

Selective Service System

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2015 Chief FOIA Officer Report

Section I: Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

The guiding principle underlying the President's FOIA Memorandum and the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines is the presumption of openness.

Please answer the following questions in order to describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA. You may also include any additional information that illustrates how your agency is working to apply the presumption of openness.

1. Did your FOIA professionals or the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend any FOIA training or conference during the reporting period such as that provided by the Department of Justice?

Yes, FOIA staff attended the DOJ Workshops (a) "Proactive Disclosures & Making Online Information More Useful" and (b) "Best Practices from the Requester's Perspective"

2. Provide an estimate of the percentage of your FOIA professionals and staff with FOIA responsibilities who attended substantive FOIA training during this reporting period.

One-half, 50% of the SSS FOIA staff attended training during this reporting period.

3. In the 2014 Chief FOIA Officer Report Guidelines, OIP asked agencies to provide a plan for ensuring that core, substantive FOIA training is offered to all agency FOIA professionals at least once each year. Please provide the status of your agency's implementation of this plan. Include any successes or challenges your agency has seen in implementing the plan.

SSS is committed to FOIA staff completing training. The FOIA staff consists of two employees for which FOIA is a collateral duty. In spite of limited resources and budget constraints, FOIA staff was able to take advantage of the excellent DOJ workshop series and reviewed posted DOJ OIP training on Fees and Fee Waivers.

4. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to review records for discretionary release? If so, please briefly describe this process. If your agency is decentralized, please specify whether all components of your agency have such a process or system in place?

First, the content of each requested record is examined by the program office, FOIA staff and General Counsel to ascertain whether or not record is classified or pertains to national security, commercial and financial information, personal privacy, and information protected by statute. If so, the record is generally not released. However, very, very few requests involve the foregoing categories. Second, each record is carefully reviewed to see if it fits all requirements of the exemption being considered. The age of the document is also looked at to determine if it is outdated and has been superseded by a newer version and is no longer sensitive. On the rare occasion that an exemption may apply, the FOIA staff and the Office of General Counsel determine if a partial release of any portion of the record can be made. FOIA staff looks at each request with a presumption of openness and releases portions of the record when the full release is not possible. Therefore, everything else has been released; in fact, the vast preponderant of requests are satisfied. This policy of discretionary releases has been maximized through our centralized system. Since one office handles all FOIA actions, this policy is practiced uniformly.

5. During the reporting period, did your agency make any discretionary releases of information?

Yes. Following appeals, the agency had two discretionary releases.

6. What exemption(s) would have covered the material released as a matter of discretion? For a discussion of the exemptions that allow for discretionary releases, please see OIP's guidance on implementing the President's and Attorney General's FOIA Memoranda.

Exemption 2 internal agency rules and practices.

7. Provide a narrative description, as well as some specific examples, of the types of information that your agency released as a matter of discretion during the reporting year.

Two particular released are a listing of SSS Directives and the SSS Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual.

8. If your agency was not able to make any discretionary releases of information, please explain why.

N/A

9. *If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied, please describe them here.*

If any of these initiatives are online, please provide links in your description

The Agency is maximizing the presentation of Informational print, radio and TV materials on the Agency's website. Additionally, the Agency is able to disseminate information and solicit feedback through social media venues like the SSS Facebook page and YouTube. Both are linked to our website. The Agency uses Twitter as another means of communication and dissemination of information with the public. The public's comments are reviewed and responded to on a continual basis. The public may also contact us through our Information@sss.gov email account linked on our website.

- a. <http://media.sss.gov/media/>
- b. <https://www.facebook.com/SSSregistration>
- c. <http://www.youtube.com/user/SelectiveServ?feature=watch>

Section II: Steps Taken to Ensure that Your Agency Has an Effective System in Place for Responding to Requests

As the Attorney General emphasized in his FOIA Guidelines, "[a]pplication of the proper disclosure standard is only one part of ensuring transparency. Open government requires not just a presumption of disclosure, but also an effective system for responding to FOIA requests." It is essential that agencies effectively manage their FOIA program.

Please answer the following questions to describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that your management of your FOIA program is effective and efficient. You should also include any additional information that describes your agency's efforts in this area.

1. *For Fiscal Year 2014, what was the average number of days your agency reported for adjudicating requests for expedited processing? Please see Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2014 Annual FOIA Report.*

- *Please note here if your agency did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing during Fiscal Year 2014.*

Agency did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing.

2. If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was above ten calendar days, please describe the steps your agency will take to ensure that requests for expedited processing are adjudicated within ten calendar days or less.

Agency did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing.

3. Does your agency notify requesters of the mediation services offered by the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration? See OIP Guidance, "Notifying Requesters of the Mediation Services Offered by OGIS." (July 9, 2010)

Have not had the need to do so, but will if the situation arises.

4. When assessing fees, does your agency provide a breakdown of how FOIA fees were calculated and assessed to the FOIA requester? For example, does your agency explain the amount of fees attributable to search, review, and duplication? See OIP Guidance, "The Importance of Good Communication with FOIA Requesters 2.0: Improving Both the Means and the Content of Requester Communications." (Nov. 22, 2013)

Selective Service has not assessed fees for requests. If in the future it is determined that fees should be charged to a requester, agency will provide a breakdown of how the FOIA fees were calculated and assessed and agency will explain the amount of fees attributable to search, review, and duplication.

5. If estimated fees estimates are particularly high, does your agency provide an explanation for the estimate to the requester? See id.

N/A. Agency has not assessed fees for requests.

6. If there are any other steps your agency has undertaken to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively, such as conducting self-assessments to find greater efficiencies, improving search processes, eliminating redundancy, etc., please describe them here.

We do conduct customer feedback, internal controls, self-assessments, and other audits; the Selective Service's FOIA system has consistently operated efficiently and effectively with extremely short response times to our customers. While we do evaluate ourselves periodically, any changes must offer programmatic betterments which are feasible and affordable.

Section III: Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

Both the President and Attorney General focused on the need for agencies to work proactively to post information online without waiting for individual requests to be received.

Please answer the following questions to describe the steps your agency has taken to increase the amount of material that is available on your agency websites. In addition to the questions below, you should also describe any additional steps taken by your agency to make and improve proactive disclosures of information.

1. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to identify records for proactive disclosure? If so, please describe your agency's process or system.

Yes. The FOIA staff determines records for proactive disclosures by means of professional judgment, public feedback, review of FOIA requests received, and analysis of correspondence and requests. Consequently, Selective Service continues to post information about the agency and individuals, policies, plans, and procedures on its public website to inform the public what records and information are available. We already know what types of information will probably be disclosed by category/type. Selective Service has a vast amount of information and records posted on the Agency's internet which affords the public easy and fast access.

2. Does your process or system involve any collaboration with agency staff outside the FOIA office? If so, describe this interaction.

Yes. FOIA staff solicits information on topics of interest and developing issues from agency staff on an ongoing basis. With agency staff input, FOIA and PIA staffs post this information on our website and social media venues.

3. Describe your agency's process or system for identifying "frequently requested" records that should be posted online.

Information is reviewed to see how often the topic is requested. If it is requested more than a few times, the information is posted on our website or on our Facebook page.

4. Provide examples of material that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including links to the posted material.

Annual Reports to Congress

<http://www.sss.gov/PDFs/Annual%20Report%202014.pdf>

Performance and Accountability Report

<http://www.sss.gov/PDFs/PAR%202014%20-%20Web.pdf>

Performance Budget Justification

<http://www.sss.gov/PDFs/FY2015%20Budget%20Justification.PDF>

Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey

<http://www.sss.gov/PDFs/2013%20Employee%20Viewpoint%20Survey.pdf>

Annual FOIA Report

<http://www.sss.gov/PDFs/SSS%20FY14%20Final%20FOIA%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

Chief FOIA Officer Report

<http://www.sss.gov/PDFs/2014%20Chief%20FOIA%20Officer%20Report%20FINAL%20031MAR14.pdf>

5. If there are any other steps your agency has taken to increase proactive disclosures, please describe them here.

In addition to posting information on the SSS Facebook page and updating the agency website, the agency has expanded its presence on social media venues like YouTube and Twitter.

Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

A key component of the President's FOIA Memorandum was the direction to "use modern technology to inform citizens about what is known and done by their Government." In addition to using the internet to make proactive disclosures, agencies should also be exploring ways to utilize technology in responding to requests.

Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is utilizing technology to improve its FOIA administration and the public's access to information. You should also include any additional information that that describes your agency's efforts in this area.

Making Material Posted Online More Useful:

1. Beyond posting new material, is your agency taking steps to make the posted information more useful to the public, especially to the community of individuals who regularly access your agency's website?

Information is constantly updated and expanded. The website is updated to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate.

2. *If yes, please provide examples of such improvements.*

Agency updated the homepage of the website to add buttons so the public can directly access forms. One of the buttons provides a direct link to the most requested forms used by the public; Registration Form; Change of Address Form; Status Information Letter Request Form; and Men Born Before 1960: Records Request Form.

3. *Has your agency encountered challenges that make it difficult to post records you otherwise would like to post?*

No.

4. *If so, please briefly explain what those challenges are.*

N/A

Other Initiatives:

5. *Did your agency successfully post all four quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2014?*

Yes, all four quarterly reports for FY 2014 were posted.

6. *If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports, with information appearing on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2015.*

N/A

7. *Do your agency's FOIA professionals use e-mail or other electronic means to communicate with requesters whenever feasible? See OIP Guidance, "The Importance of Good Communication with FOIA Requesters 2.0: Improving Both the Means and the Content of Requester Communications." (Nov. 22, 2013) If yes, what are the different types of electronic means are utilized by your agency to communicate with requesters?*

Yes, agency FOIA staff utilizes e-mail to communicate with requesters. E-mail is the preferred electronic means used.

8. *If your agency does not communicate electronically with requesters as a default, are there any limitations or restrictions for the use of such means? If yes, does your agency inform requesters about such limitations? See id.*

N/A

Section V: Steps Taken to Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests and Reducing Backlogs

The President and the Attorney General have emphasized the importance of improving timeliness in responding to requests. This section your Chief FOIA Officer Report addresses both time limits and backlog reduction. Backlog reduction is measured both in terms of numbers of backlogged requests or appeals and by looking at whether agencies closed their ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations. *For the figures required in this Section, please use the numbers contained in the specified sections of your agency's 2014 Annual FOIA Report and, when applicable, your agency's 2013 Annual FOIA Report.*

Simple Track: Section VII.A of your agency's Annual FOIA Report, entitled "FOIA Requests – Response Time for All Processed Requests," includes figures that show your agency's average response times for processed requests. For agencies utilizing a multi-track system to process requests, there is a category for "simple" requests, which are those requests that are placed in the agency's fastest (non-expedited) track, based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.

1. Does your agency utilize a separate track for simple requests?

No, not applicable. With so few requests, all are handled alike – as simple requests.

2. If so, for your agency overall in Fiscal Year 2014, was the average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer?

N/A

3. Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014 that were placed in your simple track.

N/A

4. If your agency does not track simple requests separately, was the average number of days to process all non-expedited requests twenty working days or fewer?

Yes, the average number of days to process all non-expedited requests is twenty working days or fewer.

Backlogs: Section XII.A of your agency's Annual FOIA Report, entitled "Backlogs of FOIA Requests and Administrative Appeals" shows the numbers of any backlogged

requests or appeals from the fiscal year. You should refer to these numbers from your Annual FOIA Reports for both Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 when completing this section of your Chief FOIA Officer Report.

BACKLOGGED REQUESTS

5. *If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2014, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2013?*

- *If not, explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able reduce its backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:*
 - *An increase in the number of incoming requests*
 - *A loss of staff*
 - *An increase in the complexity of the requests received*

Not applicable; Selective Service experienced no backlog.

6. *If you had a request backlog please report the percentage of requests that make up the backlog out of the total number of requests received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014. If your agency did not receive any requests in Fiscal Year 2014 and/or has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

N/A.

- *To calculate your agency's percentage, you must divide the number of backlogged requests reported in Section XII.A. of your Fiscal Year 2014 Annual FOIA Report by the number of requests received in Fiscal Year 2014, which can be found in Section V.A. of your Annual FOIA Report. Once divided, you can multiply that number by 100 to get the percentage.*

BACKLOGGED APPEALS

7. *If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2014, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2013?*

N/A. Agency had no backlog.

8. *If you had an appeal backlog please report the percentage of appeals that make up the backlog out of the total number of appeals received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2014 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

N/A.

To calculate your agency's percentage, you must divide the number of backlogged appeals reported in Section XII.A. of your Fiscal Year 2014 Annual FOIA Report by the number of appeals received in Fiscal Year 2014, which can be found in Section VI.A. of your Annual FOIA Report. Once divided, you can multiply that number by 100 to get the percentage.

Status of Ten Oldest Requests, Appeals, and Consultations: Section VII.E, entitled "Pending Requests – Ten Oldest Pending Requests," Section VI.C.(5), entitled "Ten Oldest Pending Administrative Appeals," and Section XII.C., entitled "Consultations on FOIA Requests – Ten Oldest Consultations Received from Other Agencies and Pending at Your Agency," show the ten oldest pending requests, appeals, and consultations. You should refer to these numbers from your Annual FOIA Reports for both Fiscal Year 2013 and Fiscal Year 2014 when completing this section of your Chief FOIA Officer Report.

TEN OLDEST REQUESTS

9. In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest requests that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?

N/A; there were no old requests which were held over from FY 2013.

10. If no, please provide the number of these requests your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.E of your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.

- For example, if you only had seven requests listed as part of your "ten oldest" in Section VII.E. and you closed six of them, you should note that you closed six out of seven "oldest" requests.*

There were no old requests in FY 2013 or FY 2014.

11. Of the requests your agency was able to close from your ten oldest, please indicate how many of these were closed because the request was withdrawn by the requester. If any were closed because the request was withdrawn, did you provide any interim responses prior to the withdrawal?

N/A

TEN OLDEST APPEALS

12. *In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?*

N/A

13. *If no, please provide the number of these appeals your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.C.(5) of your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.*

N/A

TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS

14. *In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?*

N/A

15. *If no, please provide the number of these consultations your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.*

N/A

Additional Information on Ten Oldest Requests, Appeals, and Consultations & Plans:

16. *Briefly explain any obstacles your agency faced in closing its ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations from Fiscal Year 2013.*

N/A

17. *If your agency was unable to close any of its ten oldest requests because you were waiting to hear back from other agencies on consultations you sent, please provide the date the request was initially received by your agency, the date when your agency sent the consultation, and the date when you last contacted the agency where the consultation was pending.*

N/A

18. *If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those “ten oldest” requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2015.*

N/A

Use of the FOIA's Law Enforcement Exclusions

Did your agency invoke a statutory exclusion, 5 U.S.C. § 552(c)(1), (2), (3), during Fiscal Year 2014?

No.

If so, please provide the total number of times exclusions were invoked.