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National Security Agency

Candidate Experience Security Portal (CESP)



SECURITY PORTAL

For Students

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Candidate Experience Security Portal (CESP) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Unless you coordinated a change to the email address for your CESP account with your Recruiter or Security, you must use the email address where you received your CESP account link. Please be aware that aside from changing the email address associated with CESP, you must contact Login.gov to address issues with Login.gov. Please keep in mind that you will want to maintain access to the contact method you select as your multi-factor authentication as this may require deletion and re-creation of your login.gov account.

To complete your security questionnaire in CESP, you will require access to a computer with a stable internet connection with the use of any preferred web browser. Additionally, you will require pertinent information expanding to the last ten years or until your 18th birthday. Within CESP, the instructions will state that you should not list information before your 18th birthday unless necessary to provide a minimum of two years prior to your 18th birthday. Please follow the specific instructions for each question on the security questionnaire. If you have a security-related or CESP/forms-related question that is not addressed below, contact the Customer Care Line by phone at 1-844-ICHIREs, by e-mail at help@intelligencecareers.gov. If you have general questions regarding your processing, please contact your recruiter.

Security Questionnaire Sections

Sections 1-7, Identifying Information (Basic Information)

- For Identifying Information provide your full legal name listing your middle name and only selecting “No Middle Name” if applicable and “Initial Only” if your name(s) consist of initials.
- (Optional) Provide information for your gender identity in an additional comment listed in Identifying Information while selecting your appropriate sex at birth.
- (Optional) If you use a primary name that differs from your legal name, provide your primary name as an entry in Other Names. A primary name is one you use day to day, which may or may not be the same as your legal name.
- Do not select “I don’t know” for your Social Security Number (SSN)
- Do not select “Estimate” for your birthdate
- Do not select “Not Applicable” for your driver’s license number unless you do not have a valid driver’s license
- Provide your full driver’s license number.
- Provide a valid e-mail address and phone number, as this will be required for the background investigation. We suggest using only using “.edu” email address if the email address does not expire.
- List primary name(s), alias(es), or nickname(s) in “Other Names”

Section 9, Citizenship Information (Citizenship)

- For Citizenship Information, verify your place of birth listed here matches your place of birth within “Identifying Information” (e.g. If you listed you were born in a foreign country, do not list that you are U.S. citizen or national by birth in the U.S. or U.S. territory/commonwealth. You must select that you were naturalized, born aboard, or derived. If you listed that you were born in the U.S., do not list that you were naturalized, born aboard, or derived. You must select that you are a U.S. citizen born in the U.S.)
 - If you were born aboard, provide a legible copy of your birth aboard certificate
 - If you were naturalized, provide a legible copy of your naturalization certificate
 - U.S. military bases abroad are not considered U.S. territory and being born on them is no different from being born in a foreign country.
- If citizenship was derived, provide a legible copy of your certificate of citizenship or U.S. passport.

Note: Please reference the list below of valid proofs of citizenship as an applicant.

Valid Proofs of Citizenship (POCs)

| | |
|---|--|
| U.S. Passport | Certificate of Report of Birth Aboard (DS1350) |
| Certificate of Citizenship (N560 or N561) | Certificate of Birth (FS545) |
| Naturalization Certificate (N550 or N570) | Consular Report of Birth Aboard (FS240) |

Section 10, Dual Citizenship and Foreign Passports (Citizenship)

- For Dual Citizenship, please provide the appropriate foreign country or countries you may have additional citizenship with. Please do not list U.S. within this section as this is covered with Section 9, Citizenship Information.
- For Foreign Passports, please provide both expired and active foreign passports you may have with any foreign country with the document number, issue date, expiration date, issue location, and a copy of your foreign passport in the “Attachments” section of CESP.
- Include foreign travel reported in this section in Foreign Travel section if it is within scope.

Sections 11, 12, and 13A, Residence History, Educational History, and Employment History (Qualifications)

- Within these sections there are instructions telling you not to provide information that pre-dates your 18th birthday unless to provide a minimum two years of history. These instructions provide guidance on how many years back you have to report information. See examples below:
 - If older than 28, then provide 10 years;
 - If younger than 28 and older than 20, then provide until 18th birthday;
 - If younger than 20, then provide a minimum of two years. This does not mean that a single entry must be at least two years in length before you have to report it. For example, you would need to list an employer even if you only worked for the employer for one month during the two-year timeframe.
- Recommend that verifiers within these sections be U.S. citizens who reside in the U.S. and are unrelated to you.
- A verifier must be a person, do not list businesses/companies, organizations, schools, etc. as a verifiers.
- Do not list “I don’t know” or use “Unknown” or “N/A” as a verifier.
- Please reference the invalid and valid list of example verifiers below and provide valid verifiers only. All verifiers must have a full name, valid phone number, and full U.S. address:

Invalid versus Valid Verifiers

| Invalid Verifier Examples | Valid Verifier Examples <i>*Not an all-inclusive list*</i> |
|--|---|
| Mothers, Fathers, Brothers, Sisters, Stepmothers, Stepfathers, Stepbrothers, Stepsisters, Half-brothers, Half-sisters, Uncles, Aunts, Cousins, Spouses, Fiancées, Foreign Contacts, U.S. citizens residing in a foreign country, businesses/companies, organizations, schools, et cetera | Neighbors, Friends, Acquaintances, Co-workers, Managers, Professors, Classmates, Previous co-workers, Previous managers, Ex-friends, Ex-girlfriends, Ex-boyfriends, Ex-spouses, et cetera |

- For your Residence History, please include residences, of 90 days or more, that account for the time you were deployed or away at school such as dorms/residence halls, apartments, and etcetera.
- For your Residence History, please provide a full name, full address, and valid phone number of someone who knew you residing at each address (e.g. neighbors, landlord, friends, etc.). Do not list your spouse, cohabitant or other relative.
- For your Education History, please include any schools you are currently attending and all degrees/diplomas, even degrees/diplomas received more than 10 years ago.
- Accurately provide your complete education history within the criteria. Including any degrees/diplomas received. This includes your high school diploma.
- For your Educational History, please provide a full name, full address, and valid phone number of someone who knew you while attending each institute (e.g. students, instructors, dorm mates, academic advisors, etc.).
- For your Employment History, please provide a full name, full address, and valid phone number of someone who knew you while employed at each position (e.g. co-workers, manager, owner, etc.).
- Be sure to provide your complete employment/unemployment history. Unemployment is defined as periods without employment. Receiving unemployment benefits is not necessary.
- Periods of unemployment includes time spent as a student and during active applications with other employers and/or agencies, etcetera.
- Please do not list family members as unemployment verifiers. An unemployment verifier is not required for periods of unemployment that are less than four months.

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- If you are unable to provide a supervisor who is unrelated to you, i.e. a family business, please provide a verifier such as a friend, neighbor, co-worker or associate who can verify this employment.
- Use the “Other” employment type category to report periods of employment not otherwise accounted for. As previously noted, time spent as a student does not qualify as employment.

Note: FOR STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 ONLY – If you are unable to provide a valid verifier, you may use your relatives to cover the scope of your investigation. All contact information must include a physical address within the U.S. or a U.S. territory. P.O. boxes are not valid and APO/FPO addresses are valid. For assistance in locating address information, visit <https://maps.google.com/>.

Section 14, Selective Service Information (Qualifications)

- For your Selective Service number, visit www.sss.gov to obtain it.
- For currently enlisted members, please provide appropriate dates of enlistment, branch of military, and status
- For prior enlisted members, please provide appropriate dates of enlistment, branch of military, status, and discharge type with a copy of your DD214 uploaded.

Note: If you are unable to provide your Selective Service number from www.sss.gov, please provide a legible copy of your exemption letter as an attachment in the “Attachments” section of CESP.

Section 15, Military History

- For your Military History, if your period of military service ends before the present, please accurately document whether or not you have been discharged.
- Provide DD214s for all discharges (e.g. General, Honorable, Less than Honorable).

Section 16, People Who Know You Well (Relationships)

- For People Who Know You Well, please provide three verifiers that cover the scope of your background investigation (e.g. 7 years). While you are required to provide three verifiers, one verifier or a combination of all three can satisfy the seven-year scope.
- Spouses, former spouses, relatives and anyone else listed in other sections of the form should not be listed in this section.

Section 17, Marital/Relationship Status (Relationships)

- For Marital/Relationship Status, please provide the following:
 - Select all statuses that apply, i.e. currently in a civil marriage..., divorced, annulled, etcetera. For example, if currently married and divorced, include both relationships.
 - A cohabitant is defined as a person you reside with, other than a spouse or legally recognized civil union/domestic partner, with whom you share bonds of affection, obligation, or other commitment, as opposed to a person with whom you live with for convenience. Do not list roommates or other members of the household unless they meet the spouse-like criteria.
 - Provide your cohabitant or spouse’s SSN (Do not list your own in this section).
 - For U.S. citizen cohabitants and/or spouses, provide their full name, full address (if different), and Social Security Number (SSN). Additionally, if they were born aboard, then provide the appropriate document number, document type, and upload a legible copy in the “Attachments” section of CESP. If they are naturalized, provide the appropriate document number, document type, and upload a legible copy in the “Attachments” section of CESP.
 - For non-U.S. citizen cohabitants and/or spouses, provide their full name, full address (if different), Social Security Number (SSN), and their citizenship status with the appropriate country(s). If they are permanent or temporary residents, then provide the appropriate document number, document type, and other required information, and upload a legible copy in the “Attachments” section of CESP.
 - For foreign cohabitants and/or spouses, provide their full name, full address, and other required information (e.g. contact information).

Note: Please reference the list below of valid proofs of citizenship for your cohabitants or spouses

Valid Proofs of Citizenship (POCs)

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| | |
|---|--|
| U.S. Passport (Active only) | Certificate of Report of Birth Aboard (DS1350) |
| Certificate of Citizenship (N560 or N561) | Certificate of Birth (FS545) |
| Naturalization Certificate (N550 or N570) | Consular Report of Birth Aboard (FS240) |

Note: Please reference the list below of valid proofs of residency for your cohabitants or spouses

Valid Proofs of Residency (PORs)

| | |
|---|--|
| Employment Authorization (EAD CARD 1-766) | U.S. Red Foil Visa |
| I-94 Arrival/Departure Record | DS-2019 Cert. of Eligibility of Exchange Visitor-J1-Status |
| I-551 Permanent Resident | I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Non-Immigrant-F1-Student |

Note: Providing a copy of these documents by uploading an electronic or scanned copy of them into CESP during the completion of your form can save you and your sponsoring agency time. You may be able to obtain assistance with lost or unknown information at the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services website <https://uscis.gov/>.

Section 18, Relatives (Relationships)

- For Relatives, CESP provides a list of relatives that you must report regardless of contact or relationship. If you do not know all the details about a relative (to include a parent), provide what you know and explain your contact or relationship in the Additional Comments section of each entry if necessary. **Do not leave relatives off the form** because of required information that you do not know and are unable to save your form without it. If you have questions about this type of information, please contact the Customer Care Line by phone at 1-844-ICHIRES, or by e-mail at help@intelligencecareers.gov.
 - For U.S. citizen relatives, provide their country of birth, citizenship, full name, full address (if different). Additionally, if they were born aboard, then provide the appropriate document number, document type, and upload a legible copy in the “Attachments” section. If they are naturalized, then provide the appropriate document number, document type, and upload a legible copy in the “Attachments” section of CESP.
 - For non-U.S. citizen relatives, provide their country of birth, citizenship, full name, full address (if different), and their citizenship status with the appropriate country/countries. If they are permanent or temporary residents, then provide the appropriate document number, document type, and other required information, and upload a legible copy in the “Attachments” section.
 - For foreign relatives, provide their place of birth, citizenship full name, full address, and other required information (e.g. contact information).

Note: Please reference the list below of valid proofs of citizenship for your relatives

Valid Proofs of Citizenship (POCs)

| | |
|---|--|
| U.S. Passport (Active only) | Certificate of Report of Birth Aboard (DS1350) |
| Certificate of Citizenship (N560 or N561) | Certificate of Birth (FS545) |
| Naturalization Certificate (N550 or N570) | Consular Report of Birth Aboard (FS240) |

Note: Please reference the list below of valid proofs of residency for your relatives

Valid Proofs of Residency (PORs)

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| I-551 Permanent Resident | I-20 Certificate of Eligibility for Non-Immigrant-F1-Student |

Note: Providing a copy of these documents by uploading an electronic or scanned copy of them into CESP during the completion of your form can save you and your sponsoring agency time. You may be able to obtain assistance with lost or unknown information at the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services website <https://uscis.gov/>.

Section 19, Foreign Contacts (Relationships)

- Include associations with a foreign national, an individual holding dual citizenship, or any individual (including U.S. citizens) working on behalf of a foreign government, foreign business, or foreign entity that is characterized by ties of kinship, affection, capacity to influence, or personal, professional, or financial obligation.
- For Foreign Contacts, (preferred) please provide the full name of the reported foreign national. If you are unable to provide the full name, please provide an alias or first name. Additionally, please provide the current address and country of citizenship (e.g. The system is designed to verify this and you must provide at least the reported foreign national's first name, current or last known address, and country of citizenship).
- Include Foreign Contacts that meet the criteria even if you lack all the requested information.

Section 20A, Foreign Financial Activities (Foreign Activities)

- For Foreign Financial Activities, please include any foreign financial interests or benefits you, your spouse or legally recognized civil union/domestic partner, cohabitant, or dependent children may have. This may include stocks, property, investments, bank accounts, corporate entities, corporate interests, exchange traded funds (ETFs), medical benefits or insurance, pensions, or life insurance.

Section 20B, Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts (Foreign Activities)

*Note: Please review the criteria below. Highlighted in blue applies to yourself and highlighted in yellow applies to your spouse, cohabitant, relatives (e.g. parents, stepparents, siblings, half-siblings, stepsiblings, children, and stepchildren).

- For the purposes of this section immediate family is defined as your spouse or legally recognized civil union/domestic partner, cohabitant, parents, stepparents, siblings, half and stepsiblings, children, and stepchildren.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include any advice or support you provided to any individual associated with a foreign business or other foreign organization.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether you or any member of your immediate family have been asked to provide advice or serve as a consultant by any foreign government or agency.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether any foreign national offered you a job, asked you to work as a consultant, or consider employment with them.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether you have been involved in any other type of business venture with a foreign nation.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether you attended or participated in any conference, trade shows, seminars, or meetings outside the U.S. (excluding those you attended or participated in on official U.S. Government business).
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether you or your immediate family had any contact with a foreign government, its establishments or representatives (in and outside of the U.S.). Exclude routine visa applications and border crossings related to either official U.S. Government travel, foreign travel on a U.S. passport, or as a U.S. military service member in conjunction with a U.S. Government military duty.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether you sponsored any foreign national to come to the U.S. as a student, for work, or for permanent residence.
- For Foreign Businesses, Activities, or Government Contacts, please include whether you ever held political office in a foreign country.

Section 20C, Foreign Travel (Foreign Activities)

- For Foreign Travel, please provide clarification when selecting "Visiting Family and Friends" in the Additional Comments section of each entry and with any prompted follow-up question(s).

Section 22, Police Records (Legal History)

- For Police Records, include activity regardless of whether the record in your case has been sealed, expunged, or otherwise stricken from the record and please provide clarification in the Additional Comments section of entry.

Section 23, Drug Use (Legal History)

- For Drug Activity, because marijuana remains illegal under the Controlled Substances Act. the use of marijuana must be reported even if it is legal according to the state/local laws where you live or where you traveled/visited. If marijuana is legal in your state, please provide clarification in the Additional Comments section of each entry.

Section 24, Alcohol Use (Legal History)

- For Alcohol Use, include alcohol-related incidents that may have had a negative impact on your work performance, professional or personal relationships, finances, or intervention by law enforcement or public safety personnel.

Section 25, Investigations and Clearances (Investigations)

- For Investigations and Clearances, please include instances when the U.S. Government (or foreign government) investigated your background regardless of whether you were granted a clearance or access.
- For Investigations and Clearances, please include any past or present instances within the last seven years when you applied to such positions that would require an investigation of your background.

Required Signature Forms

All required signature forms, with the exception of where parental/guardian signatures are required, must be digitally signed through Candidate Experience Security Portal (CESP).

Note: FOR STUDENTS UNDER THE AGE OF 18 ONLY – If you are under the age of 18, the system will permit you to download two additional signature forms, Parental Consent Affidavit and Authority for Release of Information, for your parental figure or guardian to sign via wet-ink. Once you have received a wet-ink signature from your parental figure or guardian, please upload this document before submitting your security questionnaire to continue processing.

Review, Certification and Submission of Form

Please ensure you select “Review/Submit” to start the review and certification process. Once you have reviewed your reported information on the security questionnaire and on any attachments to it in their entirety and ensured they are complete and accurate; then select “Digitally Sign and Submit” at the bottom to move on to the process of certifying your forms.

In this next step, you will need to read the certification statement that addressed the following:

- The truthfulness, completeness and correctness of your statements;
- That you did not include classified information;
- That you carefully read the instructions for completing the questionnaire;
- Your understanding that a knowing and willful false statement on the form can be punished by fine or imprisonment or both;
- That intentionally withholding, misrepresenting, falsifying, or including classified information may have a negative effect on your security clearance, employment prospects, or job status, up to and including denial or revocation of your security clearance, or your removal and debarment from Federal service; and
- That your digital signature here has the same legal effect, validity or enforceability as a manually executed signature

Finally, at the bottom of the certification statement, you will see both “Cancel” and “Sign and Submit” buttons. Selecting the sign and submit button will digitally sign the certification statement and submit your security questionnaire and attachments.