

Office of Procurement and Property Management
Personnel and Document Security Division

USDA Personnel Security Newsletter

Personnel and Document Security Division Earns National Award

In early November, the Personnel and Document Security Division (PDS) received the *FY 2002 Guardian Award* from the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). This annual award is given to the one federal entity that best uses innovative solutions to solve today's personnel challenges. OPM Deputy Director, Dan Blair, presented the award at this year's *Security Professionals Conference*. The conference attendees included several hundred personnel security specialists from across the federal government. USDA representatives at the awards luncheon were from the Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM) and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Administration. Clifford Oliver, Chief, PDS, and Marty Brumback, Associate Chief, PDS accepted the award for USDA. Lou Gallegos, Assistant Secretary for Administration (ASA), provided comments for the Department.

Following the OPM Awards Ceremony, ASA Lou Gallegos hosted an awards reception to acknowledge the efforts of the staff that made the award possible. The award is an important milestone in our continuing efforts to improve the delivery of personnel security services.



Pictured Above at the OPM Awards Luncheon are (left to right): Verdell Dixon, Carl Johns, ASA Lou Gallegos, Cliff Oliver, OPM Deputy Director Dan Blair, Marty Brumback, and Deputy ASA John Surina



Pictured Above at the ASA Awards Reception (left right): Anthony Balbosa, Verdell Dixon, Cyra Lorensen, Lucy Lew, Carrie Moore, Clifford Oliver, John Surina, Marty Brumback, Karen Maguire, Carl Johns, and Joseph Monroe.

Have comments or suggestions for future articles? Please contact Verdell Dixon at (202) 720-PDS (7373) or Verdell.Dixon@usda.gov

Reorganization Completed

On October 1, 2002, the Office of Crisis Planning and Management (OCPM) was abolished and most functions were transferred to the Office of Procurement and Property Management (OPPM). As a result, OCPM's Personnel Security Division, is now the OPPM Personnel and Document Security Division (PDSO). These organizational changes will not have impact on our ability to deliver personnel security services.

The biggest impact on our customers is that PDSO has a new phone number and e-mail address as shown below:

Personnel and Document Security
Division
Room S-302 Mail Stop 9305
1400 Independence Ave
Washington, D.C. 20250
Phone: (202) 720-PDSO (7373)
Fax: (202) 720-7708
E-mail: PDSO@USDA.GOV

USDA's Personnel Security Review Board Eliminates Backlog

In February 2002, [Departmental Regulation 4600-2](#), entitled *Procedures for Denial or Revocation for Access to National Security Information* was issued. The regulation creates the *USDA Personnel Security Review Board* (PSRB) and laid out the process to be used in USDA to provide a final level of administrative appeal for persons whose security clearance has been denied or revoked. Since that time, the PSRB has been busy working on two cases where employees have appealed the revocation of their security clearances. Both cases have been concluded and there are no cases pending before the PSRB at this time.

New Personnel Security Bulletin on Separating Employees Issued

The Personnel and Document Security Division has issued Personnel Security [Bulletin # 03-01 Terminating Access to National Security Information for Separating Employees](#). This bulletin is intended to ensure that USDA employees, with access to national security information, receive a security debriefing before separating from the Department. In accordance with this bulletin, on November 8, 2002, we started sending out a salmon colored sheet of paper (see attachment #1 to the bulletin) to be placed on the top of the left side of employee's Official Personnel File. This notice is intended to remind human resources staff to ensure that a USDA employee, who has been granted access to national security information, receives a debriefing prior to separating from USDA. This debriefing is required under Executive Order 12968 *Access to National Security Information*. Once the employee receives their debriefing, they will be provided a memo (see attachment #2 to the bulletin) from our office as confirmation that they were debriefed.

Personnel Security Bulletins contain important information for those working in personnel security and we encourage everyone to read them as soon as possible. All the Bulletins are posted on our web site <http://www.usda.gov/da/pdsd/bulletins.htm> in both PDF and Microsoft Word[®] versions for easy viewing.

Personnel Security Factoid

Did you know that in FY 2002, the Personnel Security Division processed in excess of 4000 requests for personnel security services, more than 3 times any other fiscal year on record?

Changes in the Personnel Security Program and Staffing

As with any organization, staff comes and goes. Presently, the Personnel and Document Security Division consists of:

Division Chief

Clifford Oliver clifford.oliver@usda.gov

Associate Division Chief

Marty Brumback
martin.brumbach@usda.gov

Division Secretary

Cynthia Powell cynthia.powell@usda.gov

Personnel Security Specialists

Verdell Dixon verdell.dixon@usda.gov

Carl Johns carl.johns.usda.gov

Cyra Lorenson* persec1@usda.gov

Vanessa Gates* persec2@usda.gov

Anthony Balbosa* persec3@usda.gov

Carrie Moore* persec4@usda.gov

James McDermott* persec5@usda.gov

Administrative Support

Lucy Lew lucy.lew@usda.gov

Joseph Monroe* persecadmin@usda.gov

* *Contract staff*

Personnel Security Challenged to Meet Performance Goal

If you have read previous personnel security newsletter, you are aware that the Personnel and Document Security Division has experienced slippage in meeting its performance goal of adjudicating closed personnel security cases within 30 calendar days of when OPM closes the investigation. The surge in workload continues to have the

unfortunate result of causing us to slip in our processing time for closed cases. Recently, it has been taking about 45 calendar days, on the average, to adjudicate cases from when they were closed by OPM.

We are presently implementing several alternatives to address this slippage. Actions underway include increasing the level of contractor support and using detailed staff from agencies to assist us.

Personnel Security Web Site Relocated as Part of Reorganization

The USDA personnel security web site, now located at (<http://www.usda.gov/da/pdsd/>), provides information on our personnel security program. **You will need to reset all your bookmarks and "favorites" since our web address has changed.** As a reminder the following forms and information are available on or web site:

- A [Microsoft Word 2000[®] fillable version of the SF-86 Questionnaire on National Security](#) has been posted
- A [Microsoft Word 2000[®] fillable version of the Request for Personnel Security Services form](#) has been posted
- All [Personnel Security Newsletters](#) have been posted in both Microsoft Word[®] and PDF format
- All [Personnel Security Bulletins](#) have been posted in both Microsoft Word[®] and PDF format
- Information on [Web-based Information Security Training](#) has been posted

As always, comments and suggestions on further improving the web site are welcome and should be sent to Carrie Moore at persec4@usda.gov

Efforts Towards Implementing E-Security Make Progress

If you have been keeping up with our newsletters, you know that the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is working on rolling out e-security initiatives, called *E-clearance* that should soon make it easier for employees to access personnel security services. There are three major emphases to this effort; each one is called a *Module*. More information on the E-clearance initiative can be found at: [The E-Clearance Initiative](#)

Module One - Electronic Questionnaire for Investigations Processing (e-QIP)

The first Module is to allow federal employees to complete the paperwork for a security clearance on line and submit it electronically to their agency for review and transmission to OPM for investigation. A major milestone was reached in November 2002 when OPM activated the *Electronic Questionnaire for Investigative Processing* web site known as [e-QIP](#). This module has four major initiatives. The first is the application, which allows the user to fill out their security questionnaire. This has been through alpha testing, programming changes were made and it is now in beta testing.

The second application is the one that moves the form from the server and to the sponsoring agency. This is now in alpha testing and will soon move back to the programming staff to allow changes to improve its operation. The third application has been programmed and was scheduled for an initial round of testing mid-fall. All three applications are on schedule for a target implementation date of June 2003. The fourth major initiative is the deployment of a new form, the SF 86C, which is a

certification form that allows an individual to use an abbreviated form to indicate that there have been no changes to his/her last execution of the lengthy SF 86, or to indicate what changes have taken place. The SF 86C should reduce form execution from hours to minutes. Deployment of this form is scheduled for October 2003.

Currently agencies participating in the pilot phase are utilizing the web site. USDA and other federal agencies are scheduled to begin utilizing the web site in June 2003. PDSO will work closely with USDA agencies to make sure this initial step in the transition to a paperless personnel security process goes smoothly.

Module Two - Clearance Verification System (CVS)

Module Two consists of the development and implementation of a cross-agency Clearance Verification System (CVS). This initiative includes the load of all civilian agency clearance information into the OPM Personnel Security Investigations Index (SII) and, simultaneously, its connection to the Department of Defense's Joint Personnel Adjudication System (JPAS). This will enable, for the first time, one search to locate investigative and clearance information in either system and for any agency.

OPM and the DOD are establishing a link between the SII and JPAS so that clearances may be searched in a "one-stop shopping" manner. In conjunction with this, the loading of civilian clearances into the SII started in May of 2002. Each week additional clearances are loaded. Both initiatives are on schedule for their target completion dates of December 31, 2002 and January 31, 2003.

PDSO is working closely with the National Finance Center and OPM to supply security information on USDA employees. Once

operational, each federal department security office will have access to the database and will be able to determine the status of each person's clearance.

Module Three - Imaging of Investigative Records.

Module Three includes the creation, storage, and retrieval of digital image investigative information. Often times, the longest delay in an investigation can be the retrieval, copying and mailing of previous investigations. Imaging will result in ease of retrieval and dissemination to authorized users.

All personnel security investigative agencies of the government have agreed to image their records for ease of transfer to other authorized users. Target commencement of this imaging is May 2003 and OPM reports the initiative is on schedule.



Chief
Personnel and Document Security Division

Marty Brumback

Associate Chief
Personnel and Document Security Division

