

MSPB FOIA ANNUAL REPORT

FOR
10/01/2013
THROUGH
09/30/2014

The following **Annual Freedom of Information Act** report covers the Period 10/01/2013, through 09/30/2014, as required by 5 U.S.C. 552.

I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT

1. Name, Title, Address, and Telephone Number

Darryl Aaron
National FOIA Officer
Office of the Clerk of the Board
Merit Systems Protection Board
1615 M Street, N.W.
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20419
202-254-4474

2. Electronic address for Report on the agency web site.

Electronic copies of the report are on the Merit Systems Protection Board's (MSPB) website at www.mspb.gov.

3. How to obtain a copy of the report in paper form.

Paper copies of the report may be obtained by writing to the above address.

II. MAKING A FOIA REQUEST

1. The MSPB has prepared a FOIA Guide, which is on its website. Paper copies are also available in the MSPB's headquarters library, by calling 202-653-7200, or by emailing foia@mspb.gov. Requesters also will find contact information for the MSPB's FOIA Liaisons on its FOIAonline website:

<https://foiaonline.regulations.gov/foia/action/registered/home>

1. Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and emails of MSPB offices where FOIA requests can be filed are found below:

Atlanta Regional Office
401 W. Peachtree Street, NW
10th Floor
Atlanta, GA 30308-3519
(404) 730-2755
FAX (404) 730-2767
foiaat@mspb.gov

Northeastern Regional Office
1601 Market Street,
Suite 1700
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 597-9960

FAX (215) 597-3456
foiaph@mspb.gov

New York Field Office
26 Federal Plaza
Room 3137-A
New York, NY 10278-0022
(212) 264-9372
FAX (212) 264-1417
foiany@mspb.gov

Dallas Regional Office
1100 Commerce Street
Room 620
Dallas, TX 75242-9979
(214) 767-0810
FAX (214) 767-0102
foiada@mspb.gov

Washington DC Regional Office
1901 S. Bell Street
Suite 950
Arlington, VA 22202
(703) 756-6250
FAX (703) 756-7112
foiadc@mspb.gov

Western Regional Office
201 Mission Street
Suite 2310
San Francisco, CA 94105-1831
(415) 904-6772
FAX (415) 904-0580
foiasf@mspb.gov

Denver Field Office
165 South Union Boulevard
Suite 318
Lakewood, CO 80228-2211
(303) 969-5101
FAX (303) 969-5109
foiade@mspb.gov

III. ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS

1. Acronyms used :

Acronym	Definition
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2. Definition of terms used in this report :

- a. **Administrative Appeal** - a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a FOIA determination made by the agency at the initial request level.
- b. **Average Number** - the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.
- c. **Backlog** - the number of requests or administrative appeals that are pending at an agency at the end of the fiscal year that are beyond the statutory time period for a response.
- d. **Component** - for agencies that process requests on a decentralized basis, a "component" is an entity, also sometimes referred to as an Office, Division, Bureau, Center, or Directorate, within the agency that processes FOIA requests. The FOIA now requires that agencies include in their Annual FOIA Report data for both the agency overall and for each principal component of the agency.
- e. **Consultation** - the procedure whereby the agency responding to a FOIA request first forwards a record to another agency for its review because that other agency has an interest in the document. Once the agency in receipt of the consultation finishes its review of the record, it responds back to the agency that forwarded it. That agency, in turn, will then respond to the FOIA requester.
- f. **Exemption 3 Statute** - a federal statute that exempts information from disclosure and which the agency relies on to withhold information under subsection (b)(3) of the FOIA.
- g. **FOIA Request** - a FOIA request is generally a request to a federal agency for access to records concerning another person (i.e., a "third-party" request), or concerning an organization, or a particular topic of interest. FOIA requests also include requests made by requesters seeking records concerning themselves (i.e., "first-party" requests) when those requesters are not subject to the Privacy Act, such as non-U.S. citizens. Moreover, because all first-party requesters should be afforded the benefit of both the access provisions of the FOIA as well as those of the Privacy Act, FOIA requests also include any first-party requests where an agency determines that it must search beyond its Privacy Act "systems of records" or where a Privacy Act exemption applies, and the agency looks to FOIA to afford the greatest possible access. All requests which require the agency to utilize the FOIA in responding to the requester are included in this Report.

Additionally, a FOIA request includes records referred to the agency for processing and direct response to the requester. It does not, however, include records for which the agency has received a consultation from another agency. (Consultations are reported separately in Section XII of this Report.)

- h. **Full Grant** - an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request
- i. **Full Denial** - an agency decision not to release any records in response to a FOIA request because the records are exempt in their entireties under one or more of the FOIA exemptions, or because of a procedural reason, such as when no records could be located.
- j. **Median Number** - the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
- k. **Multi-Track Processing** - a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests granted expedited processing are placed in yet another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.
- l. **Expedited Processing** - an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester satisfies the requirements for expedited processing as set forth in the statute and in agency regulations.

- m. **Simple Request** - a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.
 - n. **Complex Request** - a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the high volume and/or complexity of the records requested.
 - o. **Partial Grant/Partial Denial** - in response to a FOIA request, an agency decision to disclose portions of the records and to withhold other portions that are exempt under the FOIA, or to otherwise deny a portion of the request for a procedural reason.
 - p. **Pending Request or Pending Administrative Appeal** - a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has not taken final action in all respects.
 - q. **Perfected Request** - a request for records which reasonably describes such records and is made in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any) and procedures to be followed.
 - r. **Processed Request or Processed Administrative Appeal** - a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has taken final action in all respects.
 - s. **Range in Number of Days** - the lowest and highest number of days to process requests or administrative appeals.
 - t. **Time Limits** - the time period in the statute for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily twenty working days from receipt of a perfected FOIA request).
3. Concise descriptions of the nine FOIA exemptions :
- a. **Exemption 1** - classified national defense and foreign relations information
 - b. **Exemption 2** - internal agency rules and practices
 - c. **Exemption 3** - information that is prohibited from disclosure by another federal law
 - d. **Exemption 4** - trade secrets and other confidential business information
 - e. **Exemption 5** - inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges
 - f. **Exemption 6** - information involving matters of personal privacy
 - g. **Exemption 7** - records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent that the production of those records (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual
 - h. **Exemption 8** - information relating to the supervision of financial institutions
 - i. **Exemption 9** - geological information on wells

IV. EXEMPTION 3 STATUTES

Statute	Type of Information Withheld	Case Citation	Number of Times Relied Upon per Component	Total Number of Times Relied Upon by Agency
Pub. L. No. 107347	Data that are required for exclusively statistical purposes under a pledge of confidentiality	N/A	OCB : 1	1

V. FOIA REQUESTS

A. Received, Processed and Pending FOIA Requests				
	Number of Requests Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
TOTAL	12	221	212	21

* Due to a clerical error the FY13 report listed 5 requests pending at the end of the fiscal, this should be 12.

B.(1) Disposition of FOIA Requests -- All Processed Requests													
	Number of Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions												
	Number of Full Grants	Number of Partial Grants / Partial Denials	Number of Full Denials Based on Exemptions	No records	All records referred to another agency	Request withdrawn	Fee-related reason	Records not reasonably described	Improper FOIA request for other reason	Not an agency record	Duplicate request	Other	TOTAL
TOTAL	103	40	4	43	8	9	0	2	3	0	0	0	212

B.(2) Disposition of FOIA Requests -- Other Reasons for Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions		
	Description of Other Reasons for Denials from Chart B.(1) & Number of Times Those Reasons Were Relied Upon	TOTAL

* N/A

B.(3) Disposition of FOIA Requests -- Number of Times Exemptions Applied														
	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex. 7(D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
TOTAL	0	0	1	0	6	30	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OF INITIAL DETERMINATIONS OF FOIA REQUESTS

A. Received, Processed and Pending FOIA Appeals				
	Number of Appeals Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
TOTAL	1	10	9	2

B. Disposition of Administrative Appeals All Processed Appeals					
	Number of Affirmed on Appeal	Number Partially Affirmed & Partially Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Completely Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Appeals Closed for Other Reasons	TOTAL
TOTAL	2	2	2	3	9

C.(1) Reasons for Denial on Appeal Number of Times Exemptions Applied														
	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex. 7(D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
TOTAL														

C.(2) Reasons for Denial on Appeal Reasons Other than Exemptions												
	No records	Records referred at initial request level	Request withdrawn	Fee-related reason	Records not reasonably described	Improper request for other reasons	Not agency record	Duplicate request or appeal	Request in litigation	Appeal based solely on denial for expedited processing	Other	
TOTAL	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	

C.(3) Reasons for Denial on Appeal Other Reasons	
	TOTAL
Description of Other Reasons for Denials from Chart C.(2) & Number of Times Those Reasons Were Relied Upon	

C.(4) Response Time for Administrative Appeals				
	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
TOTAL	4	9.44	< 1	20

C.(5) Ten Oldest Pending Administrative Appeals										
	10th Oldest Appeal and Number of Days Pending	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Appeal and Number of Days Pending
TOTAL										2014-06-10 78

VII. FOIA REQUESTS: RESPONSE TIME FOR PROCESSED AND PENDING REQUESTS

A. Processed Requests -- Response Time for All Processed Perfected Requests												
	SIMPLE				COMPLEX				EXPEDITED			
	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
TOTAL	8	10.6	< 1	51	39	40.63	17	94	14	14	14	14

B. Processed Requests Response Time for Perfected Requests in Which Information Was Granted												
	SIMPLE				COMPLEX				EXPEDITED PROCESSING			
	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
TOTAL	9	11.4	< 1	37	40.5	41.32	17	94	-	-	-	-

C. Processed Requests Response Time in Day Increments														
Simple Requests														
	1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
TOTAL	152	24	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	177

Complex Requests														
	1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
TOTAL	1	19	10	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	34

Expedited Requests														
	1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
TOTAL	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1

D. Pending Requests All Pending Perfected Requests									
	SIMPLE			COMPLEX			EXPEDITED		
	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days
TOTAL	13	14	10.4	8	82.5	86	0	-	-

E. Pending Requests Ten Oldest Pending Perfected Requests										
	10th Oldest Request and Number of Days Pending	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Request and Number of Days Pending
TOTAL	2014-09-25 3	2014-09-10 14	2014-09-09 15	2014-09-05 17	2014-07-08 59	2014-07-28 70	2014-06-10 78	2014-05-28 87	2014-05-22 90	2014-03-25 132

VIII. REQUESTS FOR EXPEDITED PROCESSING AND REQUESTS FOR FEE WAIVER

A. Requests for Expedited Processing					
	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate	Number Adjudicated Within Ten Calendar Days
TOTAL	1	21	1	4.35	20

B. Requests for Fee Waiver				
	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate

* N/A

IX. FOIA PERSONNEL AND COSTS

	PERSONNEL			COSTS		
	Number of Full-Time FOIA Employees	Number of Equivalent Full-Time FOIA Employees	Total Number of Full-Time FOIA Staff	Processing Costs	Litigation-Related Costs	Total Costs
TOTAL	1	1	2	\$238,958.00	\$0.00	\$238,958.00

X. FEES COLLECTED FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS

	Total Amount of Fees Collected	Percentage of Total Costs
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* N/A

XI. FOIA REGULATIONS

1. For more information, please consult the following website:
<http://www.mspb.gov/netsearch/viewdocs.aspx?docnumber=278732&version=279052&application=HTML>

XII. BACKLOGS, CONSULTATIONS, AND COMPARISONS

A. Backlogs of FOIA Requests and Administrative Appeals		
	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of Fiscal Year	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of Fiscal Year
TOTAL	10	1

B. Consultations on FOIA Requests Received, Processed, and Pending Consultations				
	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Pending as of Start of the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Processed During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Pending as of End of the Fiscal Year
TOTAL	0	1	1	0

C. Consultations on FOIA Requests Ten Oldest Consultations Received from Other Agencies and Pending										
	10th Oldest Consultation and Number of Days Pending	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Consultation and Number of Days Pending

D. Comparison of Numbers of Requests from Previous and Current Annual Report Requests Received, Processed, and Backlogged				
	NUMBER OF REQUESTS RECEIVED		NUMBER OF REQUESTS PROCESSED	
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
TOTAL	207	221	202	212

	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
TOTAL	0	10

E. Comparison of Numbers of Administrative Appeals from Previous and Current Annual Report Appeals Received, Processed, and Backlogged				
	NUMBER OF APPEALS RECEIVED		NUMBER OF APPEALS PROCESSED	
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
TOTAL	18	10	18	9

	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
TOTAL	1	1