

BRAC Presents Job Opportunities for Workers with Security Clearance

By Christopher Graham

With the U.S. Department of Defense consolidating several organizations and relocating them to Fort George G. Meade in Maryland as a result of the Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) process, many job seekers could miss out on a thaw in federal hiring if they fail to obtain security clearance credentials.

A Baltimore Sun story about a job fair at Fort Meade in Anne Arundel County highlights this point, noting that an expected 1,000 job seekers from as far as California and Chicago descended on the base on Wednesday. They vied for 1,200 jobs that over 80 employers, including nine federal agencies, were looking to fill. Sixty percent of those jobs required security clearance, and many people who attended the job fair were “deterred” from pursuing those positions because they lacked such credentials, according to the Sun.

Fort Meade stands to gain 5,695 direct jobs from the 2005 BRAC recommendations, which must be implemented by September 2011, according to the Anne Arundel Economic Development Corporation. Among the military operations ordered to relocate to Fort Meade is the Defense Industrial Security Clearance Office (DISCO), which is currently based in Columbus, Ohio and is responsible for issuing clearances for industry personnel on behalf of the Defense Department. In the 2010 fiscal year, DISCO approved 170,120 requests for investigations and granted 113,819 security clearance eligibilities, according to its annual report.

The Sun story quoted people who described the process of obtaining security clearance as being costly and time consuming. So long as job seekers have a sponsor, be it in the military, a civilian contractor or a government agency, they should not let such comments dissuade them from pursuing such credentials. Actually, the Defense Department recently reported it has made great strides in speeding up its clearance process, which currently takes an average 47 days, compared to 165 days in 2006.

The attorneys at Tully Rinckey PLLC know the importance of attaining and retaining security clearance. On March 30 and 31, the firm will participate in the 2011 Government Security Conference and Expo (GovSec) at the D.C. Convention Center. People wanting to obtain or retain security clearance and advance or protect their career should contact a security clearance law attorney.