

Explanation of Instructions for Completing Standard Form 85P (SF85P)

Questionnaire for Public Trust Positions

This explanation of instructions for completing the Standard Form 85P is intended to provide you with detailed information on completing the questionnaire. The information in this document is in addition to the requirements outlined in the instructions on the SF85P, which must also be followed in detail. It is our hope that this explanation of instructions better prepares you in promptly completing the Standard Form 85P; therefore, enabling you to answer all the questions fully and accurately. All questions require complete answers, no exceptions will be made.

BLOCKS 1–7 requests information that **helps identify you**.

Questions ask your Full Name, your Date of Birth, your Place of Birth, Social Security Number, Other Names Used (*e.g., maiden name, name(s) by a former marriage, alias(s) or nicknames*), Other Identifying Information (*height, weight, hair color, eye color, gender*), and Telephone Number(s). If you have no middle name, write in “NMN” in the space provided. Answer each question as it pertains to you.

BLOCK 8 requests information about your **citizenship**.

Questions ask the following:

- (a) Are you a U.S. citizen or national by birth in the U.S. or U.S. territory/possession? (*If so, you will have to answer items b and d*)

Are you a U.S. citizen, but you were not born in the U.S.? (*If so, you will have to answer items b, c, and d*)

Are you not a U.S. citizen? (*If so, you will have to answer items b and e*)

- (b) What is your Mother’s maiden name? (*Birth name before marriage*)

- (c) If you are a U.S. citizen, but you were not born in the U.S. you will need to know the following pertaining to your Naturalization Certificate, Citizenship Certificate, State Department Form 240, and/or U.S. Passport.

- Where were you naturalized? You need to know the Court, City, State, Certificate Number, Month, Day, and Year of where and when you received your Naturalization Certificate.

- Where was your certificate issued? You will need to know the City, State, Certificate Number, Month, Day, and Year of where and when you received your Citizenship Certificate was issued.
 - If you have a State Department Form 240 (*Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States*), you will need to know the date the form was prepared, and also give an explanation if needed.
 - If you have either a current or previous U.S. Passport, you will need to know the Passport Number, Month, Day, and year the Passport was issued.
- (d) If you are or were a dual citizen of the United States and another country, you will be asked to provide the name of the other country.
- (e) If you are an alien (*noncitizen resident of the U.S.*), you will be asked to provide the City, State, Month, Day, and Year of where and when you entered the United States. Additionally, you will be asked your Alien Registration Number and you Country of Citizenship.

BLOCK 9 asks you to list the **places you've lived**, beginning with the most recent one and **working back 7 years**.

This section requires the physical location of your residence (*a post office box is **not** allowed*) and must be as specific as possible (*e.g., do not list only your base or ship; list your barracks number or home port as well*). You will be required to include the Street Address, City, State, and Zip Code. For any address in the last 5 years, you will be asked to list a person who knew you when you lived there (*preferably someone who still lives there*), and do not list your spouse, former spouses, or other relatives. You must account for the entire 7 year period from the date that you sign the SF85P working back **without breaks**.

BLOCK 10 asks you to list the **schools you have attended** beyond Junior High School, beginning with the most recent one and **working back 7 years**.

You are asked to list all College or University degrees and the dates they were received. If all of your education occurred more than 7 years ago, list your most recent education beyond high school, no matter when that education occurred. For schools you attended in the last 3 years, you are required to list a person who knew you at the school (an instructor, student, etc.). Be sure to list the appropriate "Code" provided in this section to identify the type of school attended as noted on the SF85P.

BLOCK 11 asks you to list **your employment activities**, beginning with the present one and working **back 7 years**.

You should list all full-time work, part-time work, military service, temporary military duty locations over 90 days, self-employment, other paid work, and all periods of unemployment.

In this section you will be asked to list your Dates of Employment, the Employer's and/or Verifier's Name, Military Duty Location (*if applicable*), Phone Number, and Full Address in addition to the Supervisors Name and Street Address if it is different than the Job Location.

The entire 7-year period must be accounted for (“even if unemployed”) without breaks, but you need not list any employments prior to your 16th birthday.

Codes provided in this section must be used to identify the **type of employment** described. Explanations are also provided to help applicants fill in the sections titled **Employer/Verifier Name** and **Previous Periods of Activity**.

BLOCK 12 asks about **your employment record**.

If **over the last 7 years** you have been:

- fired from a job
- quit a job after being told you'd be fired
- left a job by mutual agreement following allegations of misconduct
- left a job by mutual agreement following allegations of unsatisfactory performance
- or left a job for other reasons under unfavorable circumstances

Note: If you answer yes to this question, you will be asked to provide the specific date of the action, the reason, the employer's name and address.

BLOCK 13 asks you to list three **people who know you well**.

These people should live in the United States and should be good friends, peers, colleagues, college roommates, etc., whose combined association with you covers as well as possible **the last 7 years**. You should **not** list your spouse, former spouses, or other relatives, and try not to list anyone who is listed elsewhere on this form.

BLOCK 14 asks for your **marital status**.

If you are currently married, separated, or legally separated you will be asked to provide your Spouse's Full Name, Date of Birth, Place of Birth, Social Security Number, Other Names Used (*specify maiden name, names by other marriages, etc., and show dates used for each name*), Country of Citizenship, Date Married, and Place Married.

If separated/legally separated, you will be asked to provide the Date of Separation, and if legally separated, Where the Record of Separation is located (*City and Country*). You will also be asked to provide the Address of the Current Spouse.

BLOCK 15 asks you to **identify your relatives**.

You will be required to include their Date of Birth, Country of Birth, Country (ies) of Citizenship, Current Street Address, City and State of Living Relatives. You are asked to identify Mother, Father, Stepmother, Stepfather, Foster Parent, Child (adopted also) and Stepchild. Use the correct code listed on the SF85P to identify your relationship with each relative. Lines 1 and 2 on the form are already prefilled with codes (1 & 2), which require you to list your mother and father at the very minimum.

BLOCK 16 asks for your **military history**.

- (a) You will be asked if you served in the United States military. Check the appropriate yes/no box.
- (b) You will be asked if you served in the United States Merchant Marine. Check the appropriate yes/no box.

If yes, you will be asked to identify the Branch of Service, Month/Year Served, Service/Certificate #, Officer or Enlisted status, and the Active or Reserve status in which you served. If your service was with a country other than that associated with the U. S. Armed Forces, you will be required to list the country for which you served.

BLOCK 17 asks for your **selective service record**.

If you are a male born after 31 December 1959, you will be asked whether you have registered with the Selective Service System. If you answer "yes" you will be asked to provide your Registration Number; if you answer "no" you will be asked to show the reason for your legal exemption. Your Registration Number can be found through the Selective Service website at www.sss.gov. If you are a woman, you are still required to check the appropriated yes/no box.

BLOCK 18 asks for your **investigations record**, (*i.e.*, whether the U.S. Government ever investigated your background and/or granted you a security clearance).

Part (a) If the United States Government has ever investigated your background and/or granted you a security clearance, use the appropriate codes listed on the SF85P to answer the question. If you answer “yes”, but you can’t recall the investigating agency and/or security clearance received, enter “Other” agency code or clearance code as appropriate. Also write in “Don’t know” or “Don’t Recall” under the “Other Agency” heading. If you can’t recall if you were ever investigated and cleared, check the “no” box.

Part (b) asks whether you ever had a clearance or access authorization denied, suspended, or revoked, or whether you ever have been debarred from government employment. If you answer “yes” in this section, you will be asked to provide the Date of the action as well as the Name of the Department or Agency taking the action. Part (b) also notes that an administrative downgrade or termination of a security clearance is not a revocation.

BLOCK 19 asks you to **list foreign countries you have visited**, except on travel under Government orders, beginning with the most current and **working back 7 years**. Travel as a dependent or contractor must also be listed.

For each country visited, you will be required to list the Name of the Country and the length of time you spent there (*i.e.* Month/Year to Month/Year). This will also include short trips to Canada or Mexico. You will also be required to state the purpose of your visit (*i.e.* business, pleasure, education, other) by using the codes listed.

BLOCK 20 asks about your **police record** [*i.e.*, whether **in the last 7 years**, you have been arrested for, charged with, or convicted of any offense(s)].

If you answer “yes,” you are asked to explain your answer(s) in the space provided. Do **not** include anything that happened before your 16th birthday; leave out traffic fines of less than \$150. Complete information as it pertains to the question is required.

BLOCK 21 asks whether you have **used, possessed, supplied or manufactured illegal drugs**.

Part (a) asks whether, **in the last year**, you have illegally used any controlled substance. If you answer “yes,” you are asked to provide information relating to the types of substance(s), the nature of the activity, and any other details relating to your involvement with illegal drugs. Include any treatment or counseling you also received. Complete information as it pertains to the question is required.

Part (b) asks whether, **in the last 7 years**, you have been involved in the illegal activities relating to controlled or illicit drugs for your own intended profit or that of another. Check the appropriate yes/no box.

BLOCK 22 asks about your **financial records**.

Part (a) asks whether, **in the last 7 years**, you have, or a company over which you exercised some control, filed for bankruptcy, been declared bankrupt, been subject to a tax lien, or had legal judgment rendered against you for a debt. If you answer “yes,” provide date of initial action and other information requested. Complete information as it pertains to the question is required.

Part (b) asks whether you are over 180 days delinquent on any loan or financial obligation. This should include loans or obligations funded or guaranteed by the Federal government. Complete information as it pertains to the question is required.

At the bottom of page 7 on the SF 85P, you will be asked for your signature and date to certify that your answers are “true, complete, and correct to the best of your knowledge and belief and are made in good faith.” Your signature also certifies that you understand that a knowing and willful false statement on this form can be punished by fine or imprisonment or both.

Preliminary Information:

Follow instructions fully or the form cannot be processed.

You must enter your Social Security Number on the bottom of pages 2 through 7 prior to going to the next page.

You must sign and date the Certification that your answers are true on Page 7.

You must sign and date the Authorization for Release of Information on Pages 8.

You must sign and date the Authorization for Release of Medical Information, which has no page number; however, it is the last page of the questionnaire.

Giving the information asked for on this form is voluntary; however, failure to provide all of the requested information may result in an incomplete investigation, which could (*negatively*) affect the individual’s placement or employment prospects.

Purpose of Form SF 85P:

This form is used in conducting background investigations and reinvestigations to establish that applicants or individuals currently employed by the Federal government or working for the Federal government under contract are suitable for the job and/or eligible for a public trust or sensitive position.

Information from this form is used primarily as the basis for this investigation.

This form is to be completed only after a conditional offer of employment has been made.

The Investigative Process:

Background investigations are conducted using your responses on this form and on your Declaration of Federal Employment (*OF 306*) to develop information to show whether you are reliable, trustworthy, of good conduct and character, and loyal to the United States.

The information that you provide on this form is confirmed during the investigation.

Your current employer must be contacted as part of the investigation, even if you have previously indicated on applications or other forms that you do not want this.

Inquiry also is made about a person's adherence to security requirements, honesty and integrity, vulnerability to exploitation or coercion, falsification, misrepresentation, and any other behavior, activities, or associations that tend to show the person is not reliable, trustworthy, or loyal.

Your Personal Interview:

Some investigations will include an interview with you as a normal part of the investigation process. This provides you the opportunity to update, clarify, and explain information on your form more completely, which often helps to complete your investigation faster. It is important that the interview be conducted as soon as possible after you are contacted.

You will be asked to bring identification with your picture on it, such as a valid State driver's license or passport, to the interview. There are other documents you may be asked to bring to verify your identity as well. These include documentation of any legal name change, Social Security card, and/or birth certificate.

You may also be asked to bring documents about information you provided on the form or other matters requiring specific attention. These matters include: alien registration; delinquent loans or taxes, bankruptcy, judgments, liens, or other financial obligations; agreements involving child custody or support, alimony or property settlements; arrests, convictions, probation, and/or parole.