

## The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board

### 2015 Chief FOIA Officer Reports

#### Section I: Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

##### FOIA Training

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. Our Agency FOIA Officer attended the Cutting Edge FOIA Issues, Privacy and Civil Liberties offered by the D.C. Bar and 508 Compliance hosted by the American Society of Access Professional (ASAP). Our Chief FOIA Officer attended FOIA training for Attorneys and Access Professionals (DOJ), FOIA Exemptions Overview Webinar (ASAP) and the 7th Annual National Training Conference (ASAP).

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.

100%

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.

FOIA professionals are required yearly by the Agency to have an Individual Development Plan (IDP) in place. An IDP is a tool that assists employees in developing and enhancing the skills they need to stay current with required skills pertaining to their job. Yearly FOIA training, especially that of which is offered by DOJ, is considered a requirement on the IDP for FOIA professionals in the Agency.

##### Discretionary Releases

4. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to review records for discretionary release?

No, we do not have a formal process for considering material for discretionary release. Our Agency is not decentralized.

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

No.

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](#).

N/A.

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.

N/A.

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

The Agency has not yet made releases of otherwise exempt information because the majority of the information withheld from FOIA requests are that of personal and confidential information that would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

### **Other Initiatives**

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.

No additional initiatives have been made in this area. As an Agency whose mission is to administer the Thrift Savings Plan solely in the interest of its participants and beneficiaries, we feel we have always maintained a well-balanced presumption of openness whenever possible to inform the public without jeopardizing the safety and security of the participants and beneficiaries' protected information.

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

### **Processing Procedures**

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.

Our Agency did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing during Fiscal Year 2014.

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.

N/A.

### **Requestor Services**

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)

No.

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)

Yes.

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

Yes.

### **Other Initiatives**

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.

In June 2014 the Agency finalized its internal policies and procedures for processing FOIA requests and appeals. These resources are to help ensure that the Agency's FOIA Office together with the help of other Agency employees are running effectively and efficiently.

## Section III: Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

### Posting Material

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.

No.

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

No.

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

The Agency looks at how often a record has been requested to determine whether it should be posted online. However, our Agency may be unique in that we do not receive too many requests for the same record.

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

Some examples of the materials posted on our Agency's website are the monthly Board meeting minutes, vendor financial status reports, legislative reports, monthly participant activity reports, monthly investment performance reports and administrative expense reports. These are all posted on our Agency's website at <http://www.frtib.gov/Home.html>.

### Other Initiatives

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

Rate of Return, share prices and/or administrative expenses are provided to participants at [www.tsp.gov](http://www.tsp.gov). in the annually updated investment fund sheets (see the Forms and Publications section of the TSP website), in the quarterly newsletter (TSP Highlights can also be found in the Forms and Publications section of [tsp.gov](http://tsp.gov)) and in a participants annual statement which is mailed to TSP participants.

## Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

## **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?

During 2014, the Agency made several enhancements to our website and other digital properties. For example, we began embedding YouTube videos in our "Plan News" section, and we prompted participants to create stronger passwords to use when logging into their accounts. We added graphics to our Twitter posts (@tsp4gov) and enabled participant comments for YouTube videos. We also took a number of steps to gauge the efficacy of posted information. As part of a coordinated effort for Financial Literacy Month, we created a special webpage and video that included links to short web-based, mobile-friendly surveys. The surveys invited participants to share their feedback on the TSP's website, online calculators, YouTube videos, and Twitter outreach. We also undertook an internal communications review that included soliciting participant feedback about our website via focus groups, mail and online/mobile surveys, and usability testing. We also added the ability for participants to download historical fund share prices and account balance data as a text file. Participants can then import the data into the financial software of their choice.

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

Financial Literacy Month Survey: <http://takefive.questionpro.com/>

Plan News: <https://www.tsp.gov/whatsnew/plan/planNews.shtml#fivetips>

Fund Share Price Downloads:

<https://www.tsp.gov/investmentfunds/shareprice/sharePriceHistory.shtml>

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.

## **Use of Technology to Facilitate Processing of Requests**

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

Yes. Our Agency completed all quarterly reports.

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?

Yes.

If yes, what are the different types of electronic means are utilized by your agency to communicate with requesters?

We have an email address specifically set up to receive FOIA requests and to communicate with the requestors.

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?

N/A.

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

### **Simple Track**

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

No.

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?

N/A.

### **Backlogs**

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?

The number of backlogs decreased. In 2013 the Agency reported two backlogs and in 2014 the Agency reported only one.

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."

3.1%

### **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.

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.

### **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?

Yes.

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.

N/A

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?

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### **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?

Yes.

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.

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.

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.

N/A.