

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE



# 2011 Report on Security Clearance Determinations

L E A D I N G I N T E L L I G E N C E I N T E G R A T I O N

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## INTRODUCTION

The Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010<sup>1</sup> established a requirement for the President to submit an annual report to Congress on the security clearance process, to include the total number of security clearances across government and in-depth metrics on the timeliness of security clearance determinations in the Intelligence Community (IC). In response to this requirement, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI) has prepared this second *Annual Report on Security Clearance Determinations*, which provides the number of security clearance determinations in the following categories:

- The number of individuals who held and who were approved for a security clearance as of October 1, 2011, categorized by government employees and contractors and by security clearance level.
- For the IC:
  - The time in days to process the shortest and longest security clearance determination made among 80 percent of determinations, and the time in days for the shortest and longest security clearance determination made among 90 percent of security clearance determinations.
  - The number of security clearance investigations as of October 1 of the preceding fiscal year open for: 4 months or less; between 4 months and 8 months; between 8 months and one year; and more than one year.
  - The percentage of reviews during the preceding fiscal year that resulted in a denial or revocation of a security clearance.
  - The percentage of investigations during the preceding fiscal year that resulted in incomplete information.
  - The percentage of investigations during the preceding fiscal year that did not result in enough information to make a decision on potentially adverse information.
  - The number of completed or pending security clearance determinations for government employees and contractors during the preceding fiscal year that have taken longer than one year to complete; the agencies that investigated and adjudicated such determinations; and the cause of significant delays in such determinations.

***The methodology employed to collect the number of security clearance determinations was refined this year to more accurately measure the total population eligible for a security clearance at any level. We believe this methodology more closely corresponds to the Act's requirements. A detailed explanation of the enhanced methodology is provided on pages 4-5 of this report.***

The process to determine the total number of security clearance determinations in the U.S. Government involves queries of the three primary record repositories that contain security clearance data: ODNI's Scattered Castles (SC); the Department of Defense's (DoD's) Joint Personnel Adjudication System (JPAS); and the Office of Personnel Management's (OPM's) Central Verification System (CVS). Data from these repositories is compiled and processed by the Office of the National Counterintelligence Executive/Special Security Directorate

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<sup>1</sup> [Intelligence Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2010](#), see Sec. 367 Security Clearances: Reports; Reciprocity (PL 111-259).

(ONCIX/SSD) through queries designed to eliminate as many duplicative records as possible and achieve a more accurate count. Duplicate records are often created when multiple agencies grant a security clearance or access to an individual or an agency reports their security determination to more than one repository. The data on IC security clearances in this report was gathered to the extent possible from information that is already being reported to the ODNI and was augmented with data from a special data call to the seven IC agencies with delegated authority to conduct investigations or adjudications.

**(A) and (B) - Number of individuals who held and who were approved for a security clearance as of October 1, 2011, categorized by government employees and contractors and by security clearance level.<sup>2</sup>**

(A) Number of government employees who:

- (i) Held a security clearance at such level as of October 1, 2011;
- (ii) Were approved for a security clearance at such level during the preceding fiscal year;

(B) Number of contractors who:

- (i) Held a security clearance at such level as of October 1, 2011;
- (ii) Were approved for a security clearance at such level during the preceding fiscal year.

**Table 1**

Held a security clearance at such level:

| Employee Type | As of 10/1/10: |            | As of 10/1/11: |            |
|---------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
|               | Conf/Secret    | Top Secret | Conf/Secret    | Top Secret |
| Government    | 2,559,014      | 756,672    | 2,693,402      | 766,245    |
| Contractor    | 620,783        | 550,642    | 598,006        | 478,835    |
| Other         | 91,468         | 129,662    | 161,606        | 165,458    |
| Sub-Total:    | 3,271,265      | 1,436,976  | 3,453,014      | 1,410,538  |
| Total:        | 4,708,241      |            | 4,863,552      |            |

Key:  New methodology

<sup>2</sup> The numbers reported in the "Other" category in Tables 1 and 2 are the number of individuals who held or were approved for security clearances *but could not be categorized* from the available data as either a government employee or a contractor. Therefore, all CVS data and any JPAS and SC data that could not be categorized by employee type are captured in this category



Table 2

Approved for a security clearance at such level:

| Employee Type | As of 10/1/10: |            | As of 10/1/11: |            |
|---------------|----------------|------------|----------------|------------|
|               | Conf/Secret    | Top Secret | Conf/Secret    | Top Secret |
| Government    |                |            | 400,490        | 178,926    |
| Contractor    | 512,076        | 130,755    | 97,453         | 102,277    |
| Other         |                |            | 42,546         | 29,702     |
| Sub-Total:    | 512,076        | 130,755    | 540,489        | 310,905    |
| Total:        | 642,831        |            | 851,394        |            |

|      |   |
|------|---|
| Key: | <span style="background-color: #d9ead3; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> Data could not be refreshed using new methodology |
|      | <span style="background-color: #d9ead3; border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 20px; height: 10px;"></span> New methodology                                   |

The data indicate that the overall number of security clearance determinations has increased since October 2010. **This increase, however, is largely due to a modification in the methodology used to collect the data during FY 2011 to address the guidance in the Act and to collect more accurate data and does not reflect a large year-to-year growth in the number of clearances.** Queries using this improved methodology captured data for all individuals who were investigated and deemed eligible to hold a security clearance at any level, whether or not these individuals had been granted a clearance and had access to classified information or they no longer had access to classified information due to a transfer or change in position. Including this data in the report provides a more accurate assessment of the total cleared population.

Specifically, the 2011 data from JPAS include all of DoD's security clearance eligibility determinations. DoD makes an "eligibility" determination prior to granting "access" to improve support to the warfighter and the mobility of personnel requiring access. Therefore, the FY 2011 number more accurately reflects the total number of individuals who have had a clearance determination. These individuals may not have been briefed yet, but may be briefed at any time without any additional investigative or adjudicative actions, if required by the duties of their positions.

The reporting of "eligibility" provides a more meaningful number for the long-term and is consistent with the ODNI's collection of timeliness metrics, which are based on investigations and adjudications conducted to determine "eligibility." This differs significantly from reporting "access," which can change significantly throughout the fiscal year. Therefore, "eligibility" measurements are reported with more confidence and consistency as the most accurate depiction of active clearance determinations.

The numbers reported, however, are likely to include some duplicate entries, despite ongoing efforts to eliminate duplicative clearance information. Adjudicative facilities are increasingly recording their clearance determinations in multiple repositories in order to better support reciprocity, and creating a single repository to house all national security determinations is not currently feasible given the sensitivity of certain clearance information and the need for non-IC agencies to have a repository to report determinations. Queries of SC and JPAS can be structured to eliminate the majority of duplicate entries based on an individual's Personal

Identifying Information (PII), such as a Social Security number. PII is not made available through CVS; as a result, a minimal number of duplicates may be included in the total count.

Finally, limitations in our current ability to extract specific data from the repositories represent a challenge to collecting more precise data. For instance, a query of the security clearance determination “approvals” recorded in certain repositories cannot distinguish between initial and periodic reinvestigation approvals. Therefore, the number of approvals does not represent the number of new clearances, but rather a combination of approvals for new clearances and for existing clearances based on an updated investigation.

The FY 2010 data in Table 1 was refreshed using the new methodology to support a transparent comparison of the FY 2010 and FY 2011 data. Although the refreshed information varies slightly from the FY 2010 data reported previously, it provides a clearer picture of the cleared population and enables a better understanding of the level of effort necessary to support the clearance process and data collection. It was not possible to refresh the FY 2010 data in Table 2 on the number of clearances approved; therefore, the data from the FY 2010 report is provided in this table.

JPAS has moved to the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC), and the DMDC rigorously scrutinized the FY 2011 data to ensure that the most accurate information available was provided for inclusion in this report. While the other two repositories do not provide the largest percentage of clearance information, the SC and CVS data owners also refined their queries to collect the most accurate data. The ODNI will continue to work with the data repository owners to continue to improve methodology and enable collection of more granular data for future reports.

**(C) For Each Element of the Intelligence Community:**

The ODNI conducted a special data call to collect information responsive to Section (C) from the seven IC agencies<sup>3</sup> with delegated authority to conduct investigations or adjudications. Data from other agencies that have IC components<sup>4</sup> are not included because these agencies are unable to extract data on clearance actions for individuals assigned to IC positions without a manual review of the files. The results are as follows:

- i. The total number of days required to process the security clearance determination for the shortest and longest time among 80 percent of determinations made;**
- ii. The total number of days required to process the security clearance determination for the shortest and longest time among 90 percent of determinations made.**

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<sup>3</sup> Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), National Security Agency (NSA), and Department of State. The CIA also processes security clearances for ODNI employees and contractors.

<sup>4</sup> DHS, DOE, DEA, and Departments of the Treasury, Army, Navy (which includes the Marine Corps as a separate component), Coast Guard and Air Force.



Table 3 provides the total amount of time, in number of days, required to process the shortest and longest security clearance cases—from initiation to adjudicative decision—for the fastest 80 percent of cases and the fastest 90 percent of cases.

**Table 3**

| Agency | 80th Percentile |          |                     |          | 90th Percentile |          |                     |          |
|--------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|----------|-----------------|----------|---------------------|----------|
|        | TS              |          | Secret/Confidential |          | TS              |          | Secret/Confidential |          |
|        | Longest         | Shortest | Longest             | Shortest | Longest         | Shortest | Longest             | Shortest |
| CIA    | 300             | 1        | 309                 | 1        | 494             | 1        | 490                 | 1        |
| DIA    | 169             | 8        | DNP                 | DNP      | 234             | 8        | DNP                 | DNP      |
| FBI    | 88              | 12       | DNP                 | DNP      | 99              | 12       | DNP                 | DNP      |
| NGA    | 172             | 7        | DNP                 | DNP      | 267             | 7        | DNP                 | DNP      |
| NRO    | 150             | 10       | 105                 | 23       | 201             | 10       | 384                 | 23       |
| NSA    | 117             | 17       | DNP                 | DNP      | 172             | 17       | DNP                 | DNP      |
| State  | 91              | 9        | 57                  | 6        | 118             | 9        | 76                  | 6        |

DNP = Does Not Perform

- iii. The number of pending security clearance investigations for such level as of October 1, 2011 that have remained pending for: 4 months or less; between 4 months and 8 months; between 8 months and one year; and for more than one year.

**Table 4**

| Agency | Top Secret<br>Initial Security Clearance |                  |                   |                   |
|--------|--|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
|        | 0 to 4<br>Months                         | 4 to 8<br>Months | 8 to 12<br>Months | Over 12<br>Months |
| CIA    | 495                                      | 4                | 0                 | 0                 |
| DIA    | 65                                       | 1                | 0                 | 0                 |
| FBI    | 644                                      | 105              | 9                 | 4                 |
| NGA    | 238                                      | 138              | 27                | 6                 |
| NRO    | 154                                      | 1                | 0                 | 0                 |
| NSA    | 614                                      | 242              | 71                | 59                |
| State  | NA                                       | NA               | NA                | NA                |

NA = Not Available

- iv. **The percentage of reviews during the preceding fiscal year that resulted in a denial or revocation of a security clearance.**

**Table 5**

| Agency | FY 11   |             |
|--------|---------|-------------|
|        | Denials | Revocations |
| CIA    | 5.3%    | 0.5%        |
| DIA    | 1.2%    | DNP         |
| FBI    | 0.2%    | 0.1%        |
| NGA    | 0.0%    | DNP         |
| NRO    | 3.8%    | 0.4%        |
| NSA    | 8.0%    | 1.6%        |
| State  | 0.5%    | 0%          |

DNP = Does Not Perform

This table reflects the percentage of security clearances denied or revoked in FY 2011 by IC agency, based upon that agency's annual total volume of cases adjudicated.

- v. **The percentage of investigations during the preceding fiscal year that resulted in incomplete information.**

All agencies confirmed that their final reports of investigation contained complete information. One agency, NGA, reported that 2 percent of its reports of investigation initially resulted in incomplete information. In these instances, NGA returned the incomplete reports to the investigative service provider to obtain the additional information needed to meet the standards and to make an adjudicative determination.

- vi. **The percentage of investigations during the preceding fiscal year that did not result in enough information to make a decision on potentially adverse information.**

The seven IC agencies listed on Table 5 advised they had no cases to report against this category. Agencies worked to ensure that sufficient information was available to make a decision on any potentially adverse information.



vii. **For security clearance determinations completed or pending during the preceding fiscal year that have taken longer than one year to complete**

- **The number of security clearance determinations for positions as employees of the U.S. Government that required more than one year to complete;**

**Table 6**

| Agency | Government Cases: |           |
|--------|-------------------|-----------|
|        | Over 1 Year       |           |
|        | Pending           | Completed |
| CIA    | 3755              | 86        |
| DIA    | 374               | 1         |
| FBI    | 25                | 8         |
| NGA    | 0                 | 3         |
| NRO    | 116               | 0         |
| NSA    | 14                | 7         |
| State  | 0                 | 0         |

- **The number of security clearance determinations for contractors that required more than one year to complete;**

**Table 7**

| Agency | Contractor Cases: |           |
|--------|-------------------|-----------|
|        | Over 1 Year       |           |
|        | Pending           | Completed |
| CIA    | 732               | 1164      |
| DIA    | DNP               | DNP       |
| FBI    | 1                 | 6         |
| NGA    | DNP               | DNP       |
| NRO    | 1                 | 35        |
| NSA    | 41                | 45        |
| State  | 0                 | 0         |

DNP = Does Not Perform

- **The agencies that investigated and adjudicated such determinations;**

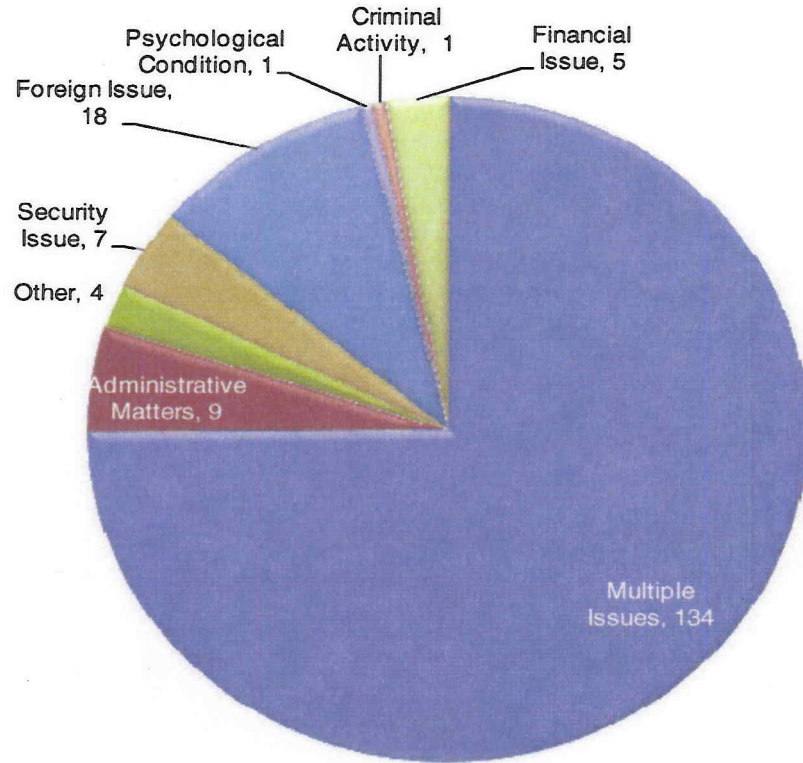
CIA, DIA, FBI, NGA, NRO, NSA, and the Department of State investigated and adjudicated these determinations.

- **The cause of significant delays in such determinations.**

The ODNI conducted a special data call to obtain information on the number of IC clearances pending for more than a year and the delays associated with those cases. Seven of the 17 organizations that comprise the IC conduct their own security clearance investigations. CIA is one of those seven agencies and also conducts security investigations for ODNI employees and contractors. OPM's Federal Investigative Services performs investigations for the remaining nine IC organizations.

Chart 1

Processing Delays by Reason



Six of the seven IC agencies reported that they had cases open in excess of one year. Five IC agencies were able to provide data on 179 such cases. "Multiple issues" were cited as the cause for significant delay in more than 75 percent of the cases; foreign issues were reported as the most common single reason for delay.



Detailed information for year-old cases in the IC agencies with delegated investigative authority is reflected in the table below.

**Table 8**

| Agency |       | GOV | CONTR | TOTAL | Delays:                        |                        |        |                                 |               |                   |                         |                   |                 |                  |
|--------|-------|-----|-------|-------|--------------------------------|------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|---------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| ASP    | ISP   |     |       |       | Multiple Issues                | Administrative Matters | Other* | Significant Adjudicative Events |               |                   |                         |                   |                 |                  |
|        |       |     |       |       |                                |                        |        | Security Issue                  | Foreign Issue | Alcohol Use Issue | Psychological Condition | Criminal Activity | Financial Issue | Personal Conduct |
| CIA    | CIA   | 278 | 1896  | 2174  | Unable to provide at this time |                        |        |                                 |               |                   |                         |                   |                 |                  |
| DIA    | DIA   | 1   | 0     | 1     | 0                              | 1                      | 0      | 0                               | 0             | 0                 | 0                       | 0                 | 0               | 0                |
| FBI    | FBI   | 25  | 7     | 32    | 5                              | 5                      | 4      | 6                               | 12            | 0                 | 0                       | 0                 | 0               | 0                |
| NGA    | NGA   | 3   | 0     | 3     | 0                              | 3                      | 0      | 0                               | 0             | 0                 | 0                       | 0                 | 0               | 0                |
| NRO    | NRO   | 0   | 36    | 36    | 24                             | 0                      | 0      | 1                               | 6             | 0                 | 1                       | 0                 | 4               | 0                |
| NSA    | NSA   | 21  | 86    | 107   | 105                            | 0                      | 0      | 0                               | 0             | 0                 | 0                       | 1                 | 1               | 0                |
| State  | State | 0   | 0     | 0     | 0                              | 0                      | 0      | 0                               | 0             | 0                 | 0                       | 0                 | 0               | 0                |

\*Other: Includes delays involving high risk cases, derogatory information, protected information, and polygraph or medical issues.

**SUMMARY**

While significant progress continues to be made to improve the timeliness of security clearance determinations, the ODNI will continue to stress the need for improvements in the investigative and adjudicative clearance processes. The IC faces unique challenges in clearing individuals with unique or critical skills—such as highly desirable language abilities—who often have significant foreign associations that may take additional time to investigate and adjudicate. Further, compartmentalization and variations in information technology platforms within the IC are impediments to the implementation of automated systems that have the potential to improve the timeliness of processing non-issue cases and to allow security specialists to concentrate on issue cases. While the increase in the total number of clearances held as of October 1, 2011 largely reflects the significantly improved reporting of essential data by all of the entities involved in the process of collecting data for this report, additional measures and methods are being developed and implemented to collect and report the information required.