



Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia

Office of the Director

Fiscal Year 2010 Chief FOIA Officer's Report

I. Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

1. Describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA. To do so, you should answer the questions listed below and then include any additional information you would like to describe how your agency is working to apply the presumption of openness.

a. Describe how the President's FOIA Memorandum and the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines have been publicized throughout your agency.

All FOIA requests are processed by FOIA staff. FOIA staff are fully aware of the presumption of openness, the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines and the President's FOIA Memorandum, all of which have been distributed and discussed at numerous FOIA staff meetings. The vast majority of FOIA requests to the Agency are for Privacy Act protected material related to offender records. On those occasions where the request is for non-Privacy Act protected material, FOIA staff reinforce the presumption of openness principle to the affected offices.

b. What training has been attended and/or conducted on the new FOIA Guidelines?

FOIA staff have attended various DOJ training sessions including FOIA for Attorneys and Access Professionals, Annual FOIA Refresher, Chief FOIA Officer Report training and USDA FOIA training

c. How has your agency created or modified your internal guidance to reflect the presumption of openness?

The majority of our requests deal with Privacy Act protected records. Of the 719 requests received in FY 2010, 709 (98.6%) were for Privacy Act protected records.

d. To what extent has your agency made discretionary releases of otherwise exempt information?

CSOSA has not made discretionary releases since the non-Privacy Act protected records dealt with contractual information.

e. What exemptions would have covered the information that was released as a matter of discretion?

N/A

f. How does your agency review records to determine whether discretionary releases are possible?

Due to the nature of our records, we cannot make discretionary releases.

g. Describe any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied.

None

2. Report the extent to which the numbers of requests where records have been released in full and the numbers of requests where records have been released in part has changed from those numbers as reported in your previous year's Annual FOIA Report.

In FY 2010, CSOSA received 719 FOIA requests and made 38 full and 532 partial releases in response to those requests. In FY 2009, we received 911 requests and made 14 full and 725 partial releases.

II. Steps Taken to Ensure that Your Agency has an Effective System for Responding to Requests

a. Do FOIA professionals within your agency have sufficient IT support?

The IT support provided to FOIA professionals is sufficient.

b. Describe how your agency's FOIA professionals interact with your Open Government Team.

FOIA staff work with the Open Government Team/IT staff to maintain FOIA reports on the Agency's public website. The Agency has not yet launched its open government website.

c. Describe the steps your agency has taken to assess whether adequate staffing is being devoted to responding to FOIA requests.

FOIA requests decreased 21% between FY 2009 and FY 2010. The majority of the backlog is related to pending requests for additional information from the requestor. The Agency has not identified a need for additional FOIA staff.

d. Describe any other steps your agency has undertaken to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively.

The FOIA Section collaborated extensively with the Agency's Office of Information Technology to develop a system for electronic filing of FOIA requests. Our online FOIA request system to allow FOIA requests through our website was implemented in 2008. The system only accepts requests for FOIA information. Privacy protected records cannot be requested online.

As indicated in our FY 2009 report, we utilize a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software application to allow FOIA staff to process records electronically. The system was installed in May 2006. The ability to process records electronically has reduced our FOIA processing time substantially from our previous manual process. The system allows FOIA staff to recall previously processed records when a new request for the same information is received.

While the nature of our work results in fairly routine FOIA requests primarily related to offender records, our FOIA staff continue to work with agency staff to meet the requirements of the FOIA, including the need to respond to requests in the most efficient and timely manner.

III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

Approximately 99% of our requests involve Privacy Act protected records. However, in the interest of proactive disclosures we post agency policies on our website and maintain an electronic reading room that provides access to the agency FOIA Annual Reports, the Agency Strategic Plan, our IMPAC card holder listing and performance and accountability reports.

a. Has your agency added new material to your agency website since last year?

Yes

b. What types of records have been posted?

The Agency routinely posts our budget and financial reports and new information about our programs and services, research activities, and the changing demographics of our client population.

c. Give examples of the types of records your agency now posts that used to be available only by making a FOIA request for them.

Agency policies are now posted on our website.

d. What system do you have in place to routinely identify records that are appropriate for posting?

The bulk of our records are Privacy Act protected. However, we routinely post new information to our website as it is developed or becomes available. A recent example is our Offender Profile Report, developed in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police Department. Using this interactive map, the public can select a specific Police Service Area and view the number and demographic profile of the CSOSA clients residing in that community.

e. How do you utilize social media in disseminating information?

CSOSA does not currently use social media to disseminate FOIA-related information. The Agency does maintain a blog, *DC Public Safety*, for community supervision related issues.

f. Describe any other steps taken to increase proactive disclosures at your agency.

N/A

IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

1. Electronic receipt of FOIA requests:

a. What proportion of the components within your agency which receive FOIA requests have the capability to receive such requests electronically?

CSOSA is comprised of two components: the Community Supervision Program (CSP) and the Pretrial Services Agency (PSA). CSOSA receives and processes FOIA requests for both CSP and PSA electronically.

b. To what extent have you increased the number of components doing so since the filing of your last Chief FOIA Officer Report?

N/A

c. What methods does your agency use to receive requests electronically?

FOIA requests can be made by email or through the Agency website.

2. Electronic tracking of FOIA requests:

- a. What proportion of components within your agency which receive FOIA requests have the capability to track such requests electronically?

Our two Agency components, CSP and PSA, can track FOIA requests electronically.

- b. To what extent have you increased the number of components doing so since the filing of your last Chief FOIA Officer Report?

N/A

- c. What methods does your agency use to track requests electronically?

CSOSA uses an off-the-shelf software product to track FOIA requests. The system logs and assigns a unique identification number to each request.

3. Electronic processing of FOIA requests:

- a. What proportion of components within your agency which receive FOIA requests have the capability to process such requests electronically?

CSP processes FOIA requests electronically for both CSP and PSA.

- b. To what extent have you increased the number of components doing so since the filing of your last Chief FOIA Officer Report?

N/A

- c. What methods does your agency use to process requests electronically?

CSOSA uses an off-the-shelf software product to track FOIA requests. The system logs and assigns a unique identification number to each request.

4. Electronic preparation of your Annual FOIA Report:

- a. What type of technology does your agency use to prepare your agency Annual FOIA Report, i.e., specify whether the technology is FOIA-specific or a generic data-processing system?

The Agency utilizes a FOIA-specific software program to prepare the Annual FOIA Report.

- b. If you are not satisfied with your existing system to prepare your Annual FOIA Report, describe the steps you have taken to increase your use of technology for next year.

N/A

V. **Steps Taken to Reduce Backlogs and Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests**

1. If your agency has a backlog, report here whether that backlog is decreasing. That reduction should be measured in two ways. First, report whether the number of backlogged requests and backlogged administrative appeals that remain pending at the end of the fiscal year decreased or increased, and by how many, when compared with last fiscal year. Second, report whether your agency closed in Fiscal Year 2010 the ten oldest of those pending requests and appeals from Fiscal Year 2009, and if not, report how many of them your agency did close.

Our backlog is decreasing. In FY 2009 we had a backlog of 172 requests. In FY 2010, we had a backlog of 169 requests. All requests pending in FY 2009 have been processed and closed.

2. If there has not been a reduction in the backlog as measured by either of these metrics, describe why that has occurred. In doing so, answer the following questions and then include any other additional explanation:

- a. Is the backlog increase a result of an increase in the number of incoming requests or appeals?

N/A

- b. Is the backlog increase caused by a loss of staff?

N/A

- c. Is the backlog increase caused by an increase in the complexity of the requests received?

N/A

- d. What other causes, if any, contributed to the increase in backlog?

N/A

3. Describe the steps your agency is taking to reduce any backlogs and to improve timeliness in responding to requests and administrative appeals. In doing so answer the following questions and then also include any other steps being taken to improve timeliness.

- a. Does your agency routinely set goals and monitor the progress of your FOIA caseload?

The Agency's goal is to process FOIA requests with 20 workdays of the request and we monitor our progress in achieving that goal. In our backlogged requests, we are either awaiting receipt of offender records or awaiting further information from the requesters and have sent out letters to ascertain if the requested information is still needed.

- b. Has your agency increased its FOIA staffing?

No

c. Has your agency made IT improvements to increase timeliness?

No

d. Has your agency Chief FOIA Officer been involved in overseeing your agency's capacity to process requests?

Yes