- tracting, licensee, certificate holder, or grantee status, or as a matter of right or privilege, or as a result of any particular title, rank, position, or affiliation.
- (b) Except as provided in sections 2.6 and 3.3 of this order, eligibility for access to classified information shall be granted only to employees who are United States citizens for whom an appropriate investigation has been completed and whose personal and professional history affirmatively indicates loyalty to the United States, strength of character, trustworthiness, honesty, reliability, discretion, and sound judgment, as well as freedom from conflicting allegiances and potential for coercion, and willingness and ability to abide by regulations governing the use, handling, and protection of classified information. A determination of eligibility for access to such information is a discretionary security decision based on judgments by appropriately trained adjudicative personnel. Eligibility shall be granted only where facts and circumstances indicate access to classified information is clearly consistent with the national security interests of the United States, and any doubt shall be resolved in favor of the national security.
- (c) The United States Government does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation in granting access to classified information.
- (d) In determining eligibility for access under this order, agencies may investigate and consider any matter that relates to the determination of whether access is clearly consistent with the interests of national security. No inference concerning the standards in this section may be raised solely on the basis of the sexual orientation of the employee.
- (e) No negative inference concerning the standards in this section may be raised solely on the basis of mental health counseling. Such counseling can be a positive factor in eligibility determinations. However, mental health counseling, where relevant to the adjudication of access to classified information, may justify further inquiry to determine whether the standards of subsection (b) of this section are satisfied, and mental health may be considered where it directly relates to those standards.
- (f) Not later than 180 days after the effective date of this order, the Security Policy Board shall develop a common set of adjudicative guidelines for determining eligibility for access to classified information, including access to special access programs.
- **Sec. 3.2.** Basis for Eligibility Approval. (a) Eligibility determinations for access to classified information shall be based on information concerning the applicant or employee that is acquired through the investigation conducted pursuant to this order or otherwise available to security officials and shall be made part of the applicant's or employee's security record. Applicants or employees shall be required to provide relevant information pertaining to their background and character for use in investigating and adjudicating their eligibility for access.
- (b) Not later than 180 days after the effective date of this order, the Security Policy Board shall develop a common set of investigative standards for background investigations for access to classified information. These standards may vary for the various levels of access.
- (c) Nothing in this order shall prohibit an agency from utilizing any lawful investigative procedure in addition to the investigative requirements set forth in this order and its implementing regulations to resolve issues that may arise during the course of a background investigation or reinvestigation.
- **Sec. 3.3.** Special Circumstances. (a) In exceptional circumstances where official functions must be performed prior to the completion of the investigative and adjudication process, temporary eligibility for access to classified information may be granted to an employee while the initial investigation is underway. When such eligibility is granted, the initial investigation shall be expedited.