



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT  
Washington, DC 20415

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March 17, 2026

Memorandum for: Chief Human Capital Officers and Trusted Workforce 2.0 Senior  
Implementation Officials

From: Joe Knouff  
Suitability Director  
Suitability Executive Agent Programs

Subject: **Streamlining Vetting Processes in Support of the Merit Hiring Plan**

The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is issuing this memorandum to reinforce agency responsibilities to streamline and improve personnel vetting processes by implementing personnel vetting reforms under the Administration's Trusted Workforce (TW) 2.0 initiative, as directed under the [Merit Hiring Plan](#), issued May 29, 2025, pursuant to [Executive Order \(EO\) 14170](#), *Reforming the Federal Hiring Process and Restoring Merit to Government Service* and the [President's Management Agenda](#), issued December 8, 2025. This work is a key factor in achieving the Administration's priorities of reducing time-to-hire, strengthening the suitability of the Federal workforce, and eliminating waste.

Agencies need not wait for full implementation of the TW 2.0 reform initiative to start realizing significant improvements in vetting processes. As directed in the Merit Hiring Plan, agencies should take steps immediately to fully adopt existing personnel vetting capabilities. Two capabilities specifically identified in the Merit Hiring Plan for immediate adoption are preliminary determinations and electronic adjudication.<sup>1</sup>

**Agency Requirements:**

To deliver immediate improvements to personnel vetting processes and support governmentwide implementation of the Merit Hiring Plan, EO 14170, and the President's Management Agenda, agencies should take the following actions:

**1. Expand Preliminary Determinations**

Preliminary determinations enable agencies to get people to work faster. Agencies are authorized and encouraged to use preliminary determinations. Preliminary determinations should not be withheld based on internal preferences or practices inconsistent with Federal standards.

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<sup>1</sup> Specific information related to improving processes in the Merit Hiring Plan are found in Section IV, "Reducing Time-to-Hire to 80 Days".

The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) provide services at no additional cost, such as the Advanced National Agency Check, that can be used to provide early investigative results to make an initial decision on whether to trust a candidate to onboard and begin work while the full investigation continues. Agencies who are not currently using preliminary determinations are encouraged to contact their DCSA Agency Liaison to adopt this service to support preliminary determinations.

## **2. Implement and Expand Adoption of Electronic Adjudication (eVetting)**

eVetting enables agencies to get people to work faster while decreasing the need for manual, human review and adjudication of investigative results. In FY2025, 34 agencies used eVetting to process 102,100 favorable adjudications, reducing processing times and enabling adjudication resources to focus on higher risk cases. eVetting services are free-of-charge, and, in FY 2026, DCSA expects to begin offering a new eVetting service for automated preliminary determinations.

Agencies should fully deploy eVetting capabilities where available, and ensure these tools are used to adjudicate cases that meet automated criteria. Any agency's decision not to utilize electronic adjudication should be based on demonstrable data rather than reliance on internal preferences or concerns not borne out in data. Agencies are encouraged to contact their DCSA Agency Liaison to adopt this service at no cost.

## **3. Align with Trusted Workforce 2.0 Policy Requirements**

Agencies must:

- Enroll their sensitive and non-sensitive public trust populations into continuous vetting.
  - Agencies were required to enroll their full non-sensitive public trust populations into continuous vetting by September 30, 2025. There is still work to be done to achieve full enrollment and agencies must prioritize completion of this crucial milestone in vetting reform. Continuous vetting capabilities provide enhanced risk management over the traditional periodic reinvestigation model by allowing agencies to identify and manage risk in near real-time instead of once every 5 years.
- Eliminate periodic reinvestigations consistent with Federal policy.
- Ensure accurate position designation in accordance with Title 5 of the Code of Federal Regulations, parts 731 and 1400, and apply the appropriate level of vetting.

- A position's risk and sensitivity designations determine the level of vetting required. Under-designating a position exposes an agency to additional risk by not vetting an individual at a high enough level based on the position's duties. Over-designating a position wastes agency and governmentwide vetting resources on unnecessary activity and can increase agency costs. Agencies should review internal processes to ensure accurate designations and levels of vetting to ensure individuals are enrolled in the right level of continuous vetting.

#### **4. Strengthen Reciprocity**

Agencies must apply reciprocity for individuals with existing favorably adjudicated investigations or eligible clearances and seek 3-day completion of vetting for qualifying cases.

#### **Agency Outreach**

OPM will use available data on agencies' adoption of preliminary determinations and electronic adjudications to conduct targeted outreach to drive adoption across the Executive Branch. OPM will also discuss agencies' progress implementing other key areas of reform, such as enrolling personnel into continuous vetting, and offer assistance and guidance as needed.

#### **Conclusion**

Improving personnel vetting processes is crucial to improving timely and efficient hiring and directly supports fulfilling agency missions and advancing the Administration's objectives. OPM appreciates your collaboration in fully implementing personnel vetting reform under TW 2.0.

Strengthening personnel vetting processes along with the remaining requirements of the Merit Hiring Plan should provide agencies with a capable, trusted, and operationally ready Federal workforce to deliver for the American people.

#### **Questions**

Agencies requiring assistance may contact OPM's Suitability Executive Agent Programs at [SuitEA@opm.gov](mailto:SuitEA@opm.gov).