



TICKET
to **Work**

SSA Employment Network Security and Suitability Guide

**TICKET
PROGRAM
MANAGER**

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INTRODUCTION

This business process guide documents the Social Security Administration's (SSA) suitability process for Employment Network (EN) personnel. A background investigation is required for EN personnel who require any type of access to an SSA facility, site, system, or information, and when a Personal Identity Verification (PIV) credential is required.

SSA personnel may not allow EN personnel access to a facility, site, information, or system until SSA's Center for Suitability and Personnel Security (CSPS) issues a current, favorable suitability determination for the specified award (e.g., agreement, contract, grant, etc.). A suitability determination letter issued by CSPS is valid only for performance on the SSA award specified in the letter. Even if an individual previously worked on an SSA award, they must still go through the suitability process to return to work on the specified award or a new award (see [EN Personnel Suitability Workflow](#) below for the applicable steps and stages).

The EN Company Point of Contact (CPOC) must submit the required paperwork **at least 30 business days** prior to the date personnel are to begin work. The suitability process will not begin until CSPS receives accurate and complete documents.

The Ticket Program Manager (TPM) recommends the EN CPOC review the entire business process guide prior to bringing EN personnel to work.

Failure to follow the chronological process, as detailed in this document, will result in delays and/or personnel not allowed to work on SSA awards.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The following is a high-level overview of the SSA security and suitability requirements for EN personnel. Please see the [EN Personnel Suitability Workflow](#) charts below for step-by-step security and suitability requirements.

1. The EN CPOC submits the suitability package to DCHR.OPE.Suitability@ssa.gov and ENService@ssa.gov via secure email. The suitability package includes the following elements:
 - a. National Background Investigation Services (NBIS) [Electronic-Application-Applicant-Listing April 2024.xlsx](#), including the award number, award points of contact, and information on the applicants identified to work on the award;
 - b. Completed [Optional Form \(OF\) 306, Declaration for Federal Employment](#); and
 - c. Work authorization documentation for applicants that are not citizens of the United States of America, if applicable.
2. CSPS verifies if the EN personnel (applicant) already has the appropriate background investigation on record or initiates the application in eAPP. CSPS sends an invitation email containing the applicant's NBIS eAPP system initiation date and an attachment

with fingerprinting instructions and a link to the FieldPrint website to the EN CPOC and ENService@ssa.gov.

3. The EN CPOC forwards the fingerprinting process information to the applicant.
4. NBIS sends the account creation email from donotreply@nbis.mil to the applicant.
5. Applicants have 10 business days to complete eAPP and submit electronic fingerprints.
6. CSPS makes initial suitability determination (as applicable, reviews form submissions, resolves any discrepancies, and releases investigation to NBIS, and releases the applicable suitability determination letter to the EN CPOC and ENService@ssa.gov .
7. NBIS completes the full background investigation. CSPS reviews and adjudicates the background investigation.

EN PERSONNEL SUITABILITY WORKFLOW

New Applicants

Timeframes below are estimates for completing the activity.

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeline*	Tips and Follow-ups
1	EN CPOC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provides the OF-306, Declaration for Federal Employment to the applicant to complete and return to the EN CPOC. 2) Requests work authorization documentation for non-U.S. applicants, if applicable 		<p>Name on forms must match the legal name, including middle name or initial (if initial only) as it appears in SSA's official record.</p> <p>The OF-306 must be complete and accurate.</p> <p>Acceptable work authorization documentation for non-U.S. applicants, e.g.: permanent/temporary resident card, I-94 form, employment authorization card, etc.</p>
2	Applicant	Completes and returns the OF-306 and work authorization documentation (if applicable) to the EN CPOC.		<p>Carefully read the OF-306 question instructions to ensure <u>all</u> requested information is provided.</p> <p>The OF-306 must be completed thoroughly</p>

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeline*	Tips and Follow-ups
		<p>Applicants must complete Form OF-306 accurately, thoroughly, and honestly. “Yes” answers to questions 9 – 15 must be explained in the #16 Remarks field.</p>		<p>and all questions answered, including the Selective Service question and the Military Service question for all applicants including females. Failure to answer questions accurately and provide required details will result in CSPA recontacting the applicant for additional clarification, which may delay the process and may be grounds for finding the applicant unsuitable.</p>
3	EN CPOC	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Submits a completed Electronic-Application-Applicant-Listing April 2024.xlsx, with the scanned, completed OF-306 and work authorization documentation (if applicable). 2) Save scanned documentation as a PDF with naming convention of <i>Last Name, First Name 306</i>. 3) Send Electronic-Application-Applicant-Listing April 2024.xlsx with 306(s) to DCHR.OPE.Suitability@ssa.gov and ENService@ssa.gov via a secure or password encrypted email. 	<p>Applications should be submitted to CSPA at least 30 business days prior to the date EN personnel are to begin work.</p>	<p>The EN CPOC should review these forms to ensure they are completed and signed before scanning them.</p> <p>Note: On the subject line, enter: <i>EN Suitability Applicant Listing and Forms (Award #_____)</i>.</p> <p>If the EN CPOC does not have an SSA email account, the EN CPOC must submit the documentation in an encrypted, password protected email. See Encrypted Email Procedures for details.</p> <p>Use TTWE and the last 4 digits of your award number (e.g., TTWE1234) for the password.</p>

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeline*	Tips and Follow-ups
4	CSPS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reviews applicant's investigation history to verify if a sufficient investigation is on record (i.e., reciprocity). 2) If the applicant already has a reciprocal investigation on file, CSPS will issue the preliminary suitability determination letter at this stage and proceed to Step 7. 3) If not, CSPS initiates the applicant in eAPP, provides an invitation email containing the applicant's NBIS eAPP system initiation date and an attachment with fingerprinting instructions to EN Service and EN CPOC for dissemination to applicant. 	Within 4 business days.	<p>EN CPOC: The eAPP invitation email will be sent from the SSA Contractor Suitability System (CSS), dchr.ope.css@ssa.gov mailbox. This mailbox is not monitored.</p> <p>EN CPOC: If you do not receive the eAPP invitation email within 5 business day, please send a follow-up email message to the EN's Main Contractor Suitability POC on page 13 of this document for contact information) with email Subject line: <i>eAPP Invite Follow-up Request</i>. Attach the email with the Electronic-Application-Applicant-Listing_April 2024.xlsx and forms (Step 3).</p>
5	NBIS	Sends an account creation email from: donotreply@nbist.mil to the applicant's email account as indicated on the eAPP Applicant Listing.	1 day (within 24 hours after step 4).	Applicants: If you receive the automated email from NBIS, but do <u>not</u> receive the fingerprinting instructions from your EN CPOC, please follow up with your EN CPOC to ensure you receive the instructions timely.
6	EN CPOC	<p>Notifies applicant of the requirement to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Complete the eAPP form and 2) Submit fingerprints electronically 	Up to 10 days after step 5.	<p>In eAPP, be sure to submit so it is released to CSPS.</p> <p>If the eAPP is not submitted, CSPS will not be able to access the form.</p>

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeline*	Tips and Follow-ups
				<p>For assistance with eAPP, call 1- 844-874-9940 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.</p> <p>eAPP application saves your progress automatically.</p> <p>Retain username and password exactly as entered to return to eAPP later, if needed.</p> <p>Note: The applicant is responsible for paying the \$16.50 fee when scheduling their electronic fingerprinting appointment.</p>
7	Applicant	<p>1) Completes eAPP and electronically signs signature pages.</p> <p>Go to: NBIS eAPP & NBIS Agency Webpage for links to an introduction and walkthrough of the NBIS eAPP features.</p> <p>2) AFTER completing eAPP and submitting, makes appointment with electronic fingerprint services provider and submits fingerprints. Refer to: Fingerprint Instructions document.</p>	Up to 10 days after step 5.	<p>In eAPP, be sure to submit so it is released to CSPS.</p> <p>If the eAPP is not submitted, CSPS will not be able to access the form.</p> <p>For assistance with eAPP, call 1- 844-874-9940 between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Eastern Time.</p> <p>eAPP saves your progress automatically.</p> <p>Retain username and password exactly as entered to return to eAPP later, if needed.</p> <p>Note: The applicant is responsible for paying the \$16.50 fee for fingerprinting when</p>

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeline*	Tips and Follow-ups
				scheduling their appointment.
8	CSPS	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Reviews all provided information. discrepancies or issues. 2) Follows up with applicant on any discrepancies or issues <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant is not permitted to work on SSA's Ticket to Work Program unless they comply and subsequently receive a suitable determination letter. 3) Issues suitability determination letter with one of two responses: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Suitable</u>: Releases investigation request to NBIS. • <u>Unsuitable</u>: Cancels investigation request in eAPP. <p>If the applicant hasn't provided enough information for SSA to make a determination, CSPS will provide a deadline to provide the additional information.</p>	Up to 15 business days from release of eAPP form and submission of electronic fingerprints.	<p>EN Service/EN CPOC/ Applicants. For status checks after 15 business days, call the CSPS Hotline at 1-844-874-9940.</p> <p>Applicants: Applicants must submit any additional requested supporting documentation (e.g., Federal debt payment plans, payment history, etc.). Refusal to provide the requested documentation will result in a denial of suitability.</p>
9	NBIS	Conducts Subject Interview, if applicable, and completes full background investigation.	Up to 1 year after Step 7.	As applicable, an NBIS Investigator will contact the applicant to schedule an investigative interview.

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeline*	Tips and Follow-ups
				Note: The applicant, if determined suitable, can work under the SSA award during this NBIS investigation.
10	CSPS	<p>Confirms if the applicant is still active on an SSA award.</p> <p>Contacts the applicant if additional information is needed to make an adjudicative decision.</p> <p>Reviews and takes necessary actions to adjudicate the background information</p>	Up to 90 days from the date NBIS completes the investigation (Step 9).	<p>If CSPS is unable to reach the applicant or resolve the issue after two attempts, CSPS will contact EN Service /EN CPOC for assistance.</p> <p>Applicants: Comply with CSPS requests and inquiries to ensure a timely determination. Failure to do so may result in an unfavorable determination or termination of your SSA Ticket to Work Agreement.</p>

Current Contractor/EN Personnel Moving to Another Award (Rollover Request)

If current contractor/EN personnel are to perform work under a new award, CSPS must review the applicant's suitability to work on the new award. As applicable, CSPS will issue a suitability letter for the new award or notify the EN CPOC and ENService@ssa.gov of any additional steps required for the suitability review.

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeframe*	Tips and Follow-Ups
1	EN CPOC	Submits a fully completed, Contractor Personnel Rollover Request Form (ssa.gov) to EN Service and CSPS.		<p>See Encrypted Email Procedures for details on securely emailing these documents. Include ENService@ssa.gov on the email submission to DCHR.OPE.Suitability@ssa.gov</p> <p>Utilize password TTWE and last 4 digits of your award number (e.g., TTWE1234). On the rollover form, use ENService@ssa.gov for the COR information.</p>

Step	Responsible Party	Activity	Timeframe*	Tips and Follow-Ups
2	CSPS	<p>Reviews applicant to ensure they have the appropriate background investigation to perform work on the new award.</p> <p>a. If suitable, releases a suitability determination letter for the new award.</p> <p>b. If the applicant does not have the proper investigation on record, CSPS will notify the EN CPOC and EN Service of the requirement to go through the full suitability process.</p>	Within 5 business days.	If CSPS notifies the EN CPOC the applicant does <u>not</u> have the proper investigation for the new award, see Step 1 of the Suitability Process above to begin a new suitability review for that applicant.

Unsuitable Determinations

When an applicant is determined unsuitable, CSPS will send a letter notification to EN Service and the EN CPOC to be issued to the applicant. There is **no** appeals process; however, the applicant may request clarification. Details are provided in the letter.

The applicant must submit requests for clarification for unsuitable determinations in writing within 30 days of the date of the unsuitable determination to DCHR.OPE.SuitClarify@ssa.gov. Applicants must file their own requests; award EN CPOC may not file requests on behalf of the applicant.

Through the Freedom of Information Act process, the applicant can request in writing a copy of their investigation from OPM. The written request must prominently note “Freedom of Information Act Request” and describe in detail the records needed. This will assist OPM with locating the records.

Name Change Process

The EN CPOC should notify their main EN Contractor Suitability POC and ENService@ssa.gov once the individual has legally changed their name, including reporting to a local SSA field office to update SSA's mainframe record.

Re-Investigations

EN Personnel may be subject to re-investigations every 5 years from the date of their last completed background investigation. CSPA will notify ENService@ssa.gov and the EN CPOC when an individual is due for re-investigation.

EN personnel must comply with any requests from CSPA to remain active on an SSA award. The notification from CSPA will detail the steps and requirements for the re-investigation.

Notification Requirements for EN Personnel

The EN CPOC shall notify ENService@ssa.gov and their main EN Contractor Suitability POC within one business day if any EN personnel:

- Is arrested or charged with a crime during the term of their award.
- Has any other change in the status of individual (e.g. leaves the company, no longer works under the award, the alien status changes, etc.) that could affect their suitability determination.

The EN CPOC must provide as much detail as possible in the notification, including, but not limited to: name(s) of individual whose status has changed, award number, the type of charge(s), if applicable, date of arrest, the court date, jurisdiction, and, if available, the disposition of the charge(s). If the individual separated and the background investigation is in process, CSPA will cancel the investigation.

REFERENCE INFORMATION

Glossary

Award Number

EN personnel are affiliated with an SSA award (e.g., SSA agreement) number for processing.

NBIS Electronic Application (eAPP)

Electronic application system entry point for background investigation applications. The eAPP is used for entering and submitting all information into the investigative electronic Standard Forms that federal applicants, employees, and contractors use to input information required to process their personnel background information.

Acceptable Identification Documents

List of acceptable documents used for proof of identity. The names on the suitability documents must match each other and SSA's official record for NBIS to process the necessary background investigation.

Key Participants

EN Company Point of Contact (CPOC)

A representative of the awarded Employment Network who is designated as the Suitability Contact or the Signatory Authority.

Contractor (EN) Personnel

Employee(s) of the awarded company, employee(s) of the subcontractor, any consultant retained by the contractor or subcontractor, any volunteer or intern of the contractor or subcontractor, and if the contractor or subcontractor is a sole proprietorship, it refers to the sole proprietorship.

EN Service

SSA Component authorized and designated in writing to perform certain technical or administrative functions as they relate to an agreement. EN Service is the designated lead for all Employment Network agreements and personnel. Send general EN questions to ENService@ssa.gov.

Office of Human Resources, Office of Personnel, Center for Suitability and Personnel Security (DCHR, OPE, CSPA)

Screens SSA employees, contractors, and affiliates. Initiates background investigations and makes suitability determinations. Point of contact for form completion, the NBIS investigation process, fingerprint responses from the FBI, name discrepancies between identification documents and SSA's records, eAPP issues, final adjudication upon completion of the NBIS investigation, and ongoing assessments as necessary. Send questions related to these topics to DCHR.OPE.Suitability@ssa.gov.

National Background Investigation Services (NBIS)

The federal government's system for end-to-end personnel vetting — from initiation and application to background investigation, adjudication, and continuous vetting.

Contact Information

CSPA

- **Hotline at 1-844-874-9940** – Status inquires on pending suitability requests and eAPP assistance. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ET, excluding all Federal holidays.
- DCHR.OPE.Suitability@ssa.gov and your CSPA POC – Questions on SSA's suitability process, the NBIS investigation process, and name discrepancies between identification documents and SSA's records.

Points of Contact

Award numbers are set up: SS00-XX-XXXX

The POC is assigned based on the two middle digits.

- For ENs with the middle digits from 04-13 (ex: SS00-04-E1165, SS00-13-E0647), the POC is Jeanette Price jeanette.j.price@ssa.gov.
- For ENs with the middle digits from 14-15 (ex: SS00-14-E1052, SS00-15-E2928), the POC is Angela G. Davis angela.g.davis@ssa.gov.
- For ENs with the middle digits from 16-25 (ex: SS00-16-E3207, SS00-25-E3339), the POC is Courtney Jackson courtney.jackson@ssa.gov.

Encrypted Email Procedures

Secure emails may be sent via:

1. An SSA email account or SSA secure partner email account
2. Password protected email (detailed instructions below)

To Encrypt a File using WinZip

1. Save the file to your hard drive
2. Open Windows Explorer and locate the file
3. Right click on the file
4. Select “WinZip”
5. Select “Add to Zip File”
6. An Add box pops up. Near the bottom of the box you will see an “Options” area
7. Click the “Encrypt added files” check box
8. Click the “Add” button
9. Check the “Hide Password” checkbox if not already checked
 - ▶ Enter the password of TTWE and last 4 digits of your award number (e.g., TTWE1234)
 - ▶ Select the 256-Bit AES encryption radio button
 - ▶ Click “OK”
10. You have successfully encrypted the new Zip file that can now be attached to an email