

2017 Chief FOIA Officer Report

Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board

Chief FOIA Officer: Dharmesh Vashee, Assistant General Counsel

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.

2. *If yes, please provide a brief description of the type of training attended and the topics covered.*

- FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 training, October 27, 2016 – ASAP
- FOIA training for Attorneys and Access Professionals, July 12-13, 2016 – Department of Justice

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

80%

4. *OIP has **directed agencies** to "take steps to ensure that all of their FOIA professionals attend substantive FOIA training at least once throughout the year." If your response to the previous question is that less than 80% of your FOIA professionals attended training, please explain your agency's plan to ensure that all FOIA professionals receive or attend substantive FOIA training during the next reporting year.*

N/A

Other Initiatives

5. *Describe any efforts your agency has undertaken to inform non-FOIA professionals of their obligations under the FOIA?*

Our FOIA Office handed out a print-out at our Records Awareness Day training describing what FOIA is and how it works. We also offer guidance when we contact an office within the Agency regarding a FOIA request for records retained within that specific office.

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

N/A.

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 2016, 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 2016 Annual FOIA Report.

Our Agency did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing during Fiscal Year 2016.

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.

3. Please provide an estimate of how many requests your agency processed in Fiscal Year 2016 that were from commercial use requesters. If your agency is decentralized, please identify any components within your agency that received a majority of their requests from commercial use requesters.

Our Agency has had an estimate of 5 commercial requests in FY 2016.

Requester Services

4. The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires additional notification to requesters about the services provided by the agency's FOIA Public Liaison. Please provide an estimate of how often requesters sought assistance from your agency's FOIA Public Liaison.

The Agency has had one requester in FY 16 use the assistance of our FOIA Public Liaison.

5. The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires agencies to make their reference material or guide for requesting records or information from the agency electronically available to the public. Please provide a link to your agency's FOIA reference guide.

https://www.frtib.gov/ReadingRoom/FOIA/e-read_guide.pdf

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 improving search processes, eliminating redundancy, etc., please describe them here.

There are no other steps that our Agency has taken.

Section III: Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

Posting Material:

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

Our Agency monitors its FOIA log to identify "frequently requested" records.

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

Our Agency has no formal process to identify records for proactive disclosure. Our Agency does however, regularly post all monthly Board meeting minutes, vendor financial status reports, legislative reports, monthly participant activity reports, monthly investment performance reports and administrative expense reports due to public interest.

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 those challenges.

N/A.

5. 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 <https://www.frtib.gov/index.html>.

6. Did your agency use any means to publicize or highlight important proactive disclosures for public awareness? If yes, please describe those efforts.

No.

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

N/A.

Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

Making Material Posted Online More Usable:

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

Yes.

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

- In the summer of 2016 we began to respond to questions received from Twitter.
- In Sept 2016 we have started using Facebook to engage with our Participants and Beneficiaries and have also responded to questions received on this platform.
- We now send out periodic emails to those that have signed up to our mass Email list using Gov Delivery.
- We have enabled our Plan News and Announcements email alerts to be more detailed on what content has been updated under that section of our website.

Other Initiatives:

3. Did your agency successfully post all four quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2016?

Yes.

4. 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 2016.

N/A.

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

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

No.

2. If so, for your agency overall in Fiscal Year 2016, 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 2016 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.

BACKLOGGED REQUESTS

5. *If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2016, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2015?*

Yes.

6. *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:*

N/A.

7. *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 2016.*

2.7%

BACKLOGGED APPEALS

8. *If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2016, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2015?*

The Agency had no backlogged appeals.

9. *If not, explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able reduce backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:*

N/A.

10. *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 2015. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2016 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

N/A.

TEN OLDEST REQUESTS

11. *In Fiscal Year 2016, did your agency close the ten oldest requests that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2015 Annual FOIA Report?*

Yes.

12. *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 2015 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.*

N/A.

13. *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

14. *In Fiscal Year 2016, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2015 Annual FOIA Report?*

The Agency had no appeals pending in Fiscal Year 2015.

15. *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 2014 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.*

N/A.

TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS

16. *In Fiscal Year 2016, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2015 Annual FOIA Report?*

Our Agency had no pending consultations.

17. *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 2014 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:

18. *Briefly explain any obstacles your agency faced in closing its ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations from Fiscal Year 2015.*

The Agency faced no obstacles.

19. *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.

20. *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 2016.*

N/A. All pending requests were closed.