

The Federal Retirement Thrift Investment Board

2025 Chief FOIA Officer Report

Section I: FOIA Leadership and Applying the Presumption of Openness

The guiding principle underlying the Department of Justice's (DOJ) 2022 [FOIA Guidelines](#) is the presumption of openness. The Guidelines also highlight the importance of agency leadership in ensuring effective FOIA administration. Please answer the following questions about FOIA leadership at your agency and describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA.

A. Leadership Support for FOIA

1. FOIA requires each agency to designate a Chief FOIA Officer who is a senior official at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(j)(1) (2018). Is your agency's Chief FOIA Officer at or above this level?

Yes.

2. Please provide the name and title of your agency's Chief FOIA Officer.

Dharmesh Vashee, General Counsel

3. What steps has your agency taken to incorporate FOIA into its core mission? For example, has your agency incorporated FOIA milestones into its strategic plan?

The Agency's 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.

B. Presumption of Openness

4. DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines provides that "agencies should confirm in response letters to FOIA requesters that they have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying FOIA exemptions." Does your agency provide such confirmation in its response letters?

Yes.

5. In some circumstances, agencies may respond to a requester that it can neither confirm nor deny the existence of requested records if acknowledging the existence of records would harm an interest protected by a FOIA exemption. This is commonly referred to as a Glomar response. If your agency tracks Glomar responses, please provide:

- the number of times your agency issued a full or partial Glomar response during Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 (please separate full and partial Glomar responses if possible); N/A.
- the number of times a Glomar response was issued by exemption during FY 2025 (e.g., Exemption 7(C) – 20 times, Exemption 1 – 5 times). N/A

Section II: Ensuring Fair and Effective FOIA Administration

DOJ's 2022 [FOIA Guidelines](#) provide that “[e]nsuring fair and effective FOIA administration requires . . . proper training, and a full understanding of FOIA obligations by the entire agency workforce.” The Guidelines reinforce longstanding guidance to “work with FOIA requesters in a spirit of cooperation.” DOJ also “urge[s] agency Chief FOIA Officers to undertake comprehensive review of all aspects of their agency’s FOIA administration” as part of ensuring fair and effective FOIA administration.

A. FOIA Training

1. The FOIA directs agency Chief FOIA Officers to ensure that FOIA training is offered to agency personnel. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(j)(2)(F). Please describe the efforts your agency has undertaken to ensure proper FOIA training is made available and used by agency personnel.

The Agency FOIA professionals take advantage of the training offered by Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy.

2. Did your FOIA professionals, or other personnel at your agency with FOIA responsibilities, attend substantive FOIA training during the reporting period, such as training provided by the Department of Justice?

Yes.

3. If yes, please provide a brief description of the type of training attended or conducted and the topics covered.

- Administrative Appeals, FOIA Compliance, and Customer Service Training
- Privacy Consideration Training
- Continuing Freedom of Information Act Education Training
- Procedural Requirements, and Fee and Fee Waivers Training

4. Please 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%

5. 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

6. Describe any efforts your agency has undertaken to inform non-FOIA professionals of their obligations under FOIA. In particular, please describe how often and in what formats your agency provides FOIA training or briefings to non-FOIA staff, and if senior leaders at your agency received a briefing on your agency’s FOIA resources, obligations and expectations during the FOIA process.

The Agency has yearly mandatory Records Management Training that has a section dedicated to FOIA. The FOIA professionals also meet periodically with internal offices to go over what their obligations are under FOIA and offer assistance when a FOIA request comes in for records that reside with them.

B. Outreach

7. As part of the standard request process, do your FOIA professionals proactively contact requesters concerning complex or voluminous requests in an effort to clarify or narrow the scope of the request so requesters can receive responses more quickly? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue and, if applicable, any specific examples.

Yes. We often work with the FOIA requestors to provide support and guidance in clarifying or narrowing their requests, such as suggesting a specific subject matter, providing specific dates, or document types.

8. Outside of the standard request process or routine FOIA Liaison or FOIA Requester Service Center interactions, did your FOIA professionals engage in any outreach or dialogue with the requester community or open government groups regarding your administration of the FOIA? For example, did you proactively contact frequent requesters, host FOIA-related conference calls with open government groups, or provide FOIA training to members of the public? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue and, if applicable, any specific examples of how this dialogue has led to improvements in your agency's FOIA administration.

No.

9. 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 the number of times requesters sought assistance from your agency's FOIA Public Liaison during Fiscal Year 2025 (please provide a total number or an estimate of the number for the agency overall).

The estimated number of time requestors have sought assistance from the Agency's FOIA Public Liaison during Fiscal Year 2024 is 36.

C. Other Initiatives

10. Has your agency evaluated the allocation of agency personnel resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands? If so, please describe what changes your agency has or will implement.

In 2024, the Agency started assigning FOIA work to two attorneys within the Office of General Counsel, in addition to utilizing a support contract to receive additional support from outside the Agency.

11. How does your agency use data or processing metrics to ensure efficient management of your FOIA workload?

The Agency utilizes a case management system, the FOIA intake log, and the Annual FOIA report to help assist in efficiently running the FOIA program.

Section III: Proactive Disclosures

DOJ's 2022 [FOIA Guidelines](#) emphasize that "proactive disclosure of information is . . . fundamental to the faithful application of the FOIA." The Guidelines direct agencies to post "records online quickly and

systematically in advance of any public request” and reiterate that agencies should post records “in the most useful, searchable, and open formats possible.”

1. Please describe what steps your agency takes to identify, track, and post (a)(2) proactive disclosures.

There are a number of records that the Agency has consistently proactively released on its website as way to prioritize transparency and satisfy the public’s interest. Those records 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.

2. Does your agency post logs of its FOIA requests? No.

- If so, what information is contained in the logs? N/A.
- Are they posted in CSV format? If not, what format are they posted in? N/A.
- Please provide a link to the page where any FOIA logs are posted. If applicable, please provide component links. N/A

3. Provide examples of any material (with links) that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including records that have been requested and released three or more times in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D).

There are a number of records that the Agency has consistently proactively released on its website as way to prioritize transparency and satisfy the public’s interest. Those records 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. The Agency has not had too many frequently requested records under FOIA, but the most recent one was for a contract, which is now posted on our FOIA webpage.

Vendor financial status reports, legislative reports, monthly participant activity reports, monthly investment performance reports, and administrative expense reports are posted here:

<https://www.frtib.gov/reading-room/>

Records that have been requested and released three or more under FOIA are posted here:

<https://www.frtib.gov/foia/>

4. Please provide a link (or component links, if applicable) where your agency routinely posts its frequently requested records.

Board meeting minutes are posted here: <https://www.frtib.gov/meeting-minutes/>

Vendor financial status reports, legislative reports, monthly participant activity reports, monthly investment performance reports, and administrative expense reports are posted here:

<https://www.frtib.gov/reading-room/>

Records that have been requested and released three or more under FOIA are posted here:

<https://www.frtib.gov/foia/>

5. 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? If yes, please provide examples of such improvements, such as steps taken to post information in open and machine-readable formats. If your agency is not taking steps to make posted information more useful, please explain why.

Yes. In 2025, we took several steps to make posted information more useful to the public. We added new information and implemented several suggested changes that were brought to our attention by a frequent FOIA requester. In addition, we updated the layout of our website and the Reading Room to make it easier for users to locate relevant records and information.

6. Does your proactive disclosure process or system involve any collaboration with agency staff outside the FOIA office, such as IT or data personnel? If so, describe this interaction.

The posting of any material on the Agency's Reading Room involves a process wherein we collaborate with the Director of External Affairs as well as Agency IT staff. This is to ensure that the Director of External Affairs is aware of what's publicly available, should any questions arise from the public or the press, and that IT posts a version of the record that is accessible, retrievable, and compliant.

Section IV: Steps Taken to Make Better Use of Technology

A key component of FOIA administration is using technology to make information available to the public and to gain efficiency in FOIA processing. DOJ's 2022 [FOIA Guidelines](#) emphasize the importance of making FOIA websites easily navigable and complying with the [FOIA.gov](#) interoperability requirements. Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is using technology to improve its FOIA administration and the public's access to information.

1. Has your agency reviewed its FOIA-related technological capabilities to identify resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands?

Yes.

2. Please briefly describe any new types of technology your agency uses to support your FOIA program.

The Agency acquired an e-discovery tool in 2024 for FOIA professionals to search internal federal records. FOIA staff is still learning to utilize the tool to reduce responsive times and ensure thoroughness of all searches.

3. Does your agency currently use any technology to automate request intake, customer service, or record processing? For example, does your agency use artificial intelligence or other tools to conduct searches or make redactions? If so, please describe and, if possible, estimate how much time and financial resources are saved since implementing the technology.

The Agency uses the software REDAX for redacting documents.

4. OIP issued [guidance](#) in 2017 encouraging agencies to regularly review their FOIA websites to ensure that they contain essential resources and are informative and user-friendly. Has your agency reviewed its FOIA website(s) during the reporting period to ensure it addresses the elements noted in the guidance?

Yes.

5. Did all four of your agency's [quarterly reports](#) for Fiscal Year 2025 appear on FOIA.gov?

No.

6. If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2026.

During FY 2025, our Agency did not post quarterly reports to FOIA.gov because the mandatory posting requirement had not been identified. After becoming aware of this requirement, the Agency will ensure that all required quarterly reports are posted to FOIA.gov moving forward.

7. The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires all agencies to post the raw statistical data used to compile their Annual FOIA Reports. Please provide the link to this posting for your agency's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report and, if available, for your agency's Fiscal Year 2025 Annual FOIA Report.

<https://www.frtib.gov/foia/year/>

8. In February 2019, DOJ and OMB issued joint [Guidance](#) establishing interoperability standards to receive requests from the National FOIA Portal on FOIA.gov. Are all components of your agency in compliance with the guidance?

Yes.

Section V: Steps Taken to Remove Barriers to Access, Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests, and Reduce Backlogs

DOJ's 2022 [FOIA Guidelines](#) instruct agencies "to remove barriers to requesting and accessing government records and to reduce FOIA processing backlogs." Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is removing barriers to access, improving timeliness in responding to requests, and reducing FOIA backlogs.

A. Remove Barriers to Access

1. Has your agency established alternative means of access for any categories of first-party requested records, outside of the typical FOIA or Privacy Act process?

Yes.

2. If yes, please provide examples. If no, please indicate why not. Please also indicate if you do not know.

First-party requested records are typically for TSP savings account records. Participants and beneficiaries can access most records by logging into their accounts. They may also get assistance by calling the Thrift Savings Plan's Thriftline and speaking to a representative.

3. Please describe any other steps your agency has taken to remove barriers to accessing government information.

N/A.

B. Timeliness

4. For Fiscal Year 2025, 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 2025 Annual FOIA Report.

N/A

5. If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was more than ten calendar days, according to Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2025 Annual FOIA Report, 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.

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

No.

7. If your agency uses a separate track for simple requests, according to Annual FOIA Report section VII.A, was the agency overall average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer in Fiscal Year 2025?

N/A.

8. If not, did the simple track average processing time decrease compared to the previous Fiscal Year?

N/A.

9. Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2025 that were placed in your simple track. Please use the following calculation based on the data from your Annual FOIA Report: (processed simple requests from Section VII.C.1) divided by (requests processed from Section V.A.) x 100.

N/A.

10. 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?

No.

C. Backlogs

Backlogged Requests

11. If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2025, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.2, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2024?

Yes.

12. If not, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.1, did your agency process more requests during Fiscal Year 2025 than it did during Fiscal Year 2024?

N/A.

13. If your agency's request backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2025, please explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able to 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 (if possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase)
- Litigation
- Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible

N/A.

14. 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 2025. Please use the following calculation based on data from your Annual FOIA Report: (backlogged requests from Section XII.A) divided by (requests received from Section V.A) x 100. This number can be greater than 100%. If your agency has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."

29%

Backlogged Appeals

15. If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2025, according to Section XII.E.2 of the Annual FOIA Report, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2024?

The Agency had no backlog of appeals.

16. If not, according to section XII.E.1 of the Annual FOIA Report, did your agency process more appeals during Fiscal Year 2025 than it did during Fiscal Year 2024?

N/A.

17. If your agency's appeal backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2025, please explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able to reduce its backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:

- An increase in the number of incoming appeals
- A loss of staff
- An increase in the complexity of the requests received (if possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase)
- Litigation

- Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible

N/A.

18. 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 2025. Please use the following calculation based on data from your Annual FOIA Report: (backlogged appeals from Section XII.A) divided by (appeals received from Section VI.A) x 100. This number can be greater than 100%. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2025 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."

N/A.

D. Backlog Reduction Plans

19. In the 2025 guidelines for Chief FOIA Officer Reports, any agency with a backlog of over 1000 requests in Fiscal Year 2024 was asked to provide a plan for achieving backlog reduction in the year ahead. Did your agency implement a backlog reduction plan last year? If so, describe your agency's efforts in implementing this plan and note if your agency was able to achieve backlog reduction in Fiscal Year 2025?

N/A.

20. If your agency had a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in Fiscal Year 2025, please explain your agency's plan to reduce this backlog during Fiscal Year 2026.

N/A.

E. Reducing the Age of Requests, Appeals, and Consultations

Ten Oldest Requests

21. In Fiscal Year 2025, did your agency close the ten oldest pending perfected requests that were reported in Section VII.E. of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report?

Yes.

22. 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 2025 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

23. Beyond working on the ten oldest requests, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending requests.

The Agency continues to focus on closing older cases in the queue to reduce the overall age of pending requests. In certain instances, the Agency provided records through rolling releases, allowing requesters to receive responsive records sooner and portions of requests to be processed more efficiently. The Agency has also begun training on a system designed to assist with record searches and is exploring the

potential use of multi-track processing to allow simpler requests to be processed more quickly while complex requests are handled separately.

Ten Oldest Appeals

24. In Fiscal Year 2025, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in Section VI.C.5 of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report?

There were no appeals reported pending.

25. 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 2024 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

26. Beyond working on the ten oldest appeals, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending appeals.

N/A.

Ten Oldest Consultations

27. In Fiscal Year 2025, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report?

There were no consultations reported pending.

N/A. The Agency did not have any consultations pending from FY 2024.

28. 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 2024 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

Additional Information Regarding Ten Oldest

29. If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please explain why and provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those "ten oldest" requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2026.

Yes.

F. Additional Information about FOIA Processing

30. Were there any requests at your agency the subject of FOIA litigation during the reporting period? If so, please describe the impact on your agency's overall FOIA request processing and backlog. If possible, please indicate:

N/A