

## **Electronic Questionnaire for Investigations Processing (e-QIP)**

e-QIP is a web-based application that will assist the VA in obtaining your background investigation, which is a requirement of employment. You are required to complete an electronic Standard Form 85 (SF85) **prior** to beginning your first full day of employment with the VA Palo Alto. The SF85 may be the most time consuming form you will have to complete, and it will require access to the internet. You will receive an email and/or a phone call from your Staffing Specialist directing you to the online form and providing you with additional instructions.

If you encounter difficulties with e-QIP, you may come to the Personnel Security Office in Human Resources for help. To speed up the process, you will need the following information before you start working on your e-QIP.

- For security purposes, you will have to develop **three** password questions, which are referred to as “Golden Questions” or “GQs.” These three questions will replace the default questions already programmed in e-QIP. Your new GQs should be simple questions and answers that are easy for you to remember yet difficult for unauthorized users to obtain. We do not recommend making your GQs and answers too complex. The GQs are not case-sensitive but need to be spelled accurately. You must type them in exactly as you did when you first created them. (HINT: Write down your GQs and answers in a safe place.)

When you start typing in your GQs and answers, it will show up as dots (what you type is hidden from view) unless you check the little box at the top, which will allow you to see what you are typing.

- Complete addresses (number, street, city, state, zip code) for places you have lived, went to school, and worked **for the past 5 years**. You will need names and phone numbers for your previous employers.
- Complete names and addresses for **three** people who know you well. These people cannot be your spouse, former spouse, or relatives and must have contact information available. If you have difficulty, please contact your Staffing Specialist.

Once you have gathered the required information, you must ensure your computer is set up to read the encrypted pages of the form. The encryption is in place to further secure your personal information; on some computers, this may already be set.

### **To Begin:**

1. Open your Internet Browser (Internet Explorer, Mozilla, Firefox, etc.)
2. Go to the top of the page and click “**TOOLS**,” then “**INTERNET OPTIONS**,” and click the “**ADVANCED**” tab.
3. Scroll to the bottom of the “**ADVANCED**” tab and find the box named “**Use TLS1.0**”.
4. Check the box, click “**APPLY**” and then “**OK**.”
5. Close your browser and reopen it. You are now ready to enter the secure portal and begin/complete the forms.

To Access e-QIP:

1. Enter the following website address into your browser: <http://www.opm.gov/e-qip/> Select the “**ENTER APPLICANT e-QIP Site**” button. You will be directed to a “**Testing Your Web Browser for Compatibility**” message. If you correctly set your security settings as directed in steps 1-4, you will have all green checks.
2. Select the “**CONTINUE**” button and enter your Social Security Number. Your basic file was established by your Security Point-of-Contact and is set up according to the information provided to them by you on your application for employment.
3. Answer the default **GQs**. The questions are “What is your last name?”, “What city were you born in?”, and “What is the four digit year you were born in?” These must match the information given to your Staffing Specialist on your application. If you have difficulty logging in, contact your Security Point-of-Contact immediately to have the issue resolved.
4. Read the instructions on completing the form and any additional instructions sent to you by your Staffing Specialist. Complete the form.
  - a. When completing the form, either electronic or paper, begin with the most current residence, employer, or school and work your way backwards. All dates are formatted as month/year and specific days of the month are not necessary. For periods of unemployment, you will have to provide the name of someone who can verify this inactivity. If you were attending school, enter “unemployed” and provide the name of a person who can verify your school attendance.
  - b. You are required to complete all sections and will be prompted at the end of the electronic version to complete any incomplete or inaccurate sections. The computer program is capable of identifying minor mistakes such as incorrect zip codes or gaps in dates.
  - c. When you have completed all sections, you will be prompted to review any incomplete or inaccurate sections. Once all sections are complete, you will be able to print a copy for your records. In addition, you **MUST** print the “Release of Information” form, which consists of two (2) signature forms. These forms **MUST** be signed by you and received by your Security Point-of-Contact prior to your first day of work. The complete signature forms can be faxed to **(718) 630-1472**. If you do not have access to a fax machine, they can be dropped off in person when you come in for pre-employment fingerprinting.

When you are finished completing the form, or if you have difficulty with a particular section, notify your Security Point-of-Contact. He or she will be able to track the progress of your questionnaire and assist you if needed. When they have received your signature forms and reviewed your completed SF85/85P, they will forward your file to the Office of Personnel Management’s (OPM) Investigative Service in Boyers, PA. Most investigations are generally completed within 60 days but may take longer in some circumstances.