

Corporation for National and Community Service Operating as AmeriCorps 2025 Chief FOIA Officer Report

Section I: FOIA Leadership and Applying the Presumption of Openness

The guiding principle underlying the Attorney General's 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. The FOIA requires each agency to designate a Chief FOIA Officer who is a senior official at least 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.

Acting General Counsel Andrea Grill

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?

AmeriCorps' core mission is to improve lives, strengthen communities, and foster civic engagement through service and volunteering. AmeriCorps' General Counsel, who serves as the agency's Chief FOIA Officer, has regularly emphasized to senior staff and program leaders that providing records to the public via the FOIA is not only a legal requirement, but that such transparency supports and strengthens the communities we serve, and who serve America through our programs – and thus supports our mission.

B. Presumption of Openness

4. The Attorney General’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?

AmeriCorps now provides such confirmation in its response letters when information has been withheld per exemption.

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 interested 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) 2024 (separate full and partial if possible);
- the number of times a *Glomar* response was issued by exemption during FY 2024 (e.g., Exemption 7(C) – 20 times, Exemption 1 – 5 times).

AmeriCorps has not made any Glomar responses.

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

When there is reasonable basis to consider releasing information that may be protected by one or more FOIA exemptions, the FOIA officer who processes requests consults with the Chief FOIA Officer.

Section II: Ensuring Fair and Effective FOIA Administration

The Attorney General’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.” The Attorney General 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.

AmeriCorps' FOIA staff takes full advantage of the training offered by the Department of Justice. Because FOIA search requests are generally sent to office and program leads, the Chief FOIA Officer has also provided one-on-one training when new staff come on board in these positions.

2. Did your FOIA professionals or the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend substantive FOIA training during the reporting period such as that 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.

Exemptions 1, 4, 5, 7, privacy considerations.

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.

100% of staff with primary FOIA responsibilities attended training.

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 the 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 Chief FOIA Officer provided one-on-one training for senior staff. The FOIA Officer provides ad hoc training to supplement comprehensive training done in earlier years for the same staff. The Office of General Counsel posts a FOIA guidance document on the agency's intranet.

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, the FOIA Officer who processes requests reaches out directly when a request needs clarification or the scope is very large.

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.

N/A

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 2024 (please provide a total number or an estimate of the number for the agency overall).

The agency's FOIA Public Liaison reports no requests for assistance in 2024.

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.

No changes are planned at this time. However, FOIA staffing is an ongoing consideration.

11. How does your agency use data or processing metrics to ensure efficient management of your FOIA workload? For example, case management reports, staff processing statistics, etc. In addition, please specifically highlight any data analysis methods or technologies used.

The sole FOIA Officer who processes requests maintains a spreadsheet to track processing, and meets regularly with the Chief FOIA Officer to discuss any obstacles to efficient processing that become evident from the data in the spreadsheet.

12. The federal [FOIA Advisory Committee](#), comprised of agency representatives and members of the public, was created to foster dialogue between agencies and the requester community, solicit public comments, and develop recommendations for improving FOIA administration. Since 2020, the FOIA Advisory Committee has issued a number of [recommendations](#). Please answer the below questions:

- Is your agency familiar with the FOIA Advisory Committee and its recommendations?

Yes.

- Has your agency implemented any of its recommendations or found them to be helpful? If so, which ones?

Recommendation 2022-07; Published an inventory of major agency systems; main FOIA contains a direct email link to submit requests

Recommendation 2022-10; monthly updates of agency FOIA logs

Recommendation 2023-01; identify the privilege that is the basis for any information or whole records withheld under Exemption 5

13. Optional – If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure fair and effective FOIA administration, please describe them here.

N/A

Section III: Proactive Disclosures

The Attorney General’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.

The FOIA Officer periodically reviews the agency’s external website and its FOIA page for (a)(2) compliance.

2. Does your agency post logs of its FOIA requests?

Yes, monthly.

- If so, what information is contained in the logs?

Request number, date, requester, the request itself, and the final disposition.

- Are they posted in CSV format? If not, what format are they posted in?

No; in PDF format.

- Please provide a link to the page where any FOIA logs are posted. If applicable, please provide component links.

Report PDFs are linked at <https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/foia-privacy-act>.

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).

For (a)(1) records encompassing categories (A), (B), (D), and (E), AmeriCorps published three proposed rules and four final rules in the Federal Register. The agency posts its Federal Register notices here:

*https://www.americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/federal-register-notices?_gl=1*gsxlix*_gcl_au*MTQxMDc0OTEzOS4xNzMxNjE5NjE0.*

For (a)(2) records:

- In 2024, AmeriCorps did not have any records that were requested and released three or more times.*
- The agency published four final orders/opinions. The PDFs are all linked here, in the Electronic Reading Room section: <https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/foia-privacy-act>.*

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

<https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/foia-privacy-act>

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 not taking steps to make posted information more useful, please explain why.

On the whole, the information most useful to AmeriCorps' user community relates to information regarding opportunities to serve, opportunities for grant funding, and the evaluation and related material gathered by the agency's Office of Research and Evaluation. Those are all accessed through tabs on the agency website's main page. For example, see here: <https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/open-government> and here: <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact> and here: <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>.

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.

AmeriCorps' FOIA personnel connect with the agency's IT team for the Major Systems Inventory.

7. Optional – Please describe the best practices used to improve proactive disclosures and any challenges your agency faces in this area.

N/A.

Section IV: Steps Take to Greater Utilize Technology

A key component of FOIA administration is using technology to make information available to the public and to gain efficiency in FOIA processing. The Attorney General'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.

AmeriCorps uses Everlaw to hold and review records.

3. Does your agency currently use any technology to automate record processing? For example, does your agency use machine learning, predictive coding, technology assisted review or similar 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.

N/A

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 2024 appear on FOIA.gov?

Yes.

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 2025.

N/A

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 2023 Annual FOIA Report and, if available, for your agency's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report.

The zip file link for the FY 2023 raw data can be found here:

<https://americorps.gov/about/agency-overview/foia-privacy-act>

The raw data for FY 2024 is not yet published.

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.

9. Optional – Please describe the best practices used in greater utilizing technology and any challenges your agency faces in this area.

N/A

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

The Attorney General'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 to 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.

People who are serving, or have served, through AmeriCorps programs have access to a hotline and an online account where they can ask for copies of their records. In 2024, we empowered two of our program offices – the connection with the agency that's most familiar to members – to respond directly when members and program alumni ask for their records.

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

As noted in Q. III.5 above, AmeriCorps has made access to data easier by posting research and evaluation results here: <https://americorps.gov/about/our-impact/evidence-exchange>.

B. Timeliness

4. For Fiscal Year 2024, 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 2024 Annual FOIA Report.

The average number of days was 0. We received no requests for expedited processing in FY 2024.

5. If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was above ten calendar days, according to Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2024 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?

Yes.

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 2024?

No.

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

No; it increased by one day.

9. Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2024 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.

66.7%

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?

N/A

C. Backlogs

Backlogged Requests

11. If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2024, 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 2023?

No.

12. If not, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.1, did your agency process more requests during Fiscal Year 2024 than it did during Fiscal Year 2023?

Yes; 49 in FY 2023 and 75 in FY 2024.

13. If your agency's request backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2024, 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

The backlog was due to an increase in the number of incoming requests (a 69% increase, from 58 in FY 2023 to 98 in FY 2024 – after a 24% increase in requests from FY 2022 to FY 2023, from 44 to 58) and an increase in the complexity of requests. One requester in particular made all of the increased number of requests in FY 2023 and all but four of the increased number of requests in FY 2024. They asked for comprehensive agency records concerning compliance with Executive Orders, large volumes of emails, and large quantities of data that existed as discrete records that needed to be compiled.

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 2024. 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."

30.6%

Backlogged Appeals

15. If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2024, 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 2023?

AmeriCorps had no appeal backlog in FY 2024.

16. If not, according to section XII.E.1 of the Annual FOIA Report, did your agency process more appeals during Fiscal Year 2024 than it did during Fiscal Year 2023?

N/A

17. If your agency's appeal backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2024, 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 2024. 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 2024 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."

N/A

D. Backlog Reduction Plans

19. In the 2024 guidelines for Chief FOIA Officer Reports, any agency with a backlog of over 1000 requests in Fiscal Year 2023 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 2024?

No. AmeriCorps' backlog is measures smaller than the threshold.

20. If your agency had a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in Fiscal Year 2024, please explain your agency's plan to reduce this backlog during Fiscal Year 2025.

N/A

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

Ten Oldest Requests

21. In Fiscal Year 2024, did your agency close the ten oldest pending perfected requests that were reported in Section VII.E. of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report?

No.

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 2023 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.

We closed 6 of the 10 pending perfected requests from FY 2023.

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

N/A

Ten Oldest Appeals

24. In Fiscal Year 2024, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in Section VI.C.5 of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report?

AmeriCorps had no pending appeals from FY 2023.

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 2023 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.

N/A

26. Beyond work 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 2024, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report?

AmeriCorps had no pending consultations from FY 2023.

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 2023 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 2025.

AmeriCorps has closed the remaining 4 pending perfected requests from FY 2023.

F. Additional Information about FOIA Processing

30. Were 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:

- The number and nature of requests subject to litigation
- Common causes leading to litigation
- Any other information to illustrate the impact of litigation on your overall FOIA administration

AmeriCorps had no FOIA litigation in 2024.