enrollment can occur, all required information needs to be entered into NEIS. Sponsors should initiate data collection as soon as he/she identifies a need for a Non-Employee to obtain a LincPass.
4. **What are LACS and PACS?**
   The LincPass will be used not only for identification purposes, but eventually also for access to both federal computer systems (LACS) and federal facilities (PACS). Therefore it is very important that LincPass cardholders safeguard their LincPass at all times.
5. **How does the cardholder do their job in the time between card expiration or loss and when the new one is issued and activated?**
   Until LACS/PACS integration there is no impact. After PACS integration, the Non-Employee will need a temporary site badge issued. The impact upon integration of LACS is unknown.
6. **Are the cards interoperable between different agencies? Would someone in another Federal Department be able to use their card at USDA?**
   Yes, although no policy has been issued on this yet. Interoperability of cards between Federal agencies is one of the goals of HSPD-12 that is currently under development.
6. **How often do you have to go through the enrollment process and/or the BI process?**
   Once. However, if your card is ever lost, damaged, or broken, the Non-Employee will have to go through the Enrollment process again, except for Adjudication.
7. **What is the LincPass expiration date tied to for Non-Employees? The 5-year card expiration or the Contract termination date?**
   The printed date on the LincPass is 5 years from card activation, just like Federal Employees. However, when a LincPass is scanned by a card reader, electronic access to systems or facilities are tied to period of performance on a contract. If the contract to which the Non-Employee is assigned has expired, access will be denied. In cases where the Non-Employee is bound to multiple contracts, the card will be active as long as the Non-Employee is active on at least one contract.

Contracts

1. **What role does the CO have?**
   The CO is responsible for ensuring applicable FAR/AGAR clauses are included in the contract. When issuing COR/COTR appointment letters, the CO should ensure that any Sponsor duties are included in the letter. The CO may also provide any pertinent contract information to the COR/COTR for entry into NEIS, such as Contract Number/PIID and period of performance.
2. **Where can I find AGAR clauses?**
   AGAR Advisory 81 includes PIV clauses for contracts, and is available online on the USDA Procurement website.
3. **If a Contracting Officer Representative (COR)/Contracting Officer Technical Representative (COTR) does not complete the Sponsor training, should they be removed from the contract?**
   No. Being a Sponsor is not a requirement of being a COR/COTR. It is seen as a collateral duty that in most cases to be performed by a COR/COTR. However, if the COR/COTR cannot perform Sponsorship duties, another Sponsor will need to be found to sponsor their Non-Employees.
4. **Should I include AGAR clauses in old contracts?**
   Yes, it is recommended that as long as the period of performance is still valid, AGAR clauses should be included in all contracts.
5. **What about short-term contracts (e.g. 1 week or 6 months)? Do those people need a LincPass?**
   This is an agency decision that should be based on the Risk Assessment (see DM 4620-xxx). There is currently no policy addressing short-term PIV issuance.
6. **If a contractor is here intermittently (e.g. here for one day and does not return for a few weeks), what kind of badge do they need?**
   This is an agency decision that should be based on the Risk Assessment (see DM 4620-xxx). There is currently no policy addressing short-term PIV issuance. For these types of contracts, you may want to consider issuing a site badge and ensuring the contractor is escorted by someone who has a LincPass.
7. **How do Non-Employees start performing when there is a lag between the contract award and getting a fingerprint initiated/returned?**
   Until integration of Logical Access Control Systems (LACS) and Physical Access Control Systems (PACS), Non-Employees can be issued a site badge and can work as they do today. After LACS integration, Non-Employees can be issued a temporary site badge until they get their LincPass. The impact of lag time upon PACS integration is unknown.
8. **What if a Non-Employee flashes a LincPass with a 5-year expiration date printed on it but the contract is expired?**
   Until LACS and PACS are fully implemented, there may be cases where this happens. CORs/COTRs should follow exiting processes to ensure that site badges and LincPasses are turned in at the end of the period of performance.
9. **Should I insert AGAR clauses in an MOU (Memorandum of Understanding)?** You can include AGAR clauses in MOUs, although no revision to the AGAR to include specific reference to MOUs is planned.

Role Holders

1. **Should the Agency Role Administrator be involved when choosing Sponsors and Adjudicators for Non-Employees?**
   Yes. Agencies should adhere to the existing role structure.
2. **Do Sponsors and Adjudicators have to be designated in USAccess?**
   Yes. If Sponsors and Adjudicators are not designated in USAccess by the Role Administrator for their respective roles, records in NEIS will not process successfully to USAccess.
3. **Should NEIS Sponsors and Adjudicators be Federal Employees?**
   Yes. NEIS Sponsors and Adjudicators should be Federal Employees.
4. **Who acts as the Sponsor?**
   Agencies must determine who will act as Sponsors for Non-Employees and ensure they are designated by the Role Administrator in USAccess. The Sponsor is a program point of contact, usually a COR/COTR. The Sponsor is typically someone who is familiar with the work being performed.
5. **Who acts as the Adjudicator?**
   Agencies must determine who will act as Adjudicators for Non-Employees and ensure they are designated by the Role Administrator in USAccess. Agencies should follow existing procedures for Non-Employee adjudication.
6. **Does the Sponsor have to do all the data collection/data entry?**
   No. While this falls under sponsorship, Sponsors can delegate portions of this process.
7. **Can a Non-Employee do data entry in NEIS?**
   No Currently Non-Employees will not be granted access to NEIS. .
8. **Can a backup Sponsor be set up?**
   Yes. You can have as many backup Sponsors as necessary, but each must be trained and certified.
9. **What is a Non-Employee Administrator?**
   The Non-Employee Administrator is the person who facilitates data collection from the Vendor and enters Non-Employee biographical data into NEIS.

Training

1. **What kind of training is there for NEIS?**
   There are training modules for both NEIS Sponsorship and Adjudication.
2. **How is the NEIS training provided?**
   NEIS training will be provided via AgLearn. Training will be placed on your learning plan by the Agency Role Administrator. You will receive notification from the agency Role Administrator when NEIS training has been added to your learning plan. Pending AgLearn posting, NEIS training is available on the USDA HSPD-12 website.
3. **Do I have to take NEIS training?**
   This is an Agency determination, but it is strongly recommended that anyone using NEIS take the NEIS training.
4. **Should COs take NEIS training?**
   COs may take NEIS training if they like, but there is no requirement for them to complete NEIS training.
5. **I took USAccess training. Is NEIS training the same thing?**
   No. While USAccess training shows you how to perform your role, NEIS training offers step-by-step instructions and screenshots of the system itself.
6. **When training is complete, how will the certificate be submitted, and to whom, so that the Sponsor can be granted access to NEIS?**
   Once you have completed your NEIS training, the certificate of completion will be submitted to the Role Administrator electronically or via paper copy.
7. **I am performing data entry and will not sponsor or adjudicate in NEIS. Should I take NEIS training?**
   Yes. Anyone using NEIS should take the NEIS training. If you are performing data entry, such as entering contract information or Non-Employee information in support of the sponsor, you should take the NEIS sponsorship training.

Risk Assessment

1. **What is the Risk Assessment?**
   The Risk Assessment can be found in the Departmental Manual (DM) 4620-xxx, and provides guidelines for determining LincPass applicability.
2. **How do I use it?**
   The Risk Assessment is a flowchart with a series of questions for determining who needs a LincPass based on access and the kind of work someone performs. Start at the top left diamond in the Risk Assessment and work your way through. If you answer Yes to any question in the Risk Assessment, the Non-Employee requires a LincPass.
3. **Who decides who needs a LincPass?**
   Agencies must determine who is responsible for applying the Risk Assessment.
4. **Do all Non-Employees need a LincPass?**
   No. Use the Risk Assessment to determine LincPass applicability.
5. **If a Non-Employee doesn't need a LincPass, what type of ID are they issued?**
   If a Non-Employee doesn't need a LincPass per the Risk Assessment, they should be issued a site badge or a visitor badge.
6. **What about temporary employees?**
   This is based on the Risk Assessment per Agency decision.
7. **Should I keep records of Risk Assessments?**
   It is strongly recommended that you keep a record of Risk Assessments, especially in cases where it is determined that a Non-Employee does not require a LincPass.
8. **What about short-term contracts (e.g. 1 week or 6 months)? Do those people need a LincPass?**
   This is an agency decision that should be based on the Risk Assessment (see DM 4620-xxx). There is currently no policy addressing short-term PIV issuance.
9. **If a contractor is here intermittently (e.g. here for one day and does not return for a few weeks), what kind of badge do they need?**
   This is an agency decision that should be based on the Risk Assessment (see DM 4620-xxx). There is currently no policy addressing short-term PIV issuance. For these types of contracts, you may want to consider issuing a site badge and ensuring the contractor is escorted by someone who has a LincPass.

Background Investigations

1. **What is a NACI?**
   A NACI is a National Agency Check with (Written) Inquiries. A NACI is the minimum background investigation (BI) required for a LincPass.
2. **How does the fingerprint check for HSPD-12 differ and/or replace the current Non-Employee fingerprint check?**
   The fingerprint check must be a Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) National Criminal History Check (NCHC). It does not replace any other fingerprint checks, but is the only one accepted for LincPass issuance.
3. **A Non-Employee needs to get started immediately, but doesn't have a BI. Can I expedite the process to get them a LincPass?**
   Yes. Non-Employees may enroll after a positively adjudicated fingerprint check is returned, and a BI is initiated.
4. **In our agency, we process the fingerprints and BI together and have to wait until everything is returned to determine suitability. Do we have to wait until everything is done for the Non-Employee to get their LincPass?**
   Not necessarily. You have the option of requesting an advanced fingerprint check, which allows Non-Employees to enroll after a positively adjudicated fingerprint check. You can also request to expedite the card in USAccess at an added cost.
5. **What happens if the Non-Employee's background investigation (BI) is negatively adjudicated?**
   If a BI is negatively adjudicated, the Non-Employee's provisional LincPass will be revoked and confiscated. The Non-Employee cannot work or access any Federally-controlled information systems or Federally-controlled facilities if their LincPass is revoked.
6. **Who notifies the Contracting Officer (CO) if a Non-Employee's BI is negatively adjudicated?**
   The Adjudicator will notify the CO via email or phone.
7. **What is the time limit by which a Non-Employee must be removed if their BI is negatively adjudicated?**
   The Non-Employee must be removed as soon as possible. The maximum amount of time allotted is 72 hours.
8. **Is there a specific way to pay for the BI?**
   USDA has not issued a policy on payment for Non-Employee BIs. At this point, it is seen as the cost of doing business, and the Program Office is absorbing the cost.
9. **Some Non-Employees already have a BI. Do they have to get a new one?**
   No, as long as it is a valid BI recognized by OPM. Previous or existing investigations can be verified in PIPS (Personnel Investigations Processing System).
10. **A Non-Employee's investigation was processed by a third-party company. Is that a valid BI?**
    No. OPM has to conduct the investigation for it to be considered a valid BI. Private companies cannot enter their investigation results into the OPM system.
11. **How is a national security clearance handled?**
    If someone has a national security position that warrants a clearance, e.g. Secret, Top Secret, the BI is processed through DOD. DOD processes the investigation and determines suitability. Results can be verified in PIPS.

NEIS

1. **What is NEIS?**
   NEIS is the Non-Employee Identity System. NEIS is USDA's secure and authoritative database for individual Non-Employee applicant information required by HSPD-12. NEIS feeds non-employee information to USAccess, the General Services Administration (GSA) credentialing system.
2. **Can't I just enter the non-employee's information directly into USAccess?**
   No. Non-Employee information must be entered into NEIS, and that information will flow over to USAccess.
3. **What is the length of record retention in NEIS?**
   Records are maintained in NEIS as long as they are needed. A definitive length of time for records retention has not been determined due to non-employee turnover.
4. **Is there a SORN/C&A that covers NEIS?**
   Yes, the EmpowHR SORN and C&A cover NEIS.
5. **Is there a CCB for NEIS?**
   Yes. There is a NEIS CCB that works hand-in-hand with the EmpowHR CCB (NFC).
6. **Can you run reports in NEIS?**
   Currently, you cannot run reports in NEIS, but total numbers of records of Non-Employees and Contract Assignments by Agency can be verified. A future enhancement of NEIS is being planned, which will include reporting capabilities.
7. **How do I get access to NEIS?**
   Fill out the NEIS Login request and submit according to the instructions at the top. The submittal process may vary depending on whether your agency is considered an EmpowHR agency. Agencies that do not use EmpowHR as their HR system may submit NEIS requests for logins directly to Thomas Bennett (thomas.bennett@usda.gov). EmpowHR agencies must submit a request to their Agency EmpowHR Administrator to add NEIS to their user permission list. The Agency EmpowHR Administrator must submit requests to Thomas Bennett (thomas.bennett@usda.gov) for approval. NFC will send approvals and passwords (if necessary) to Agency EmpowHR Administrator for distribution to approved users.
8. **Who do I contact if I forgot my NEIS password?**
   For agencies who administer their own EmpowHR Security - To reset your NEIS Password and all other access issues, contact your Agency EmpowHR Security Administrator. If your Agency EmpowHR Security Administrator cannot resolve the issue, they should submit the issue to the National Finance Center's (NFC's) Operations and Security Center (OSC) at osc.etix@nfc.usda.gov.
   For agencies whose EmpowHR Security is administered by the NFC's Information Systems Security Office (ISSO) - To reset your NEIS Password and all other access issues, submit the issue to the National Finance Center's (NFC's) Operations and Security Center (OSC) at osc.etix@nfc.usda.gov.
9. **What is an Employee ID, and how do you get one?**
   For Agencies that use EmpowHR, all employees within that Agency are assigned an Employee ID (EmplID). It is a unique number generated by EmpowHR. Contact your Agency EmpowHR Administrator if you do not know your EmplID.

For non-EmpowHR Agencies, you will be assigned a unique NEIS User ID when you apply for NEIS access.

10. **What role should I request on my NEIS login request?**
    NEIS roles are based on screen views. You may select multiple roles, but you may not select both Sponsor and Adjudicator. The following is an overview of the NEIS roles and screen views associated with those roles:
    - NEIS Sponsor: Contract Assignment
    - NEIS Adjudicator: NEIS Adjudication
    - NEIS Non-Employee Administrator: Non-Employee Information
    - NEIS COR: Contract Information
11. **What are the data fields in NEIS?** The NEIS Sponsor or Adjudicator training show screen shots of the required NEIS fields.
12. **Why can't I enter information in certain NEIS fields?**
    Some fields in NEIS are masked, or "grayed-out," because they are not required.
13. **Does designating someone as an Emergency Response Official change the enrollment process in any way?**
    No. The enrollment process will not change. If a Non-Employee is identified as an Emergency Response Official, there will be an additional label added to their LincPass. Check with your Agency's Security Officer before selecting this in NEIS.
14. **How do I determine the correct country code for Home Address?** NEIS uses the International Organization for Standards (ISO) 3166-1 alpha-3 country codes. The Help Desk has a complete listing of these codes and can help you choose the correct one.
15. **I entered the wrong information in a Non-Employee record. How do I correct it?**
    Select "Correct History" on the bottom right hand side of the screen. You can update/edit records when you are in Correct History mode.
16. **Why would a Non-Employee appear to be "Terminated" on their NEIS record?**
    When a Non-Employee Information record says "Terminated," it means that this non-employee does not have an active Contract Assignment. To change their status to Active, you make assign them to an active contract in NEIS.
17. **If I've sponsored partners/contractors/affiliates, why haven't they received a sponsorship or enrollment email?**
    First, make sure the applicant has a record in NEIS and that all background information (name, DOB, etc.) is correct. Ensure that the status on the Non-Employee Information record does not say "Terminated." Check the USAccess Applicant Status Report (ASR) to verify that their record has been processed. If you have sponsored a non-employee in NEIS and have validated that all their information is correct, and they have been sponsored and adjudicated, their record should appear in the ASR within a few days. If they are still not showing up in the ASR, contact the USDA Help Desk to verify that the applicant has been processed.
18. **How do I re-send an enrollment email to the applicant?**
    Go to the sponsor portal in USAccess and select Function to re-send their enrollment email.
19. **I have updated the applicant's record in NEIS. Why is the records not showing up in USAccess?** The record has not been processed yet and and is

pending transmittal to USAccess. It may take a few days for the record to process. If you have verified that their NEIS record is complete and it is still not appearing in the ASR after a few days, contact the USDA Help Desk for assistance**.**

20. **Why can't applicant's record be found by the registrar upon enrollment?** The record has not been processed into USAccess yet. Applicants should not enroll until they have received an official sponsorship email telling them to enroll.