

**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA) ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY ADMINISTRATION
FOR FISCAL YEAR 2011**

I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT

1. Provide name, title, address, and telephone number of person(s) to be contacted with questions about the Report.

Name: Dawn Wiggins

Title: Freedom of Information Act Officer

**Agency/Component: Social Security Administration
Office of the General Counsel
Office of Privacy and Disclosure**

**Telephone Number: (410) 966-6645
FAX: (410) 966-4304**

**Mailing Address: Social Security Administration
Office of the General Counsel
Office of Privacy and Disclosure
Altmeyer Building, Room 617
6401 Security Boulevard
Baltimore, MD 21235-0001**

2. Provide an electronic link for access to the Report on the agency Web site.

Website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/foia/>

3. Explain how to obtain a copy of the Report in paper form.

To obtain a paper copy of this report, write to the address shown above, or phone, fax, or e-mail the Office of Privacy and Disclosure (OPD). Our e-mail address is foia.pa.officers@ssa.gov.

II. MAKING A FOIA REQUEST

1. Provide names, addresses, and telephone numbers of all individual agency components that receive FOIA requests.

Office of Privacy and Disclosure, Altmeyer Building, Room 617, 6401 Security Boulevard, Baltimore, MD 21235-0001, (410) 966-6645.

Division of Earning Records, 3-D-10 Metro West, 300 North Greene Street, Baltimore, MD 21290-0300, (410) 597-1730.

2. Provide a brief description of why some requests are not granted and an overview of certain general categories of the agency's records to which the FOIA exemptions apply.

In general, we do not disclose: classified records; internal personnel rules; records of investigation; information deemed confidential by law; personal information about living people; information that is otherwise legally privileged; or trade secrets found in confidential financial information within procurement records.

The following are some examples of agency records covered by FOIA exemptions:

- **Exemption 2, Internal Personnel Rules and Practices.** After *Milner v. U.S. Dep't of the Navy* (131 S. Ct. 1259 (2011)), we use Exemption 2 only to withhold information regarding federal agency personnel matters such as conditions of employment, hiring tests, work rules, disciplinary actions, and employee benefits.
- **Exemption 3, Prohibited by Law.** We cite this exemption when the law strictly prohibits disclosing the requested information or when we can withhold information under specific criteria set by law. For example, the Internal Revenue Code restricts the disclosure of tax return information, such as third-party addresses, employer's names, addresses, and earnings information. The Federal Information Security Management Act (FISMA) of 2002 (44 U.S.C. § 3541) protects sensitive information about our systems because its release would increase the opportunity of fraud and pose cyber-security risks to our networks. In addition, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (48 C.F.R. Part 15.5) protects from disclosure contract information submitted by unsuccessful bidders.
- **Exemption 4, Trade Secrets and Commercial or Financial Information.** We withhold information obtained from outside the Government that relates to "trade secrets and commercial or financial information which, if disclosed, would either cause substantial harm to a person's ability to compete with others in his business or impair the Government's ability to obtain needed information." These records may include detailed information concerning profits, losses, and business costs. This exemption does not apply to SSA program records; we generally use it to avoid disclosing procurement records.

- **Exemption 5, Interagency or Intra-agency Memorandums.** We withhold memorandums or letters that would not be available by law to a party, other than a party in litigation with the agency. We cite this exemption to withhold opinions (such as Office of the General Counsel opinions), recommendations, suggestions, or judgmental analyses exchanged or developed by SSA’s field and central office components before making policy or other decisions.
- **Exemption 6, Invasion of Privacy.** We withhold any personal information if disclosing it would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. For example, we would invoke this exemption when a requester asks if his neighbor receives Social Security benefits. Disclosing this information would not serve the public interest and would constitute an invasion of the neighbor’s privacy.
- **Exemption 7, Investigatory Records.** We withhold records compiled for law enforcement purposes if the production of this information could reasonably be expected to interfere with law enforcement proceedings, deprive a person of their right to a fair trial, disclose the identity of a confidential source, disclose investigative techniques or procedures, or endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement personnel. We apply this exemption to Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reports and information.

III. ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS

1. Provide any agency-specific acronyms or terms used in this Report.

OPD- Office of Privacy and Disclosure

SSA- Social Security Administration

SSN- Social Security number

FISMA- Federal Information Security Management Act

2. Include the following definitions 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 full denial or a partial denial of access to records under the FOIA, or any other FOIA determination such as a matter pertaining to fees.

- 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 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 that require the agency to use 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.
 - i. **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.
 - ii. **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.
 - iii. **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.
- l. **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.
- m. **Pending Request or Pending Administrative Appeal** – a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has not taken final action in all respects.
- n. **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.

- o. **Processed Request or Processed Administrative Appeal** – a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has taken final action in all respects.
- p. **Range in Number of Days** – the lowest and highest number of days to process requests or administrative appeals.
- q. **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. Include the following 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 (Low 2 only)
- 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. EXEMPTIONS 3 STATUTES

A. Exemption 3 Statutes Relied upon to Withhold Information

Statute	Type of Information Withheld	Case Citation	Number of Times Relied upon per Component	Total Number of Times Relied upon by Agency
26 U.S.C. §§ 6103, 6105 (Internal Revenue Code)	Certain tax return information and certain tax convention information	Church of Scientology v. IRS, 484 U.S. 9, 15 (1987) (26 U.S.C. § 6103); Pac. Fisheries, Inc. v. IRS, No. 09-35618, 2010 WL 3611645, at *2 (9th Cir. September 15, 2010) (unpublished disposition); Tax Analysts v. IRS, 217 F. Supp. 2d 23, 27-29 (D.D.C. 2002) (26 U.S.C. § 6105).	50	50
The Federal Information Security Management Act of 2002 (44 U.S.C. § 3541, <i>et seq.</i>)	Information security controls and programs that support Federal operations		3	3
41 U.S.C. § 253b(m)(1)	Contractor proposals that are in the possession or control of an executive agency and that have not been set forth or incorporated by reference into contracts	Margolin v. NASA, No. 09CV-00421-LRH-VPC, 2011 WL 1303221, at *6 (D. Nev. Mar. 31, 2011); Hornbostel v. U.S. Dep't of the Interior, 305 F. Supp. 2d 21, 30 (D.D.C. 2003), summary affirmance granted, No. 03-5257, 2004 WL 1900562 (D.C. Cir. Aug. 25, 2004).	2	2

V. FOIA REQUESTS

A. Received, Processed and Pending FOIA Requests

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	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
AGENCY OVERALL	834	32,456	32,445	845

B. (1) Disposition of FOIA Requests – All Processed Requests

1. Provide the number of request dispositions as described in the columns below. Select only the one column to report

	Number of Full Grants	Number of Partial Grants/ Partial Denials	Number of Full Denials Based on Exemptions	Number of Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions									Total
				No Records	All Records Referred to Another Component or Agency	Request Withdrawn	Fee-Related Reason	Records not Reasonably Described	Improper FOIA Request for Other Reason	Not Agency Record	Duplicate Request	Other *Explain in chart below	
AGENCY OVERALL	30,498	1622	125	95	0	4	37	43	6	10	5	0	32,445

B. (2) Disposition of FOIA Requests – “Other” Reasons for “Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions” from Section V, B (1) Chart

	Description of “Other” Reasons for Denials from Chart B (1) & Number of Times Those Reasons Were Relied upon	TOTAL
AGENCY OVERALL	Not Applicable	0

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
AGENCY OVERALL	0	12	55	46	99	1241	12	4	17	1	4	0	0	0

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OF INITIAL DETERMINATIONS OF FOIA REQUESTS

- If more than one component in the agency adjudicates administrative appeals, provide information for each appellate component, as well as for the agency overall.

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
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
16	98	100	14

B. Disposition of Administrative Appeals – All Processed Appeals

Number Affirmed on Appeal	Number Partially Affirmed & Partially Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number Completely Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Appeals Closed for Other Reasons	TOTAL
27	7	66 ¹	0	100

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
0	0	0	0	27	18	0	0	8	0	0	0	0	0

¹ The number of appeal decisions we reversed includes cases where we reversed the decision because the requester provided additional information required for us to disclose records. For example, requesters must provide proof of death when requesting records on deceased individuals. If the requester provides acceptable proof of death on an appeal, we reverse the decision and release the records.

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 of Request for Expedited Processing	Other *Explain in chart below
7	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

C. (3) Reasons for Denial on Appeal – “Other” Reasons from Section VI, C (2) Chart

Description of “Other” Reasons for Denial on Appeal from Chart C (2) & Number of Times Those Reasons Were Relied upon	TOTAL
	0

C. (4) Response Time for Administrative Appeals

Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
49	57	3	187

C. (5) Ten Oldest Pending Administrative Appeals

	10 th Oldest Appeal	9 th	8 th	7 th	6 th	5 th	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	Oldest Appeal
Date of Receipt of Ten Oldest Appeals	9/20/11	9/14/11	9/7/11	8/31/11	8/5/11	8/3/11	8/1/11	7/25/11	6/3/11	02/4/11
Number of Days Pending	9	13	18	23	41	43	45	50	86	171

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

A. Processed Requests - Response Time for All Processed Perfected Request

	SIMPLE				COMPLEX				EXPEDITED PROCESSING ²			
	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
AGENCY OVERALL	17	22	3	159	47	56	3	248	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

² SSA grants expedited processing if it involves an imminent threat to a person’s life or physical safety; if a member of the media makes the request to obtain information that the public has an urgent need to know and the records would cover an actual or an alleged Federal Government activity; or if the individual explains in detail that he or she may be denied a legal right, benefit, or remedy without the requested information.

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
AGENCY OVERALL	17	20	3	159	46	54	3	222	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

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
AGENCY OVERALL	28,616	2,226	412	205	200	135	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	31,796

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
AGENCY OVERALL	422	75	75	26	26	7	8	3	4	2	1	0	0	649

Requests Granted Expedited Processing

	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
AGENCY OVERALL	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

D. Pending Requests – All Pending Perfected Requests

	SIMPLE			COMPLEX			EXPEDITED PROCESSING		
	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
AGENCY OVERALL	828	6	11	17	20	32	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. Provide the dates of receipt of the ten oldest perfected requests pending as of the end of the fiscal year, and the number of days those requests had been pending.

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
AGENCY OVERALL	6/7/11 84	6/7/11 84	6/7/11 84	6/3/11 86	5/3/11 109	4/11/11 125	3/28/11 135	3/4/11 151	2/25/11 156	2/4/11 171

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
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	0	0	0

B. Requests for Fee Waiver

	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate
AGENCY OVERALL	2	18 ³	8	8

³ We review requests for fee waivers on a case-by-case basis. Only the SSA FOI Officer may waive or reduce a fee (in excess of \$7.50). We usually grant a fee waiver when it has been determined that furnishing the information will primarily benefit the public. We normally grant fee waivers from members of the media and educational and scientific institutions when we need only limited search time to respond, or if the request is duplicative.

IX. FOIA PERSONNEL AND COSTS

PERSONNEL

COST

	Number of “Full-Time FOIA Employees”	Number of “Equivalent Full-Time FOIA Employees”	Total Number of “Full- Time FOIA Staff” (The sum of Columns 1 & 2)	Processing Costs (At initial request and appeal levels)	Litigation- Related Costs	Total Costs
AGENCY OVERALL	23	60	83	\$3,982,633.00	\$38,507.00	\$4,021,140.00

X. FEES COLLECTED FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS

	Total Amount of Fees Collected	Percentage of Total Costs
AGENCY OVERALL	\$1,482,213.00 ⁴	37%

⁴ Because of system enhancements and reporting changes implemented in FY 2009, we no longer report in this calculation the fees we collected from our first-party requests. Therefore, the fees collected are significantly lower than that provided in past reports. Most of the fees we collect from first-parties for earnings records and Social Security Number verifications are not based on the FOIA, but on a separate provision for fee charging found in section 1106(c) of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1306(c)).

XI. FOIA REGULATIONS

Website: <http://www.socialsecurity.gov/foia/> (click on the link entitled Social Security Law, Regulations & Related Guidance)

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
AGENCY OVERALL	38	7

1. Discuss/explain the backlog here (optional).

In FY 2011, SSA again reduced its backlog of FOIA requests. We largely attribute the reduction to implementing improvements emanating from a comprehensive review of our FOIA process. We created a FOIA Case Processing Working Group that examined each phase of our process and looked for ways to reduce processing time and maximize our existing technology. We implemented several of the working group’s recommendations. Additionally, we consulted with other Federal agencies to identify best practices we could implement to reduce FOIA processing time. We also devoted extra resources at the end of FY 2011 to process backlogged cases. In FY 2012, we will continue to look for ways to reduce our backlog.

B. Consultations on FOIA Requests – Received, Processed, and Pending Consultations

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were <u>Pending</u> at the SSA as of <u>Start</u> of the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations <u>Received</u> from Other Agencies During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were <u>Processed</u> by the SSA During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were <u>Pending</u> at the SSA as of <u>End</u> of the Fiscal Year
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	0	0

C. Consultations on FOIA Requests – Ten Oldest Consultations Received from Other Agencies and Pending at Your Agency

Agency Overall	10 th Oldest Consultation and Number of Days Pending	9 th	8 th	7 th	6 th	5 th	4 th	3 rd	2 nd	Oldest Consultation and Number of Days Pending
	Date	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of Days	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

D. Comparison of Numbers of Requests from Previous and Current Annual Report – Requests Received, Processed, and Backlogged

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	NUMBER OF REQUESTS <u>RECEIVED</u>		NUMBER OF REQUESTS <u>PROCESSED</u>	
	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
AGENCY OVERALL	32,997	32,456	33,012	32,445

	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
AGENCY OVERALL	68	38

E. Comparison of Numbers of Administrative Appeals from Previous and Current Annual Report – Appeals Received, Processed, and Backlogged

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	NUMBER OF APPEALS <u>RECEIVED</u>		NUMBER OF APPEALS <u>PROCESSED</u>	
	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
AGENCY OVERALL	155	98	148	100

	Column 1	Column 2
	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
AGENCY OVERALL	3	7

F. Discussion of Other FOIA Activities (Optional)

Provide here any further information about the agency's efforts to improve FOIA administration.

In FY 2011, we created a FOIA Case Processing Workgroup to review the Agency's methods and procedures for responding to FOIA requests. The group recommended and implemented several strategies to increase efficiencies when processing requests. We are currently looking into new FOIA processing technology to provide better and faster service to requestors.

We conducted several in-house FOIA/Privacy Act (PA) training sessions for our analysts that focused on technical, legal, and hands-on training. Our office recently held an advanced FOIA training session including a discussion on the *Milner vs. U.S. Dep't of the Navy* 131 S. Ct. 1259 (2011) decision, displaying our initiative to learn and apply new strategies in order to more efficiently respond to the public.

Several members of the executive staff visited regional offices (ROs) to evaluate their FOIA process and share our FOIA process. These visits consisted of presentations on the procedures at headquarters, challenges faced by the ROs, and ways to address cases that require greater collaboration with the ROs. In meeting with the ROs, the executive staff was able to bring back new ideas to improve the administration of our FOIA processing.

We assigned one senior analyst to a 120-day detail in the Office of the Executive Director of OPD specifically to help implement new strategies for FOIA processing. The analyst revamped the standard language we use to respond to FOIA requests. She also developed guidance and discussed ideas with regional coordinators on methods of increasing efficiency in responding to requests. There was also outreach to components within the agency to promote better communication and enhance working relationships to facilitate a decrease in the time required to process requests.

We continue to encourage and sponsor analysts to attend outside FOIA/PA training. We sent several analysts to FOIA training offered by the American Society of Access Professionals and the Department of Justice. The analysts shared with their colleagues the "best practices" they learned while training with other Federal Government FOIA professionals. We implemented many of these "best practices," and continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with other agencies to improve our FOIA processes. We have reached out to several agencies to identify technology to better support our needs in processing FOIA requests.