The Road Ahead- 
NSA’s Pre-Employment 
Processing and What to Expect

Congratulations on being selected to process for employment with the National Security Agency (NSA)! We are excited to begin your candidate pre-processing and would like to share some information about what to expect.
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Benefits Information for Prospective Employees

Our success in helping preserve the nation’s security depends on the dedicated members of our workforce; we cannot fulfill our mission without them. That is why we are equally committed to our employees by offering them tremendous benefits and developmental opportunities that we hope you take advantage of. Our Benefits Guide will aid in your familiarization with the benefits NSA has to offer.

HR Forms Submission

As part of your processing, we require completion of HR Forms which need to be returned to your recruiter within 4 business days of receipt. If HR forms are not returned within the time frame given, your process may be discontinued.

None of the HR Forms can be left completely blank. They must all be signed even if not applicable to you. Form Specific Guidance:

Statement of Prior Federal Service: If you do not have Federal Service to add on the Prior Federal Service form: fill out #1-3, check “yes” for #4, skip to #8 (check yes or no for Veteran Preference) and then sign/date #9. If you do have Prior Federal Civilian or Military Service please complete #5-7 as appropriate.

Declaration for Federal Employment:

- Question 14 refers to relatives who currently work for NSA as a civilian (i.e., federal employee not contractor) and/or Military Service Member assigned to NSA.

- Military Service: In the “Type of Discharge” block, please note if you are retiring or separating.

Discussing your Employment Processing

We request that you use discretion when discussing your processing. You may tell family members or close friends but otherwise we ask that you simply state that you have applied for a government position with the Department of Defense (DoD). We also request that you refrain from posting any information regarding your application/processing with NSA on social media.

Multiple Offers Notice

Candidates may receive multiple Conditional Job Offers (CJO) and may work with multiple recruiters. We try to minimize the contact from different people to avoid confusion and ensure you are receiving the latest information on your processing. Once your pre-employment processing is completed, if you had received multiple offers, you will be presented with all available offers at the time of Final Job Offer (FJO). You will be given the opportunity to select the position you are interested in. Regardless of multiple offers, candidates only need to complete one set of HR and Security Forms, if applicable.
Processing Ratios and Timeline
We process multiple candidates per available position(s). At any time during your processing, if the position(s) you were processing for is (are) no longer available, you will be contacted by your recruiter. Although we make every effort to review a candidate’s resume in these situations and try to find another opportunity for them that matches their skill set, we may not be able to do so. In these cases, you would be notified by your recruiter that your processing has been discontinued. This does not preclude you from applying or being considered for other positions.

To help set your expectations, you can review the Candidate Pre-Employment Timeline. Processing times shown are average. Time frames may vary significantly by candidate and job opening. To aid in this process, please be responsive when you are contacted to provide information or schedule your appointments to avoid unnecessary delays. Should you have any questions at any time during your pre-employment process, please contact your recruiter. Your recruiter will also keep you updated through your pre-employment process as new information becomes available.

Suitability Processing
Our suitability processing includes two parts which are completed concurrently: Security and Psychological Processing. Both of these processes must be completed successfully in order for a candidate to receive an FJO.

Due to Privacy Act regulations, your recruiter is not privy to information regarding details of your suitability processing and therefore will be unable to answer any specific questions.

Security Processing: Some candidates may not have to complete Security Processing and will be notified of this by their recruiter. If you require Security Processing, you will be required to submit a Standard Form (SF) 86 (Security Forms). It is critical you complete the SF86 to initiate your suitability processing. The SF86 will be accessible about 10 business days after you have accepted your CJO; you will receive an automated email once your account has been set up to access the form. Please be sure to check your spam/junk folders for receipt of this notification as sometimes these emails are sent there. You will have 15 calendar days to set-up your login information. After your first login, you will then have 30 calendar days to complete, validate and submit the SF86 and upload the required release forms. If your forms are not submitted within the 30-day time frame, the system will purge all information entered and your process may be discontinued. Please ensure you click “submit” after you have completed the certification steps to ensure your SF86 is submitted.

After you submit your security forms, the Security team will complete their initial review of your forms; you may be contacted by them requesting additional/updated information. We ask that you respond to their requests quickly to avoid delays in your processing. Failure to respond may result in your process being discontinued.

Once the Security team has completed their initial review of the forms and have the information needed to begin your background investigation, they will provide the Recruitment team authorization to schedule your in-person security processing. The in-person processing will include a polygraph and may also include a 1-2 day security interview.
Suitability Processing (continued)

- **Background Investigation:** In cases where an investigation has been initiated/completed by another federal agency within the past seven years, NSA may use that investigation as part of NSA’s adjudication for clearance or may request an updated investigation. The background investigation helps determine a candidate’s stability, trustworthiness, reliability, discretion, character, honesty, judgment, and unquestioned loyalty to the United States. During the background investigation, previous and current employment, education and residences are verified. Interviews are conducted with knowledgeable sources such as friends, neighbors, supervisors and co-workers. A candidate’s current employer may be contacted during the background investigation, so use your best discretion with regards to information provided to your employer. A personal interview with each candidate is conducted to review the security forms and discuss the required topics necessary to help NSA determine a candidate’s eligibility for a security clearance.

- **Polygraph:** The polygraph is administered to anyone who requires access to NSA information and/or spaces. We utilize polygraph interviewing techniques in a fair, consistent and timely manner in addressing both Suitability and Counterintelligence questions. Suitability questions address involvement in criminal activity, personal involvement with illegal drugs, and deliberate falsification of the NSA security forms. Counterintelligence questions address involvement in espionage, sabotage, terrorist activities and the intentional compromise of classified information.

Once the required security processing has been completed, our Security team will make a clearance eligibility determination in accordance with the adjudicative criteria found in Security Executive Agent Directive 4.

**Psychological Processing:** You will also be required to complete an in-person psychological evaluation. The psychological evaluation consists of two parts: the Psychological Assessment Battery (PAB) and the interview with a Clinical Psychologist (PSY). During the PAB, the candidate will answer questions about himself/herself, and following the PAB they will complete the PSY.