

**VA**



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



## Office of Talent Management (OTM) Suitability Standard Operating Process (SOP)

Veterans Benefits Administration  
1800 G Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

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**Revision History**

This section is intended to record any changes made to the SOP and to implement document version control.

| Revision Date | Revised By | Summary of Changes |
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**Approvals**

This document requires the following approvals. A signed copy will be placed in the project files.

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## 1.0 Introduction

A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is a set of written instructions that document a repetitive or routine activity followed by individuals within an organization. The development and use of SOPs are an integral part of a successful organization, as they provide individuals with the information to perform a job or carry out a task properly and facilitate consistency in the quality and integrity of the end-result. This document is designed to establish personnel security program responsibilities and procedural requirements for onboarding and Interim Suitability determinations.

## 2.0 Purpose

SOPs detail the regularly recurring work processes that are to be conducted or followed within an organization to facilitate consistency. It is intended to be specific to the organization or office to maintain their quality and ensure compliance with government regulations.

Suitability is a process to evaluate the character and conduct of Government applicants and appointees for the purpose of making suitability determinations for covered positions of public trust as required in VA Handbook 0710, Personnel Security and Suitability Program.

## 3.0 Scope

This SOP applies to all activities involved with suitability in accordance with VA Handbook 5005 and VA Handbook 0710.

## 4.0 Audience

The primary audience for this SOP is the Office of Talent Management (OTM), Human Resources Centers (HRC), Human Resources (HR) Recruitment and Staffing Section and Employee and Labor Relations' (ERLR) Suitability Team. The secondary audience for this SOP is to Human Resources Liaisons VBA-wide.

## 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The table below outlines the individuals/teams involved in each phase of on-boarding and pre-screening process, including their responsibilities and suggested team composition.

| Role                     | Role Overview                                                                                                                                                   | Suggested Team Composition*                                                                                             |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>New Employee (NE)</b> | All new VBA hires.                                                                                                                                              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New VBA hires</li> </ul>                                                       |
| <b>HR Representative</b> | Staff in OTM HR who are knowledgeable about the suitability processes and will assist the <i>NE</i> and <i>HRL</i> through the process for each new local hire. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Specialist</li> <li>• ER/LR Specialist</li> <li>• HR Suitability</li> </ul> |

*\*Denotes suggested individuals to be part of each team. Employee may vary office to office.*



|                                 |                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>HR Liaisons (HRL)</b></p> | <p>Staff in VBACO or at the Station/RO who are involved in the NE onboarding process to include conducting fingerprints.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HR Liaison (HRL)</li> <li>• HR Specialist</li> <li>• HR Assistant</li> <li>• ER/LR</li> </ul> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## 6.0 Detailed Process

### 1.1 Office of Talent Management (OTM) HR Center Specialist:

- Generate the new hire’s record in USA staffing
- Make the Tentative Job Offer (TJO) by communicating with the selectee
- Confirm with the selectee to ensure an understanding that a response to the Tentative Offer is due within 24 hours and the OF-306 must be completed and returned or the offer will be rescinded
- Once the TJO is accepted, the Specialist will inform the selectee to log in, accept offer, complete the OF-306 and return within 72 hours
- Check USA Staffing for OF-306 within 72 hours
- Notify Suitability Team that the OF-306 has been completed
- If the selectee does not respond within 24 hours, the TJO will be rescinded, and the HR Liaison will be notified so another selection can be initiated by the hiring official if there is no indication on the certificate
- If the selectee responds, the OF-306 moves to the Suitability Team.
- Once the pre-screening has been favorably completed a customized Conditional Employee Offer letter is completed and sent to the selectee with notification of entry on duty (EOD) immediately (next pay period).
- Contact the HR liaison for a POC and contact number to place in the letter for the Official Job Offer
- If unfavorable, the signed TJO withdraw letter will be sent to the applicant
- Servicing HRC Specialist then coordinates with HR Liaison for guidance on selecting the next available candidate

### 1.2 Suitability Team:

- Complete the review of the OF-306
- Once the OF-306 has been cleared, the Suitability Team will send out the pre-screening email with instructions to the applicant to complete the e-QIP application, or self-certification for reciprocity, and fingerprints
- Order prior background investigation from DCSA, Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (formerly OPM), if needed for reciprocity
- Once fingerprints results are completed, review and adjudicate the prints
- Review e-QIP for completion and release to DCSA or review prior investigation if needed for reciprocity
- If reciprocity is granted, complete VAF 4236 Certificate of Eligibility or 10-4236A Certificate of Reciprocity
- If pre-screening is unfavorable, Suitability Team prepares and sends the withdrawal of Tentative Offer letter to HRC Director for signature
- Notify servicing Specialist by email of result of the interim suitability determination



### 1.3 HR Liaisons:

- Complete the onboard process. This consists of coordinating with the selectee to submit fingerprints, as well as, helping with completion of e-QIP. OTM Suitability Team will act as support for Liaisons in this task
- Review the Conditional Employment Offer during onboarding and possible termination for unfavorable suitability/security determination with appointees

### 1.4 New Employee:

- Respond to tentative job offer and request for completion of OF-306
- Schedule fingerprints and complete e-QIP
- Respond to all communications from HR and Suitability Team
- Report to duty
- Understand that if suitability/security determination is unfavorable, employment may be terminated

## 7.0 Related Handbooks, Procedures, and Guidelines

- VA Handbook 5005, *Staffing*
- VA Handbook 0710, *Personnel Suitability & Security Program*

## 8.0 Terms & Definitions

**Adjudication** is an examination of a person's character or conduct over time, resulting in a favorable or unfavorable determination of their employment suitability, eligibility for access to classified information, materials, or areas, or to their retention in Federal employment.

**Applicant** means a person who is being considered or has been considered for employment.

**Appointee** means a person who has entered on duty and is in the first year of a subject-to-investigation appointment.

**Days** means calendar days unless otherwise specified in this document.

**Employee** means a person who has completed the first year of a subject-to-investigation appointment.

**Suitability determination** means a decision by Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency or an agency with delegated authority that a person is suitable or is not suitable for employment in covered positions in the Federal Government or a specific Federal agency.

## 9.0 Technology Platforms Used

- USA Jobs: <https://www.usajobs.gov/>
- USA Staffing: <https://www.usastaffing.gov/>
- VA-CABS <https://vaww.cabs.va.gov/CABS/>