



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20522

## MEMORANDUM

### PLEASE READ ALL THE FOLLOWING BEFORE COMPLETING YOUR SF-86 **SECRET & TOP SECRET PROCESSING**

SUBJECT: Completion of the Standard Form 86 (Questionnaire for National Security Position) and other appropriate documentation for security clearance processing.

To facilitate the processing of your security clearance background investigation which is a requirement of the position for which you have applied, please complete the forms and/or submit the following information with your package.

Although you may have to do some research to obtain the required needed information, it will help Diplomatic Security (DS) tremendously in expediting your security clearance background investigation. The following guidance is provided for your assistance in completing your package:

- **STANDARD FORM 86 (SF-86):** Every section of this form must be completed in detail and all signature pages with an original signature (where requested). Failure to complete the form properly or having the required signatures will result in your clearance not being initiated until all information is received.
- **Form must be completed going back 10 years.** If not back 10 years, it will slow down the processing time of your background investigation. The SF-86 form requests information back 7 years for employment and residence; however, to comply with the investigative standards, 10 years is required.
- **Citizenship of yourself and "immediate" family members (spouse, children, mother, father, brothers and sisters).** If you or any of your "immediate" family members were born outside the United States, please ensure you annotate on the form, or separate sheet of paper, the appropriate manner of how U.S. citizenship was obtained (i.e. naturalization, derived or born abroad of U.S. parents). Please provide copies of naturalization certificates, citizenship certificate or report of birth abroad for your parents, yourself, your children, brothers and sisters, if at all possible. A copy of a U.S. passport will suffice to show proof of U.S. citizenship. Whichever is available will be accepted. If family members are not U.S. citizens and have an alien registration number from the INS, please provide that number. Your U.S. citizenship and that of your immediate family members have to be verified by DS.
- Under question 8d, please annotate whether you are a dual citizen with another country or annotate "none" instead of N/A for question 8d.
- If you are a dual citizen, please complete the enclosed memorandum concerning exercising your rights of a citizen of another country while holding a security clearance.
- All residences (the actual physical address – no P.O. Box number or APO address) need to be annotated. There should be no gaps in the months/years. If you were traveling for a couple of months, fully explain where you went and how long you were

there. Annotate who can corroborate your travel and activities during these periods. Provide name address and contact phone number. All housing at colleges and universities should be listed separately by year. The specific building and room number should be annotated.

- All employments should be listed in appropriate order and in detail. If there were periods of unemployment, those periods must also be annotated appropriately under code "7." A listed verifier will also be listed with their name, address and contact phone number. Periods as a full-time student do not need to be annotated in the employment section because that is listed under question 10 (where you went to school). Remember no gaps between listed employments, unemployment and school.
- All current and all former spouses will be annotated. If the location of a former spouse is unknown, provide the names and addresses of your former in-laws in the remarks section so they may be contacted.
- Selective service numbers are required for males born after December 31, 1959 in question 20. If you do not know your selective service number, you can obtain it by calling 1-847-688-6888 and obtain the number from the automated system. Not registering for the Selective Service is a ***felony***.
- **SIGNED CREDIT RELEASE:** The DS 4002 is required to obtain a copy of your Credit Bureau Report. Credit check is required under the investigative standards.
  - One of the biggest problems with applicant's is adverse credit. If you have or had adverse credit, please try to locate any documentation to support your claims during your interview. This could include letters sent to or received from creditors and copies of canceled checks, etc.
- **SIGNED DS 7601:** If married to a U.S. citizen and applying for a Top Secret clearance, the spouse must sign the DS Form 7601 for appropriate checks.
- **COPY OF BIRTH CERTIFICATE:** A copy of your birth certificate should be sent in with the package. Do not send in the original.
- **COPY OF PASSPORT:** A copy of your U.S. passport is requested to assist in corroborating citizenship. If you possess a copy of a foreign passport (current or expired), provide a copy.
- **COLLEGE TRANSCRIPTS:** Please provide a copy of your college transcripts. If you do not have a copy, please make arrangements to have a copy sent to you and forward to the Department. If you do not have the time to get the transcript before the due date of the package, DS will go to the educational institution as required by investigative standards.
- **U.S. CITIZENSHIP:** Reiterated again here, for any "immediate" family members who were born abroad, please annotate the manner in which they obtained their U.S. citizenship. All U.S. citizenship needs to be verified and your assistance will greatly speed up this process. Copies of citizenship forms or U.S. passport will enhance the process, but if you cannot obtain them, it will not stop your package from being processed. We are only asking for your assistance.
- **FOREIGN RELATIVES:** If you or your spouse have any foreign relatives, whether residing in the U.S. or abroad, please provide a separate listing that includes the following: (a) their full names, dates and place of birth; (b) current address; (c) country of citizenship; (d) occupation; (e) current employer; (f) whether they now or in the past have worked for a government agency, police, security or intelligence organization, if so what; (g) types of contact you have with them (e.g., phone, email, none, etc.), how often and date of last contact. (Attached blank form enclosed)

- **FOREIGN SPOUSES AND THOSE IN A “SPOUSE-LIKE” RELATIONSHIP WITH A FOREIGN NATIONAL**: The Department requires that a **SF-85P and SF-85PS** be completed on all foreign spouses and foreign national individuals that are in a “spouse-like” relationship with a Department applicant that requires a security clearance (Secret or Top Secret.) This does not apply to individuals who are foreign born and now a U.S. citizen. This only applies to non-U.S. citizens. Please complete it in detail and provide it with your package. The SF-85P should also be completed back 10 years.
- **FINGERPRINT CARDS (FD258)**: Provide two completed cards. Ensure you fill in all the required sections and you and the person fingerprinting you sign the card. ***Please ensure the prints are rolled and you can see the “ridges” otherwise the cards will be rejected and another set obtained.***

The objective of these instructions is to assist you in processing your package. A little time invested in obtaining all the required information will greatly enhance the subsequent processing of your clearance. Above all, be truthful in your responses. Untruthfulness can have a detrimental impact upon the adjudication of your clearance.

Any questions concerning the security clearance process can be directed to the Office of Personnel Security and Suitability, Customer Service Center at [securityclearance@state.gov](mailto:securityclearance@state.gov) or telephone 1-866-643-INFO (4636). Your inquiry will be answered in one or two business days. In addition, you can visit our Internet website at <http://www.state.gov/m/ds/clearances> for general information.