

**Inter-American Foundation
FOIA Improvement Plan: FY2006**

A. Agency's FOIA Operations

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) is an independent agency of the U. S. government that provides grants to nongovernmental and community-based organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean for innovative, sustainable and participatory self-help programs. The IAF receives very few Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests on average each year and does not maintain a backlog of requests. Furthermore, the agency places a priority on providing a timely, customer service-oriented response to each request.

The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is the unit principally responsible for receiving and responding to FOIA requests at the IAF, and it has been designated as the agency's FOIA Requester Service Center pursuant to Executive Order #13392. The Chief FOIA Officer is Jocelyn Nieva, Assistant General Counsel, and the FOIA Public Liaison is Patrick Breslin, Vice President for External Affairs.

B. Areas Selected for Review

All areas of the IAF's FOIA response program were reviewed.

C. Review Results Summary

Pursuant to E.O. #13392, the IAF has undertaken a comprehensive review of its FOIA response system to identify problem areas and develop improvements for the system. Overall, the results of the FOIA program review conducted by the OGC were favorable. The IAF receives relatively few FOIA requests each year and its median response time is well within the 20-day limit. For example, the IAF received only 15 FOIA requests in FY 2004 and 18 in FY 2005, and the median response times to FOIA requests in those Fiscal Years were 9 and 12 days, respectively. Moreover, the IAF did not maintain a backlog in either year, nor does it currently maintain a backlog.

D. Areas Selected for Improvement

Our review revealed two areas in which the IAF could improve its accessibility to the FOIA program and further streamline the agency's processing of FOIA requests. The first issue is the somewhat obscure location of our online FOIA page for a user of the IAF website. To ensure that the public and potential FOIA requesters can easily access the agency's FOIA resources, the website homepage should indicate more clearly how to get to the IAF's FOIA webpage.

In terms of streamlining the IAF FOIA process, electronic FOIA requests should be sent directly to the OGC. Currently, requests sent by e-mail are sent to the IAF's general information e-mail address; from there, they must be forwarded to one of the OGC staff

members for attention. Although this process has not lead to substantial delays in the past, additional time is required for the electronic request to work its way to the OGC and for the FOIA requester to receive a response.

E. Specific Improvements

- a. Name: FOIA-specific e-mail address creation
 - i. Goal(s): To create a new e-mail address that will direct electronic FOIA requests to OGC without any intermediary steps. The address should be concise and indicative of the purpose it serves, such as foia@iaf.gov.
 - ii. Steps to achieve goal:
 1. Contact information technology staff to request e-mail address creation.
 2. Notify the public and potential FOIA requesters by posting the new address on the IAF website (www.iaf.gov).
 - iii. Time milestones: Completion anticipated by December 31, 2006.
 - iv. Measures of Success: E-mail address is created and FOIA contact information on IAF website is modified to reflect new, more direct means of submitting FOIA requests.
- b. Name: Direct link to FOIA webpage
 - i. Goal(s): To make the FOIA webpage more easily accessible from the IAF homepage by adding a hyperlink that leads directly to the FOIA webpage from the IAF homepage.
 - ii. Steps to achieve goal:
 1. Request that IAF webmaster create a hyperlink on the IAF homepage that links directly to the IAF's FOIA webpage.
 - iii. Time milestones: Completion anticipated by December 31, 2006.
 - iv. Measures of Success:
 1. Hyperlink is posted on IAF website and is operational.
- c. Name: FOIA webpage revision/expansion
 - i. Goal(s): To revise and expand the agency's FOIA webpage to reflect the changes in the IAF FOIA process implemented as a

result of E.O. #13392 and improve accessibility to FOIA resources. The revised FOIA webpage will contain information such as contact information for the FOIA Requester Service Center and other FOIA staff designated under E.O. #13392, a FOIA e-Reading Room, and a FOIA Frequently Asked Questions webpage.

- ii. Steps to achieve goal:
 - 1. Update FOIA-related contact information on IAF FOIA webpage, if necessary.
 - 2. Draft and finalize a basic FOIA FAQ webpage that provides an explanation of what FOIA is, as well as an overview of the agency's FOIA program.
 - 3. Prepare a FOIA e-Reading Room webpage consisting of the IAF's most recent annual FOIA report(s) and information commonly requested from the IAF under FOIA.
 - 4. Post these webpages on the IAF website and create appropriate hyperlinks to the new webpages on the main IAF FOIA webpage.
- iii. Time milestones: Ongoing, but completion of initial steps anticipated by December 31, 2007.
- iv. Measures of Success: FOIA-related documents enumerated above have been created and/or updated and subsequently posted on the IAF FOIA webpage.

F. Improvements by Time Period

- a. Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2006
 - i. FOIA-specific e-mail address creation
 - ii. Direct link to FOIA webpage
- b. Areas anticipated to be completed by December 31, 2007
 - i. FOIA webpage revision/expansion