

## **Appendix A:**

### **FOIA IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

#### **A. Characterize overall nature of agency's FOIA operations:**

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) maintains a decentralized FOIA process, in which we operate and staff 13 FOIA Requester Service Centers at each of our NASA Centers or components. This approach enables NASA to reduce our FOIA request processing time and provide a quicker response to the public requesters.

#### **B. List all areas selected for review:**

- (1) The initial FOIA request process was reviewed against our published regulations set forth at 14 CFR Part 1206.
- (2) The current backlog status at each of our decentralized FOIA offices.
- (3) The number of requests received during the past three years.
- (4) Our agency's FOIA processes and practices used at each of our decentralized FOIA processing locations.
- (5) FOIA staffing at each location.
- (6) FOIA request volume by Center offices.
- (7) Our current public Web sites.

#### **C. Include narrative statement summarizing results of review:**

The results of our agency's FOIA review revealed that we have satisfied the requirements of Title 5 USC §552, but we have noted, that some of our Center FOIA Requester Service Centers maintain a small backlog of cases. Further, during FY03 – FY04, we actually improved on our median dates, even though the public FOIA requests increased significantly after the Columbia Space Shuttle tragedy and other NASA public events. NASA's response to FOIA requests after the Columbia accident was particularly noteworthy. Following the accident, we established an internal process to ensure responsive records were provided and technical and legal review were conducted; this, coupled with immediately providing these documents in our electronic reading room, allowed the media and public in days rather than months.

One of the lessons learned following for the Columbia accident provided NASA an opportunity to recognize that NASA needed to improve our FOIA process. As we endeavor to improve our disclosure of information to the public, we are developing this quick-response approach for our future FOIA processing. Also, our internal review showed the need to improve our computer hardware and software, such as:

- Procuring redaction software – to allow a quicker, more efficient means of redacting agency records.

- Individual desk scanners – to quicken the process to redact electronically and the ability to download document into our electronic reading room immediately upon completion of our initial release determination.

We also learned from our review that, out of our 13 FOIA Requester Service Centers, we had serious single-point failures at six locations. Not having an effective Center personnel back-up at those locations could create a serious backlog.

Finally, we discovered an important need to team build internally with our search teams within the program offices and our initial legal reviews by our legal offices. Their help and assistance are vital in reducing the backlog and response time to finalize the initial release determinations.

D. List all areas chosen as improvement areas for agency:

- (1) FOIA Staffing
- (2) Equipment / Logistics
- (3) Web Site Improvements
- (4) Agency Reference Handbook
- (5) FOIA Database
- (6) FOIA Training
- (7) Communications

E. For each improvement area provide:

- (1) Name: **FOIA Staffing**
- (2) Brief statement of goal sought: This improvement is based on several factors:
  - a) Eliminating single point failures at our NASA Centers.
  - b) Ensure that all FOIA positions are primary jobs.
  - c) Seek adequate administrative support for higher volume Center offices.
  - d) Standardize staff personnel practices concerning series and grades.
- (3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken:
  - a) During the next several months, the agency's chief FOIA officer and chief FOIA public liaison officer will coordinate with the senior management at each NASA Center to ensure the identification of suitable employees that can be properly trained to serve as backups to our Centers' FOIA specialists.
  - b) During the above discussions at each Center, emphasis will be center around the importance of the assigned FOIA specialist's primary duties and functions. Any other duties must be secondary and must not hinder the FOIA process.
  - c) Seek an administrative support specialist to assist the Headquarters office in the daily processing of FOIA requests.
  - d) Discuss human resources at the agency level to standardized position description for agency FOIA personnel, including the development of a GS-7/9/11 information release specialist and a GS-12/13 senior information release specialist, in a standardized series.

- (4) Time milestones: These actions are expected to be completed in FY07. We will conduct an evaluation quarterly between now and FY08 on our improvement in this area.
- (5) Means of measurement of success: Overall success in this area will be based solely on the elimination of all single point failures at each of our 13 FOIA Requester Service Center locations and standardizing grades and series of our assigned FOIA staff, as stated above. We expect to achieve success once we have eliminated FOIA as a secondary function to other duties assigned.

1) Name: **Equipment/Logistics**

- 2) Brief statement of goal sought: Redaction software should be procured for each Center FOIA Requester Service Center and dedicated scanning support/equipment should be acquired for each Center office.
- 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Each Center FOIA public liaison officer will budget for these items with either year-end funds (if available) or as part of the FY07 budget.
- 4) Time milestones: First milestone will be September 30, 2006, to ascertain which of our 13 FOIA Requester Service Centers have received both hardware and software. Second and Final Milestone will be first Quarter, FY07, in which all FOIA processing offices should have received both items.
- 5) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent of the FOIA Requester Service Centers have both desktop scanners and redaction software for implementation.

1) Name: **Web Site Improvements**

- 2) Brief statement of goal sought: Redeveloping NASA's FOIA Web page to enhance the public's knowledge of our FOIA process. Redesign all subordinate FOIA web pages to incorporate the 'portal' design. Finally, consolidate the NASA Electronic Reading Room from 13 sites into one.
- 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Work with NASA Internet Services to development and design of the 'portal' look and feel among all subordinate FOIA sites.
- 4) Time milestones: Initial milestone is projected to be no later than 90 days from the end of FY06 to meet the expected completion date of September 30, 2006.
- 5) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent of the NASA Center Web pages updated with current information and having the 'portal' look and feel.

1) Name: **Agency FOIA Reference Handbook**

- 2) Brief statement of goal sought: It has been over two years since the last update to our agency's FOIA Reference Handbook. The goal is to revise and update all agency information pertaining to its FOIA process including any changes or update directly related to Executive Order (EO) 13392. Download this handbook directly to our FOIA Web page.
- 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: During the revision process, an ad hoc group of agency FOIA staff will conduct a page by page review, updating all changes since the last revision, deleting outdated information, and adding the newly adapted changes in accordance with EO 13392.

- 4) Time milestones: No later than September 30, 2006.
  - 5) Means of measurement of success: Updated, printed, and posted onto our agency's FOIA Web page.
- 1) Name: **FOIA Database**
  - 2) Brief statement of goal sought: Replace current FileMaker Pro database with an established commercial-based system which will allow the public to access and track the current status of its FOIA request.
  - 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Interview vendors and evaluate their FOIA database systems for procurement.
  - 4) Time milestones: Initial milestone - No later than September 30, 2006, for the review and decision of which commercial package to procure; have the new system up and operational no later than September 30, 2007, for implementation for FY08.
  - 5) Means of measurement of success: Procuring the commercial program and having it available for use by FY08.
- 1) Name: **FOIA Training**
  - 2) Brief statement of goal sought: Implement an annual mandatory FOIA training program to be held in conjunction with the annual NASA FOIA Conference for all assigned FOIA information release specialists and their designated backups.
  - 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Budget travel and training dollars at each of our Centers dedicated for annual FOIA training at American Society of Access Professionals Annual Western Regional FOIA Training Conference and an annual agency FOIA Conference.
  - 4) Time milestones: Annually during the budget process.
  - 5) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent participation.
- 1) Name: **Communications**
  - 2) Brief statement of goal sought: Establish a toll free phone number for use by the public to contact the agency's FOIA Requester Service Center.
  - 3) List of all distinct steps planned to be taken: Coordinate with the agency communications team to establish a toll free line and install in the agency's FOIA Requester Service Center. Post this information on NASA FOIA's Web page for public dissemination.
  - 4) Time milestones: No later than June 14, 2006.
  - 5) Means of measurement of success: 100 percent operational by the above date.

F. For the entire plan, group the improvement areas into the following time periods:

- 1) Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2006:
  - a. Equipment/Logistics
  - b. Agency FOIA Handbook
  - c. FOIA Training
  - d. Communications
- 2) Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2007:
  - a. FOIA Staffing

- 3) Areas anticipated to be completed after December 31, 2007:
  - a. FOIA Database

## Appendix A: (Modification 1)

### Add –

D. List all areas chosen as improvement areas for agency:

(8) Backlog Reduction

E. For each improvement area provide:

(1) Name: **Backlog Reduction**

(2) Brief Statement of goal sought: To reduce the existing backlog of pending FOIA requests by a substantial number each year, by periodically and consistently focusing on the existing backlog. We will identify the agency five (5) oldest FOIA requests at the beginning of each FY quarter and close those by the end of that FY quarter.

(3) List all distinct steps planned to be taken:

- a. On a quarterly basis, during our scheduled FOIA video teleconference (Vits), each NASA FOIA Requester Service Center will report out on their oldest FOIA requests, which will vary based on the volume of the FOIA Requester Service Center.
- b. A list of the agency's five (5) oldest FOIA requests will be created.
  1. This listing will provide the date of the request, date received, request's contact information, summary of the request, the current status, and any additional information concerning the process delay.
- c. Develop an action plan for each individual FOIA request.
  1. The Chief FOIA Public Liaison Officer will personally review each identified FOIA request, and will;
    - a. Annotate specific instructions to complete any pending actions.
    - b. Elevate the focus to the agency and or center senior management concerning compliance with the FOIA to eliminate any bottlenecks in the processing flow.
    - c. Distribute cases amongst the lower volume processing FOIA Requester Service Centers to make initial release determinations.
    - d. Require an immediate legal review of any initial determinations pending release.
  2. Based on these recommendations each identified NASA FOIA Requester Service Centers will be directed to:
    - a. Implement the actions directed by the Chief Public Liaison Officer.

- b. If directed, electronically distribute requests for processing to its regional partners to conduct an initial determination of responsive agency records to pending FOIA requests to reduce its backlog.
- d. Divide the 13 decentralized FOIA offices into three (3) regional areas which can provide additional assistance in processing FOIA requests.
  - 1. East Region – Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC), Glenn Research Center (GRC), Headquarters (HQ), Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Langley Research Center (LaRC).
  - 2. South Region – Johnson Space Center (JSC), Kennedy Space Center (KSC), Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC), NASA Shared Services Center (NSSC), and Stennis Space Center (SSC).
  - 3. West Region – Ames Research Center (ARC), Dryden Space Flight Center (DFRC) and NASA Management Office-Jet Propulsion Laboratory (NMO-JPL).
- (4) Time milestones: Identification of the five (5) oldest FOIA requests is to be conducted quarterly. Those identified will be evaluated and a timetable set for each individual FOIA request to be completed within FY Quarter. These actions are to be initiated First Quarter, FY07, and will continue quarterly till FY09.

- F. For the entire plan, group the improvement areas into the following time periods:
  - (1) Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2006:
  - (2) Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2007:
  - (3) Areas anticipated to be completed after December 31, 2007:
    - a. Backlog Reduction.

**Appendix B:  
NASA FOIA Requester Service Center Addresses**

NASA, FOIA Requester Service Center, Attention: Chief, FOIA Public Liaison Officer,  
Mail Stop 9P39, 300 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20546

NASA Ames Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Mail Stop 943-4, Moffett Field,  
CA 94035

NASA Dryden Flight Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Post Office Box 273,  
M/S 4839, Edwards, CA 93523

NASA Glenn Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, 21000 Brookpark Road,  
Cleveland, OH 44135

NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Greenbelt, MD 20771

NASA Headquarters, FOIA Requester Service Center, Mail Stop 5-K39, 300 E Street, SW,  
Washington, DC 20546

NASA Office of the Inspector General, FOIA Requester Service Center, Mail Stop 8-V79,  
300 E Street, SW, Washington, DC 20546

NASA Management Office – Jet Propulsion Laboratory, FOIA Requester Service Center,  
4800 Oak Grove Drive, Pasadena, CA 91109

NASA Johnson Space Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Houston, TX 77058

NASA Kennedy Space Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Kennedy Space Center, FL  
32899

NASA Langley Research Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Hampton, VA 23681

NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Huntsville, AL 35812

NASA Stennis Space Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Stennis Space Center, MS 39529

NASA Shared Services Center, FOIA Requester Service Center, Bldg 5100, Stennis Space  
Center, MS 39529



**Appendix C:  
NASA FOIA Public Liaison Officers and Service Center Contact Numbers**

**NASA**

Stephen McConnell, **Chief, FOIA Public Liaison Officer**  
 Judi Hollingsworth, **Deputy Chief, FOIA Public Liaison Officer**  
 (877) NAS-FOIA / (202) 358-FOIA

**Ames Research Center**

Kelly Garcia  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (650) 604-3273

**Dryden Space Flight Center**

Kim Lewis  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (661) 276-2704

**Glenn Research Center**

Angela Pierce  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (216) 433-2813

**Goddard Space Flight Center**

Joan Belt  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (301) 286-4721

**NASA Headquarters**

Kellie Robinson  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (202) 358-2265

**Office of the Inspector General**

Frank LaRocca  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (202) 358-2582

**Jet Propulsion Laboratory**

Dennis Mahon  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (818) 393-6779

**Johnson Space Center**

Stella Luna  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (281) 483-8612

**Kennedy Space Center**

Penny Myers  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (321) 867-9280

**Langley Research Center**

Cheryl Cleghorn  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (757) 864-2497

**Marshall Space Flight Center**

Judi Hollingsworth  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (256) 544-1837

**Stennis Space Center**

Joy Smith  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (228) 688-2118

**NASA Shared Services Center**

Koby South  
 FOIA Public Liaison Officer  
 (228) 813-6012