



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DEFENSE OFFICE OF HEARINGS AND APPEALS



In the matter of:)
)
) ISCR Case No. 11-09606
)
)
Applicant for Security Clearance)

Appearances

For Government: Gregg A. Cervi, Esquire, Department Counsel
For Applicant: *Pro se*

April 3, 2013

Decision

CEFOLA, Richard A., Administrative Judge:

Applicant submitted his Electronic Questionnaires for Investigations Processing (e-QIP) on February 8, 2011. On September 26, 2012, the Department of Defense (DOD) issued a Statement of Reasons (SOR) detailing the security concerns under Guideline F for Applicant. The action was taken under Executive Order 10865, *Safeguarding Classified Information within Industry* (February 20, 1960), as amended; Department of Defense Directive 5220.6, *Defense Industrial Personnel Security Clearance Review Program* (January 2, 1992), as amended (Directive); and the adjudicative guidelines (AG), effective within the Department of Defense after September 1, 2006.

Applicant answered the SOR in writing on October 17, 2012, and requested an Administrative Determination by an administrative judge. Department Counsel issued a File of Relevant Material (FORM) on January 14, 2013. Applicant failed to respond to the FORM. Based upon a review of the pleadings and exhibits, eligibility for access to classified information is denied.

Findings of Fact

In her Answer to the SOR, dated October 17, 2012, Applicant admitted all the factual allegations in the Paragraphs of the SOR, without explanations.

Guideline F - Financial Considerations

Applicant has been gainfully employed since April of 2002. (Item 5 at pages 16~18.) The SOR alleges nine past-due debts, all of which are supported by fairly recent credit reports, the last one of which is from January of 2013. (Items 7~9.)

1.a. Applicant is indebted to Creditor A in the amount of about \$1,646. (Item 7 at page 1.) She admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.b. Applicant is indebted to Creditor B in the amount of about \$2,558. (Item 7 at page 1.) She also admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.c. Applicant is indebted to Creditor C in the amount of about \$155. (Item 7 at page 1.) She again admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.d. Applicant is indebted to Creditor D in the amount of about \$374. (Item 7 at page 1.) She admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.e. Applicant is indebted to Creditor E in the amount of about \$850. (Item 7 at page 1.) She admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.f. Applicant is indebted to Creditor F in the amount of about \$220. (Item 7 at page 1.) She admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.g. Applicant is indebted to Creditor G in the amount of about \$120. (Item 7 at page 1.) She admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.h. Applicant is indebted to Creditor H in the amount of about \$7,917. (Item 8 at page 1.) She admits this past-due debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

1.i. Applicant is indebted to Creditor I in the amount of about \$128. (Item 9 at page 14.) She admits this past due-debt, but has submitted nothing further in this regard. I find that this debt remains unpaid.

Policies

When evaluating an applicant's suitability for a security clearance, the administrative judge must consider the adjudicative guidelines (AG). In addition to brief introductory explanations for each guideline, the adjudicative guidelines list potentially disqualifying conditions and mitigating conditions, which are useful in evaluating an applicant's eligibility for access to classified information.

These guidelines are not inflexible rules of law. Instead, recognizing the complexities of human behavior, these guidelines are applied in conjunction with the factors listed in AG ¶ 2(a) describing the adjudicative process. The administrative judge's over-arching adjudicative goal is a fair, impartial and commonsense decision. According to AG ¶ 2(c), the entire process is a conscientious scrutiny of a number of variables known as the "whole-person concept." The administrative judge must consider all available, reliable information about the person, past and present, favorable and unfavorable, in making a decision.

The protection of the national security is the paramount consideration. AG ¶ 2(b) requires that "[a]ny doubt concerning personnel being considered for access to classified information will be resolved in favor of national security." In reaching this decision, I have drawn only those conclusions that are reasonable, logical and based on the evidence contained in the record. Likewise, I have avoided drawing inferences grounded on mere speculation or conjecture.

Under Directive ¶ E3.1.14, the Government must present evidence to establish controverted facts alleged in the SOR. Under Directive ¶ E3.1.15, the applicant is responsible for presenting "witnesses and other evidence to rebut, explain, extenuate, or mitigate facts admitted by the applicant or proven by Department Counsel. . . ." The applicant has the ultimate burden of persuasion as to obtaining a favorable clearance decision.

A person who seeks access to classified information enters into a fiduciary relationship with the Government predicated upon trust and confidence. This relationship transcends normal duty hours and endures throughout off-duty hours. The Government reposes a high degree of trust and confidence in individuals to whom it grants access to classified information. Decisions include, by necessity, consideration of the possible risk the applicant may deliberately or inadvertently fail to protect or safeguard classified information. Such decisions entail a certain degree of legally permissible extrapolation as to potential, rather than actual, risk of compromise of classified information.

Section 7 of Executive Order 10865 provides that adverse decisions shall be "in terms of the national interest and shall in no sense be a determination as to the loyalty of the applicant concerned." See *also* EO 12968, Section 3.1(b) (listing multiple prerequisites for access to classified or sensitive information).

Analysis

Guideline F - Financial Considerations

The security concern relating to the guideline for Financial Considerations is set out in Paragraph 18:

Failure or inability to live within one's means, satisfy debts, and meet financial obligations may indicate poor self-control, lack of judgment, or unwillingness to abide by rules and regulations, all of which can raise questions about an individual's reliability, trustworthiness and ability to protect classified information. An individual who is financially overextended is at risk of having to engage in illegal acts to generate funds.

The guideline notes several conditions that could raise security concerns. Under Subparagraph 19(a), an *"inability or unwillingness to satisfy debts"* is potentially disqualifying. Similarly under Subparagraph 19(c), *"a history of not meeting financial obligations"* may raise security concerns. Applicant had significant past-due debts that she has failed to demonstrate she has addressed. I can find no countervailing Mitigating Condition that is applicable here. She has been gainfully employed since 2002, but has yet to address her debts.

Whole-Person Concept

Under the whole-person concept, the Administrative Judge must evaluate an applicant's eligibility for a security clearance by considering the totality of Applicant's conduct and all the circumstances. Under Paragraph 2(c), the ultimate determination of whether to grant eligibility for a security clearance must be an overall commonsense judgment based upon careful consideration of the guidelines and the whole-person concept.

The Administrative Judge should also consider the nine adjudicative process factors listed at AG Paragraph 2(a):

(1) the nature, extent, and seriousness of the conduct; (2) the circumstances surrounding the conduct, to include knowledgeable participation; (3) the frequency and recency of the conduct; (4) the individual's age and maturity at the time of the conduct; (5) the extent to which participation is voluntary; (6) the presence or absence of rehabilitation and other permanent behavioral changes; (7) the motivation for the conduct; (8) the potential for pressure, coercion, exploitation, or duress; and (9) the likelihood of continuation or recurrence.

I considered all of the evidence, including the potentially disqualifying and mitigating conditions surrounding this case. The record evidence leaves me with questions and doubts as to Applicant's eligibility and suitability for a security clearance. For this reason, I conclude Applicant has not mitigated the security concerns arising from her Financial Considerations.

