



ANNOUNCEMENT

from the Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20559

PROPOSED RULES

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT; SCHEDULE OF FEES AND METHODS OF PAYMENT FOR SERVICES RENDERED

The following excerpt is taken from Volume 53, Number 2 of the Federal Register for Tuesday, January 5, 1988 (pp. 153 - 155)

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Copyright Office¹

37 CFR Part 203

[Docket No. RM 87-6]

Freedom of Information Act; Schedule of Fees and Methods of Payment For Services Rendered

AGENCY: Library of Congress, Copyright Office.

ACTION: Proposed rules.

SUMMARY: The Copyright Office's proposed fee schedule and fee waiver regulations comply with appropriate provisions of the Freedom of Information Reform Act of 1986 (Pub. L. 99-570), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Administrative Guidelines published in the Federal Register on March 27, 1987, Vol 52, No. 50, pages 10017-10020, and the Justice² Department fee waiver policy guide dated April 2, 1987. The Freedom of Information Reform Act of 1986 permits agencies to charge for direct costs of providing FOIA services such as search, duplication, and in certain cases, review. It also requires that agencies promulgate "procedures and guidelines for determining when such fees should be reduced or waived." The Copyright Office invites interested parties to comment on its proposed regulation to implement the Freedom of Information Reform Act of 1986.

DATE: Comments must be received on or before February 4, 1988.

¹Error; line should read: "Copyright Office"

²Error; line should read: "59, pages 10017-10020, and the Justice"

ADDRESS: Interested parties should submit ten copies of their written comments to: Office of the General Counsel, Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Department 100, Washington, DC 20540, or if by hand to: Office of the General Counsel, James Madison Memorial Building, Room 407, First and Independence Avenue SE., Washington, DC 20540.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dorothy Schrader, General Counsel, Copyright Office, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20559. Telephone (202) 287-8380.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The Freedom of Information Reform Act of 1986 (Pub. L. 99-570) requires agencies to adopt regulations that conform to the Act regarding procedures and fees for obtaining copies of agency records. It also provides that the fees established pursuant to the FOIA Reform Act do not supercede fees the agency is required to charge by another statute. The Copyright Act (Pub. L. 94-553) either establishes a fee schedule for copies and other services, or requires the Register of Copyright to establish fees for most copies or services, requested from this Office. Fees for requests for copies or service made under the Privacy Act (Pub. L. 93-579) will be assessed according to the fee schedule established pursuant to the administration of that Act and found in 37 CFR 204.6. Fees for searching and making copies of all other categories of records will be assessed according to the fees stated in the proposed rule or if not specifically stated, the Office will assess the direct costs incurred in filing

the request. Part 203.6 of 37 CFR, Chapter II would be substantially revised to conform to the requirements of the FOIA Reform Act.

List of Subjects in 37 CFR Part 203
Freedom of Information Act.

Proposed Regulation

In consideration of the foregoing, the Copyright Office proposes to amend Part 203 of 37 CFR, Chapter II.

PART 203—[AMENDED]

1. The authority citation for Part 203 would continue to read as follows:

Authority: Copyright Act of 1976, Pub. L. 94-553, 90 Stat. 2541 (17 U.S.C. 702).

2. Section 203.6 would be revised to read as follows:

§ 203.6 Schedule of fees and methods of payment for services rendered.

(a) *General.* The fee schedule of this section does not apply with respect to the charging of fees for those records for which the Copyright Act of 1976, title 17 of the United States Code (Pub. L. 94-553) requires a fee to be charged. The fees required to be charged are contained in section 708 of title 17 U.S.C., or have been established by the Register of Copyrights or Library of Congress pursuant to the requirements of that section. If the Copyright Office receives a request for copies or other services involving the public records or indexes of the Office or for copies of deposited articles for which a fee is required to be charged, the Office will notify the requester of the procedure established to obtain the copies or

services and the amount of the chargeable fees. Fees pursuant to title 5 U.S.C., section 552 for all other services not involving the public records of the Copyright Office will be assessed according to the schedule in paragraph (b) of this section. All fees so assessed shall be charged to the requester, except where the charge is limited under paragraph (c) of this section or where a waiver or reduction of fees is granted under paragraph (d) of this section. Requests by record subjects asking for copies of records about themselves shall be processed under the Privacy Act fee schedule found in 37 CFR 204.6.

(b) *FOIA requests.* In responding to requests under this part, the following fees shall be assessed, unless a waiver or reduction in fees has been granted pursuant to paragraph (d) of this section:

(1) For copies of certificates of copyright registration, \$4.

(2) For Copies of all other Copyright Office records not otherwise provided for in this section \$45 per page.

(3) For each hour or fraction of an hour spent in searching for a requested record, \$10, except that no search fee shall be assessed with respect to requests by educational institutions, non-commercial scientific institutions, and representatives of the news media. Search fees shall be assessed with respect to all other requests, subject to the limitations of paragraph (c) of this section. Fees may be assessed for time spent searching even if the search fails to locate any responsive records or where the records located are subsequently determined to be entirely exempt from disclosure.

(4) For certification of each document, \$4.

(5) Other costs incurred by the Copyright Office in fulfilling a request will be chargeable at the actual cost to the Office.

(6) For computer searches of records, which may be undertaken through the use of existing programming, the actual direct costs of conducting the search including the cost of operating a central processing unit for that portion of operating time that is directly attributable to searching for records responsive to a request, as well as the direct costs of operator/programmer salary apportionable to search (at no more than \$10.00 per hour or fraction thereof so spent).

(7) No review fees will be charged for time spent in resolving legal or policy issues affecting access to Office records. No charge will be made for the time involved in examining records to determine whether some or all such records may be withheld.

(c) *Fee limitations.* The following limitations or fees shall apply: ³

(1) Except for requesters seeking

records for commercial use the following will be provided without charge—

(i) The first 100 pages of duplication (or its cost equivalent), and

(ii) The first two hours of search (or its cost equivalent).

(2) No fees will be charged for ordinary packaging and mailing costs.

(d) *Waiver or reduction of fees.* (1) Records responsive to a request under 5 USC 552 shall be furnished without charge or at a charge reduced below that established under paragraph (b) of this section where the Office determines, based upon information provided by a requester in support of a fee waiver request or otherwise made known to the Office, that disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. Requests for a waiver or reduction of fees shall be considered on a case-by-case basis.

(2) In order to determine whether the first fee waiver requirement is met—i.e., that disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government—the Office shall consider the following four factors in sequence:

(i) The subject of the request: Whether the subject of the requested records concerns "the operations or activities of the government."

(ii) The informative value of the information to be disclosed: Whether the disclosure is "likely to contribute" to an understanding of government operations or activities.

(iii) The contribution to an understanding of the subject by the public likely to result from disclosures: Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to "public understanding."

(iv) The significance of the contribution to public understanding: Whether the disclosure is likely to contribute "significantly" to public understanding of government operations or activities.

(3) In order to determine whether the second fee waiver requirement is met—i.e., that disclosure of the requested information is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester—the Office shall consider the following two factors in sequence:

(i) The existence and magnitude of a commercial interest: Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure.

(ii) The primary interest in disclosure: Whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is "primarily in the commercial interest of the requester."

(4) Where only a portion of the requested records satisfies both of the requirements for a waiver or reduction of fees under this paragraph, a waiver or reduction shall be granted only as to that portion.

(e) *Notice of anticipated fees in excess of \$25.00.* Where the Office determines or estimates that the fees to be assessed under this section may amount to more than \$25.00, the Office shall notify the requester as soon as practicable of the actual or estimated amount of the fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance his willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. (If only a portion of the fee can be estimated readily, the Office shall advise the requester that the estimated fee may be only a portion of the total fee.) In cases where a requester has been notified that actual or estimated fees may amount to more than \$25.00, the requests will be deemed not to have been received until the requester has agreed to pay the anticipated total fee. A notice to a requester pursuant to this paragraph shall offer him the opportunity to confer with Copyright Office personnel in order to reformulate his request to meet his needs at a lower cost.

(f) *Aggregation of requests.* Where the Office reasonably believes that a requester or a group of requesters acting in concert is attempting to divide a request into a series of requests for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, the Office may aggregate any such requests and charge accordingly.

(g) *Advance payments.* (1) Where the Office estimates that a total fee to be assessed under this section is likely to exceed \$250.00, it may require the requester to make an advance payment of an amount up to the entire estimated fee before beginning to process the request, except where it receives a satisfactory assurance of full payment from a requester with a history of prompt payment.

(2) Where a requester has previously failed to pay a records access fee within 30 days of the date of billings, the Office may require the requester to pay the full amount owed, plus any applicable interest (as provided for in paragraph (h) of this section), and to make an advance payment of the full amount of any estimated fee before the office begins to process a new request or continues to process a pending request from that requester.

³Error; line should read:
"limitations on fees shall apply:"

(3) For requests other than those described in paragraph (g)(1) and (g)(2) of this section, the Office shall not require the requester to make an advance payment, i.e., a payment made before work is commenced or continued on a request. Payment owed for work already completed is not an advance payment.
(h) *Charging interest.* The Office may

assess interest charges on an unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the day on which the bill was sent to the requester. Once a fee payment has been received by a component of the Office, even if not processed, the accrual of interest shall be stayed. Interest charges shall be assessed at the rate prescribed in section 3717 of title 31 U.S.C. and shall accrue from the date of the billing.

Dated: December 17, 1987.
Ralph Oman,
Register of Copyrights.
Approved by:
James H. Billington,
The Librarian of Congress.
[FR Doc. 88-44 Filed 1-4-88; 8:45 am]
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