

MS 403 Personnel Security Program

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1.0 Authorities

Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2519; Executive Order 10450; Executive Order 12958; Executive Order 12968; Office of Management and Budget Circular A-130; Homeland Security Presidential Directive 12; 5 CFR Part 731.

2.0 Purpose

This manual section sets out the policies and procedures for the Peace Corps Personnel Security Program.

3.0 Applicability

This manual section applies to any individual nominated for access to classified national security information or any individual who requires real or virtual access to Peace Corps domestic facilities.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 A personnel security investigation is an inquiry into a person's experience, qualifications, conduct and actions, to be used as a basis to make a determination about a person's loyalty, suitability, and trustworthiness.

4.2 National Agency Check (NAC) is a check of the investigative and identification (name and fingerprint) files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the investigative files of the Office of Personnel Management and Defense Investigative Service, and other government agencies as dictated by the subject's personal history.

4.3 A National Agency Check and Inquiries (NACI) is a combination of the NAC described above with written inquiries to credit bureaus, law enforcement agencies, employers, educators and references.

4.4 A Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI) combines the NAC with personal interviews with the subject of the investigation, employers, educators, neighbors, references, credit bureaus, law enforcement agencies, courts, and other sources of information.

4.5 A Periodic Reinvestigation (PRI) is a reinvestigation of the incumbent of certain positions requiring access to classified national security information, conducted on a 5-year cycle for holders of Top Secret clearances, or 10-year cycle for holders of Secret clearances.

4.6 A Security Clearance is a favorable determination (or re-determination), based on an appropriate investigation, that an individual does not pose a risk or danger to the security or interest of the United States, has a need for access to classified national security information at specific levels (Confidential, Secret, or Top Secret), and is deemed trustworthy for that purpose.

4.7 A Suitability Determination is a finding, based on an appropriate investigation, that an individual meets the standards of qualification and personal conduct that would be likely to allow them to be able to carry out the duties of a Federal job with appropriate integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness.

4.8 Position Sensitivity is a designation assigned to a specific position that takes into consideration the degree of adverse or damaging impact the holder of the position could have on the mission of the Peace Corps and/or the national security.

4.9 Critical Sensitive Positions involve duties of major importance to the Agency with primary program responsibilities and have the potential for exceptionally grave impact on national security or Agency mission. Such positions may include:

- (a) Access to classified information up to and including TOP SECRET information;
- (b) Development or approval of plans, policies, or programs affecting the overall operations of the Agency, i.e., policy-making or policy-determining positions;
- (c) Investigative duties or the issuance of personnel security clearances;
- (d) Fiduciary, public contact, or other duties demanding the highest degree of public trust; or
- (e) Positions in which the incumbent is responsible for the planning, direction and implementation of a computer security program; the direction, planning and design of a computer system, including the hardware and software; or, accessing a system with the potential of a high risk for causing grave damage or realizing a significant personal gain.

Positions at the critical sensitive level initially require a SSBI with a PRI every five years thereafter.

4.10 Non-Critical Sensitive Positions involve duties of considerable importance to the Agency with significant program responsibility and have the potential for moderate to serious impact on national security or the Agency mission. Such positions may include:

- (a) Access to classified information up to and including SECRET information;
- (b) Duties that may directly or indirectly adversely affect the overall operations of the Agency;
- (c) Duties that demand a high degree of confidence and trust;
- (d) Positions in which the incumbent is responsible for the direction, planning, design, operation, or maintenance of a computer system, but whose work is reviewed by another person, to insure the integrity of the system; or
- (e) Other positions that involve a degree of access to an automated data processing (ADP) system that creates a significant potential for damage or personal gain but less than that in critical sensitive positions.

Positions at the non-critical sensitive level will require, at a minimum, a NACI. If duties include access to classified national security information, a PRI every 10 years thereafter will be required.

4.11 Non-Sensitive Positions have the potential for limited impact involving the Agency mission. This includes:

- (a) All positions, including automated data processing (ADP), not falling into one of the above sensitivity levels; and
- (b) No access to classified national security information.

Positions at the non-sensitive level require, at a minimum, a NACI investigation. A PRI is not required.

5.0 Policies

5.1 Position Sensitivity Designations

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that all positions in the Peace Corps will be designated as to the degree of their sensitivity and/or requirements for access to classified information.

5.2 Investigations

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that all individuals requiring access to classified national security information and/or unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities will be subjected to an investigation commensurate with the sensitivity of the position to be encumbered or the level of classified information to which access will be required.

5.3 Due Process

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that the process of investigation and adjudication will be conducted in a manner that will protect the individual's rights, including the right to privacy and due process, while adhering to the primary purpose of the Information and Personnel Safety and Security program, to protect national security interests and the mission of the Peace Corps.

5.4 Loyalty Issues

Agencies, including the Peace Corps, are required to refer any information that raises questions of loyalty to the United States, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

6.0 Procedures

6.1 Position Sensitivity Designation Process

The Information and Personnel Safety and Security Division (SS/DO/IPSS) will periodically conduct position sensitivity surveys of existing positions and in addition conduct a position sensitivity survey of any new or significantly changed position. A survey will include interviews with program managers responsible for positions being surveyed to insure proper designation.

SS/DO/IPSS will provide the Office of Human Resource Management (M/HRM) a list consisting of the most recent designation of the sensitivity of each position in the Peace Corps.

That list will be used by M/HRM to determine the level of investigation that will be requested on new or reassigned employees.

6.2 Personnel Investigative Process

Individuals subject to investigation include employees, experts, consultants, personal service contractors, contractor employees, work study students, interns, and any other individual requiring unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities. Individuals hired for sensitive positions will require additional investigations commensurate with the sensitivity level of the position that is to be encumbered and/or the work to be performed.

All such individuals will, at a minimum, require a pre-employment National Agency Check (NAC). In addition, Federal employees and contractors who are to be employed in excess of 6 months, must be issued a Federal document which will allow failsafe identification of that individual through the use of an image, a personal identification number (PIN) and the storage of two fingerprints. The process of obtaining a compliant Federal identification document or PIV card incorporates the requisite investigation, personal identity verification at several points in the process, and separation of the activities (request, registration and issuance) to ensure the integrity of the process.

6.3 Notification of Investigative Process

Each applicant for a position requiring unescorted access, either physical or virtual, to Peace Corps domestic facilities, will be notified by their Sponsor that placement and/or retention in any position is contingent upon the favorable adjudication of a personnel investigation. Language to this effect must appear in all contracts. All others will be advised in writing as part of the offer of employment. The Sponsors are: M/HRM for direct hire employees; the supervisor for work study students, interns, etc, or the Contracting Officers Technical Representative (COTAR) for contractors.

When a candidate has been selected, the Sponsor sends a Workplace Access Authorization Form and an Optional Form 306, to request the issuance of a PIV card, to SS/DO/IPSS.

6.4 Document Completion, Registration and Investigative Scheduling

SS/DO/IPSS provides the appropriate paper or online documents to the applicant. The applicant completes the documents and makes an appointment to appear in person before SS/DO/IPSS at least 10 business days prior to the expected start date, to submit the documents along with two forms of identification from an approved list supplied by the SS/DO/IPSS.

SS/DO/IPSS captures the fingerprints and image of the applicant and validates the identification documents to verify the identity of the applicant.

SS/DO/IPSS schedules the required investigation.

6.5 Adjudication of the NAC and PIV Card Issuance

Upon completion of the National Agency Check (NAC) portion of the investigation, the results are adjudicated. If the NAC results are favorable, the applicant is instructed to appear in person before Emergency Preparedness Plans & Training (SS/DO/EPPTTE), with 2 forms of identification from a supplied list. SS/DO/EPPTTE verifies the identity of the applicant and issues an interim PIV card which allows the recipient to have unescorted access to Peace Corps facilities on an interim basis. Upon favorable completion of the entire investigation, the interim status of the PIV card is removed.

If the results of the NAC are unfavorable, the applicant will not be issued a PIV card and unescorted access to Peace Corps facilities will not be permitted. Attempts to resolve issues of concern will be made through further investigation.

Individuals, whose need for unescorted access to Peace Corps facilities is less than 6 months, will be given a Facilities Access Card (FAC) instead of a PIV Card upon the successful adjudication of the NAC.

6.6 Reciprocity of Investigative Processes and Security Clearances

Where possible, security clearances granted by one Federal agency will be accepted by Peace Corps, and duplicative investigations will not be conducted. This does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility of submitting the required documentation. Those documents include a release authorizing the Peace Corps to conduct inquiries, to include the review of records held by another Federal agency. When it is determined that an investigative report currently exists that meets all or part of the investigative requirements, the scope of the current investigation will be shortened or eliminated as appropriate.

6.7 Other Investigations

The initiation of additional investigative activity is set out below.

6.7.1 Questions of Continued Suitability for Employment or Clearance

When a complaint or other information is received that raises questions as to an individual's continued suitability for either Peace Corps employment or continued access to classified national security information, an investigation will be initiated to resolve the concerns. Pending resolution, the individual's security clearance or access to Peace Corps facilities may be suspended. Results of the investigation will be adjudicated, and appropriate action will be taken which could include termination of employment, revocation of security clearance and/or other necessary administrative actions.

Should any indication of waste, fraud or abuse of Peace Corps programs, or matters otherwise under the jurisdiction of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), be received or disclosed, they will be referred to the OIG for action.

6.7.2 Position Upgrade

If a person moves from a lower to a higher position sensitivity level, or requires access to classified national security information because of promotion, reassignment, or re-designation of the position, he or she may have to undergo an upgrade investigation to meet the requirements of the new position. SS/DO/IPSS will notify such persons of the requirements and conduct upgrade investigations as required.

6.7.3 Re-Investigations

Individuals requiring access to classified national security information must be re-investigated periodically. Individuals holding Top Secret clearances must be re-investigated at least every 5 years and those holding Secret clearances must be re-investigated at least every 10 years. SS/DO/IPSS will contact individuals requiring a re-investigation at the appropriate time. Failure to complete the required documentation for the re-investigation may result in the suspension of the individual's security clearance and access to classified national security information.

6.7.4 Foreign Service Nationals

A Foreign Service National (FSN) hire is required to have a security and suitability investigation conducted by the Regional Security Officer (RSO) or Post Security Officer (PSO) at the servicing U.S. Embassy in accordance with 3 FAM 7222. An FSN may not be appointed until at least a temporary security certification, good for 120 days, has been issued by the RSO/PSO. The RSO/PSO may issue extensions of the initial 120 day temporary security certification. Additionally, the RSO/PSO must conduct an update investigation every 5 years for the purpose of reissuing the security certification. Contact the RSO/PSO for instructions and appropriate forms. Refer to MS 691, Guidelines for Employment of Foreign Service Nationals by Direct Hire and Detail.

6.7.5 Foreign National Spouse

Refer to MS 642 for staff, for instructions on the in-service marriage notification process.

6.7.6 U.S. Citizens Hired Abroad

All U.S. citizen employees hired abroad must be investigated and approved commensurate with their position sensitivity level and requirement for access to classified information. The identity verification and investigative processes required of domestic employees described in sections 6.2 to 6.5 of this manual section apply. Refer also to MS 693 Employment of U.S. Citizens Abroad.

6.8 Exemptions from Investigation Requirements

Temporary employees in non-sensitive positions who serve less than 120 cumulative (not necessarily consecutive) days do not require a personnel security investigation if pre-employment screening has been conducted. The applicant for a temporary position is still required to complete the PIV process described in sections 6.3 to 6.5 of this manual section. The

NAC will serve as pre-employment screening. Unless issues of concern are developed, no additional investigation will be scheduled on incumbents of temporary positions. If an employee is continued past 120 days, becomes permanent, or fills a higher sensitivity position, the required investigation will be conducted.

6.9 Waivers of Pre-Appointment Investigative Requirement

In the event of a national emergency and a finding that filling a critical sensitive position prior to completion of the required investigation is in the national interest, a waiver of the pre-appointment investigation and clearance requirements may be granted provided that the investigation is initiated no later than the date of appointment. It is required that the waiver be included in Agency records. A copy of every waiver granted must be forwarded to SS/DO/IPSS.

6.9.1 Director's Staff and Country Director Positions

Waivers for Country Director positions and critical sensitive positions on the Director's staff, and Associate Director and Regional Director positions, may be granted only by the Director. This authority may not be re-delegated.

6.9.2 All Other Critical Sensitive Positions

Waiver of the pre-appointment investigative and clearance requirements for all other critical sensitive positions, for national security purposes, may be granted by either the Associate Director having responsibility for the position, or by the Chief of Staff. This authority may not be re-delegated.

6.9.3 Positions Designated Non-Critical, Sensitive, and Below

Positions designated Non-Critical, Sensitive, or Non-Sensitive do not require a waiver of the pre-appointment investigative requirements.

6.9.4 Departure for Overseas Assignment

All staff personnel departing for overseas assignments must have completed the PIV/investigative process and have been granted a security clearance prior to departure. If the process has not been completed, waivers to depart must be obtained from the Peace Corps Director for Country Director positions or from the Chief of Staff for all other overseas positions. This authority may not be re-delegated.

Waivers are initiated by the Regional Director, submitted to the Chief of Staff or Director for approval and forwarded to SS/DO/IPSS for implementation

6.9.5 Foreign National Spouse

The applicable Regional Director may grant a waiver for an alien spouse to join a Country Director or staff member at an overseas post prior to completion of the required National Agency Check.

7.0 Adjudication for Security Clearances

Guidelines are established for all United States government civilian and military personnel, consultants, contractors, employees of contractors, licensees, certificate holders or grantees and their employees and other individuals who require access to classified national security information. These guidelines apply to persons being considered for initial or continued eligibility for access to classified information, and are to be used by government departments and agencies in all final clearance determinations.

7.1 Adjudicative Process

The adjudicative process is an examination of a sufficient period of a person's life to make an affirmative determination that the person is eligible for a security clearance. The following personnel security factors will be used to adjudicate applicant eligibility for access to classified national security information:

- (a) Allegiance to the United States;
- (b) Foreign influence;
- (c) Foreign preference;
- (d) Sexual behavior;
- (e) Personal conduct;
- (f) Financial considerations;
- (g) Alcohol consumption;
- (h) Drug involvement;
- (i) Emotional, mental, and personality disorders;
- (j) Criminal conduct;
- (k) Security violations;
- (l) Outside activities; and
- (m) Misuse of Information Technology Systems.

Each case must be judged on its own merits. Any doubt as to whether access to classified information is clearly consistent with national security will result in the security clearance in question being denied or revoked.

7.2 Favorable Decision

An SS/DO/IPSS Personnel Security Specialist will review the completed investigation considering the personnel security factors cited in Section 7.1 herein. If a favorable decision is clearly consistent with national security, SS/DO/IPSS will notify M/HRM, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the employee in writing.

7.3 Potentially Unfavorable Decision

If the data in the completed investigation indicates the subject may not meet the standards for initial or continued access to classified information, the Personnel Security Specialist will advise the Chief of SS/DO/IPSS who will initiate due process procedures in order to arrive at a final determination. Those procedures are as follows:

7.3.1 Deciding Official

A Personnel Security Specialist shall be designated the Deciding Official by the Chief of SS/DO/IPSS. When the Deciding Official determines that an individual nominated for access to classified information by Peace Corps does not meet the standards for access to classified information, the Deciding Official shall:

- (a) Provide a written notice to the individual which provides a comprehensive and detailed explanation, to the extent that the National Security interests of the United States and other applicable laws permit, of the basis for the decision to deny, reduce, or revoke clearance eligibility;
- (b) Include with the written notice, the entire security investigative file and any other documents, records, reports or other materials upon which the denial, reduction or revocation decision was based, as permitted by the National Security interests and any other applicable law, and to the extent the documents would be provided if requested under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) or the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a);
- (c) Include with the written notice a copy of Executive Order 12968 and applicable adjudicative guidelines;
- (d) Advise the individual in the written notice of the right to be represented by counsel or other representative at his or her own expense; and
- (e) Advise the individual in the written notice that, within 30 days of the decision by the Deciding Official to deny/reduce/ revoke a clearance, he/she may request a review of the decision, may reply in writing and/or in person to the Reviewing Official and may present any relevant documents, materials, and information to the Reviewing Official. The individual shall also be notified that, if the individual meets with the Reviewing Official in

person, a written summary or recording of the appearance will be made part of the individual's security file.

7.3.2 Reviewing Official

The Chief, SS/DO/IPSS is the designated Reviewing Official.

After the individual has submitted a written reply and/or has presented information in person, or upon expiration of the 30-day time period, a decision will be made by the Reviewing Official.

If the Reviewing Official disagrees with the decision of the Deciding Official, the access eligibility determination will be appropriately modified and written notification will be sent to the individual.

If the Reviewing Official agrees with the decision of the Deciding Official, the Reviewing Official will notify the individual in writing of the results of the review, and of the right to file a written appeal of the Reviewing Official's decision within 30 days to the Security Clearance Review Panel.

7.3.3 Security Clearance Review Panel

The Security Clearance Review Panel (SCRCP) shall be comprised of the Chief, SS/DO, who serves as Chairperson of the SCRCP, and two persons not in the security field, the Designated Agency Ethics Official and the Deputy Director of the Office of Human Resources.

If the individual appeals the decision of the Reviewing Official, the Reviewing Official shall forward the complete file to the Chair of the SCRCP. The Chair of the SCRCP then notifies the Director of Human Resources and the General Counsel that the SCRCP must meet to issue an appeal decision. The Director of Human Resources and the General Counsel will notify the Deputy Director of Human Resources and the Designated Agency Ethics Official of their responsibility to serve on the SCRCP.

In reaching its decision, the SCRCP is limited to consideration of information developed and presented in the individual's entire security file, including, but not limited to, any and all information and material provided by the individual in connection with the clearance denial/revocation/reduction proceedings, and the access eligibility policy, procedure, and standards set forth in Executive Order 12968, as well as the Adjudicative Guidelines of the Security Policy Board, refer to 8.1 of this manual section.

The Chair of the SCRCP notifies the individual in writing of the final decision reached by majority vote of the SCRCP. The majority decision of the SCRCP is not subject to further appeal.

7.3.4 Certification

If the Director personally certifies that any procedure set forth herein cannot be made available in a particular case without damaging the national security interests of the United States by

revealing classified information, the particular procedure(s) shall not be made available. The Director's certification shall be conclusive.

8.0 Adjudication of Suitability for Federal Employment

Any individual seeking employment with the Peace Corps, including those who require a security clearance, must be investigated and found suitable for Peace Corps employment. Suitability is defined as identifiable character traits and conduct sufficient to determine whether an individual is likely or not likely to be able to carry out the duties of a Federal job with appropriate integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness. It is the policy of the Peace Corps that SS/DO/IPSS will investigate and make suitability recommendations. M/HRM delegates to SS/DO/IPSS the authority to make favorable suitability determinations and the authority to make initial adverse suitability determinations subject to review and action by M/HRM. M/HRM retains authority to make final suitability determinations in adverse cases.

8.1 Adjudicative Process

The adjudicative process is an examination of a sufficient period of a person's life to make an affirmative determination that the person is suitable for federal employment. The following suitability factors will be used to adjudicate applicant suitability for employment in the Peace Corps:

- (a) Delinquency or misconduct in employment;
- (b) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
- (c) Material intentional false statement or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
- (d) Alcohol abuse;
- (e) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances;
- (f) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. government by force; or
- (g) Statutory or regulatory bar.

8.2 Favorable Decision

SS/DO/IPSS will review the data from a completed investigation considering the factors cited in paragraph 8.1 of this manual section. If a favorable decision is clearly consistent with the standards, SS/DO/IPSS will notify M/HRM, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the employee in writing.

8.3 Potentially Unfavorable Decision

If the data in the completed investigation indicates the subject may not meet the suitability standards for federal employment, SS/DO/IPSS will initiate the following due process procedures in order to arrive at a final determination.

8.3.1 Suitability Determination

A personnel security specialist shall adjudicate the results of the investigation and prepare a written adjudication indicating the grounds for the proposed adverse suitability determination for review by the Reviewing Official.

8.3.2 Review

The Chief, SS/DO/IPSS is the designated Reviewing Official.

If the Reviewing Official disagrees with the adjudicative determination, the suitability determination will be appropriately modified and notice of suitability will be provided to M/HRM, the office head and the subject in writing.

If the Reviewing Official agrees with the decision of the personnel security specialist, M/HRM will be requested to make a suitability determination. The Deputy Director, M/HRM will be furnished with a recommendation memo indicating the adverse findings and the investigative materials (the report of investigation and the written adjudication) upon which that recommendation is based.

8.3.3 Decision

If the Deputy Director of M/HRM disagrees with the recommendation the office will prepare a written reply to SS/DO/IPSS, providing their basis for dissent. The office will also prepare a written notice of suitability and provide it to SS/DO/IPSS, the office head, and the subject.

If the Deputy Director of M/HRM agrees with the recommendation, he or she will prepare a letter to the subject, explaining the basis for finding the subject unsuitable for Federal employment. The letter will be sent to the subject along with a copy of the investigation, adjudication, and recommendation.

The subject will be given 15 days to provide to the Director of M/HRM, any evidence that might refute, explain, or mitigate the information upon which the recommendation is based. The subject may be represented by a person of his or her choice, at his or her own cost. Following the expiration of the 15 day appeal window, the Director of M/HRM will issue a finding regarding the suitability of the individual. The decision of the Director of M/HRM is not subject to further appeal.

9.0 Adjudication of Suitability for All Others Requiring Unescorted Access

All individuals requiring unescorted access to Federal facilities undergo the same investigation and suitability determination to which Federal employees are subjected, to insure a safe and secure working environment. It is the policy of the Peace Corps that SS/DO/IPSS will investigate and make suitability determinations for all individuals who are not Federal employees, but require unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities.

For purposes of this section, this will include experts, consultants, personal service contractors, contractor employees, work study students, interns and any other individual requiring unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities.

9.1 Adjudicative Process

The adjudicative process is an examination of a sufficient period of a person's life to make an affirmative determination that the person is suitable for unescorted access to Federal facilities. The following suitability factors will be used to adjudicate the subject's suitability for access to Peace Corps domestic facilities:

- (a) Delinquency or misconduct in employment;
- (b) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
- (c) Material, intentional false statement or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
- (d) Alcohol abuse;
- (e) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances;
- (f) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
- (g) Statutory or regulatory bar.

9.2 Favorable Decision

SS/DO/IPSS will review the data from a completed investigation and will consider the factors cited in paragraph 9.1 of this manual section. If a favorable decision is clearly consistent with the standards, SS/DO/IPSS will notify when appropriate the COTAR, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the subject in writing.

9.3 Potentially Unfavorable Decision

If the data in the completed investigation indicates the subject may not meet the suitability standards for federal employment, SS/DO/IPSS will initiate the following due process procedures in order to arrive at a final determination.

9.3.1 Suitability Determination

A Personnel Security Specialist shall adjudicate the results of the investigation and prepare a written adjudication indicating the grounds for the proposed adverse determination and notify the Reviewing Official.

9.3.2 Review

The Chief, SS/DO/IPSS is the designated Reviewing Official.

If the Reviewing Official disagrees with the adjudicative determination, the suitability determination will be appropriately modified and notice of suitability will be provided to, the COTAR, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the subject in writing.

If the Reviewing Official agrees with the adjudicative determination, he or she will prepare a letter to the subject, explaining the basis for finding the subject unsuitable for unescorted access into Peace Corps domestic facilities. The letter will be sent to the subject along with a copy of the investigation, adjudication, and recommendation.

9.3.3 Decision

The Chief, SS/DO is the designated Deciding Official.

The subject will be given 15 days to provide to the Deciding Official, any evidence that might refute, explain, or mitigate the information upon which the recommendation is based. The subject may be represented by a person of his or her choice, at his or her own cost. Following the expiration of the 15 day appeal window, the Deciding Official will issue a finding regarding the suitability of the individual. The finding of the Deciding Official is not subject to further appeal.

10.0 Accreditation of Access Clearance

SS/DO/IPSS has the responsibility for accrediting Peace Corps employees when access clearance certification is required.

10.1 Positions outside the United States

The country clearance cable must include the security clearance level of the traveler. This clearance notification is required for unescorted access to the Embassy and access to Department of State controlled classified information. Should issues arise regarding the clearance level of a Peace Corps employee, the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer (RSO) should be directed to the Chief of SS/DO/IPSS for confirmation of clearance.

10.2 Facilities Access

Many government facilities restrict access within their facilities. Peace Corps employees requiring access to other agency facilities that impose such restrictions should notify SS/DO/IPSS for accreditation.

10.3 Other Access

Some agencies may require accreditation of an employee prior to attendance at meetings, seminars, or briefings that involve discussion of classified information. SS/DO/IPSS should be notified by the employee or agency requiring such clearance.

11.0 Training and Assistance

SS/DO/IPSS provides individual and group training and assistance to domestic and overseas staff in matters of documents, information, and personal safeguards.

11.1 Classified Information

All persons who have access to national security classified information must receive periodic training on the proper receipt, handling, storage, dissemination, and destruction of such material. SS/DO/IPSS will provide this training.

Training for domestic staff will be conducted as soon as possible after an individual has received notice of access clearance approval. Access to classified national security information will not be granted prior to this training.

Training for overseas staff will be provided during regularly scheduled overseas staff development programs.

Training for staff hired overseas must be obtained from the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer.

11.2 Security Awareness

All Executive branch agencies are required to provide a security awareness briefing to alert employees to any hostile intelligence threat, especially those agencies involved with war plans, foreign affairs, and counterintelligence. The SS/DO/IPSS will provide a security awareness briefing for Agency employees with primary focus on overseas staff.

12.0 Security Files and Records

Investigative information contained in the Agency's security files is protected against unauthorized disclosure and shall be maintained, stored and released in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

13.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.