

PART 1600—DEFINITIONS

AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 2996.

§ 1600.1 Definitions.

As used in these regulations, chapter XVI, unless otherwise indicated, the term—

Act means the Legal Services Corporation Act, Pub. L. 93-355 (1974), as amended, Pub. L. 95-222 (1977), 42 U.S.C. 2996-29961.

Appeal means any appellate proceeding in a civil action as defined by law or usage in the jurisdiction in which the action is filed.

Attorney means a person who provides legal assistance to eligible clients and who is authorized to practice law in the jurisdiction where assistance is rendered.

Control means the direct or indirect ability to determine the direction of management and policies or to influence the management or operating policies of another organization to the extent that an arm's-length transaction may not be achieved.

Corporation means the Legal Services Corporation established under the Act.

Director of a recipient means a person directly employed by a recipient in an executive capacity who has overall day-to-day responsibility for management of operations by a recipient.

Eligible client means any person determined to be eligible for legal assistance under the Act, these regulations or other applicable law.

Employee means a person employed by the Corporation or by a recipient, or a person employed by a subrecipient whose salary is paid in whole or in major part with funds provided by the Corporation.

Fee generating case means any case or matter which, if undertaken on behalf of an eligible client by an attorney in private practice, reasonably may be expected to result in a fee for legal services from an award to a client from public funds or from an opposing party.

Financial assistance means annualized funding from the Corporation granted under section 1006(a)(1)(A) for the direct delivery of legal assistance to eligible clients.

Legal assistance means the provisions of any legal services consistent with

the purposes and provisions of the Act or other applicable law.

Outside practice of law means the provisions of legal assistance to a client who is not eligible to receive legal assistance from the employer of the attorney rendering assistance, but does not include, among other activities, teaching, consulting, or performing evaluations.

Political means that which relates to engendering public support for or opposition to candidates for public office, ballot measures, or political parties, and would include publicity or propaganda used for that purpose.

President means the President of the Corporation.

Public funds means the funds received directly or indirectly from the Corporation or a Federal, State, or local government or instrumentality of a government.

Recipient means any grantee or contractor receiving financial assistance from the Corporation under section 1006(a)(1)(A) of the Act.

Staff attorney means an attorney more than one half of whose annual professional income is derived from the proceeds of a grant from the Legal Services Corporation or is received from a recipient, subrecipient, grantee, or contractor that limits its activities to providing legal assistance to clients eligible for assistance under the Act.

Tribal funds means funds received from an Indian tribe or from a private foundation for the benefit of an Indian tribe.

[49 FR 21327, May 21, 1984, as amended at 51 FR 24827, July 9, 1986]

PART 1601 [RESERVED]

PART 1602—PROCEDURES FOR DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION UNDER THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

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AUTHORITY: 42 U.S.C. 2996d(g); 5 U.S.C. 552.

SOURCE: 63 FR 41196, Aug. 3, 1998, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1602.1 Purpose.

This part contains the rules and procedures the Legal Services Corporation follows in making records available to the public under the Freedom of Information Act.

§ 1602.2 Definitions.

As used in this part—

(a) *Commercial use request* means a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. In determining whether a requester properly belongs in this category, the Corporation will look to the use to which a requester will put the documents requested. When the Corporation has reasonable cause to doubt the requester's stated use of the records sought, or where the use is not clear from the request itself, it will seek additional clarification before assigning the request to a category.

(b) *Duplication* means the process of making a copy of a requested record pursuant to this part. Such copies can take the form of paper copy, microform, audio-visual materials, or machine readable electronic documents, among others.

(c) *Educational institution* means a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate or graduate higher education, or an institution of professional or vocational education which operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

(d) *FOIA* means the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. 552.

(e) *Non-commercial scientific institution* means an institution that is not operated on a "commercial" basis and which is operated solely for the pur-

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pose of conducting scientific research, the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(f) *Office of Inspector General records* means those records as defined generally in this section which are exclusively in the possession and control of the Office of Inspector General of the Legal Services Corporation.

(g) *Records* means books, papers, maps, photographs, or other documentary materials, regardless of whether the format is physical or electronic, made or received by the Corporation in connection with the transaction of the Corporation's business and preserved by the Corporation as evidence of the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Corporation, or because of the informational value of data in them. The term does not include, inter alia, books, magazines, or other materials acquired solely for library purposes.

(h) *Representative of the news media* means any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. The term "news" means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news media entities include 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. These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive. Moreover, as traditional methods of news delivery evolve (e.g., electronic dissemination of newspapers through telecommunications services), such alternative media would be included in this category. In the case of "freelance" journalists, they will be regarded as working for a news organization if they can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that organization, even though not actually employed by it.

(i) *Review* means the process of examining documents located in response to a request to determine whether any

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portion of any such document is exempt from disclosure. It also includes processing any such documents for disclosure. Review does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(j) *Search* means the process of looking for and retrieving records that are responsive to a request for records. It includes page-by-page or line-by-line identification of material within documents and also includes reasonable efforts to locate and retrieve information from records maintained in electronic form or format. Searches may be conducted manually or by automated means and will be conducted in the most efficient and least expensive manner.

(k) *Submitter* means any person or entity from whom the Corporation receives grant application records.

[63 FR 41196, Aug. 3, 1998, as amended by 68 FR 7437, Feb. 14, 2003]

§ 1602.3 Policy.

The Corporation will make records concerning its operations, activities, and business available to the public to the maximum extent reasonably possible. Records will be withheld from the public only in accordance with the FOIA and this part. Records exempt from disclosure under the FOIA may be made available as a matter of discretion when disclosure is not prohibited by law, and disclosure would not foreseeably harm a legitimate interest of the public, the Corporation, a recipient, or any individual.

§ 1602.4 Records published in the Federal Register.

The Corporation routinely publishes in the FEDERAL REGISTER information on its basic structure and operations necessary to inform the public how to deal effectively with the Corporation. The Corporation will make reasonable efforts to currently update such information, which will include basic information on the Corporation's location, functions, rules of procedure, substantive rules, statements of general policy, and information regarding how the public may obtain information, make submittals or requests, or obtain decisions.

§ 1602.5 Public reading room.

(a) The Corporation will maintain a public reading room at its office at 750 First Street, NE., Washington, DC, 20002. After June 1, 2003, the Corporation's public reading room will be located at its office at 3333 K Street, NW., Washington, DC, 20007. This room will be supervised and will be open to the public during the regular business hours of the Corporation for inspecting and copying records described in paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) Subject to the limitation stated in paragraph (c) of this section, the following records will be made available in the public reading room:

(1) All final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, and orders issued in the adjudication of cases;

(2) Statements of policy and interpretations adopted by the Corporation that are not published in the FEDERAL REGISTER;

(3) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to the staff that affect the public or recipients;

(4) Copies of records, regardless of form or format, released to any person in response to a public request for records pursuant to §1602.8 which the Corporation has determined are likely to become subject to subsequent requests for substantially the same records, and a general index of such records;

(5) The current index required by §1602.7;

(6) To the extent feasible, other records considered to be of general interest to recipients or members of the public in understanding activities of the Corporation or in dealing with the Corporation in connection with those activities.

(c) Certain records otherwise required by FOIA to be available in the public reading room may be exempt from mandatory disclosure pursuant to section 552(b) of the FOIA and §1602.9. Such records will not be made available in the public reading room. Other records maintained in the public reading room may be edited by the deletion of identifying details concerning individuals to prevent a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. In

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such cases, the record shall have attached to it a full explanation of the deletion. The extent of the deletion shall be indicated, unless doing so would harm an interest protected by the exemption under which the deletion is made. If technically feasible, the extent of the deletion shall be indicated at the place in the record where the deletion was made.

(d) Records required by the FOIA to be maintained and made available in the public reading room that are created by the Corporation on or after November 1, 1996, shall be made available electronically. This includes the index of published and reading room records, which shall indicate which records are available electronically.

(e) Most electronic public reading room records will also be made available to the public on the Corporation's websites at <http://www.lsc.gov> and <http://oig.lsc.gov>.

[63 FR 41196, Aug. 3, 1998, as amended by 68 FR 7437, Feb. 14, 2003]

§ 1602.6 Procedures for use of public reading room.

Any member of the public may inspect or copy records described in § 1602.5(b) in the public reading room during regular business hours. Because it will sometimes be impossible to produce records or copies of records on short notice, a person who wishes to inspect or copy records is advised to arrange a time in advance, by telephone or letter request made to the Office of Legal Affairs. Persons submitting requests by telephone will be notified whether a written request would be advisable to aid in the identification and expeditious processing of the records sought. Written requests should identify the records sought in the manner provided in § 1602.8(b) and should request a specific date for inspecting the records. The requester will be advised as promptly as possible if, for any reason, it may not be possible to make the records sought available on the date requested.

[63 FR 41196, Aug. 3, 1998, as amended by 68 FR 7437, Feb. 14, 2003]

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§ 1602.7 Index of records.

The Corporation will maintain a current index identifying any matter within the scope of § 1602.4 and § 1602.5(b) (1) through (5). The index will be maintained and made available for public inspection and copying at the Corporation's office in Washington, DC. The cost of a copy of the index will not exceed the standard charge for duplication set out in § 1602.13(e). The Corporation will also make the index available on its websites.

§ 1602.8 Requests for records.

(a) Except for records required by the FOIA to be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER (§ 1602.4) or to be made available in the public reading room (§ 1602.5), Corporation records will be made promptly available, upon request, to any person in accordance with this section, unless it is determined that such records should be withheld and are exempt from mandatory disclosure under the FOIA and § 1602.9.

(b) Requests. Requests for records under this section shall be made in writing, with the envelope and the letter or e-mail request clearly marked Freedom of Information Request. All such requests shall be addressed to the Corporation's Office of Legal Affairs. Requests by letter shall use the address given in § 1602.5(a). E-mail requests shall be addressed to info@smtp.lsc.gov. Any request not marked and addressed as specified in this paragraph will be so marked by Corporation personnel as soon as it is properly identified, and will be forwarded immediately to the Office of Legal Affairs. A request improperly addressed will not be deemed to have been received for purposes of the time period set forth in paragraph (i) of this section until it has been received by the Office of Legal Affairs. Upon receipt of an improperly addressed request, the General Counsel or designee shall notify the requester of the date on which the time period began.

(c) A request must reasonably describe the records requested so that employees of the Corporation who are familiar with the subject area of the request are able, with a reasonable amount of effort, to determine which particular records are within the scope

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of the request. If it is determined that a request does not reasonably describe the records sought, the requester shall be so informed and provided an opportunity to confer with Corporation personnel in order to attempt to reformulate the request in a manner that will meet the needs of the requester and the requirements of this paragraph.

(d) To facilitate the location of records by the Corporation, a requester should try to provide the following kinds of information, if known:

(1) The specific event or action to which the record refers;

(2) The unit or program of the Corporation which may be responsible for or may have produced the record;

(3) The date of the record or the date or period to which it refers or relates;

(4) The type of record, such as an application, a grant, a contract, or a report;

(5) Personnel of the Corporation who may have prepared or have knowledge of the record;

(6) Citations to newspapers or publications which have referred to the record.

(e) The Corporation is not required to create a record or to perform research to satisfy a request.

(f) Estimated fees. The Corporation shall advise the requester of any estimated fees as promptly as possible. The Corporation may require that fees be paid in advance, in accordance with §1602.13(i), and the Corporation will advise a requester as promptly as possible if the fees are estimated to exceed \$25 or any limit indicated by the requester.

(g) Any request for a waiver or reduction of fees should be included in the FOIA request, and any such request should indicate the grounds for a waiver or reduction of fees, as set out in §1602.13(f). The Corporation shall respond to such request as promptly as possible.

(h) Format. The Corporation will provide records in the form or format indicated by the requester to the extent such records are readily reproducible in the requested form or format.

(i)(1) The General Counsel or designee, upon request for any records made in accordance with this section, except in the case of a request for Office of Inspector General records, shall

make an initial determination of whether to comply with or deny such request and dispatch such determination to the requester within 20 days (excepting Saturdays, Sundays, and legal public holidays) after receipt of such request, except for unusual circumstances, in which case the time limit may be extended for up to 10 working days by written notice to the requester setting forth the reasons for such extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be dispatched.

(2) Initial response/delays. If the General Counsel or designee determines that a request or portion thereof is for Office of Inspector General records, the General Counsel or designee shall promptly refer the request or portion thereof to the Office of Inspector General and send notice of such referral to the requester. In such case, the Counsel to the Inspector General or designee shall make an initial determination of whether to comply with or deny such request and dispatch such determination to the requester within 20 working days after receipt of such request, except for unusual circumstances, in which case the time limit may be extended for up to 10 working days by written notice to the requester setting forth the reasons for such extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be dispatched.

(3) Unusual circumstances. As used in this part, "unusual circumstances" are limited to the following, but only to the extent reasonably necessary for the proper processing of the particular request:

(i) The need to search for and collect the requested records from establishments that are separate from the office processing the request;

(ii) The need to search for, collect, and appropriately examine a voluminous amount of separate and distinct records which are demanded in a single request; or

(iii) The need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another agency or organization, such as a recipient, having a substantial interest in the determination of the request or among two or more components of the Corporation

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having substantial subject matter interest therein.

(j) If a request is particularly broad or complex so that it cannot be completed within the time periods stated in paragraph (i) of this section, the Corporation may ask the requester to narrow the request or agree to an additional delay.

(k) When no determination can be dispatched within the applicable time limit, the General Counsel or designee or the Counsel to the Inspector General or designee shall inform the requester of the reason for the delay, the date on which a determination may be expected to be dispatched, and the requester's right to treat the delay as a denial and to appeal to the Corporation's President or Inspector General, in accordance with § 1602.12. If no determination has been dispatched by the end of the 20-day period, or the last extension thereof, the requester may deem the request denied, and exercise a right of appeal in accordance with § 1602.12. The General Counsel or designee or the Counsel to the Inspector General or designee may ask the requester to forego appeal until a determination is made.

(l) After it has been determined that a request will be granted, the Corporation will act with due diligence in providing a substantive response.

(m)(1) Expedited treatment. Requests and appeals will be taken out of order and given expedited treatment whenever the requester demonstrates a compelling need. A compelling need means:

(i) Circumstances in which the lack of expedited treatment could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual;

(ii) An urgency to inform the public about an actual or alleged Corporation or Federal government activity and the request is made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information;

(iii) The loss of substantial due process rights; or

(iv) A matter of widespread and exceptional media interest in which there exist possible questions about the Corporation's or the Federal government's integrity which affect public confidence.

(2) A request for expedited processing may be made at the time of the initial request for records or at any later time. For a prompt determination, a request for expedited processing must be properly addressed and marked and received by the Corporation pursuant to paragraphs (b) of this section.

(3) A requester who seeks expedited processing must submit a statement demonstrating a compelling need that is certified by the requester to be true and correct to the best of that person's knowledge and belief, explaining in detail the basis for requesting expedited processing.

(4) Within ten calendar days of its receipt of a request for expedited processing, the General Counsel or designee or the Inspector General or designee shall decide whether to grant the request and shall notify the requester of the decision. If a request for expedited treatment is granted, the request shall be given priority and shall be processed as soon as practicable. If a request for expedited processing is denied, any appeal of that decision shall be acted on expeditiously by the Corporation.

[63 FR 41196, Aug. 3, 1998, as amended by 68 FR 7437, Feb. 14, 2003]

§ 1602.9 Exemptions for withholding records.

(a) A requested record of the Corporation may be withheld from public disclosure only if one or more of the following categories exempted by the FOIA apply:

(1) Matter which is related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of the Corporation;

(2) Matter which is specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than the exemptions under FOIA at 5 U.S.C. 552(b)), provided that such statute requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a manner as to leave no discretion on the issues, or establishes particular criteria for withholding, or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld;

(3) Trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential;

(4) Inter-agency or intra-agency memoranda or letters which would not be available by law to a party other

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than an agency in litigation with the Corporation;

(5) Personnel and medical files and similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(6) Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes including enforcing the Legal Services Corporation Act or any other law, but only to the extent that the production of such law enforcement records or information:

(i) Could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings;

(ii) Would deprive a person or a recipient of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication;

(iii) Could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;

(iv) Could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, including a State, local, or foreign agency or authority or any private institution which furnished information on a confidential basis, and in the case of a record or information compiled by a criminal law enforcement authority in the course of a criminal investigation, information furnished by a confidential source;

(v) Would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions if such disclosure could reasonably be expected to risk circumvention of the law; or

(vi) Could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual;

(b) In the event that one or more of the exemptions in paragraph (a) of this section apply, any reasonably segregable portion of a record shall be provided to the requester after deletion of the portions that are exempt. The amount of information deleted shall be indicated on the released portion of the record, unless doing so would harm the interest protected by the exemption under which the deletion is made. If technically feasible, the amount of information deleted shall be indicated at the place in the record where the deletion is made. In appropriate cir-

cumstances, at the discretion of the Corporation officials authorized to grant or deny a request for records, and after appropriate consultation as provided in §1602.10, it may be possible to provide a requester with:

(1) A summary of information in the exempt portion of a record; or

(2) An oral description of the exempt portion of a record.

(c) No requester shall have a right to insist that any or all of the techniques in paragraph (b) of this section should be employed in order to satisfy a request.

(d) Records that may be exempt from disclosure pursuant to paragraph (a) of this section may be made available at the discretion of the Corporation official authorized to grant or deny the request for records, after appropriate consultation as provided in §1602.10. Records may be made available pursuant to this paragraph when disclosure is not prohibited by law, and it does not appear adverse to legitimate interests of the Corporation, the public, a recipient, or any person.

§1602.10 Officials authorized to grant or deny requests for records.

(a) The General Counsel shall furnish necessary advice to Corporation officials and staff as to their obligations under this part and shall take such other actions as may be necessary or appropriate to assure a consistent and equitable application of the provisions of this part by and within the Corporation.

(b) The General Counsel or designee and the Counsel to the Inspector General or designee are authorized to grant or deny requests under this part. In the absence of a Counsel to the Inspector General, the Inspector General shall name a designee who will be authorized to grant or deny requests under this part and who will perform all other functions of the Counsel to the Inspector General under this part. The General Counsel or designee shall consult with the Office of Inspector General prior to granting or denying any request for records or portions of records which originated with the Office of Inspector General, or which contain information which originated with the Office of Inspector General, but which

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are maintained by other components of the Corporation. The Counsel to the Inspector General or designee shall consult with the Office of the General Counsel prior to granting or denying any requests for records.

§ 1602.11 Denials.

(a) A denial of a written request for a record that complies with the requirements of § 1602.8 shall be in writing and shall include the following:

(1) A reference to the applicable exemption or exemptions in § 1602.9 (a) upon which the denial is based;

(2) An explanation of how the exemption applies to the requested records;

(3) A statement explaining why it is deemed unreasonable to provide segregable portions of the record after deleting the exempt portions;

(4) An estimate of the volume of requested matter denied unless providing such estimate would harm the interest protected by the exemption under which the denial is made;

(5) The name and title of the person or persons responsible for denying the request; and

(6) An explanation of the right to appeal the denial and of the procedures for submitting an appeal, including the address of the official to whom appeals should be submitted.

(b) Whenever the Corporation makes a record available subject to the deletion of a portion of the record, such action shall be deemed a denial of a record for purposes of paragraph (a) of this section.

(c) All denials shall be treated as final opinions under § 1602.5(b).

§ 1602.12 Appeals of denials.

(a) Any person whose written request has been denied is entitled to appeal the denial within 90 days by writing to the President of the Corporation or, in the case of a denial of a request for Office of Inspector General records, the Inspector General, at the addresses given in § 1602.5(a) and § 1602.8(b). The envelope and letter or e-mail appeal should be clearly marked: "Freedom of Information Appeal." An appeal need not be in any particular form, but should adequately identify the denial, if possible, by describing the requested record, identifying the official who

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issued the denial, and providing the date on which the denial was issued.

(b) No personal appearance, oral argument, or hearing will ordinarily be permitted on appeal of a denial. Upon request and a showing of special circumstances, however, this limitation may be waived and an informal conference may be arranged with the President or designee, or Inspector General or designee, for this purpose.

(c) The decision of the President or the Inspector General on an appeal shall be in writing and, in the event the denial is in whole or in part upheld, shall contain an explanation responsive to the arguments advanced by the requester, the matters described in § 1602.11(a) (1) through (4), and the provisions for judicial review of such decision under section 552(a)(4) of the FOIA. The decision shall be dispatched to the requester within 20 working days after receipt of the appeal, unless an additional period is justified pursuant to § 1602.8(i) and such period taken together with any earlier extension does not exceed 10 days. The decision of the President or the Inspector General shall constitute the final action of the Corporation. All such decisions shall be treated as final opinions under § 1602.5(b).

(d) On an appeal, the President or designee shall consult with the Office of Inspector General prior to reversing in whole or in part the denial of any request for records or portions of records which originated with the Office of Inspector General, or which contain information which originated with the Office of Inspector General, but which are maintained by other components of the Corporation. The Inspector General or designee shall consult with the President prior to reversing in whole or in part the denial.

§ 1602.13 Fees.

(a) No fees will be charged for information routinely provided in the normal course of doing business.

(b) Fees shall be limited to reasonable standard charges for document search, review, and duplication, when records are requested for commercial use;

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(c) Fees shall be limited to reasonable standard charges for document duplication after the first 100 pages, when records are sought by a representative of the news media or by an educational or non-commercial scientific institution; and

(d) For all other requests, fees shall be limited to reasonable standard charges for search time after the first 2 hours and duplication after the first 100 pages.

(e) The schedule for charges for services regarding the production or disclosure of the Corporation's records is as follows:

(1) Manual search for and review of records will be charged as follows:

(i) Band 1: \$16.15

(ii) Band 2: \$26.66

(iii) Band 3: \$39.15

(iv) Band 4: \$51.41

(v) Band 5: \$54.59

(vi) Charges for search and review time less than a full hour will be billed by quarter-hour segments;

(2) Computer time: actual charges as incurred;

(3) Duplication by paper copy: 13 cents per page;

(4) Duplication by other methods: actual charges as incurred;

(5) Certification of true copies: \$1.00 each;

(6) Packing and mailing records: no charge for regular mail;

(7) Express mail: actual charges as incurred.

(f) Fee waivers. A requester may seek a waiver or reduction of fees below the fees established under paragraph (e) of this section. A fee waiver or reduction request will be granted where LSC has determined that the requester has demonstrated that disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations of the Corporation or Federal government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(1) In order to determine whether disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the Corporation or Federal government, the Corporation shall consider the following four factors:

(i) The subject of the request: Whether the subject of the requested records concerns "the operations or activities of the Corporation or Federal government." The subject of the requested records must concern identifiable operations or activities of the Corporation or Federal government, with a connection that is direct and clear, not remote or attenuated.

(ii) The informative value of the information to be disclosed: Whether the disclosure is "likely to contribute" to an understanding of Corporation or Federal government operations or activities. The requested records must be meaningfully informative about government operations or activities in order to be likely to contribute to an increased public understanding of those operations or activities. The disclosure of information that is already in the public domain, in either a duplicative or a substantially identical form, would not be likely to contribute to such understanding where nothing new would be added to the public's understanding.

(iii) The contribution to an understanding of the subject by the public likely to result from disclosure: Whether disclosure of the requested records will contribute to "public understanding." The disclosure must contribute to a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the personal interest of the requester. A requester's expertise in the subject area and ability and intention to effectively convey information to the public shall be considered. It shall be presumed that a representative of the news media will satisfy this consideration.

(iv) The significance of the contribution to public understanding: Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute "significantly" to public understanding of Corporation or Federal government operations or activities. The public's understanding of the subject in question, as compared to the level of public understanding existing prior to the disclosure, must be enhanced by the disclosure to a significant extent.

(2) In order to determine whether disclosure of the information is not primarily in the commercial interest of

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the requester, the Corporation will consider the following two factors:

(i) The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest: Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure. LSC shall consider any commercial interest of the requester (with reference to the definition of “commercial use” in this Part) or of any person on whose behalf the requester may be acting, that would be furthered by the requested disclosure.

(ii) The primary interest in disclosure: Whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is “primarily” in the commercial interest of the requester. A fee waiver or reduction is justified where the public interest is greater in magnitude than that of any identified commercial interest in disclosure. LSC ordinarily shall presume that where a news media requester has satisfied the public interest standard, the public interest will be the interest primarily served by disclosure to that requester. Disclosure to data brokers or others who merely compile and market government information for direct economic return shall not be presumed primarily to serve a public interest.

(3) Where LSC has determined that a fee waiver or reduction request is justified for only some of the records to be released, LSC shall grant the fee waiver or reduction for those records.

(4) Requests for fee waivers and reductions shall be made in writing and must address the factors listed in this paragraph as they apply to the request.

(g) No fee will be charged under this section unless the cost of routine collection and processing of the fee payment is likely to exceed \$6.50.

(h) Requesters must agree to pay all fees charged for services associated with their requests. The Corporation will assume that requesters agree to pay all charges for services associated with their requests up to \$25 unless otherwise indicated by the requester. For requests estimated to exceed \$25, the Corporation will first consult with the requester prior to processing the request, and such requests will not be deemed to have been received by the

Corporation until the requester agrees in writing to pay all fees charged for services.

(i) No requester will be required to make an advance payment of any fee unless:

(1) The requester has previously failed to pay a required fee within 30 days of the date of billing, in which case an advance deposit of the full amount of the anticipated fee together with the fee then due plus interest accrued may be required. (The request will not be deemed to have been received by the Corporation until such payment is made.); or

(2) The Corporation determines that an estimated fee will exceed \$250, in which case the requester shall be notified of the amount of the anticipated fee or such portion thereof as can readily be estimated. Such notification shall be transmitted as soon as possible, but in any event within 5 working days of receipt by the Corporation, giving the best estimate then available. The notification shall offer the requester the opportunity to confer with appropriate representatives of the Corporation for the purpose of reformulating the request so as to meet the needs of the requester at a reduced cost. The request will not be deemed to have been received by the Corporation for purposes of the initial 20-day response period until the requester makes a deposit on the fee in an amount determined by the Corporation.

(j) When a requester has previously failed to pay a properly charged FOIA fee within 30 days of the date of billing, the Corporation may require the requester to pay the full amount due, plus any applicable interest, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of any anticipated fee before the Corporation begins to process a new request or continues to process a pending request (including appeals) from that requester.

(k) Interest may be charged to those requesters who fail to pay the fees charged. Interest will be assessed on the amount billed, starting on the 31st day following the day on which the billing was sent. The rate charged will be as prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717.

(l) If the Corporation reasonably believes that a requester or group of requesters is attempting to break a request into a series of requests for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, the Corporation shall aggregate such requests and charge accordingly. Likewise, the Corporation will aggregate multiple requests for documents received from the same requester within 45 days.

(m) The Corporation reserves the right to limit the number of copies that will be provided of any document to any one requester or to require that special arrangements for duplication be made in the case of bound volumes or other records representing unusual problems of handling or reproduction.

[63 FR 41196, Aug. 3, 1998, as amended by 68 FR 7437, Feb. 14, 2003]

§ 1602.14 Submitter's rights process.

(a) When the Corporation receives a FOIA request seeking the release of a submitter's grant application(s), or portions thereof, the Corporation shall provide prompt written notice of the request to the submitter in order to afford the submitter with an opportunity to object to the disclosure of the requested grant application(s) (or any portion thereof). The notice shall reasonably describe the grant application(s), or portions thereof, requested and inform the submitter of the process required by paragraph (b) of this section.

(b) If a submitter who has received notice of a request for the submitter's grant application(s) desires to object to the disclosure of the grant application(s) (or any portion thereof), the submitter must identify the information for which disclosure is objected and provide LSC with a written detailed statement to that effect. The statement must be submitted to the FOIA Officer in the Office of Legal Affairs and must specify the grounds for withholding the information under FOIA or this Part. In particular, the submitter must demonstrate why the information is commercial or financial information that is privileged or confidential. The submitter's statement must be provided to LSC within seven business days of the date of the notice from the Corporation. If the submitter

fails to respond to the notice from LSC within that time, LSC will deem the submitter to have no objection to the disclosure of the information.

(c) Upon receipt of written objection to disclosure by a submitter, LSC shall consider the submitter's objections and specific grounds for withholding in deciding whether to release the disputed information. Whenever LSC decides to disclose information over the objection of the submitter, LSC shall give the submitter written notice which shall include:

(1) A description of the information to be released and a notice that LSC intends to release the information;

(2) A statement of the reason(s) why the submitter's request for withholding is being rejected; and

(3) Notice that the submitter shall have 5 business days from the date of the notice of proposed release to appeal that decision to the LSC President, whose decision shall be final.

(d) The requirements of this section shall not apply if:

(1) LSC determines upon initial review of the requested grant application(s), or portions thereof, the requested information should not be disclosed;

(2) The information has been previously published or officially made available to the public; or

(3) Disclosure of the information is required by statute (other than FOIA) or LSC regulations.

(e) Whenever a requester files a lawsuit seeking to compel disclosure of a submitter's information, LSC shall promptly notify the submitter.

(f) Whenever LSC provides a submitter with notice and opportunity to oppose disclosure under this section, LSC shall notify the requester that the submitter's rights process under this section has been triggered. Whenever a submitter files a lawsuit seeking to prevent the disclosure of the submitter's information, LSC shall notify the requester.

[68 FR 7438, Feb. 14, 2003]

PART 1603—STATE ADVISORY COUNCILS

Sec. 1603.1 Purpose.