



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Please find frequently asked questions about the Public-Private Analytic Exchange Program (AEP) below.

If you have any additional questions or would like to discuss the program further, please reach out to the AEP Staff at [AEP@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:AEP@hq.dhs.gov).

### BACKGROUND

#### **What agency facilitates the AEP?**

The AEP is sponsored by the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Office of Intelligence and Analysis (I&A), on behalf of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI).

#### **What is the purpose of the AEP?**

The AEP facilitates collaborative partnerships between members of the private sector and federal, state, local, tribal, and territorial government analysts, including representatives from the Intelligence Community (IC), to form several subcommittees (or teams) around issues of national or homeland security interest. All work conducted as part of the AEP is unclassified.

#### **What is the time commitment?**

The AEP is a 6-month hybrid program. Participants should expect to spend approximately 3-7 hours a week supporting the program over a six-month period. The time commitment often increases as the program progresses, particularly as the Concluding Summit approaches. Participants are expected to attend the in-person AEP Kick-Off (typically held in January or February) and Concluding Summit (typically held in August or September). Participants are also encouraged to participate in the optional research trip, which may be 3-4 days during the work week.

#### **What are some of the benefits of participating in the AEP?**

The AEP provides government analysts and private sector partners with a better understanding of select national security issues. Participants gain a greater understanding of how each participant's disparate, yet complementary, roles can work in tandem to ensure mission success. The program culminates with the creation of a joint analytic deliverable of interest to the private sector and government (Federal, State, Local, Tribal, and Territorial).

## TOPIC SOLICITATION & SELECTION

### **How are topics selected for the AEP each year?**

Topic recommendations are solicited from federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners each year, typically in the summer months. For a topic to be considered it must meet the following criteria:

- Nexus to Homeland and/or National Security.
- Relevance to both public and private sector partners.
- Address current and/or future issues.
- Do not target a narrow profession or specific qualification (i.e., only entomologist, geologist).
- Leverage government agencies and private organizations.

## APPLICATION

### **What is required for a complete application?**

The following components are required: application, resume, and supervisor's endorsement form. The application and supervisor's endorsement form are posted on the [AEP Application Information Webpage](#) during the application period.

*U.S. Citizenship and employment are requirements for consideration.*

### **Who should apply to the AEP?**

Applicants should have an interest and/or demonstrated expertise in at least one of the topics. Applicants from all levels of government, including federal (inclusive of the intelligence community), state, local, tribal, and territorial, as well as those in academia, fusion centers, and the private sector are encouraged to apply.

### **Are there any General Schedule (GS) level requirements (e.g., a minimum level) for applicants?**

There are no GS, General Government (GG), or similar requirements to apply. We invite all analytic experience levels to apply, from the novice to the expert.

### **Are there any technical requisites to join the program? (i.e., is there an expectation to be proficient on any software?)**

No, there are no technical requirements to apply.

### **Can I join a Phase II team, even if I did not participate in Phase I?**

Yes, you can join a Phase II team, especially if the team is soliciting for participants. However, the Phase II team members will coordinate with the AEP Staff for new team additions.

### **Are Phase II/III teams also limited to U.S. citizens?**

Yes, the AEP is *limited to U.S. Citizens* for all phases.

### **Is there a standard resume you are looking for (i.e., USA jobs format)?**

No, there is no required resume style, format, or template. CVs are also accepted.

### **Should an AEP resume emphasize academic or practical work experience?**

There are no specific resume requirements. Highlight any experience that makes you a great candidate for the topics you have chosen.

**For the supervisor's endorsement, will a letter with the company letterhead be accepted or is there a specific form they need to fill out?**

There is a specific AEP Supervisor's Endorsement Form for applicants to complete. The Supervisor's Endorsement Form is published during the application period.

**Does the supervisor submit the approval form directly to [aepsubmissions@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:aepsubmissions@hq.dhs.gov), or can the applicant submit the supervisor's endorsement form on behalf of their supervisor?**

We prefer the supervisor send the form to [aepsubmissions@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:aepsubmissions@hq.dhs.gov). However, either way is acceptable. If you choose to submit it on their behalf, please be sure they are included on the email.

**Do you need direct experience in the topic that you apply to?**

While direct experience is not a requirement, the selection panel does consider whether the applicant is a good fit for the topic team.

**Does the application inquire about your preference for a project, or does the selection panel decide what project you are assigned?**

You can select up to three topics of interest and rank them in order of preference in the application. However, we do not guarantee you get your top choice. The selection panel will review all applications and make final placement decisions.

**Can you provide an overview of the selection process?**

Applications are reviewed by a joint ODNI and DHS selection panel. Following the panel review, the AEP Staff notifies applicants of their status. Teams are selected to reflect diversity of industry and government.

**When are applicants notified of their application decision?**

Application decision notifications are typically sent out approximately one month after the application deadline.

**What is the acceptance rate?**

The acceptance rate fluctuates based on the number of teams and spots available in each team.

## **KICK-OFF MEETING**

**What is the Kick-Off Meeting?**

This is a mandatory day-long event where DHS, ODNI leadership, AEP Staff and team participants will meet for the first time. There will be a brief introduction to the program, then teams will have the opportunity to begin discussions with their respective teams around what aspects of their topic they would like to focus on over the next six months.

**When and where is the Kick-Off meeting?**

The Kick-Off is typically held in late January or early February in the D.C, Maryland, Virginia area. The exact location is announced following participant selection.

**Will DHS or ODNI fund travel for the Kick-Off and Concluding Summit?**

DHS and ODNI do not provide travel funds for the Kick-Off or Concluding Summit. This is the responsibility of the participants or their employers to fund. DHS has limited funding to only support the optional research trip.

## **TEAM-RELATED INFORMATION**

### **What is the main function of a Team Champion?**

A Team Champion will play the role of facilitator for the team. Champions volunteer to manage their respective teams. They assist the team with meeting deadlines, guide, and mentor, and sometimes need to make the hard decisions. They also recommend ideas and subject matter experts. There are additional team roles and responsibilities chosen by the teams themselves.

### **What are the criteria for becoming a Team Champion?**

The criteria for becoming a Team Champion are to be a government subject matter expert at a GS-14, GS-15, Senior Executive Service, or equivalent levels within your organization. Team Champions are selected by AEP Leadership.

### **How big is each team?**

We try to balance topic team membership evenly, but this may not be possible for all teams. In addition, we aim for each team to have 8 to 12 individuals to maximize discussion and the exchange of ideas. However, team size may not be uniform across all topic areas. Please note that there must be approximately two private sector analysts for each government analyst.

### **How often will my team communicate?**

The team will decide how often they would like to meet (i.e., once, or twice a week).

### **What are some of the teams' due outs throughout the program?**

Teams are required to submit notes from **every meeting** to the AEP Staff at [AEP@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:AEP@hq.dhs.gov). Additionally, teams will receive the Key Dates document that identifies what items are required and when they are due throughout program, such as abstracts, posters, slides, and more.

## **PROGRAM-RELATED INFORMATION**

### **Do topic teams work with international partners during the program?**

Teams can work with international partners if it benefits their work, but only U.S. citizens can participate in the program. The optional research trip must be within the continental U.S.

### **Is travel paid for by the program?**

DHS I&A has limited funding that will be used for the AEP optional research trip during the program. The research trip is optional, not all participants of the team are required to travel. All other travel is the responsibility of the participant's employer, including travel to and from the AEP Kick-Off and Concluding Summit.

### **Are past deliverables published anywhere I can access them?**

Yes, you can access the prior year's AEP Deliverables on our website, using this link (<https://www.dhs.gov/aep-deliverables>). You can also see the Synopses, which provide an overview of each year's AEP team's abstract of their research, and some of the many AEP accomplishments.

If you would like to get access to specific team deliverables from previous years, you can submit a request at [AEP@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:AEP@hq.dhs.gov) with the following Subject: Deliverable Request: [Insert Name of Deliverable]. You can also let us know if you are interested in requesting a discussion or briefing of a deliverable from the AEP topic team.

**Do you have any educational materials/fact sheets about the program that we can share with our supervisors and leadership when "pitching" this program to them?**

Yes, you can view a plethora of resources at <https://www.dhs.gov/publication/aep-overview-and-documents>. If your supervisor has any additional questions or concerns, the AEP Staff would be more than happy to assist and/or coordinate a brief for your leadership and/or organization.

### **CONCLUDING SUMMIT**

**What is the Concluding Summit?**

The AEP Concluding Summit is where each team presents their research findings to their fellow AEP participants, ODNI and DHS leadership, and analysts from the IC, federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, and private sector partners.

**When and where will the Concluding Summit occur?**

The Concluding Summit is typically held in late August or September in the D.C, Maryland, Virginia area. Interested in attending the AEP Concluding Summit? Please reach out to the AEP Staff at [AEP@hq.dhs.gov](mailto:AEP@hq.dhs.gov).