



*(January 25, 2016)*

In order to further improve the lines of communication and to respond to the concerns between the National VA Council and you our members, I have established a National VA Council Briefing. This NVAC Briefing will bring you the latest news and developments within DVA and provide you with the current status of issues this Council is currently addressing. I believe that this NVAC Briefing will greatly enhance the way in which we communicate and the way in which we share new information, keeping you better informed.

**Alma L. Lee**  
National VA Council, President

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**In This Briefing: New Federal Office will take the lead on background checks ~ Federal Times**

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The Obama administration plans a new office to handle background checks for federal security clearances, according to the Office of Personnel Management.

The National Background Investigations Bureau will operate under OPM and absorb the Federal Investigative Service, which had previously handled more than 1 million security clearance and suitability investigations a year. The new office will be responsible for all background investigations for the federal government.

“As the world’s technologies continue to evolve and our economy becomes ever more digitally connected, the federal government’s tools, systems, and processes for managing such sensitive information and conducting background investigations must keep pace with these advancements in order to better anticipate, detect, and counter malicious activities, as well as threats posed by trusted insiders who may seek to do harm to the government’s personnel, property, and information systems,” OPM officials said in a statement.

The move comes following a 90-day review of the federal background investigation process, conducted by the Performance Accountability Council, which includes the Director of National Intelligence, Office of Management and Budget, acting OPM director Beth Cobert, along with officials from the Departments of Defense, Treasury, Homeland Security, Justice, Energy, State, FBI and others.

The review came in the wake of this summer's hack of OPM, which exposed the information of scores of federal workers and their families. DoD will handle IT security and data for the background investigations conducted by the new NBIB office.

A transition team will help establish the new agency and help transfer FIS IT systems to the DoD while also transferring operations from OPM and FIS and maintaining current operations during the handover, according to OPM. The move comes at a time when the administration is overhauling the security clearance apparatus in the wake of the OPM hack.

[FEDERAL TIMES](#)  
[The OPM data breach](#)

Officials noted that the announcement of the NBIB creation falls in line with other security clearance reforms, including a broad reinvestigation of all security clearances, a 17 percent cut in active clearances and reforms for better evaluations and cross-agency and cross-government information sharing.

House Oversight Committee chair Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, was unimpressed.

"Simply creating a new government entity doesn't solve the problem. The administration needs to undertake meaningful reforms to protect citizens' most sensitive personal information," he said. "Protecting this information should be a core competency of OPM, the government's human resources agency. Today's announcement seems aimed only at solving a perception problem rather than tackling the reforms needed to fix a broken security clearance process."