FY21 Adjudications Year in Review Annual Report

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DCSA DOD CAF

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Mission

Deliver informed and timely adjudicative decisions to support a trusted workforce and enable operational readiness and risk management..

Vision

Leverage innovation to make timely, multifaceted adjudicative decisions in partnership with our customers.

Message from the Assistant Director



ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, MS. MARIANNA MARTINEAU

am pleased to present our second Year in Review — Annual Report. Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 was an exceptionally big year for us! First, we are transforming and transitioning to a future new name to align and position our Adjudications as an Adjudicative Service further supporting our customers needs. We are focused on our customers – the people for whom we adjudicate, the organizations for which they work, the missions and operations they conduct, and the importance of our work related to each and every one of these areas. We impact careers, capabilities, and support the Department of Defense and the National Industrial Security Program by delivering the cleared workforce necessary to conduct the important missions of defending our country and projecting power across the globe. Every case we adjudicate and make an eligibility determination, and everything we do support these missions

and we are committed to delivering timely, informed, quality and consistent decisions with a sense of urgency that reflects our commitment to you and your operational readiness and missions!

Adjudications is faced with many challenges and with each challenge we take it on with gusto and conquer it. I couldn't be prouder of the DCSA DOD CAF workforce and my leadership teams' accomplishments this past year. Just a few notable accomplishments to entice your continued reading. In FY21, Adjudications outpaced the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act (IRTPA) standards of 20 days (Initials). Our average timeliness this year for initial background investigation

decisions was 11 days. Our inventory is healthy, the quality and consistency of adjudicative actions and output are outstanding. Our goal and commitment to you is to remain focused on continuous improvement through FY22 and beyond.

A program that I am committed to and is near and dear to our hearts is the Destigmatizing of Mental Healthcare for Cleared Individuals. DCSA DOD CAF began working this effort in 2016 with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's (ODNI's) Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Office to develop a training module for mental wellness. DCSA DOD CAF continues to pursue this effort to change the way we (the cleared workforce) looks at seeking mental health care. We want the cleared workforce to understand that wellness includes being mentally well and that it is seen favorably (from an

adjudicative perspective) to seek mental healthcare. Adjudications wants to assure the cleared workforce that seeking care is positive. It's important at all levels of supervision that we support our employees in seeking wellness. We have to debunk any and all stigmatization that seeking mental healthcare will result in a cleared individual losing their clearance by asking for help. This is simply NOT true. We have a full article on "Mental healthcare' in the annual report. Please reach out to us for more information on this important program.

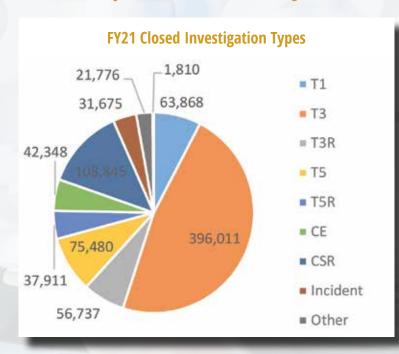
Lastly, DCSA DOD CAF made SIGNIFICANT improvement to our Reciprocity Program. Our reciprocity case timeliness improved from an average of 65 days to between one to three days on average to less than one day end-to-end as of July 2021, improving our reciprocity processing timeliness by 98.5% in this area and improving operational readiness for our customers. The full Reciprocity article provides more information and is further in the annual report.

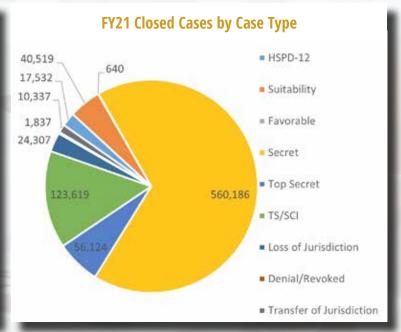
Our future is focused on achieving outcomes, serving and communicating to our customers, enabling our professional workforce through knowledge, education, training and development, and balancing our commitments through a sense of urgency, knowledge and belief that what we do is important to our customers and partners across the federal enterprise.

Please take a moment to read our Year In Review Annual Report. It's packed full with our accomplishments and our strategic goals for FY22. It's going to be a busy but prosperous year for all of us!



OCSA DOD CAF workforce completed over 836,000 personnel security, suitability, and credentialing actions ??







FY21 By The Numbers

By Adjudications Metrics Team: Divya McEachern, Cynthia Arndt, James Otis, Jackie Fabrechang, and John Beury

In FY21, DCSA DOD CAF workforce completed over 836,000 personnel security, suitability, and credentialing actions. We are the largest adjudication facility across government and the only one supporting all three branches of the federal government with the main elements being the Military Departments, National Industrial Security Program (NISP), and the DOD Fourth Estate.



Overall, we executed 99% of all DOD National Security Eligibility determinations, 92% of federal government-wide National Security Eligibility determinations, and 10% of federal government-wide civilian Suitability and Credentialing decisions.

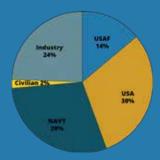
In FY21, DCSA DOD CAF out performed Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) compliance standards for Tier 3 and Tier 5 determinations. While the adjudicative team supported your operations through decisions, our internal Quality Assurance team ensured the decisions were correct. Specifically, the Adjudications Quality Assurance Branch reviewed one percent (a statistically relevant sample) of all national security cases closed by DCSA adjudicators throughout the year. Delivering a 99.9 percent appropriate determination rate on all adjudications.

Requests Received

63,868 42,348 CE 396,011 56,737 **T3** T3R 108,845 31,675 Incident 75,480 37,911 21,776 T5 T5R

~16,380 preliminary letters of intent to deny/revoke ~1,744 final letters of denial revocation

Customers Served



USAF	108,679	14%
USA	230,588	30%
NAVY	220,883	29%
4th Estate	17,240	2%
Industry	180,928	24%

Services Delivered FY21 Timeliness

Initials – 11 Days, (T3-11 Days, T5-11 Days) Reinvestigations – 31 days (T3R-32 Days, T5R-29 Days)

836,461K

FY21 Total Cases Adjudicated



FY21 Destigmatizing Mental Health Care for Cleared Individuals



eginning in 2016, the Department of **Defense Consolidated Adjudications** Facility staff psychologists began working with the Office of the Director of National Intelligence's (ODNI's) Equal **Employment Opportunity and Diversity Office** to develop a training module on mental wellness to assure the workforce that seeking mental healthcare is seen favorably, not adversely, during security vetting in both the intelligence community and the Department of Defense. Since then, DCSA Adjudications continues to be at the forefront of the effort to educate the cleared workforce regarding the benefits of seeking mental health care when needed. The importance of this message has been underscored by the troubling increase in military suicides seen over the past year, likely exacerbated by the stresses of the pandemic. It is therefore crucial to rapidly and soundly debunk the myth that seeking mental health care is a "career killer" for service members and other cleared individuals.

Since 2019, DCSA adjudicators and psychologists have presented over a dozen times, both virtually and in-person, to groups such as the Army G2 community security managers and the Naval Information Warfare

Center, with the overarching message that mental health concerns are similar to physical health concerns in that individuals should seek care, without fear that they will jeopardize their clearance eligibility, when they feel they need professional assistance. As illustrated by the diagram, only a fraction of one percent of adjudicative actions over the past eight years have been denied or revoked their security clearance for issues related to a psychological condition standing alone.

In fact, one of the most common ways that psychological conditions of concern are mitigated by adjudicators is through the cleared individual seeking appropriate treatment and following the clinical recommendations they are given. At present, DCSA psychologists are working with Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE) to develop a webinar on mental health and security clearance to broaden the opportunities for the workforce to hear this important message. Brief mental health information sheets, citing the aforementioned denial and revocation statistics among other useful information about mental health and security clearances can also be found on the DCSA website (https://www.dcsa.mil/

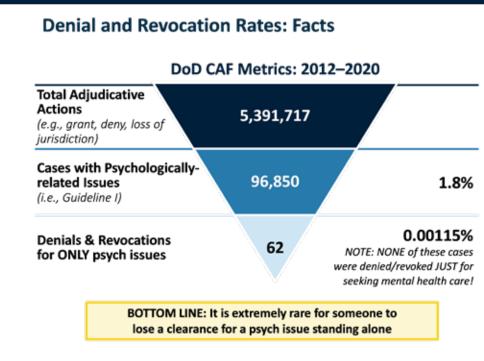


"It is extremely rare for someone to lose a clearance for a psych issue standing alone"

Portals/91/Documents/pv/ DODCAF/resources/DCSA-FactSheet Mental-Health.pdf)

Other destigmatization efforts instituted over the past year included our continuing effort to train mental health professionals to conduct psychological evaluations for security purposes. A major focus of this training is to underscore the need for these professionals to consider that when a cleared individual seeks appropriate treatment for substance use or psychological concerns, it is a key indicator of good judgment and reliable behavior. Last, in late FY 21, DCSA DOD CAF

created an adjudicative team dedicated to adjudicating cases with significant psychological conditions and other behaviorallyrelevant security concerns. The adjudicators in the Behavioral Science Branch work closely with psychologists to assess relevant behaviors of concern and potential mitigating issues to gain the information they need to arrive at an accurate, wholeperson conceptualization of cleared individuals who may have prominent psychological concerns.



DCSA DOD CAF Reciprocity Program: Reciprocity, Then, Now and Turning the Corner to One Day End to End

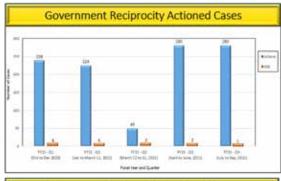
By Pamela Robinson, Adjudications Division Chief

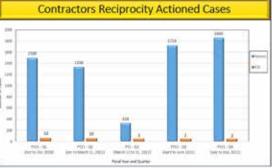
What is reciprocity and what does it mean for our customers? The Security Executive Agent Directive (SEAD) 7 is defined as the Reciprocity of Background Investigations and National Security Adjudications. It is the acknowledgement and acceptance of an existing background investigation conducted by an authorized investigative agency; the acceptance of a national security eligibility adjudication determined by an authorized adjudicative agency; and the acceptance of an active national security eligibility determination granted by an executive branch agency. SEAD 7 establishes requirements for reciprocal acceptance of background investigations and national security adjudications for initial or continued eligibility for access to classified information or eligibility to hold a sensitive position.

SEAD 7 directs, reciprocity determinations for national security background investigations and adjudications to be made within five business days of receipt by the agency's personnel security program. Processing for employment, suitability, or fitness requirements is considered outside the scope of national security reciprocity determinations and will not be counted or reported as part of the security processing to make a national security reciprocity determination.

Government operational readiness is jeopardized when employee reciprocal clearances are delayed. In addition, approximately 80%-90% of reciprocity requests are from cleared industry who may experience financial impacts if not able to start employees in a timely manner.

Prior to January 2020, reciprocity determination timeliness at DCSA averaged 65 days end-to-end, well above the Director





of National Intelligence SEAD 7 requirement of five days. A joint Lean Six Sigma study conducted by the Vetting Risk Operations (VRO) and Adjudications mission areas from January 14, 2020 to May 30, 2020, examined the reciprocity process from end to end. The study identified opportunities for improvement to eliminate bottlenecks and ultimately reduce timelines to achieve SEAD 7 compliance.

In June 2021DCSA DOD CAF fully implemented the Lean Six Sigma process improvement opportunities, and is now consistently meeting SEAD 7 timeliness for end-to-end reciprocity request processing. Furthermore, in FY21, DCSA DOD CAF processed and concluded reciprocity actions in an average of one to three days end-to-end. In July 2021, our adjudicators began processing reciprocity actions in 1 day end-to-end. This is a HUGE success for our customers.

DCSA has made great strides in this endeavor to promote the efficiency of the DOD personnel security program. The foundation of this effort was appropriate and necessary to ensure DCSA is in the forefront of clearance and access reciprocity with regard to all DOD civilian, military, and contractor personnel. The overall actions of VRO and Adjudications significantly improved the operational and mission readiness for our Government and Industry partners.

Notable Accomplishments

By Marty Shifflett, Adjudications Team Chief

We had a great year! The Adjudications' workforce continues to go above and beyond to meet our customer's operational and mission needs. Our workforce is well trained, largely earned and maintained required Adjudication Professional Certifications and Due Process Credentials. We are devoted to the importance of our decisions and meeting your needs.

Adjudications outpaced the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (IRTPA) timeliness goals throughout FY21. Adjudications FY21 average timeliness goal was 11 days. To close the year, in the fourth quarter timeliness was as follows - a great end to an outstanding year:

10 days Tier 3

14 days

14 days

24 days

1-3 davs Reciprocity

Bottom line - we met or exceeded all Congressional, OMB, and DNI timeliness requirement

We focused on quality and consistency, and the future of executing personnel security, suitability and credentialing adjudications in concert with our customers. The majority of our pending inventory is incident reports and continuous evaluation alerts – signaling our transition to the Trusted Workforce model. This is a huge success!

In addition, Adjudications continued evolving and improving our processes, policies, procedures, tools and training. Notably, we continued to advance our Knowledge Management platform to ensure the most current information is available to support adjudicative decision making.

Adjudications, in collaboration with our partners at the Program Executive Office and the U.S. Army Analytics Group continued to enhance and improve the Adjudicative Assistance Tool (AAT) which is a standalone quality and training solution, capable of using machine learning to compare adjudicative decisions against pre-defined algorithms to determine points of variance. The first AAT function to become operational is the Quality Assurance Dashboard, which will allow for quality reviews to be focused on those cases in which decision variance is most likely to occur. Our future capabilities will include the ability to measure training effectiveness and provide insight into future training needs leveraging this technology in FY22 and beyond.

Implementing Conditional Eligibility Determinations for the 5200 Subject Population

By Benjamin J. Schultz, Adjudications Policy Analyst

DCSA DOD CAF implemented a new Conditional Eligibility Determinations adjudicative process that results in increased internal and external mission resiliency. This is accomplished by more efficient use of operational resources to divert qualifying military and civilian cases from due process to a process leveraging multiple DCSA directorates and capabilities. This implementation was based on the expansion of a successful pilot with the Department of the Navy's military members and civilian personnel that confirmed the viability and proposed benefits of this process. Conditional Eligibility Determinations use Continuous Evaluation/Continuous Vetting (CE/CV) program technologies executed by DCSA's Vetting Risk Operations (VRO) Directorate to reduce the initiation of certain due process proceedings in favor of continued security monitoring via Automated Records Checks (ARCs).

Security Executive Agent Directive (SEAD) 4, "National Security Adjudicative Guidelines," and DOD Manual 5200.02, "Procedures for the DOD Personnel Security Program (PSP)," authorize adjudicative personnel to render Conditional Eligibility Determinations. Per SEAD 4, "If after evaluating information of security concern, the adjudicator decides the information is serious enough to warrant a recommendation of denial or revocation of the national security eligibility, but the specific risk to national security can be managed with appropriate mitigation measures, an adjudicator may recommend approval to grant initial or

continued eligibility for access to classified information or hold a sensitive position with an exception as defined in Appendix C." DODM 5200.02 requires the recording of all applicable adjudication rationales, including exceptions, in the relevant case management adjudication system.

A subject may be granted a Conditional Eligibility when continued security monitoring can be used to detect subsequent derogatory behavior based on the following SEAD 4 Adjudicative Guidelines: Sexual Behavior, Financial Considerations, Alcohol Consumption, Drug Involvement and Substance Misuse, and Criminal Conduct. For qualifying cases, the subject of investigation agrees to conditions described in correspondence from DCSA DOD CAF sent to them and their command and/ or security manager, as well as continued security monitoring by VRO via the CE/CV program. The correspondence also includes the requirement to not engage in additional derogatory behavior.

Conditional Eligibility Determinations issued by DCSA DOD CAF may be non-reporting in nature, but adjudicators will evaluate information received to determine if it mitigates the disqualifying guideline issue information and warrants a final favorable eligibility determination. If this mitigating information is received after a Conditional Eligibility Determination is issued, a "Release from Conditions" correspondence will be sent from DCSA DOD CAF to the subject via their command and/or security manager. Upon

Rendering Conditional Eligibility Determinations will not impact the normal execution of due process, but will divert cases with "borderline" unmitigated guideline issue disqualifying information

receipt, DCSA DOD CAF will then render a final favorable eligibility determination, thereby removing the previous "Condition" Exception. Subjects are still expected to not engage in additional derogatory behavior.

Rendering Conditional Eligibility Determinations will not impact the normal execution of due process, but will divert cases with "borderline" unmitigated guideline issue disqualifying information. Conditional Eligibility Determinations are rendered by the DCSA DOD CAF adjudicator entering a "Condition" in the "Exception" field in the Defense Information System for Security (DISS) Determination entry field. This Exception is one of four identified in SEAD 4 and DODM 5200.02—they include Waiver, Condition, Deviation, and Out of Scope (investigation or investigative items).

For one year after the date of a Conditional Eligibility Determination, VRO monitors that subject through the CE/CV program and ARCs. If subsequent derogatory behavior as cited in the correspondence from DCSA DOD CAF is developed, VRO provides that information to DCSA DOD CAF for expedited issue resolution and adjudication as appropriate. These actions could include, but are not limited to, a Supplemental Information Request or Statement of Reasons issued by DCSA DOD CAF or a Reimbursable Suitability/Security Investigation conducted by DCSA Background Investigations. If no condition-based derogatory information is developed in the subsequent year, DCSA DOD CAF removes the "Condition" from DISS by

rendering a final favorable security clearance eligibility.

The implementation of Conditional Eligibility Determinations employing current and evolving continued monitoring capabilities at VRO not only improves overall mission readiness for DCSA DOD CAF' customers, but also provides enhanced oversight and risk management of the cleared community. Expanding the application of Conditional Eligibility Determinations furthers DCSA's collaboration and engagement with the intelligence community, as VRO also analyzes continuous evaluation data provided by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence as part of their CE/CV program to continuously monitor enrolled subjects for derogatory behavior. Conditional Eligibility Determinations enhance DCSA's mission fulfillment as the nation's preeminent national security gatekeeper for the Department of Defense and other serviced customers and provides another tool to best apply risk management in the utmost interest of national security to support the warfighter.

Implementing Conditional Eligibility Determinations will enable sustained customer capabilities capabilities, as those personnel who would have otherwise entered due process will be able to continue fulfilling their billeted duties to serve the warfighter and secure the national interest. Conditional Eligibility Determinations will also improve overall case adjudication expediency by reducing the time and manpower actions required of DCSA DOD CAF during due

process, including awaiting subject receipts and responses from commands and/or security managers.

The DCSA Director, Adjudications and VRO Assistant Directors, and MILDEPS & Fourth Estate Personnel Vetting stakeholders supported expanding the Navy Conditional Eligibility Determinations pilot program to full adjudicative workforce implementation for military members and DCSA DOD CAFserviced civilian employees. This expansion was implemented in early November 2021, with Subject Matter Experts (SME's) from the pilot team providing instruction to ensure accurate process application.

The DCSA DOD CAF Call Center is aware of Conditional Eligibility Determination procedures and is available to address questions or concerns. Please do not submit requests for any subject to receive a Conditional Eligibility Determination. All military members and DCSA DOD CAF-serviced civilian employees in the cleared community with an active adjudication are eligible for a Conditional Eligibility Determination if qualifying provisions are met and a Conditional Eligibility Determination is appropriate for that subject based on available information. Industrial contractors are currently ineligible for Conditional Eligibility Determinations due to policy requirements identified in SEAD 7, "Reciprocity of Background Investigations and National Security Adjudications."

FY21/FY22 Training Development, Enhancing Adjudications

By Lou Webster, Adjudications Division Lead

The DCSA DOD CAF FY21 Training Plan included comprehensive career-level training for all adjudicative personnel, with additional recurring sessions designed to fortify adjudicative determinations and enhance personnel vetting knowledge application within the organization.

Uncertified (developmental) adjudicators received formal training facilitated by the DCSA Training Directorate's Center for Development of Security Excellence (CDSE), Security, Training, Education, and Professionalization Portal (STEPP), virtual synchronous internal training, and on the job mentorship via second review of adjudicative recommendations. Thirty personnel earned the CDSE Security Professional Education Program (SPēD) Adjudicator Professional Certification (APC) and 31 personnel earned the CDSE SPeD Due Process Adjudicator Professional Credential (DPAPC), both are respected achievements in the Personnel Vetting field and essential to DCSA DOD CAF mission resiliency.

The "All CAF Training" effort continued throughout FY21, with participants attending a total of 11 days of adjudications-specific

training that served to reinforce adjudicative competencies, including correspondence. This effort began in July 2020 at the height of virtual collaboration due to the pandemic and concluded in April 2021. Instructors delivered over 9,300 personnel instructional hours of training to over 400 adjudicators in FY21 to complete full workforce training to the comprehensive All Adjudications Training standard.

Adjudicative personnel also had the opportunity to attend targeted in-service training sessions designed to specifically address identified adjudicative areas, such as SEAD 4 Adjudicative Guidelines or case processing functions. Instructors delivered over 1,000 personnel instructional hours of In-Service Training to over 330 participants throughout the 11-week series.

DCSA DOD CAF' internal training cadre attended four week long instructor certification courses with Langevin Learning Services. They learned about course design, instructional techniques, and how to optimize training in the virtual environment, which DCSA DOD CAF intends to continue utilizing into the future.

The DCSA DOD CAF FY22 Training Plan is a full scope document to ensure all personnel assigned to DCSA DOD CAF are provided a clear path for professional success. This Training Plan includes adjudicative development, individual professional development, soft skill training, and contains six appendices that outline adjudicative certifications, career-level training, and individual professional development.

Training in the coming year will be conducted using a variety of methods, including: formal in-person adjudicative courses, online adjudicative courses, internal training conducted by a cadre of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), as well as professional development courses that are track-based and dependent on both personnel grade and current adjudicative certifications—these tracks include soft skill courses and leadership development.

A comprehensive training program and plan supports continuous learning and improvement a strategic focus area for DCSA DOD CAF.



FY22 Adjudicative Initiatives

"Endeavors succeed or fail because of the people involved."

~ Colin Powell

By Eric Hayes, Adjudications Team Chief

We would like to share with you some of our transformational focus areas for Fiscal Year 2022 and beyond. Adjudications will begin the transition and integration to 1) Full Implementation of the National Background Investigation Service, 2) Full Implementation of the Trusted Workforce, 3) Transition to the Working Capital Fund, 4) Development and Implementation of a Human Capital Strategy, and 5) Implementation of a Comprehensive Training Plan for FY22/23. Each of these areas strategical align and support the DCSA Mission, Vision, and Values. Our transformational focus areas embrace DCSA's Strategic Plan, goals and objectives; and collectively supports the 2018 National Defense Strategy, the 2021 Defense Planning Guidance (DPG), and the overarching 2021 Interim National Security Strategic Guidance published in March 2021. DCSA Values: Committed to Mission, Passionate about Service, Unwavering in Integrity, Driven to Innovate, and Invested in People.

Our future is focused on achieving outcomes, serving and communicating to our customers, enabling professionals through knowledge, education, training and development, and balancing our commitments through a sense of urgency and knowledge and belief that what we do is important to you and our National Security.

During FY21, DCSA DOD CAF collaborated with the NBIS development, training and deployment teams supporting the NBIS Adjudications Module capability releases. In FY22, our focus is phasing into NBIS for working case inventory, further developing the Adjudication Assistant Tool, leveraging quality

assistance tools, and developing a customer feedback loop.

Adjudications, in partnership with the Program Executive Office (PEO) and NBIS requirements team, is developing a pre-closure variance detection capability to review decisions before implementing them. This capability will at its deployment potentially detect when decisions or processes are outside variance boundaries, and when detected will route questioned decisions for a subject matter expert review. Developing this capability will strengthen both Adjudicative process consistency and determination quality, but also improve service delivery to our customers.

We continue to build upon the interactive and user-friendly knowledge and resource centers developed last year. We're using analytics to understand cross functionality within DCSA transformation focus areas, and we continue integrating more user experience features to incorporate all relevant resources into single source references. Evolving these platforms supports customers and the DCSA mission by communicating the right information to make the right determination at the right time.

Our leadership team encourages aspiring leaders to grow within the DCSA Foundation of Leadership Program to meet the challenges of an evolving security environment. We invest in platforms, processes, and people, and DCSA DOD CAF strives to exceed expectations with our initiatives and strategic goals. We are committed to strengthening and building strong partnerships to increase information sharing and support our customers operations, mission readiness, and the war fighter.

