



Security Clearance, Suitability/Fitness, and Credentialing Reform

Goal Leaders

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Goal Statement

A Federal workforce entrusted to protect Government information and property and to promote a safe and secure work environment, sustained by an enhanced risk management approach. Supported by:

- Improved early detection enabled by an informed, aware, and responsible Federal workforce.
- Quality decisions enabled by improved investigative and adjudicative capabilities.
- Optimized government-wide capabilities through enterprise approaches.
- Strong partnership with Insider Threat Programs to strengthen the identification, deterrence, and mitigation of problems before they negatively impact the workforce or national security.



Urgency

Our world is changing at a pace that requires the security, suitability/fitness, and credentialing community to anticipate, detect, and counter both internal and external threats, such as those posed by trusted insiders who may seek to do harm to the Federal Government's policies, processes, and information systems.



Goal Leaders:

- John Ratcliffe, DNI
- Joseph Kernan, USD(I&S)
- Mike Rigas, Acting DDM, OMB and Acting Director, OPM

The Security, Suitability, and Credentialing Performance Accountability Council (PAC) Principal agencies include the Office of Management and Budget, the Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Office of Personnel Management, and Department of Defense. The PAC* is responsible for driving government-wide implementation of security, suitability, and credentialing reform.

* PAC members are the Office of Management and Budget, Office of the Director of National Intelligence, Office of Personnel Management, Department of Defense; the Departments of State, the Treasury, Justice, Energy, and Homeland Security; the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the General Services Administration, the National Archives and Records Administration, the National Security Council, and the Defense Counterintelligence Security Agency.





Goal Structure

Goal

A Federal workforce entrusted to protect Government information and property and to promote a safe and secure work environment, sustained by an enhanced risk management approach.

Sub-Goal

Major Strategies to Achieve Sub-Goal

1



Trusted Workforce

- Develop aligned and consistent policy for reporting potential security risks or observable behaviors of concern
- Train and educate the Federal workforce on their vital role in the early detection of potential issues or risks
- Build an SSC awareness campaign to reinforce the early identification of reportable behaviors
- Study other related mission areas for potential information-sharing opportunities to streamline processes

2



Modern Policies & Processes

- Establish an agile, data-driven, and transparent policy-making process that simplifies traditional overly complex policy development processes
- Review current end-to-end SSC processes and identify the most cost-effective and efficient methods to vet the Federal workforce
- Professionalize the SSC workforce through community training, certificate programs, and collaboration with universities

3



Secure and Modern Mission-Capable IT

- Modernize the lifecycle through the use of agency federated systems and shared services
- Identify enhanced security and interoperability standards and capabilities to better inform IT cost and planning decisions
- Provide agencies with a mechanism to adopt modern technology, automate manual processes, reduce duplicative investments, and decrease the cyber threat footprint

4



Continuous Performance Improvement

- Establish and implement outcome-based performance metrics and measures
- Develop a Research and Innovation program to inform policy, process, and technology with empirical data-driven decisions
- Establish a Continuous Performance Improvement model that will continuously evaluate the performance of the SSC policies and processes





Federal Personnel Vetting Core Doctrine Paves Way for Trusted Workforce 2.0. Effective government operations require that the Federal workforce be trusted to deliver on the mission, provide excellent service, and demonstrate effective stewardship of taxpayer funds. Given that establishing and maintaining trust is the core goal of the Government's personnel vetting program, the Executive Branch initiated Trusted Workforce 2.0 – a series of transformational reforms to overhaul its personnel vetting processes. As part of the ongoing Trusted Workforce 2.0 initiative, ODNI and OPM recently refined the Federal Personnel Vetting Core Doctrine, in preparation for publication. This foundational document establishes the benchmark for the Government's personnel vetting program, and guides development of government-wide and agency policy -- defining the personnel vetting mission, guiding principles, key supporting processes, and policy priorities.

DCSA to Begin Offering Trusted Workforce Services. The Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA) has developed a product to support the early adoption of Trusted Workforce reforms. The new service will provide Federal agencies access to continuous vetting of personnel using automated record checks, alert management, real-time threat analysis and reporting, and record retention. This DCSA offering will reduce enterprise risk by expanding the number of national security sensitive individuals covered by continuous high-value checks and serve as a critical step in an agency's personnel vetting reform journey.





Summary of Progress

Financial Hardships Resulting from COVID-19 Will Not Unduly Penalize Security Clearance Holders. The National Counterintelligence and Security Center issued a guidance statement to departments and agencies for the Federal workforce. The statement reflects awareness of the potential COVID-19 economic and financial hardships on security clearance holders and applicants, and it ensures that they will not be unduly penalized due to circumstances beyond their control. Departments and agencies are reminded to adhere to the whole-person concept when working with individuals during the Federal personnel vetting process.

Background Investigation Inventory and Timeliness Remain Stable During COVID-19. Background investigation inventory levels (201k with stable state ~200k) and timeliness (Secret 55 days with a goal of 40 days and Top Secret 79 days with a goal of 80 days) remained steady during Q3. While COVID-19 has presented challenges, DCSA adjusted processes for the new environment, to include conducting interviews by video and telephone, obtaining records remotely, and offering an alternative process to agencies if digital fingerprints cannot be collected. These process adjustments and measures are mitigating the impacts of COVID-19; however, a small portion of the investigations must be held until it is deemed safe to conduct in-person interviews and record reviews. As a result, timeliness and inventory have fluctuated in Q4, inventory has increased to 220K, Secret timeliness has decreased to an average of 54 days, and Top Secret timeliness has increased to an average of 90 days.

DCSA Reduces Background Investigation Prices. Agencies were notified in June 2020 that FY 2021 pricing for background investigations across all five investigative tiers will be reduced 4.6% below previously approved FY 2021 pricing, and 3% below current FY 2020 pricing.





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 1: Trusted Workforce

- **Challenge:** Information of concern often goes unreported in the Federal Government, which inhibits an agency's ability to address potential issues before escalation.
- **Theory of Change:** The SSC must work toward instilling a sense of shared responsibility by enabling a trusted workforce through consistent reporting requirements, employee and supervisor training, awareness campaigns for reportable behaviors, and identification of gaps in information sharing with sister missions.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Identify and provide recommendations to improve cross-mission information sharing.	Mar-2018	Complete	PAC PMO, ODNI, OPM	
Expand reporting requirements to the entire workforce.	Oct-2021	On Track	OPM	





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 2: Modern Policies & Processes

- **Challenge:** The SSC community faces an ever-changing global environment with an increasing mobile workforce, emerging global threats, and advancements in cutting-edge technology and innovations.
- **Theory of Change:** To successfully modernize our processes, the SSC community must develop agile capabilities that integrate the latest innovative technologies to facilitate continuous vetting of more of our trusted workforce and promote delivery of real-time information to the appropriate SSC professional responsible for making risk-based decisions.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Issue updated standards for denying, suspending, and revoking Federal credentials.	Jun-2018	Missed	OPM	Finalized draft is in legal review prior to publication.
Establish standards and requirements for Trusted Information Providers to provide shared data with Investigative Service Providers.	Dec-2019	Missed	ODNI, OPM	Completed two pilots and a tabletop exercise. The findings are being leveraged to inform policy development.
Issue Executive Branch-wide reciprocity policy for national security/sensitive positions.	Dec-2018	Complete	ODNI	





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 2: Modern Policies & Processes

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Refine standards and guidelines under the new Federal vetting approach.	Dec-2019	Complete	ODNI, OPM	None*
Develop quality standards for adjudicative determinations and expand quality tools to include adjudications.	May-2021	On Track	ODNI, OPM	Draft content developed. Interagency workshops continue to refine standards.
Provide the PAC a recommendation for the expansion of continuous vetting across the entire Federal workforce to regularly review their backgrounds to determine whether they continue to meet applicable requirements.	Sep-2019	Complete	OPM	

* There have been no additional requests this reporting period from agencies regarding the Federal Investigative Standards, Adjudicative Guidelines, continuous vetting, or other personnel security national policy.





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 2: Modern Policies & Processes

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Reduce the inventory of background investigations to a steady and sustainable state.	Mar-2021	Complete	DCSA, ODNI, OPM	The backlog of the background investigation inventory was eliminated in Q2. While the inventory has fluctuated due to COVID-19, it remains at a manageable target level.
Stand up DoD background investigation capability and complete phased transition of cases from NBIB to DoD.	Oct-2021	Complete	DoD	
Implement business transformation efforts to reengineer the process, enhance customer engagement, and support policy and process transformation and transition efforts.	Oct-2021	On Track	DCSA	DCSA will begin providing a Trusted Workforce service in FY21 Q1. The initial service will reduce risk by offering the ability to expand the number of individuals covered by continuous high-value checks, including providing alert management and real-time threat analysis and reporting, for the national security sensitive population.





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 3: Secure & Modern Mission-Capable IT

- **Challenge:** The end-to-end SSC process relies heavily on data sharing and information technology (IT) to operate efficiently, effectively, and securely.
- **Theory of Change:** The SSC mission must develop and deploy a modern, secure, and mission-capable, end-to-end digital environment that builds on a foundation of government-wide standards, promotes interoperability and information sharing, and collaboration across the SSC community.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Implement a shared unclassified record repository to store background investigation and adjudication history.	Jan-2020	Missed	DCSA	The implementation plan for the development and rollout of the National Background Investigation System (NBIS) capabilities is being re-baselined.
Implement a new electronic Application shared service capability and continue to make iterative improvements.	Oct-2019	Missed	DCSA	The implementation plan for the development and rollout of NBIS capabilities is being re-baselined. Early adopter testing continues in DoD.





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 3: Secure & Modern Mission-Capable IT

Milestone Summary

Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Implement a shared service to provide an unclassified information exchange for ready and efficient access to data, and continue to make iterative improvements.	Sep-2020	At Risk	DCSA	The implementation plan for the development and rollout of NBIS capabilities is being re-baselined. This milestone will be missed. Data services and additional capabilities are in development.
Implement a shared service capability that leverages automation to determine the sensitivity and risk level of a position, and continue to make iterative improvements.	Oct-2019	Complete	DCSA	
Implement a shared service capability that supports the development of background investigation reports, and continue to make iterative improvements.	Jul-2020	Missed (Previously At Risk)	DCSA	The implementation plan for the development and rollout of NBIS capabilities is being re-baselined.





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 3: Secure & Modern Mission-Capable IT

Milestone Summary

Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Implement a shared service capability that supports the adjudication of background investigations, and continue to make iterative improvements.	Jul-2020	Missed (Previously At Risk)	DCSA	The implementation plan for the development and rollout of NBIS capabilities is being re-baselined. Pilot agency adopter progress under evaluation.
Implement a shared service capability that supports security or suitability manager functions that take place after adjudication (e.g., reciprocity, visit requests), and continue to make iterative improvements.	Jul-2020	Missed (Previously At Risk)	DCSA	The implementation plan for the development and rollout of NBIS capabilities is being re-baselined. Early adopter testing continues.





Key Milestones

Sub-Goal 4: Continuous Performance Improvement

- **Challenge:** The SSC has faced challenges in monitoring performance and identifying and driving enterprise-level enhancements to policy, oversight, and operational processes.
- **Theory of Change:** To initiate the necessary culture shift across the enterprise, the SSC community must institutionalize and integrate a continuous performance improvement model that will establish outcome-based performance metrics and measures; inform policy, process, and technology with empirical-based decisions; and continuously evaluate its performance and identify efficient and effective ways to perform its mission.

Milestone Summary				
Key Milestones	Milestone Due Date	Milestone Status	Owner	Recent Actions
Improve public transparency of progress and performance.	Apr-2019	Complete	PAC PMO, ODNI, OPM	
Improve decision-making by increasing access to research findings across the Executive Branch.	May-2019	Complete	PAC PMO, ODNI, OPM	
Continue to mature the research & innovation program to support SSC priorities.	Oct-2019	Complete	PAC PMO, ODNI, OPM	





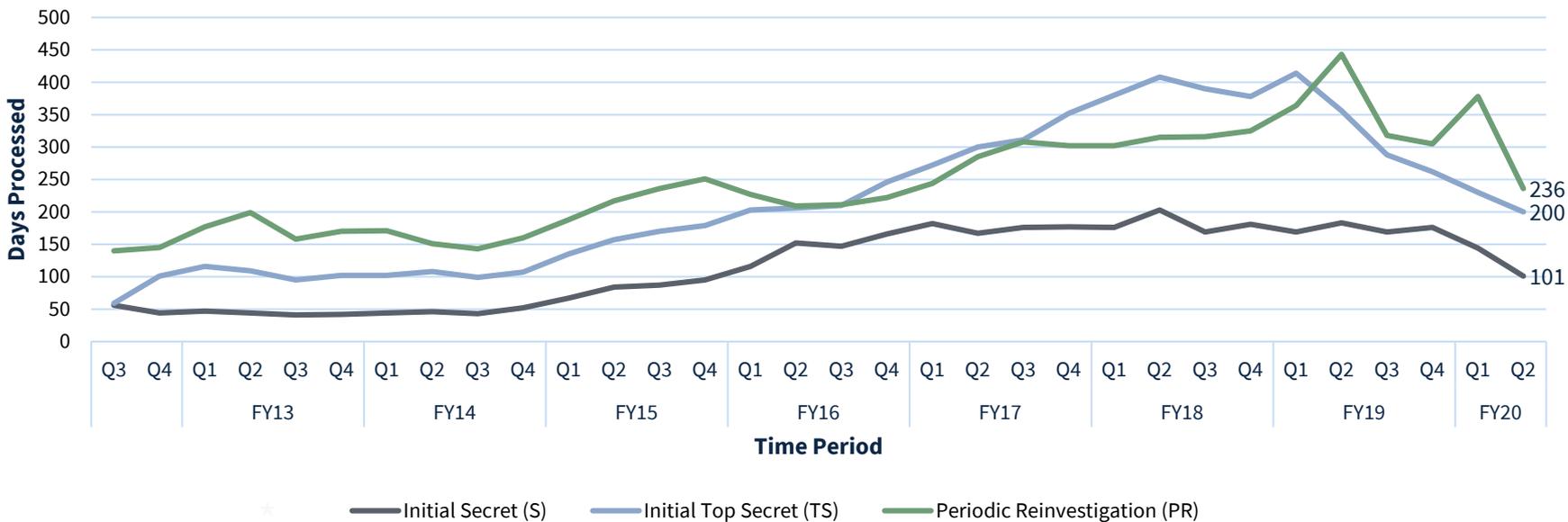
Focus Area	Key Indicator Title	Description
Timeliness	End-to-End Process Timeliness (2 slides)	Average number of days to complete end-to-end processing for the national security population
	Background Investigation Timeliness	Average number of days to complete Secret and Top Secret background investigations
	Number of Cases Meeting Timeliness Standards	Average percentage of end-to-end cases that are meeting timeliness standards
Volume	DCSA Investigations Inventory (2 slides)	Total inventory of pending DCSA investigations by progress to goal and by anticipated workload effort
	DCSA Investigations Case Flow	Total number of cases closed and scheduled per month, which drives changes to the Investigations Inventory
	DCSA Investigator Headcount	Total number of investigators performing investigations for DCSA per year by both Federal and contractor population
Risk	DoD National Security Population Eligibility and Access	Total number of Federal, military, and contractor personnel eligible for a national security position and personnel currently in access for the Defense Department
	DoD Continuous Evaluation Enrollment	Total number of DoD personnel enrolled in the Department's Continuous Evaluation (CE) Program
	Out-of-Scope National Security Population (2 slides)	Total number of Federal workforce eligible for a national security position with out-of-scope (outdated) investigations by security clearance level





Key Indicator: End-to-End Process Timeliness

Average Timeliness for Processing the Fastest 90% of Security Clearance Cases



End-to-end cases from the time of agency initiation of information collection from an applicant to the date adjudication is reported in a repository. Q3 metrics collection delayed as a result of COVID-19. Data will be reported once available or upon next quarterly report.





Key Indicator: End-to-End Process Timeliness

Government-wide end-to-end processing timeliness continues to improve.

Government-Wide Security Clearance Performance (PAC Methodology)

Fastest 90%

		Fastest 90% →												End-to-End (Initiate + Inv. + Adj.)			
		Initiate				Investigate				Adjudicate				Average Days			
		Average Days				Average Days				Average Days				Average Days			
		Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
		19	19	20	20	19	19	20	20	19	19	20	20	19	19	20	20
Initial Secret Cases	Volume	Goal: 14 Days				40 Days				20 Days				74 Days			
	486,697	16	10	11	9	117	121	94	72	36	45	39	20	169	176	144	101
Initial Top Secret Cases	Volume	Goal: 14 Days				80 Days				20 Days				114 Days			
	159,073	20	20	17	14	225	195	166	139	43	47	47	47	288	262	230	200
Periodic Reinvestigations	Volume	Goal: 15 Days				150 Days				30 Days				195 Days			
	299,795	16	17	18	12	219	198	205	134	84	90	154	91	318	305	378	236
Total	945,565	Red Text: Goal Not Met								Blue Text: Goal Met							

As of 07/16/20

Q3 metrics collection delayed as a result of COVID-19. Data will be reported once available or upon next quarterly report.

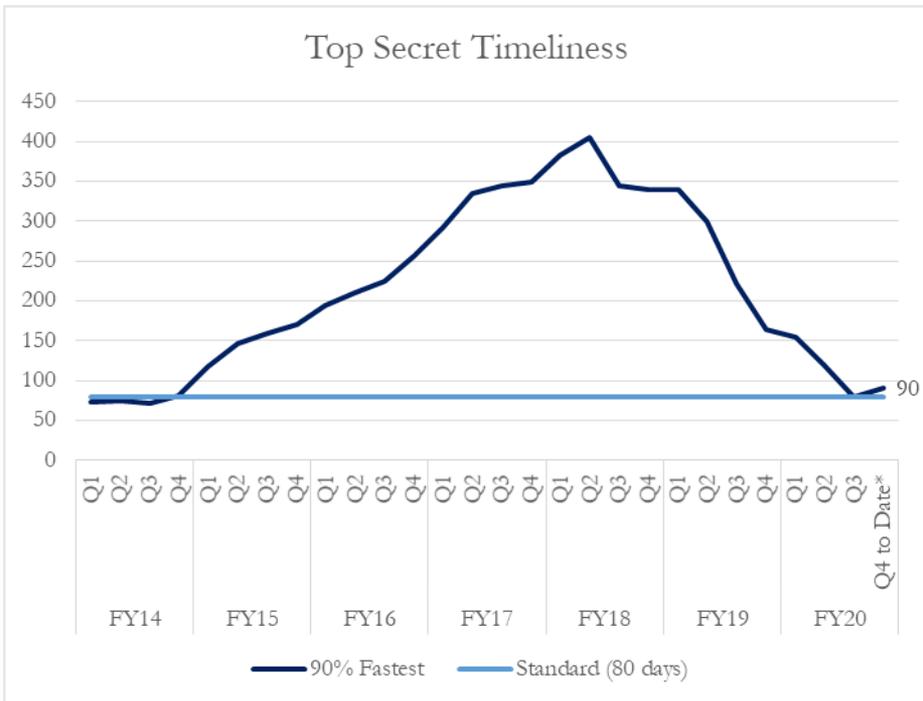




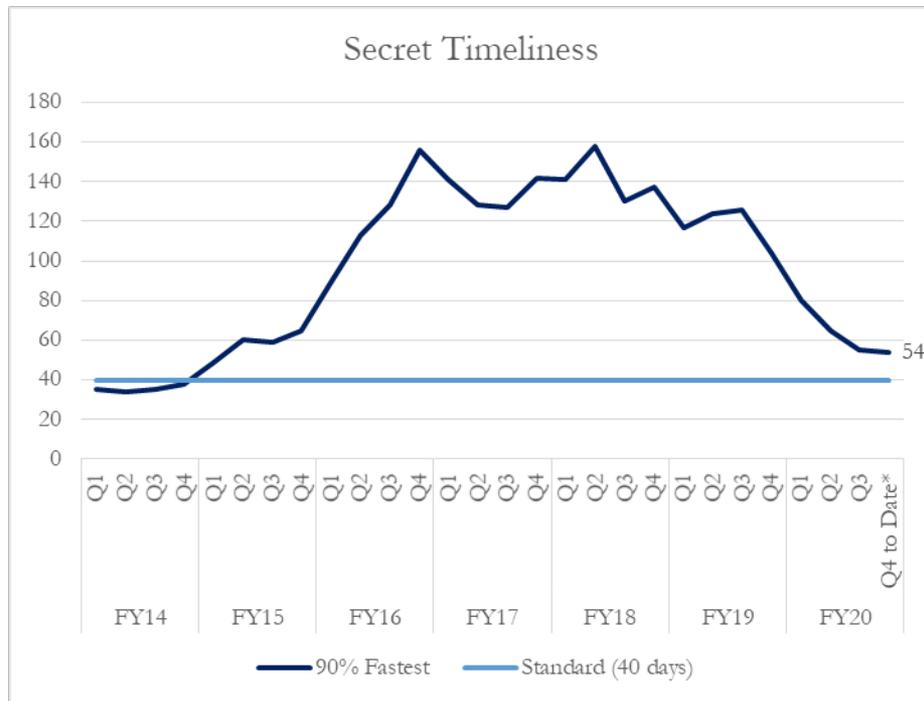
Key Indicator: Timeliness Metrics

**Overall, timeliness of background investigations is close to goals.
Top Secret met standard during Q3, however, it increased in Q4, largely due to COVID challenges.
Secret-level investigations slightly improved in Q4.**

Top Secret Timeliness



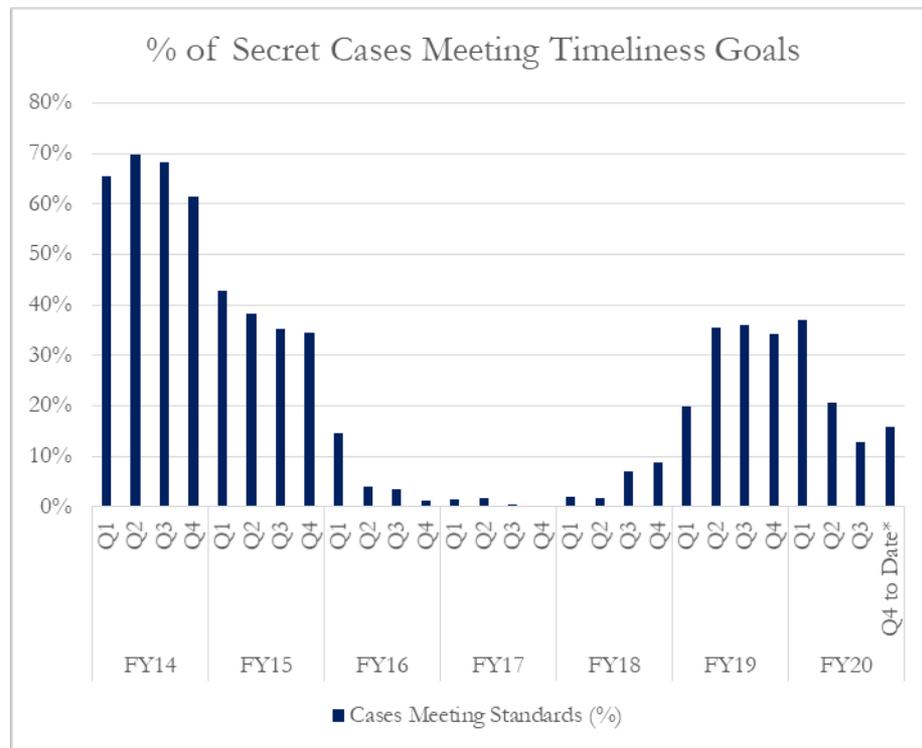
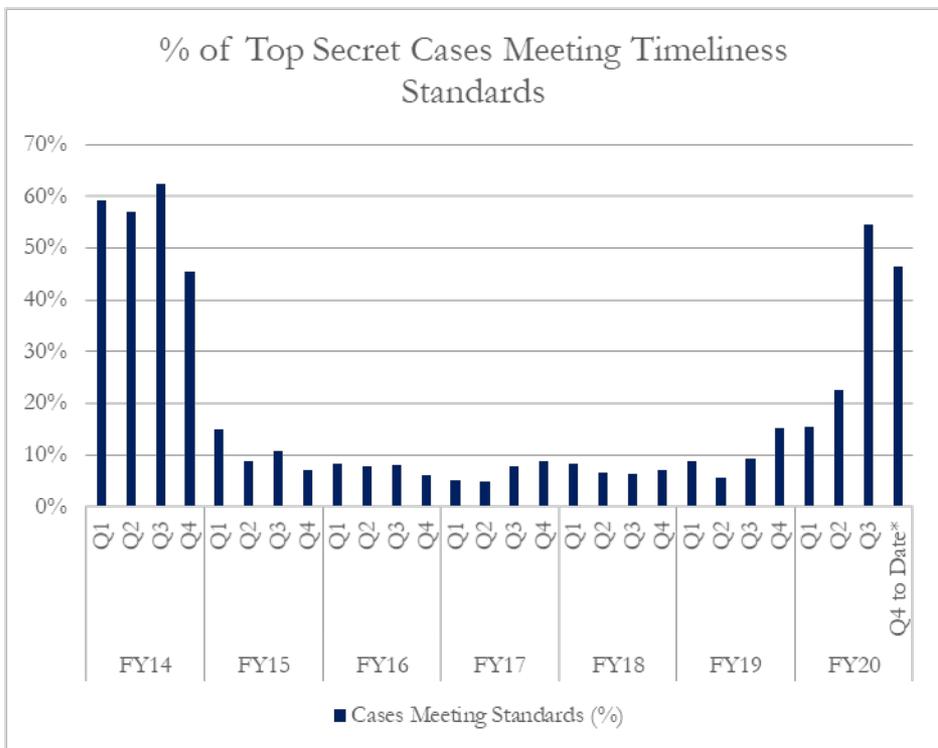
Secret Timeliness





Key Indicator: Number of Cases Meeting Timeliness Standards

The number of Top Secret cases meeting timeliness goals slightly decreased in Q4, largely due to COVID challenges. The number of Secret cases meeting timeliness goals increased in Q4.





Key Indicator: DCSA Investigations Inventory

DCSA achieved the target inventory level of 200K in mid-April 2020 and maintained this level through most of Q3. Investigations held due to COVID is causing inventory to increase in Q4.

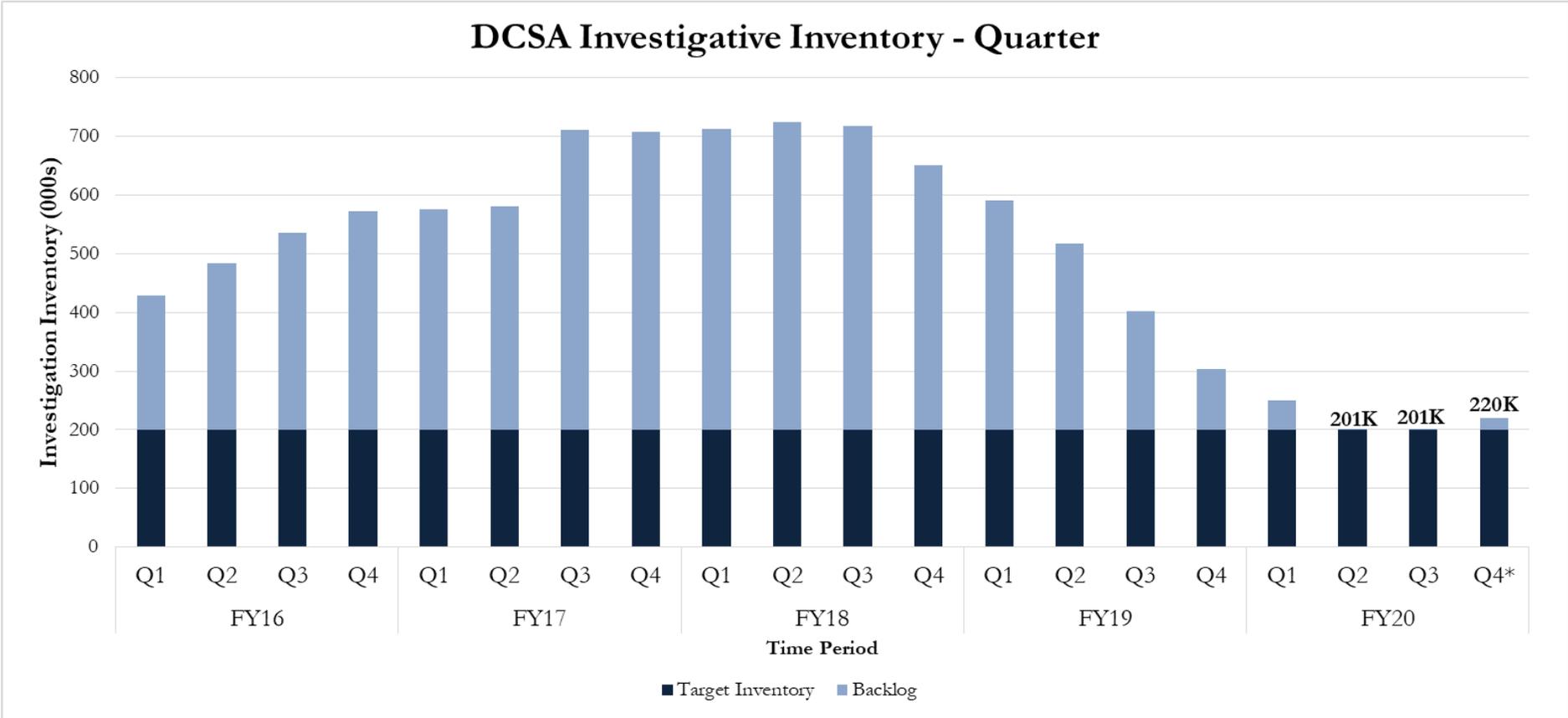
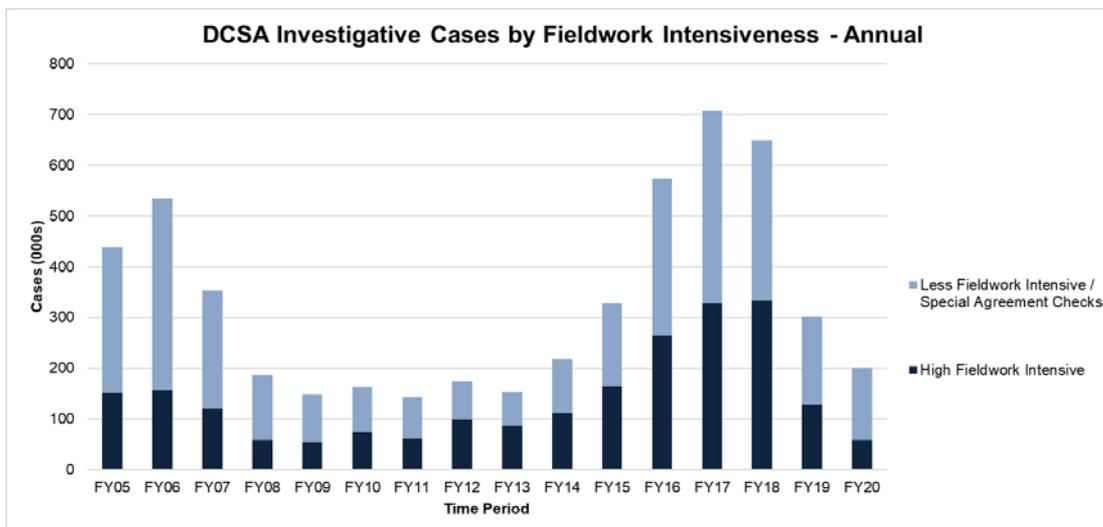


Chart reflects only DCSA data and is current as of September 14.

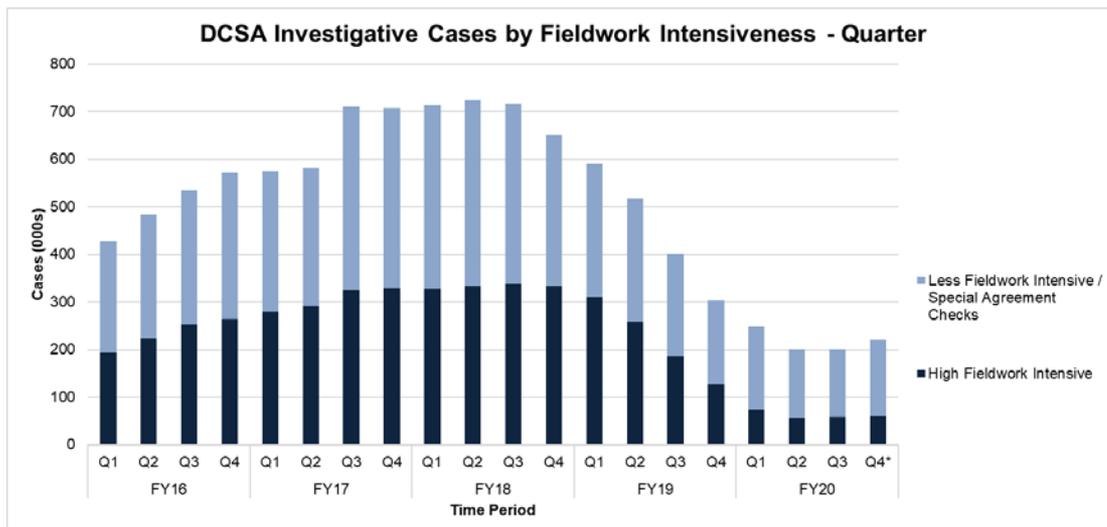


Key Indicator: DCSA Investigations Inventory



High Fieldwork Intensive – Cases that typically require investigators to do more extensive work in the field (i.e., case issues that require manual follow-up). These are used for higher risk positions.

Less Fieldwork Intensive/Special Agreement Checks – Cases that typically require little to no work in the field (i.e. automated fingerprint checks or clean cases). These are used for lower risk positions.



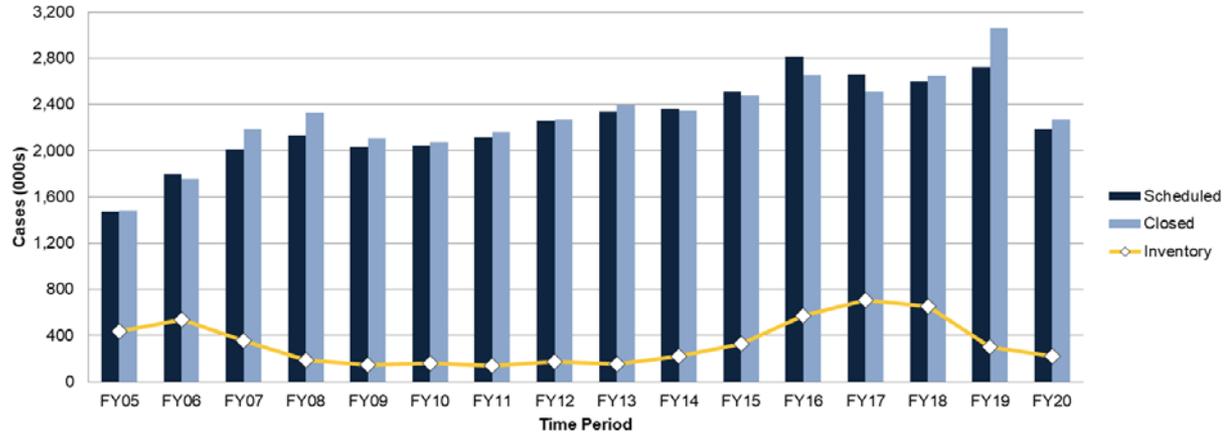
Charts reflect only DCSA data and are current as of September 14.



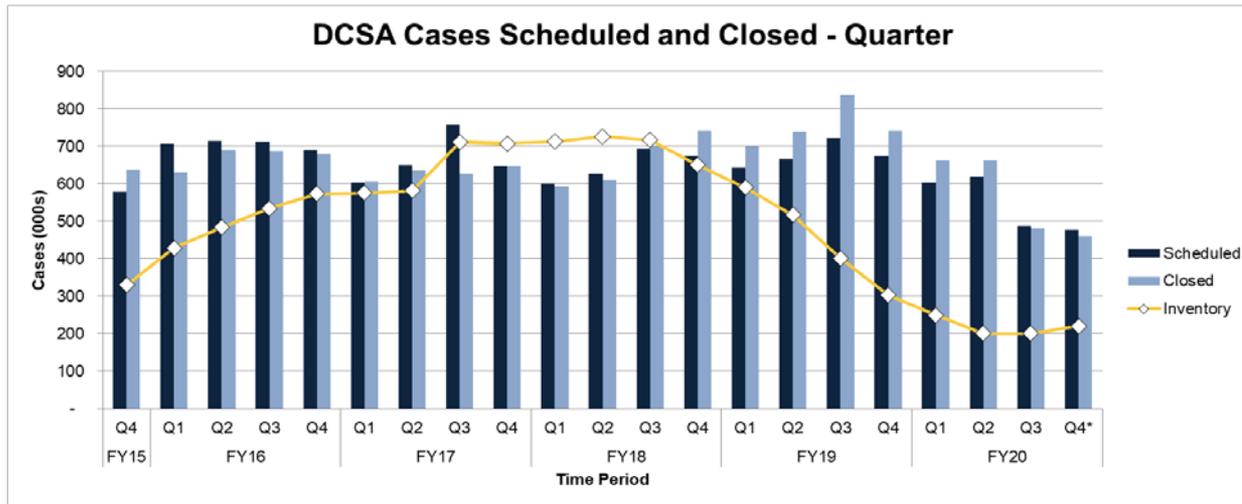


Key Indicator: DCSA Investigations Case Flow

DCSA Cases Scheduled and Closed - Annual



DCSA Cases Scheduled and Closed - Quarter



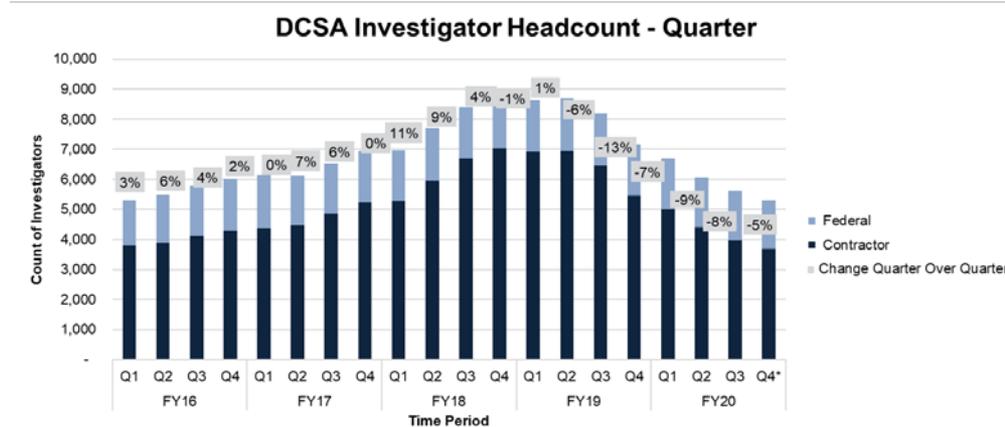
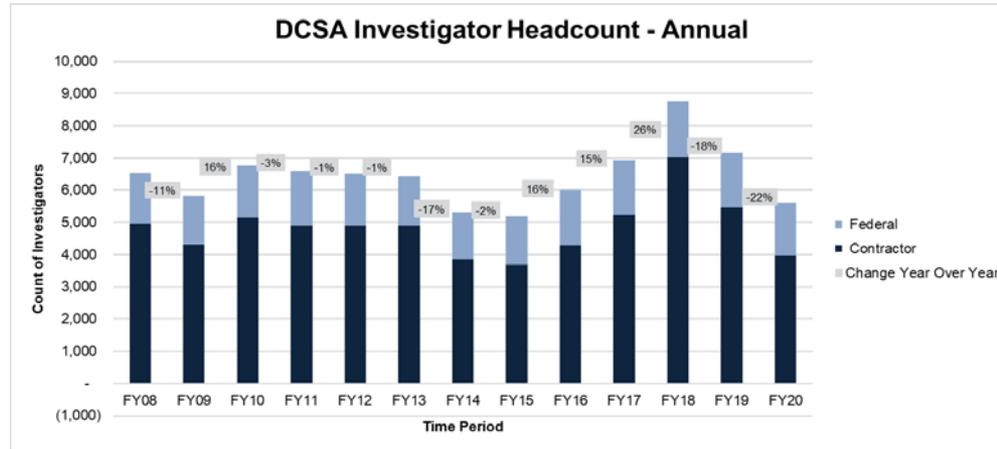
Charts reflect only DCSA data and are current as of Q3.





Key Indicator: DCSA Investigator Headcount

Having eliminated the case inventory backlog, DCSA investigator headcount has adjusted to maximize efficiency and optimize cost.

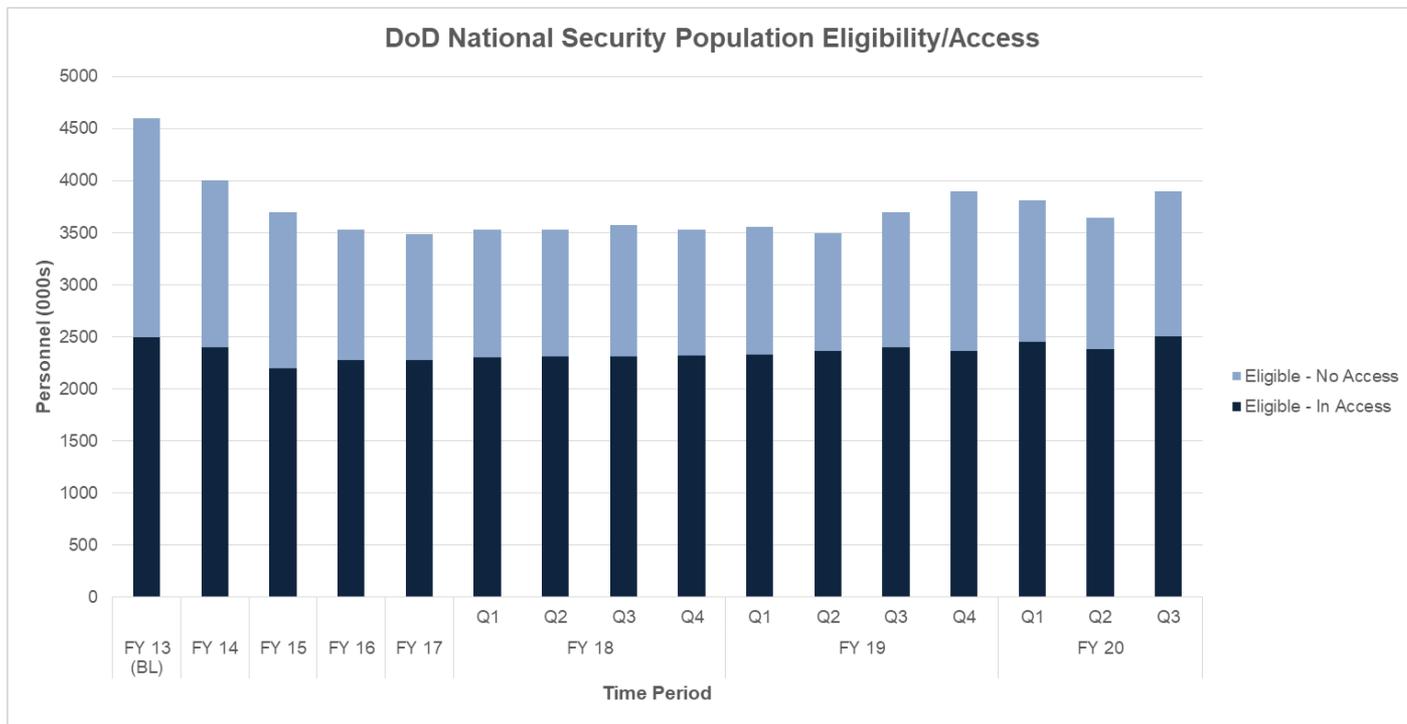


Charts reflect only DCSA data and are current as of Q3.





Key Indicator: DoD National Security Population Eligibility & Access

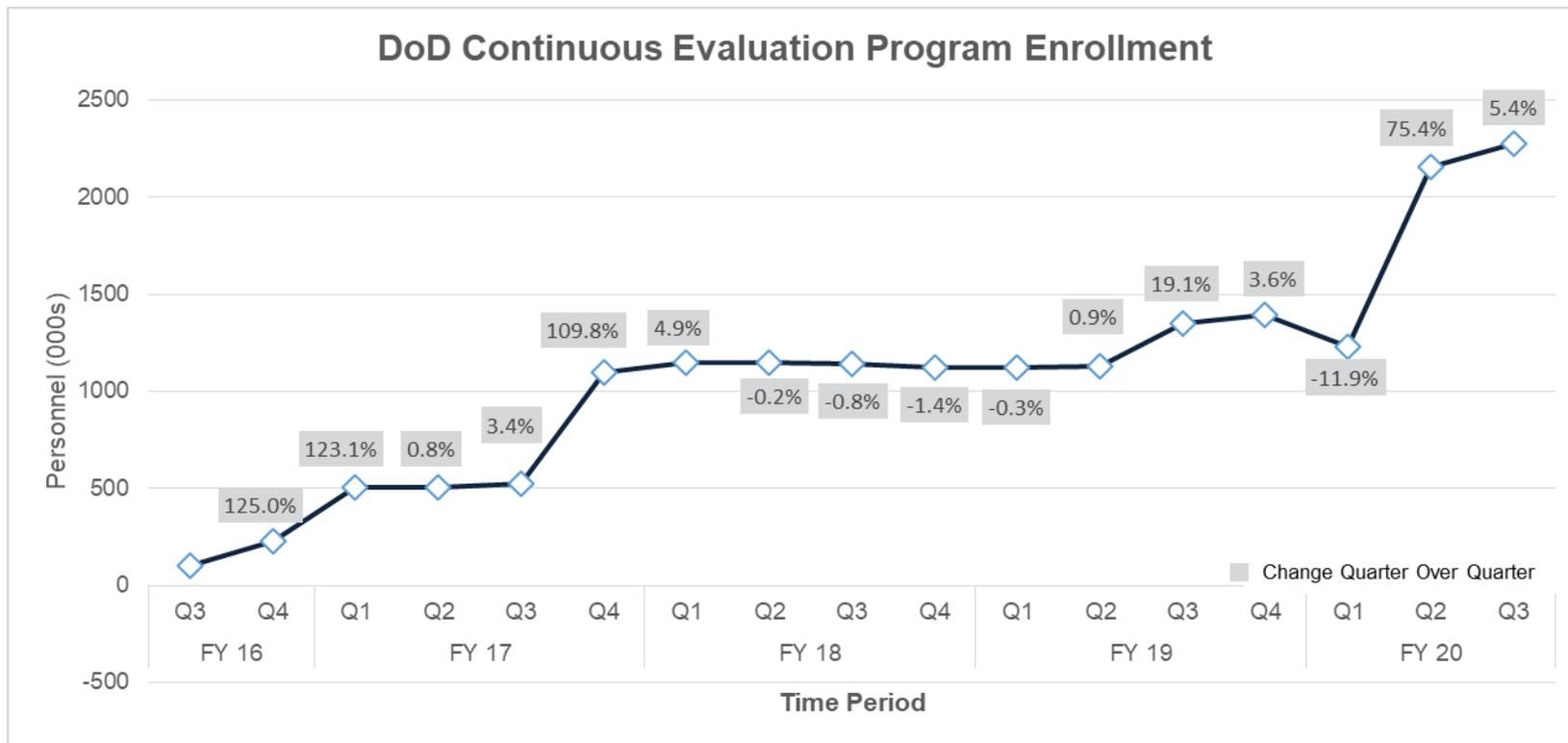


Changes in DoD Clearance (in thousands)												
	FY13 (Baseline)	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18	FY19	FY20Q1	FY20Q2	FY20Q3	Number Decreased (from baseline)	FY13- FY20Q3 % Decrease
Eligible - In Access	2500	2400	2200	2280	2280	2318	2362	2456	2380	2504	-4	0%
Eligible - No Access	2100	1600	1500	1250	1210	1211	1539	1357	1262	1395	705	34%
Total	4600	4000	3700	3530	3490	3529	3901	3813	3642	3899	701	15%





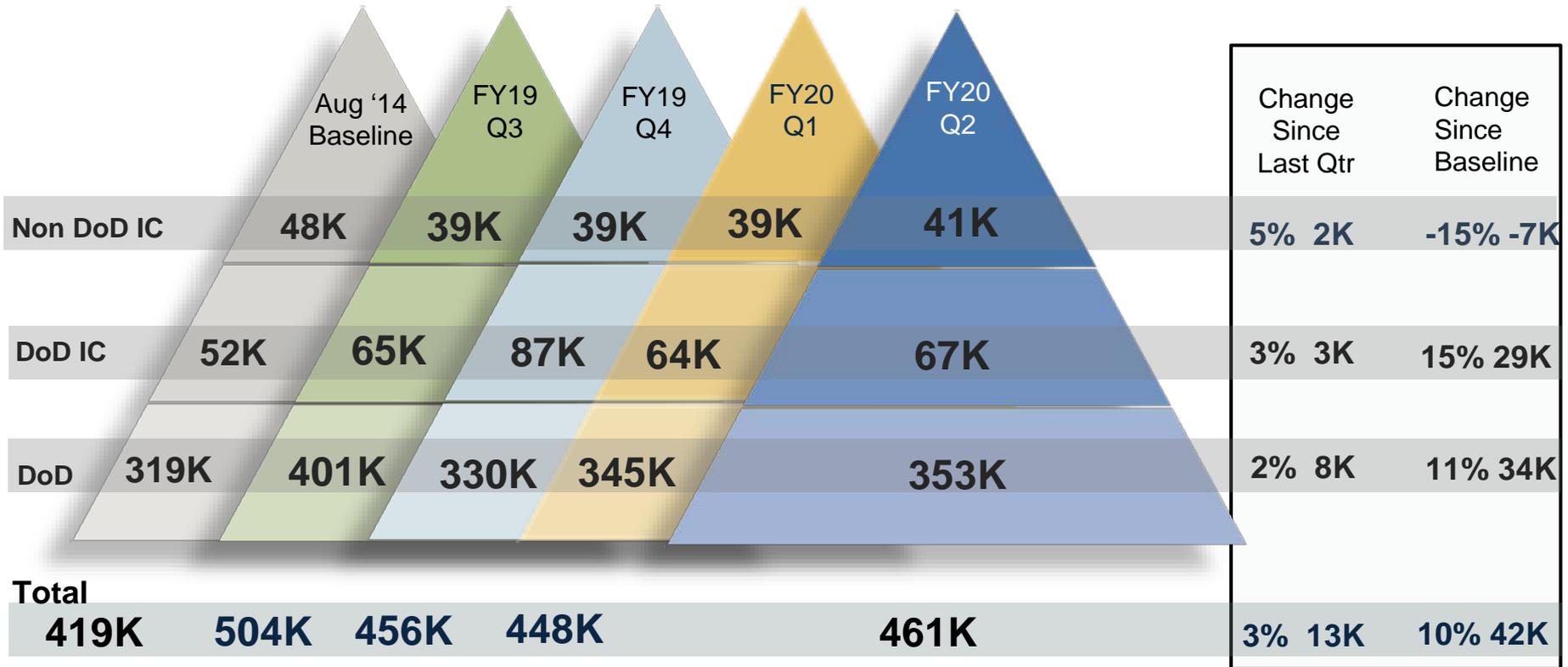
Key Indicator: DoD Continuous Evaluation Enrollment





Key Indicator: Out-of-Scope National Security Population

TS and TS/SCI "Out of Scope" Populations



Overall change since baseline: 10% 42K

As of 07/15/2020

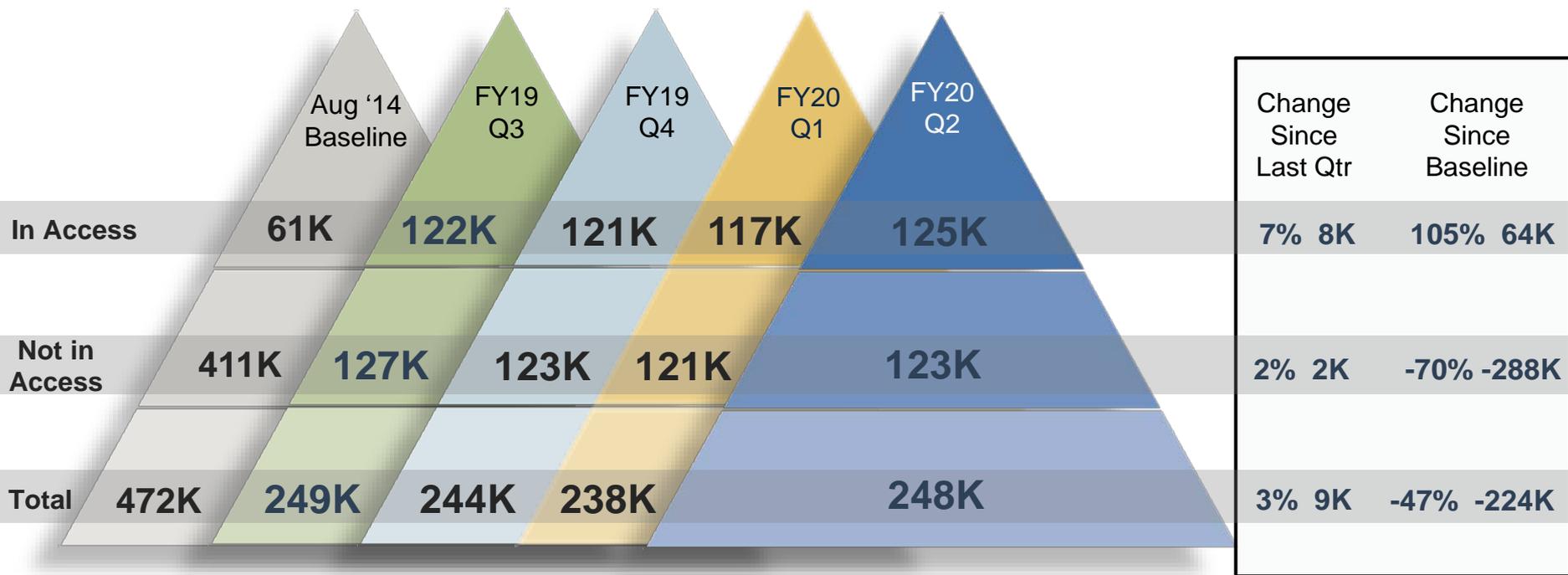
Q3 metrics collection delayed as a result of COVID-19. Data will be reported once available or upon next quarterly report.





Key Indicator: Out-of-Scope National Security Population

DoD Secret "Out of Scope" Populations



Overall change since baseline: -47% -224K

As of 07/15/2020

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PAC Member Agencies

- Office of Management and Budget
- Office of Personnel Management
- Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency
- Department of Homeland Security
- Department of State
- Federal Bureau of Investigation
- National Archives and Records Administration
- Office of the Director of National Intelligence
- Department of Defense
- Department of Energy
- Department of Justice
- Department of the Treasury
- General Services Administration
- National Security Council

PAC Ex Officio and Other Contributing Agencies

- Agency for International Development
- Department of Agriculture
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Department of Labor
- Drug Enforcement Administration
- National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
- National Security Agency
- Social Security Administration
- Central Intelligence Agency
- Department of Commerce
- Department of Housing & Urban Development
- Department of Transportation
- Environmental Protection Agency
- National Reconnaissance Office
- Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- Defense Intelligence Agency
- Department of Education
- Department of Interior
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- National Aeronautics & Space Administration
- National Science Foundation
- Small Business Administration





CE – Continuous Evaluation

DCSA – Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency

DDM – Deputy Director of Management

DNI – Director of National Intelligence

DoD – Department of Defense

EA – Executive Agent

EIB – Enterprise Investment Board

IRTPA – Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004

IT – Information Technology

ODNI – Office of the Director of National Intelligence

OMB – Office of Management and Budget

OPM – Office of Personnel Management

PAC – Performance Accountability Council

PMO – Program Management Office

SSC – Security, Suitability/Fitness, and Credentialing

SecEA – Security Executive Agent

Suit & CredEA – Suitability & Credentialing Executive Agent

USD(I&S) – Under Secretary of Defense for Intelligence and Security

