



**U.S. Department of Defense**  
Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs)

## News Release

On the Web:

<http://www.defense.gov/Releases/Release.aspx?ReleaseID=14294>

Media contact: +1 (703) 697-5131/697-5132

Public contact:

<http://www.defense.gov/landing/comment.aspx>

or +1 (703) 428-0711 +1

---

**IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**No. 157-11**  
**February 25, 2011**

---

### **DOD Announces Improvements To The Personnel Security Clearance Process**

The Department of Defense (DoD) released information today about improvements made to the personnel security clearance process. Over the past four years, the DoD has worked with the Director of National Intelligence, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Office of Personnel Management to streamline processes, make changes to policies, introduce extensive information technology improvements, and eliminate a backlog of approximately 100,000 pending cases. These improvements led to a 72 percent reduction in the time it takes to process an individual's security clearance – from an average of 165 days in 2006 to 47 days today.

“The substantive changes that we have made to our personnel security clearance process significantly enhance our safeguarding of classified materials and the quality of life of our service members and civilian employees,” said Deputy Defense Secretary William Lynn.

The improvements also led the Government Accountability Office (GAO) to recently remove the DoD personnel security clearance process from its “high risk list.” Originally added to the high list risk in 2005, removal of the personnel security clearance process marks the first time the GAO has removed a DoD area from the list since its 1990 inception. The GAO also credited the DoD with improving the quality and oversight of its investigative and adjudicative processes.

“The Department of Defense was steadfast in its commitment to substantially improve performance in this area,” said Deputy Chief Management Officer Elizabeth McGrath. “Not only because of the personal inconvenience experienced by individuals when navigating the clearance process, but also because delays in processing security clearances can cause delays in placing highly-qualified individuals in the cleared positions that need them. Additionally, the improvements made in the quality of our clearance decisions will ensure that we better safe-guard our nation's critical secrets.”