

# STEP-BY-STEP SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS

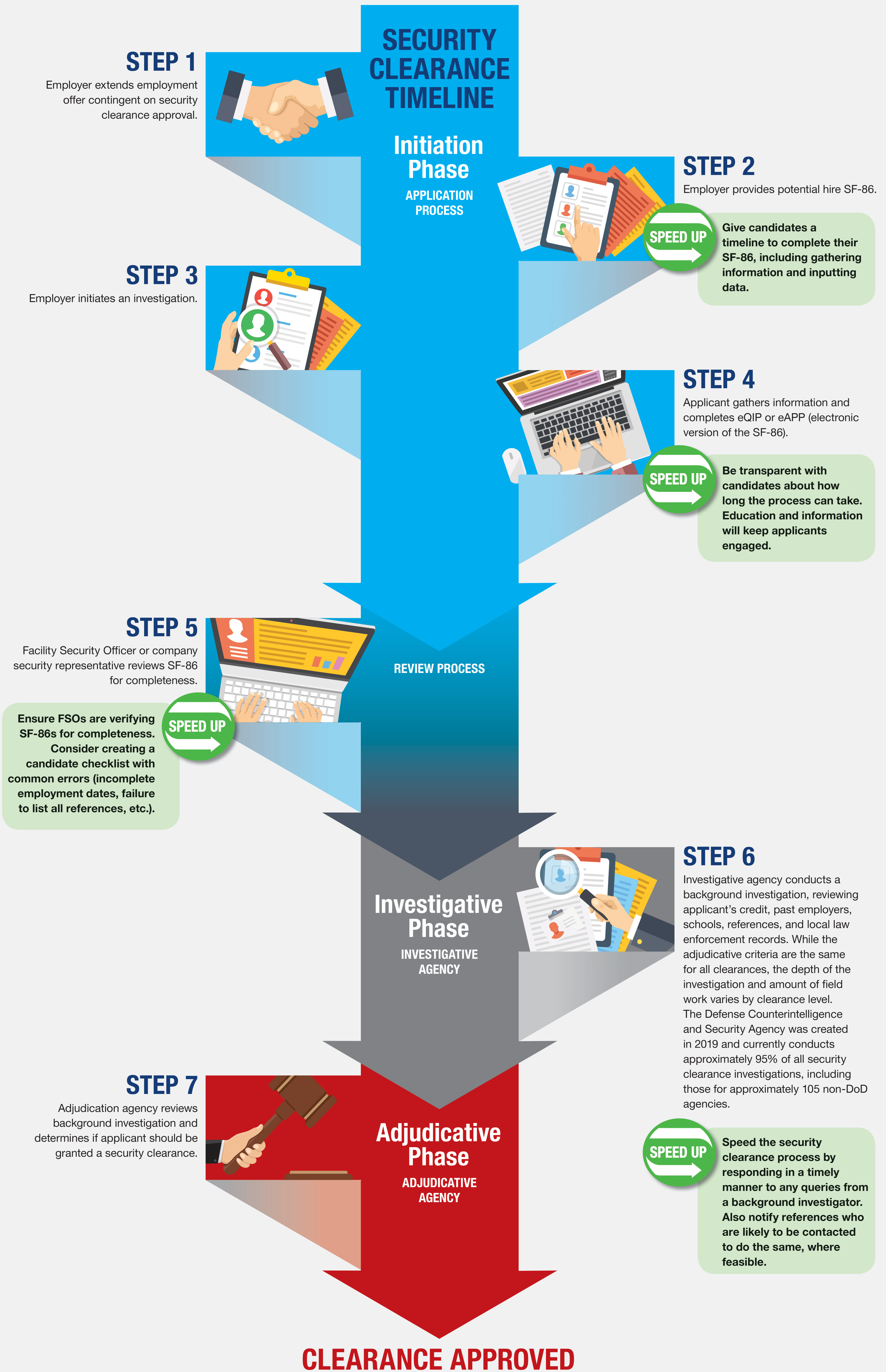
Companies interested in hiring candidates for security-cleared positions have to wait out an often lengthy background check and approval process. What can employers do to shrink that period?

## IMPORTANT FACTS TO KNOW ABOUT THE SECURITY CLEARANCE PROCESS

Processing time for a security clearance is primarily dependent on the type of clearance, the agency, and the absence or presence of significant unfavorable information.

Under the 2004 Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) federal agencies are required to complete the fastest 90% of all initial clearances (Secret and Top Secret) in an average of 60 days (not counting the 10 or 12 days required for case submission). In reality, since 2013 average processing times have hovered anywhere from 200-500 days, with complex cases frequently taking well over a year.

The 2020 National Defense Authorization Act created new processing milestones of 30 days or fewer for a Secret clearance and 90 days or fewer for a Top Secret clearance, to be met by December of 2021, for the fastest 90% of all security clearances.



## WHAT IT ALL MEANS – GLOSSARY OF TERMS

- SF-86**  
Standard Form 86: Questionnaire for national security positions. Used as the basis for determining an individual's access to classified information.
- FSO**  
Facility Security Officer: Responsible for the security of a facility, including the screening of security-cleared employees.
- eQIP**  
Electronic Questionnaire for Investigation: Current interface used to fill out forms needed to begin background investigation.
- eAPP**  
The Defense Information System Agency's replacement for eQIP. Trials have begun within some government agencies.
- JPAS**  
Joint Personnel Adjudication System: Security clearance system of record used to track investigations and eligibility.
- DISS**  
Defense Information System for Security: The Defense Information System Agency's replacement for JPAS.