

§ 1820.3

Information Act Request” on both the envelope and the letter.

[54 FR 47342, Nov. 14, 1989, as amended at 59 FR 64843, Dec. 16, 1994; 65 FR 81325, Dec. 26, 2000]

§ 1820.3 Categories of requesters under the Freedom of Information Act.

There are four categories of requesters:

(a) *Commercial use requesters.* These requesters seek information for themselves or on behalf of someone else for a use or purpose that furthers commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. A requester will not be presumed to be a “commercial use requester” merely by submitting a request on corporate letterhead without further explanation of the use to which he plans to put the requested information. Similarly, a request submitted on the letterhead of a nonprofit organization without further explanation will not be presumed to be for a noncommercial purpose. The Office of Special Counsel will seek clarification from the requester where there is a reasonable doubt as to the intended use of the information.

(b) *Educational and noncommercial scientific institution requesters.* (1) An “educational institution” requester is associated with a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate or graduate higher education, or an institution of vocational or professional education, that operates a program or programs of scholarly research, and seeks the information for a scholarly or scientific research goal of the institution, rather than for an individual goal.

(2) A “noncommercial scientific institution” requester is associated with an institution that is not operated on a “commercial” basis (as that term is defined by paragraph (a) of this section), and which is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research, the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(c) *News media requesters.* These requesters actively gather news for entities that are organized and operated to

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publish or broadcast news to the public. Freelance journalists may be news media requesters if they can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through a news organization (such as by producing a publication contract or citing their past publication records), even though not actually employed by it. “News” means information about current events or information that would be of current interest to the public. News media “entities” include, but are not limited to, television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large, and publishers of periodicals (but only in those instances when they can qualify as disseminators of “news”) who make their products available for purchase or subscription by the general public.

(d) All other requesters.

§ 1820.4 Free or partially free search time and partially free copying.

(a) *Free search time and partially free copying.* Educational and noncommercial scientific institution requesters and news media requesters who are requesting records for noncommercial use are entitled to free copying for the first 100 pages and free search time.

(b) *Partially free search time and partially free copying.* Requesters who are not commercial use requesters, educational or noncommercial scientific institution requesters, or news media requesters are “all other requesters”, and are entitled to two hours of free search time and free copying for the first 100 pages. Requests from record subjects for records about themselves filed in a system of records will continue to be treated under the fee provisions of the Privacy Act, which permits the assessment of fees only for copying.

§ 1820.5 Waiver or reduction of fees.

(a) The Associate Special Counsel for Investigation, the Deputy Associate Special Counsel for Prosecution, the Associate Special Counsel for Prosecution, the Deputy Special Counsel, and the Special Counsel may authorize waiver or reduction of fees that could otherwise be assessed if disclosure of the information requested:

(1) Is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to