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1.0 Authorities

2.0 Purpose
This Manual Section sets out the policies and procedures for the Peace Corps Personnel Security Program.
3.0 Applicability

This Manual Section applies to any individual nominated for access to classified national security information or any individual who requires real or virtual access to Peace Corps domestic facilities.

4.0 Definitions

4.1 **A Personnel Security Investigation** is an inquiry into a person’s experience, qualifications, conduct and actions, to be used as a basis to make a determination about a person’s loyalty, suitability, and trustworthiness.

4.2 **Pre-employment screening** is a review of the application and other related application documents and/or NAC results that provide sufficient information for the Personnel Security Specialist to make a suitability or security determination, prior to the completion of the full investigation.

4.3 **National Agency Check (NAC)** is a check of the investigative and identification (name and fingerprint) files of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the investigative files of the Office of Personnel Management and Defense Investigative Service, and other government agencies as dictated by the subject’s personal history.

4.4 **A National Agency Check and Inquiries (NACI)** is a combination of the NAC described above with written inquiries to credit bureaus, law enforcement agencies, employers, educators and references.

4.5 **A Single Scope Background Investigation (SSBI)** combines the NAC with personal interviews with the subject of the investigation, employers, educators, neighbors, references, credit bureaus, law enforcement agencies, courts, and other sources of information.

4.6 **A Periodic Reinvestigation (PRI)** is a reinvestigation of the incumbent of certain positions requiring access to classified national security information, conducted on a 5-year cycle for holders of Top Secret clearances, or 10-year cycle for holders of Secret clearances.

4.7 **A Security Clearance** is a favorable determination (or re-determination), based on an appropriate investigation, that an individual does not pose a risk or danger to the security or interest of the United States, has a need for access to classified national security information at specific levels (Confidential, Secret, or Top Secret), and is deemed trustworthy for that purpose.

4.8 **A Suitability Determination** is a finding, based on an appropriate investigation, that an individual meets the standards of qualification and personal conduct that would be likely to allow them to be able to carry out the duties of a Federal job with appropriate integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness.
4.9 **Position Sensitivity** is a designation assigned to a specific position that takes into consideration the degree of adverse or damaging impact the holder of the position could have on the mission of the Peace Corps and/or the national security.

4.10 **Critical Sensitive Positions** involve duties of major importance to the Agency with primary program responsibilities and have the potential for exceptionally grave impact on national security or Agency mission. Such positions may include:

(a) Access to classified information up to and including TOP SECRET information;

(b) Development or approval of plans, policies, or programs affecting the overall operations of the Agency, i.e., policy-making or policy-determining positions;

(c) Investigative duties or the issuance of personnel security clearances;

(d) Fiduciary, public contact, or other duties demanding the highest degree of public trust; or

(e) Positions in which the incumbent is responsible for the planning, direction and implementation of a computer security program; the direction, planning and design of a computer system, including the hardware and software; or, accessing a system with the potential of a high risk for causing grave damage or realizing a significant personal gain.

Positions at the critical sensitive level initially require a SSBI with a PRI every five years thereafter.

4.11 **Non-Critical Sensitive Positions** involve duties of considerable importance to the Agency with significant program responsibility and have the potential for moderate to serious impact on national security or the Agency mission. Such positions may include:

(a) Access to classified information up to and including SECRET information;

(b) Duties that may directly or indirectly adversely affect the overall operations of the Agency;

(c) Duties that demand a high degree of confidence and trust;

(d) Positions in which the incumbent is responsible for the direction, planning, design, operation, or maintenance of a computer system, but whose work is reviewed by another person, to insure the integrity of the system; or

(e) Other positions that involve a degree of access to an automated data processing (ADP) system that creates a significant potential for damage or personal gain but less than that in critical sensitive positions.

Positions at the non-critical sensitive level will require, at a minimum, a NACI. If duties include access to classified national security information, a PRI every 10 years thereafter will be required.
4.12 **Non-Sensitive Positions** have the potential for limited impact involving the Agency mission. This includes:

(a) All positions, including automated data processing (ADP), not falling into one of the above sensitivity levels; and

(b) No access to classified national security information.

Positions at the non-sensitive level require, at a minimum, a NACI investigation. A PRI is not required.

4.13 **PPD-19** means Presidential Directive – 19 issued by the President on October 10, 2012 and the following terms used in Section 7.4 of this Manual Section have the meanings given to them in PPD-19:

(a) Eligibility for Access to Classified Information; and

(b) Protected Disclosure.

4.14 **Employee** means a person employed by, detailed or assigned to, the Peace Corps; an expert or consultant to the Peace Corps; a contractor, licensee, certificate holder or grantee of the Peace Corps, including subcontractors; a personal services contractor; or any other person who acts for or on behalf of the Peace Corps as determined by the Director of the Peace Corps.

5.0 **Policies**

5.1 **Position Sensitivity Designations**

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that all positions in the Peace Corps will be designated as to the degree of their sensitivity and/or requirements for access to classified information.

5.2 **Investigations**

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that all individuals requiring access to classified national security information and/or unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities will be subjected to an investigation commensurate with the sensitivity of the position to be encumbered or the level of classified information to which access will be required.

5.3 **Due Process**

It is the policy of the Peace Corps that the process of investigation and adjudication will be conducted in a manner that will protect the individual’s rights, including the right to privacy and due process, while adhering to the primary purpose of the Information and Personnel Safety and Security program, to protect national security interests and the mission of the Peace Corps.

5.4 **Loyalty Issues**
Agencies, including the Peace Corps, are required to refer any information that raises questions of loyalty to the United States, to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

5.5 Protection of Whistleblowers with Access to Classified Information

(a) Employees of the Peace Corps who have authority to take, direct others to take, recommend, or approve any action affecting an employee’s Eligibility for Access to Classified Information shall not, with respect to such authority, take or fail to take, or threaten to take or fail to take, any action affecting an employee’s Eligibility for Access to Classified Information as a reprisal for a Protected Disclosure.

(b) Every employee has the right to appeal any action affecting the employee’s Eligibility for Access to Classified Information, including the denial, reduction or revocation of access to classified information, if the employee alleges that such action was in violation of PPD-19. In such a case, the employee may access the review process provided in Section 7.4 of this Manual Section.

6.0 Procedures

6.1 Position Sensitivity Designation Process

The Information and Personnel Safety and Security Division (SS/DO/IPSS) will periodically conduct position sensitivity surveys of existing positions and in addition conduct a position sensitivity survey of any new or significantly changed position. A survey will include interviews with program managers responsible for positions being surveyed to insure proper designation.

SS/DO/IPSS will provide the Office of Human Resource Management (M/HRM) a list consisting of the most recent designation of the sensitivity of each position in the Peace Corps. That list will be used by M/HRM to code within the automated hiring system the level of investigation that will be requested on new or reassigned employees.

6.2 Personnel Investigative Process

Individuals subject to investigation include employees, experts, consultants, personal service contractors, contractor employees, work study students, interns, and any other individual requiring unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities. Individuals hired for sensitive positions will require additional investigations commensurate with the sensitivity level of the position that is to be encumbered and/or the work to be performed.

All such individuals will, at a minimum, require a pre-employment National Agency Check (NAC). In addition, Federal employees and contractors who are to be employed in excess of 6 months, must be issued a Federal document which will allow failsafe identification of that individual through the use of an image, a personal identification number (PIN) and the storage of two fingerprints. The process of obtaining a compliant Federal identification document or PIV card incorporates the requisite investigation, personal identity verification at several points in the process, and separation of the activities (request, registration and issuance) to ensure the integrity of the process.
6.3 Notification of Investigative Process

Each applicant for a position requiring unescorted access, either physical or virtual, to Peace Corps domestic facilities, will be notified by their Sponsor that placement and/or retention in any position is contingent upon the favorable adjudication of a personnel investigation. Language to this effect must appear in all contracts. All others will be advised in writing as part of the offer of employment. The Sponsors are: M/HRM for direct hire employees; the supervisor for work study students, interns, etc, or the Contracting Officer Representative (COR) for contractors.

When a candidate has been selected, the Sponsor sends a Workplace Access Authorization Form and an Optional Form 306, to request the issuance of a PIV card, to SS/DO/IPSS.

6.4 Document Completion, Registration and Investigative Scheduling

SS/DO/IPSS provides the appropriate paper or online documents to the applicant. The applicant completes the documents and makes an appointment to appear in person before SS/DO/IPSS at least 10 business days prior to the expected start date, to submit the documents along with two forms of identification from an approved list supplied by the SS/DO/IPSS.

SS/DO/IPSS captures the fingerprints and image of the applicant and validates the identification documents to verify the identity of the applicant.

SS/DO/IPSS schedules the required investigation.

6.5 Adjudication of the NAC and PIV Card Issuance

Upon completion of the National Agency Check (NAC) portion of the investigation, the results are adjudicated. If the NAC results are favorable, the applicant is instructed to appear in person before Emergency Preparedness Plans & Training (SS/DO/EPPTE), with 2 forms of identification from a supplied list. SS/DO/EPPTE verifies the identity of the applicant and issues an interim PIV card which allows the recipient to have unescorted access to Peace Corps facilities on an interim basis. Upon favorable completion of the entire investigation, the interim status of the PIV card is removed.

If the results of the NAC are unfavorable, the applicant will not be issued a PIV card and unescorted access to Peace Corps facilities will not be permitted. Attempts to resolve issues of concern will be made through further investigation.

Individuals, whose need for unescorted access to Peace Corps facilities is less than 6 months, will be given a Facilities Access Card (FAC) instead of a PIV Card upon the successful adjudication of the NAC.

6.6 Reciprocity of Investigative Processes and Security Clearances

Where possible, security clearances granted by one Federal agency will be accepted by Peace Corps, and duplicative investigations will not be conducted. This does not relieve the applicant of the responsibility of submitting the required documentation. Those documents include a release authorizing the Peace Corps to conduct inquiries, to include the review of records held by
another Federal agency. When it is determined that an investigative report currently exists that meets all or part of the investigative requirements, the scope of the current investigation will be shortened or eliminated as appropriate.

6.7 Other Investigations

The initiation of additional investigative activity is set out below.

6.7.1 Questions of Continued Suitability for Employment or Clearance

When a complaint or other information is received that raises questions as to an individual’s continued suitability for either Peace Corps employment or continued access to classified national security information, an investigation will be initiated to resolve the concerns. Pending resolution, the individual’s security clearance or access to Peace Corps facilities may be suspended. Results of the investigation will be adjudicated, and appropriate action will be taken which could include termination of employment, revocation of security clearance and/or other necessary administrative actions.

Should any indication of waste, fraud or abuse of Peace Corps programs, or matters otherwise under the jurisdiction of the Office of Inspector General (OIG), be received or disclosed, they will be referred to the OIG for action.

6.7.2 Position Upgrade

If a person moves from a lower to a higher position sensitivity level, or requires access to classified national security information because of promotion, reassignment, or re-designation of the position, he or she may have to undergo an upgrade investigation to meet the requirements of the new position. SS/DO/IPSS will notify such persons of the requirements and conduct upgrade investigations as required.

6.7.3 Re-Investigations

Individuals requiring access to classified national security information must be re-investigated periodically. Individuals holding Top Secret clearances must be re-investigated at least every 5 years and those holding Secret clearances must be re-investigated at least every 10 years. SS/DO/IPSS will contact individuals requiring a re-investigation at the appropriate time. Failure to complete the required documentation for the re-investigation may result in the suspension of the individual’s security clearance and access to classified national security information.

6.7.4 Foreign Service Nationals

A Foreign Service National (FSN) hire is required to have a security and suitability investigation conducted by the Regional Security Officer (RSO) or Post Security Officer (PSO) at the servicing U.S. Embassy in accordance with 3 FAM 7222. An FSN may not be appointed until at least a temporary security certification, good for 120 days, has been issued by the RSO/PSO. The RSO/PSO may issue extensions of the initial 120 day temporary security certification. Additionally, the RSO/PSO must conduct an update investigation every 5 years for the purpose of reissuing the security certification. Contact the RSO/PSO for instructions and
appropriate forms. Refer to MS 691, Guidelines for Employment of Foreign Service Nationals by Direct Hire and Detail.

6.7.5 Foreign National Spouse

As a condition of employment, all U.S. citizens employed overseas (including personal service contractors deemed eligible for access to national security information) are required to obtain and maintain a security clearance at the TOP SECRET level.

One factor applicable to an employee obtaining or maintaining security clearance is an assessment of the employee's non-U.S. citizen family members, relative to national security concerns. Marriage to a non-U.S. citizen may affect the clearance holder's eligibility for continued access to classified national security information. Consequently, an evaluation of the impact of the marriage on the clearance holder's continued eligibility to hold a security clearance must be made prior to the marriage. If it is determined that a proposed marriage would result in the revocation of an employee's security clearance, and the individual chooses to marry despite this determination, the individual's employment with Peace Corps will be terminated or other necessary and appropriate action taken.

A U.S. citizen employed overseas who has security clearance and plans to marry a non-U.S. citizen must notify the Country Director, in writing, 120 days in advance of the marriage. The notice must include the following:

(a) "Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions" (SF-85P) completed by the intended spouse;
(b) A brief biography of the intended spouse; and
(c) Certified copies of any divorce decree or other evidence of termination of any former marriage of employee and/or intended spouse.

The Country Director must forward this information and request that (i) the Office of Safety and Security initiate a NAC of the intended spouse; and (ii) the appropriate embassy security official initiate administrative clearance of the intended spouse.

The Office of Safety and Security will initiate the state-side NAC through the Office of Personnel Management. Concurrently, the Country Director will notify the appropriate embassy security official, who will initiate the administrative clearance (name check, visa-type investigation) on the intended spouse. Upon completion, the embassy security official will advise the Country Director if the embassy has any objection to the proposed marriage. The Country Director will then forward the results of the administrative clearance to the Office of Safety and Security.

Upon completion of the NAC and embassy clearance, the Office of Safety and Security will advise M/HRM, the Office of Acquisition and Contracts Management, the Regional Director, and the Country Director whether the planned marriage will negatively affect the employee's security clearance.
When the U.S. citizen employee who plans to marry a non-U.S. citizen is the Country Director, the Country Director must forward the same three items of information to the same two parties, in writing, 120 days in advance of the marriage. The NAC and embassy clearance will be initiated and the results will be forwarded to the Office of Safety and Security, which will advise the Regional Director and the Director whether the planned marriage will negatively affect the security clearance of the Country Director.

6.7.6 U.S. Citizens Hired Abroad

All U.S. citizen employees hired abroad must be investigated and approved commensurate with their position sensitivity level and requirement for access to classified information. The identity verification and investigative processes required of domestic employees described in sections 6.2 to 6.5 of this Manual Section apply. Refer also to MS 693 Employment of U.S. Citizens Abroad.

6.8 Exemptions from Investigation Requirements

Temporary employees in non-sensitive positions who serve less than 120 cumulative (not necessarily consecutive) days do not require a personnel security investigation if pre-employment screening has been conducted. The applicant for a temporary position is still required to complete the PIV process described in sections 6.3 to 6.5 of this Manual Section. The NAC will serve as pre-employment screening. Unless issues of concern are developed, no additional investigation will be scheduled on incumbents of temporary positions. If an employee is continued past 120 days, becomes permanent, or fills a higher sensitivity position, the required investigation will be conducted.

7.0 Adjudication for Security Clearances

Guidelines are established for all United States government civilian and military personnel, consultants, contractors, employees of contractors, licensees, certificate holders or grantees and their employees and other individuals who require access to classified national security information. These guidelines apply to persons being considered for initial or continued eligibility for access to classified information, and are to be used by government departments and agencies in all final clearance determinations.

7.1 Adjudicative Process

The adjudicative process is an examination of a sufficient period of a person’s life to make an affirmative determination that the person is eligible for a security clearance. The following personnel security factors will be used to adjudicate applicant eligibility for access to classified national security information:

(a) Allegiance to the United States;

(b) Foreign influence;

(c) Foreign preference;
(d) Sexual behavior;
(e) Personal conduct;
(f) Financial considerations;
(g) Alcohol consumption;
(h) Drug involvement;
(i) Emotional, mental, and personality disorders;
(j) Criminal conduct;
(k) Security violations;
(l) Outside activities; and
(m) Misuse of Information Technology Systems.

Each case must be judged on its own merits. Any doubt as to whether access to classified information is clearly consistent with national security will result in the security clearance in question being denied or revoked.

7.2 Favorable Decision

An SS/DO/IPSS Personnel Security Specialist will review the completed investigation considering the personnel security factors cited in Section 7.1 herein. If a favorable decision is clearly consistent with national security, SS/DO/IPSS will notify M/HRM, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the employee in writing.

7.3 Potentially Unfavorable Decision

If the pre-employment screening or the completed investigation indicates the subject may not meet the standards for initial or continued access to classified information, the Personnel Security Specialist will advise the Chief of SS/DO/IPSS who will initiate due process procedures in order to arrive at a final determination. Those procedures are as follows:

7.3.1 Deciding Official

A Personnel Security Specialist shall be designated the Deciding Official by the Chief of SS/DO/IPSS. When the Deciding Official determines that an individual nominated for access to, or has access to, classified information by Peace Corps does not meet the standards for access to classified information, the Deciding Official shall:

(a) Provide a written notice to the individual which provides a comprehensive and detailed explanation, to the extent that the National Security interests of the United States and
other applicable laws permit, of the basis for the decision to deny, reduce, or revoke clearance eligibility;

(b) Include with the written notice, the entire security investigative file and any other documents, records, reports or other materials upon which the denial, reduction or revocation decision was based, as permitted by the National Security interests and any other applicable law, and to the extent the documents would be provided if requested under the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) or the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. 552a);

(c) Include with the written notice a copy of Executive Order 12968 and applicable adjudicative guidelines;

(d) Advise the individual in the written notice of the right to be represented by counsel or other representative at his or her own expense; and

(e) Advise the individual in the written notice that, within 30 days of the decision by the Deciding Official to deny/reduce/revoke a clearance, he/she may request a review of the decision, may reply in writing and/or in person to the Reviewing Official and may present any relevant documents, materials, and information to the Reviewing Official. The individual shall also be notified that, if the individual meets with the Reviewing Official in person, a written summary or recording of the appearance will be made part of the individual’s security file.

(f) Advise the individual in the written notice that if he/she believes an action was in violation of PPD-19, the individual may request a review by the Inspector General as provided in Section 7.4 of this Manual Section.

7.3.2 Reviewing Official

The Chief, SS/DO/IPSS is the designated Reviewing Official.

After the individual has submitted a written reply and/or has presented information in person, or upon expiration of the 30-day time period, a decision will be made by the Reviewing Official.

If the Reviewing Official disagrees with the decision of the Deciding Official, the access eligibility determination will be appropriately modified and written notification will be sent to the individual.

If the Reviewing Official agrees with the decision of the Deciding Official, the Reviewing Official will notify the individual in writing of the results of the review, of the right to file a written appeal of the Reviewing Official’s decision within 30 days to the Security Clearance Review Panel, and of the right to request a review by the Inspector General as provided in Section 7.4 of this Manual Section if the individual believes an action was in violation of PPD-19.

7.3.3 Security Clearance Review Panel
The Security Clearance Review Panel (SCRP) shall be comprised of the Associate Director for Safety and Security, who serves as Chairperson of the SCRP, and two persons not in the security field, the Designated Agency Ethics Official and the Deputy Director of the Office of Human Resource Management.

If the individual appeals the decision of the Reviewing Official, the Reviewing Official shall forward the complete file to the Chair of the SCRP. The Chair of the SCRP then notifies the Director of Human Resource Management and the General Counsel that the SCRP must meet to issue an appeal decision. The Director of Human Resource Management and the General Counsel will notify the Deputy Director of Human Resource Management and the Designated Agency Ethics Official of their responsibility to serve on the SCRP.

In reaching its decision, the SCRP is limited to consideration of information developed and presented in the individual’s entire security file, including, but not limited to, any and all information and material provided by the individual in connection with the clearance denial/revocation/reduction proceedings, and the access eligibility policy, procedure, and standards set forth in Executive Order 12968, as well as the Adjudicative Guidelines of the Security Policy Board, refer to 8.1 of this Manual Section.

The Chair of the SCRP notifies the individual in writing of the final decision reached by majority vote of the SCRP and of the right to request a review by the Inspector General as provided in Section 7.4 of this Manual Section if the individual believes an action was in violation of PPD-19. The request for the Inspector General review must be made within 30 days of receiving the written notice of the SCRP’s final decision. The majority decision of the SCRP is not otherwise subject to further appeal.

7.3.4 Certification

If the Director personally certifies that any procedure set forth herein cannot be made available in a particular case without damaging the national security interests of the United States by revealing classified information, the particular procedure(s) shall not be made available. The Director’s certification shall be conclusive.

7.4 Whistleblower Review

7.4.1 Internal Inspector General Review Process

An employee who alleges that any action affecting the employee’s Eligibility for Access to Classified Information is in violation of PPD-19 can request a review by the Inspector General at any time during the adjudication process for security clearance set out in Section 7.0 of this Manual Section.

An employee who wants an internal review by the Inspector General of such action must raise the allegation of a PPD-19 violation to the Office of Inspector General at any point during the adjudication process, but no later than 30 days after the SCRP’s negative adjudication.

The Inspector General must conduct a review of the allegations to determine whether a PPD-19 violation occurred. This review must provide for the protection of classified national security
information and intelligence sources and methods. Upon conclusion of the review, the Inspector General will inform the Director of the outcome of the review and provide, as needed, any recommendations resulting from the review in accordance with PPD-19.

The Director will carefully consider the findings of and actions recommended by the Inspector General and will make a final determination regarding the employee’s Eligibility for Access to Classified Information and other actions recommended by the Inspector General. The Director must then notify the employee of the Director’s determination and any other actions to be taken.

### 7.4.2 Externai Intelligence Community Inspector General Review

An employee who makes allegations under Section 7.4.1 and has exhausted the internal review process set out in Section 7.4.1 may request an external review by a three-member Inspector General panel chaired by the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community as provided in PPD-19.

The employee seeking an external review must provide a formal written request for such a review directly to the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community Hotline Manager within 45 days of receiving the notice from the Director regarding the internal review. Such request must include:

(a) Employee’s Full Name

(b) Federal Employing Agency

(c) Reprisal Complaint, which should include a summary of:

   (1) Protected disclosure(s),

   (2) Personnel actions, and/or Actions Affecting Eligibility for Access to Classified Information,

   (3) Reprisal allegation(s),

   (4) Efforts to exhaust the applicable agency review process, and

   (5) Agency final decision on the reprisal allegations.

(d) Reason for seeking an external IG review, and

(e) Any other supporting documentation.

Requests for the external review must be mailed to:

Office of the Inspector General of the Intelligence Community
Attn: Investigations Division
Washington D.C. 20511
The Director will carefully consider the findings of and actions recommended by the External Review Panel and will make a final determination regarding the employee’s Eligibility for Access to Classified Information and other actions recommended by the External Review Panel. The Director will notify the employee of the determination and any other actions to be taken. Within 90 days of receiving the recommendations of the External Review Panel, the Director will inform the Panel and the Director of National Intelligence (DNI) of the action taken. Under PPD -19, if the Director fails to inform the DNI, the DNI will notify the President.

8.0 Adjudication of Suitability for Federal Employment

Any individual seeking employment with the Peace Corps, including those who require a security clearance, must be investigated and found suitable for Peace Corps employment. Suitability is defined as identifiable character traits and conduct sufficient to determine whether an individual is likely or not likely to be able to carry out the duties of a Federal job with appropriate integrity, efficiency, and effectiveness. It is the policy of the Peace Corps that SS/DO/IPSS will investigate and make suitability recommendations. M/HRM delegates to SS/DO/IPSS the authority to make favorable suitability determinations and the authority to make initial adverse suitability determinations subject to review and action by M/HRM. M/HRM retains authority to make final suitability determinations in adverse cases.

8.1 Adjudicative Process

The adjudicative process is an examination of a sufficient period of a person’s life to make an affirmative determination that the person is suitable for federal employment. The following suitability factors will be used to adjudicate applicant suitability for employment in the Peace Corps:

(a) Delinquency or misconduct in employment;
(b) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
(c) Material intentional false statement or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
(d) Alcohol abuse;
(e) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances;
(f) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. government by force; or
(g) Statutory or regulatory bar.

8.2 Favorable Decision

SS/DO/IPSS will review the data from a completed investigation considering the factors cited in paragraph 8.1 of this Manual Section. If a favorable decision is clearly consistent with the standards, SS/DO/IPSS will notify M/HRM, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the employee in writing.
8.3 Potentially Unfavorable Decision

If the pre-employment screening or the completed investigation indicates the subject may not meet the suitability standards for federal employment, SS/DO/IPSS will initiate the following due process procedures in order to arrive at a final determination.

8.3.1 Suitability Determination

A personnel security specialist shall adjudicate the results of the investigation and prepare a written adjudication indicating the grounds for the proposed adverse suitability determination for review by the Reviewing Official.

8.3.2 Review

The Chief, SS/DO/IPSS is the designated Reviewing Official.

If the Reviewing Official disagrees with the adjudicative determination, the suitability determination will be appropriately modified and notice of suitability will be provided to M/HRM, the office head and the subject in writing.

If the Reviewing Official agrees with the decision of the personnel security specialist, M/HRM will be requested to make a suitability determination. The Deputy Director, M/HRM will be furnished with a recommendation memo indicating the adverse findings and the investigative materials (the report of investigation and the written adjudication) upon which that recommendation is based.

8.3.3 Decision

If the Deputy Director of M/HRM disagrees with the recommendation the office will prepare a written reply to SS/DO/IPSS, providing their basis for dissent. The office will also prepare a written notice of suitability and provide it to SS/DO/IPSS, the office head, and the subject.

If the Deputy Director of M/HRM agrees with the recommendation, he or she will prepare a letter to the subject, explaining the basis for finding the subject unsuitable for Federal employment. The letter will be sent to the subject along with a copy of the investigation, adjudication, and recommendation.

The subject will be given 15 days to provide to the Director of M/HRM, any evidence that might refute, explain, or mitigate the information upon which the recommendation is based. The subject may be represented by a person of his or her choice, at his or her own cost. Following the expiration of the 15 day appeal window, the Director of M/HRM will issue a finding regarding the suitability of the individual. The decision of the Director of M/HRM is not subject to further appeal.

9.0 Adjudication of Suitability for All Others Requiring Unescorted Access

All individuals requiring unescorted access to Federal facilities undergo the same investigation and suitability determination to which Federal employees are subjected, to ensure a safe and
secure working environment. It is the policy of the Peace Corps that SS/DO/IPSS will investigate and make suitability determinations for all individuals who are not Federal employees, but require unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities.

For purposes of this section, this will include contractor employees, work study students, interns and any other individual requiring unescorted access to Peace Corps domestic facilities.

### 9.1 Adjudicative Process

The adjudicative process is an examination of a sufficient period of a person’s life to make an affirmative determination that the person is suitable for unescorted access to Federal facilities. The following suitability factors will be used to adjudicate the subject’s suitability for access to Peace Corps domestic facilities:

(a) Delinquency or misconduct in employment;
(b) Criminal or dishonest conduct;
(c) Material, intentional false statement or deception or fraud in examination or appointment;
(d) Alcohol abuse;
(e) Illegal use of narcotics, drugs, or other controlled substances;
(f) Knowing and willful engagement in acts or activities designed to overthrow the U.S. Government by force; and
(g) Statutory or regulatory bar.

### 9.2 Favorable Decision

SS/DO/IPSS will review the data from a completed investigation and will consider the factors cited in paragraph 9.1 of this Manual Section. If a favorable decision is clearly consistent with the standards, SS/DO/IPSS will notify when appropriate the COTAR, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the subject in writing.

### 9.3 Potentially Unfavorable Decision

If the pre-employment screening or the completed investigation indicates the subject does not meet the suitability standards for federal employment, SS/DO/IPSS will initiate the following procedures in order to arrive at a final determination.

#### 9.3.1 Suitability Determination

A Personnel Security Specialist shall adjudicate the results of the investigation and prepare a written adjudication indicating the grounds for the proposed adverse determination and notify the Chief, SS/DO/IPSS.

#### 9.3.2 Review
If the Chief, SS/DO/IPSS disagrees with the adjudicative determination, the suitability determination will be appropriately modified and notice of suitability will be provided to, the COR, the office head (e.g. Chief of Staff, Associate Director, Regional Director, Inspector General), and the subject in writing.

If the Chief, SS/DO/IPSS agrees with the adjudicative determination, the Personnel Security Specialist will prepare a letter to the subject, explaining the basis for finding the subject unsuitable for unescorted access into Peace Corps domestic facilities. The letter will be sent to the subject along with a copy of the investigation, adjudication, and recommendation.

The finding of the Chief, SS/DO/IPSS is not subject to further appeal.

10.0 Accreditation of Access Clearance

SS/DO/IPSS has the responsibility for accrediting Peace Corps employees when access clearance certification is required.

10.1 Positions outside the United States

The country clearance cable must include the security clearance level of the traveler. This clearance notification is required for unescorted access to the Embassy and access to Department of State controlled classified information. Should issues arise regarding the clearance level of a Peace Corps employee, the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer (RSO) should be directed to the Chief of SS/DO/IPSS for confirmation of clearance.

10.2 Facilities Access

Many government facilities restrict access within their facilities. Peace Corps employees requiring access to other agency facilities that impose such restrictions should notify SS/DO/IPSS for accreditation.

10.3 Other Access

Some agencies may require accreditation of an employee prior to attendance at meetings, seminars, or briefings that involve discussion of classified information. SS/DO/IPSS should be notified by the employee or agency requiring such clearance.

11.0 Training and Assistance

SS/DO/IPSS provides individual and group training and assistance to domestic and overseas staff in matters of documents, information, and personal safeguards.

11.1 Classified Information

All persons who have access to national security classified information must receive periodic training on the proper receipt, handling, storage, dissemination, and destruction of such material. SS/DO/IPSS will provide this training in coordination with M/HRM.
Training for domestic staff will be conducted as soon as possible after an individual has received notice of access clearance approval. Access to classified national security information will not be granted prior to this training.

Training for overseas staff will be provided during regularly scheduled overseas staff development programs.

Training for staff hired overseas must be obtained from the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer.

11.2 Security Awareness

All Executive branch agencies are required to provide a security awareness briefing to alert employees to any hostile intelligence threat, especially those agencies involved with war plans, foreign affairs, and counterintelligence. The SS/DO/IPSS will provide a security awareness briefing for Agency employees with primary focus on overseas staff.

12.0 Security Files and Records

Investigative information contained in the Agency’s security files is protected against unauthorized disclosure and shall be maintained, stored and released in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

13.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.