

## **FEDERAL RETIREMENT THRIFT INVESTMENT BOARD**

### **2018 Chief FOIA Officer Report**

**Stefanie George, Assistant General Counsel**

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. We have not experienced an increase in proactive disclosures due to the fact that the majority of the information withheld from FOIA requests is that of a personal and confidential nature and would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, which does not lend itself to discretionary release. However, there are a number of records that the Agency does proactively release on its website and those include, for example, materials on 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>.

In 2017, the Agency added a "frequently requested records" section to our website, where we will continue to add documents in accordance with the Rule of Three, FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 (Public Law No. 114-185). In addition, the Agency made a few administrative changes to its FOIA regulations at the same time that it made revisions in accordance with the FOIA Improvement Act. These steps, along with the continued efforts of the FOIA office, have helped improve timeliness in responding to requests.

Communication with FOIA requestors is important to us and essential to the FOIA process. The Agency handles most of its FOIA communications through email. However, every now and then an issue will arise where either the FOIA Officer or the FOIA Public Liaison will speak to the requestor over the phone, in an effort to quickly resolve the problem. In 2017, on several occasions, the FOIA Public Liaison has proven to be an essential part of the FOIA office by helping the Agency provide a service for its requesters, informing them about how the FOIA process works, and providing details on the status of their individual requests.

Lastly, the Agency has made several strides in its efforts to utilize technology to reach out to the public in general as well as to its participants and beneficiaries. In addition, Privacy Act Notices have been added to more pages to further transparency about why we ask for personal contact information and how we utilize it. The Agency has also provided links to external SEC security resources as an additional safeguard against participant fraud.