

Executive Office of the President

Office of Science and Technology Policy



2025 Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer  
Annual Report

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The Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) is pleased to present its annual Chief FOIA Officer Report. The 2024 Fiscal Year demonstrated OSTP's continued commitment to its FOIA program despite its small size as an agency. In Fiscal Year 2024, we received 212 FOIA requests.

OSTP remains actively engaged in administering FOIA as required by Congress. OSTP provides the President and others within the Executive Branch with advice on the scientific, engineering, and technological aspects of the economy, national security, homeland security, health, foreign relations, and the environment. Our agency exists by creation of Congress, and Congress specifically situated the agency within the Executive Office of the President (EOP).

We operate with a small budget and currently have one full-time contractor devoted to FOIA, as well as one lawyer who spends a substantial amount of time administering the program. Like other Agencies, we use a multi-track process to coordinate FOIA requests. Because we are within the EOP and lead inter-agency processes, many of our FOIA requests are complex, voluminous, and require inter-agency coordination.

OSTP regularly engages with requestors about their FOIA matters to gain a better understanding of what is being requested. Emails and phone calls help provide open communication and foster positive dialogues with the requesting community. OSTP is constantly looking to improve the FOIA process from start to finish. We ensure all staff are regularly attending training throughout the year, and we include a FOIA training module as part of every new employee's onboarding process at OSTP. This ensures that OSTP follows FOIA best practices and fosters an environment that provides efficient and accurate FOIA responses to requestors.

OSTP regularly works with FOIA officials throughout the Government. Our office also reviews technology offerings, procedures, and tracking systems in an effort to enhance the overall FOIA request process.

OSTP is fully committed to efficient, accurate, and timely administration of FOIA requests. We look forward to a continued and excellent working relationship with the Department of Justice.

Sincerely,

Rachel Wallace

Deputy General Counsel and Chief Operations Officer

## **Section I: FOIA Leadership and Applying the Presumption of Openness**

The guiding principle underlying the Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines is the presumption of openness. The Guidelines also highlight the importance of agency leadership in ensuring effective FOIA administration. Please answer the following questions about FOIA leadership at your agency and describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA.

### **A. Leadership Support for FOIA**

1. The FOIA requires each agency to designate a Chief FOIA Officer who is a senior official at least at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(j)(1) (2018). Is your agency's Chief FOIA Officer at or above this level?

Yes.

2. Please provide the name and title of your agency's Chief FOIA Officer.

Rachel Wallace, Chief Operating Officer and Deputy General Counsel.

3. What steps has your agency taken to incorporate FOIA into its core mission? For example, has your agency incorporated FOIA milestones into its strategic plan?

OSTP has been heavily engaged in promoting policies that encourage openness in research and in government operations, data, and information. In particular, OSTP was a driving force behind the issuance of the Fifth U.S. Open Government National Action Plan, which made numerous commitments from across the Federal Government to: "ensure, consistent with law, that the public has access to Federal Government data, research, and information; empower citizens to participate in the work of Federal Government; transform the way Federal agencies interact with the public; fight corruption and support the integrity of Federal Government programs; and ensure that the Federal Government upholds the rule of law fairly for all people." In line with those commitments, OSTP has increased the number of records that it has publicly released and continues to explore a variety of mechanisms to expand its engagement with the public.

### **B. Presumption of Openness**

4. The Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines provides that "agencies should confirm in response letters to FOIA requesters that they have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying FOIA exemptions." Does your agency provide such confirmation in its response letters?

Yes. OSTP considers the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing and applying FOIA exemptions. Additionally, the determination (interim and final) letters inform requestors of the justification for the applied FOIA exemptions. We state in our response letters that we have considered the "foreseeable harm standard" when reviewing records and applying the pertinent FOIA exemption(s).

5. In some circumstances, agencies may respond to a requester that it can neither confirm nor deny the existence of requested records if acknowledging the existence of records would harm an

interested protected by a FOIA exemption. This is commonly referred to as a Glomar response. If your agency tracks Glomar responses, please provide:

the number of times your agency issued a full or partial Glomar response (separate full and partial if possible);

Zero. While we keep track of such responses, we did not rely on it for any of the processed requests during the Fiscal Year.

the number of times a Glomar response was issued by exemption (e.g., Exemption 7(C) – 20 times, Exemption 1 – 5 times).

Zero.

6. Optional -- If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied, please describe them here.

OSTP embraces the presumption of openness and provides documents on its website for easy dissemination and review. OSTP also ensures that it follows the best technology practices to ensure that documents are released in a timely fashion and in easily accessible formats.

## **Section II: Ensuring Fair and Effective FOIA Administration**

The Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines provide that "[e]nsuring fair and effective FOIA administration requires . . . proper training, and a full understanding of FOIA obligations by the entire agency workforce." The Guidelines reinforce longstanding guidance to "work with FOIA requesters in a spirit of cooperation." The Attorney General also "urge[s] agency Chief FOIA Officers to undertake comprehensive review of all aspects of their agency's FOIA administration" as part of ensuring fair and effective FOIA administration.

### **A. FOIA Training**

1. The FOIA directs agency Chief FOIA Officers to ensure that FOIA training is offered to agency personnel. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(j)(2)(F). Please describe the efforts your agency has undertaken to ensure proper FOIA training is made available and used by agency personnel.

OSTP continues to encourage its FOIA professionals to attend FOIA training sessions offered by the Department of Justice (hereinafter, "DOJ"), the Chief FOIA Officers Council Technology Committee and other FOIA training events. Additionally, information learned at those events are discussed internally amongst the FOIA professionals and efforts are made to adopt some of the best practices from those sessions.

2. Did your FOIA professionals or the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend substantive FOIA training during the reporting period such as that provided by the Department of Justice?

Yes.

3. If yes, please provide a brief description of the type of training attended or conducted and the topics covered.

OSTP welcomes the opportunity for its staff to regularly attend FOIA training throughout the year. The training sessions help to ensure that the professionals who are engaged in FOIA processing are knowledgeable about legal developments and technological advancements (for example, predictive coding and the latest e-discovery review platforms) in the field. Learning about changes in the laws or practices governing the Act as well as the most recent or best tools in the field help us to effectively and efficiently process FOIA requests.

OSTP FOIA professionals attended various virtual training sessions held by the DOJ. For example, staff members attended trainings on the FOIA exemptions as well as the FOIA Continuing Education on the latest cases dealing with attorney fees, expedited processing, failure to reasonably describe the records sought etc.

4. Please provide an estimate of the percentage of your FOIA professionals and staff with FOIA responsibilities who attended substantive FOIA training during this reporting period.

100%

5. OIP has directed agencies to “take steps to ensure that all of their FOIA professionals attend substantive FOIA training at least once throughout the year.” If your response to the previous question is that less than 80% of your FOIA professionals attended training, please explain your agency’s plan to ensure that all FOIA professionals receive or attend substantive FOIA training during the next reporting year.

N/A.

6. Describe any efforts your agency has undertaken to inform non-FOIA professionals of their obligations under the FOIA. In particular, please describe how often and in what formats your agency provides FOIA training or briefings to non-FOIA staff; and if senior leaders at your agency received a briefing on your agency’s FOIA resources, obligations and expectations during the FOIA process?

As part of OSTP’s onboarding process, the Office of General Counsel provides all staff members (leadership, career OSTP professionals, those on detail from other Agencies, academic fellows, contractors, and interns) with comprehensive FOIA training. This training occurs through a virtual course taken by all new staff. Following this course, one of OSTP’s attorneys contacts each new staff member to answer any questions they may have on FOIA or any other legal obligation.

Our attorneys distribute OIP’s FOIA infographic to all new employees as part of the agency’s onboarding materials. Additionally, OSTP FOIA professionals regularly update staff on FOIA requirements at all-hands and divisional meetings and work with staff to ensure that proper FOIA procedures are followed for records management and FOIA requests.

B. Outreach

7. As part of the standard request process, do your FOIA professionals proactively contact requesters concerning complex or voluminous requests in an effort to clarify or narrow the scope of the request so requesters can receive responses more quickly? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue and, if applicable, any specific examples.

OSTP's FOIA professionals regularly engage with the requesting community throughout the FOIA process to better understand their needs, resolve potential issues, and ensure timely and efficient production of requested documents.

Upon receipt of a request, it is carefully examined to determine if it is: permissible; overly broad; asking for the creation of a new record not in existence at the time of the request; or one that requires further clarification; misdirected to OSTP; fails to reasonably describe the records sought etc.

If there is any issue with the request, the requestor is contacted by email to seek clarification or schedule a conference call to discuss the pertinent issue(s). Additionally, a pre-review case assessment is performed in situations involving complex requests that generate voluminous records to determine if the scope needs to be narrowed.

8. Outside of the standard request process or routine FOIA Liaison or FOIA Requester Service Center interactions, did your FOIA professionals engage in any outreach or dialogue, with the requester community or open government groups regarding your administration of the FOIA? For example, did you proactively contact frequent requesters, host FOIA-related conference calls with open government groups, or provide FOIA training to members of the public? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue and, if applicable, any specific examples of how this dialogue has led to improvements in your agency's FOIA administration.

OSTP staff members attend various training events to meet with fellow Government professionals and individuals from the requestor community. These engagements provide excellent opportunities for OSTP FOIA professionals to gain insight into the needs of the FOIA community. Additionally, OSTP provides vital information to prospective requestors who might not be well versed in the FOIA. We provide guidance on scope narrowing; the appropriate agency to contact in cases of mis-directed FOIA requests; information on permissible and impermissible FOIA requests; etc.

9. The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires additional notification to requesters about the services provided by the agency's FOIA Public Liaison. Please provide an estimate of the number of times requesters sought assistance from your agency's FOIA Public Liaison during Fiscal Year 2024 (please provide a total number or an estimate of the number for the agency overall).

Once.

C. Other Initiatives

10. Has your agency evaluated the allocation of agency personnel resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands? If so, please describe what changes your agency has or will implement.

Yes. OSTP is actively recruiting FOIA personnel to manage its ever expanding and complex FOIA requests. We are in the process of hiring additional contractor(s) to assist with the increase in the number of FOIA requests received in Fiscal Year 2024. Additionally, we also work with requestors to narrow overly broad requests so they could be promptly processed.

11. How does your agency use data or processing metrics to ensure efficient management of your FOIA workload? For example, case management reports, staff processing statistics, etc. In addition, please specifically highlight any data analysis methods or technologies used.

We review the annual report, quarterly reports and raw data against the FOIA tracking tool/ log to ensure consistency in the reported information. Additionally, OSTP uses a central tracking system to record FOIA requests. This system makes it possible to track current and past FOIA requests. Furthermore, it makes it possible to re-assign FOIA personnel to priority requests and closeout our backlogs.

12. The federal [FOIA Advisory Committee](#), comprised of agency representatives and members of the public, was created to foster dialogue between agencies and the requester community, solicit public comments, and develop recommendations for improving FOIA administration. Since 2020, the FOIA Advisory Committee has issued a number of [recommendations](#). Please answer the below questions:

Is your agency familiar with the FOIA Advisory Committee and its recommendations?

Yes.

Has your agency implemented any of its recommendations or found them to be helpful? If so, which ones?

Yes. For complex requests with voluminous search results, OSTP produces the responsive records to requestors on a rolling basis. Additionally, when the Presidential Communications Privilege is asserted, OSTP uses redaction labels to identify the pertinent Exemption 5 privileges that are relied on. Furthermore, OSTP's final letter to the requestor describes which privilege attaches (for instance, the attorney-client privilege, the deliberative process privilege, the Presidential communications privilege/ Executive Privilege, et cetera).

13. Optional -- If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure fair and effective FOIA administration, please describe them here.

N/A

### **Section III: Proactive Disclosures**

The Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines emphasize that "proactive disclosure of information is . . . fundamental to the faithful application of the FOIA." The Guidelines direct agencies to post "records online quickly and systematically in advance of any public request"

and reiterate that agencies should post records “in the most useful, searchable, and open formats possible.”

1. Please describe what steps your agency takes to identify, track, and post (a)(2) proactive disclosures.

Important agency announcements, like those associated with Executive Orders, Presidential Memoranda, or Directives, are posted to [www.whitehouse.gov/news/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/). In addition, OSTP works with its Communications Office to post copies of OSTP or National Science and Technology Council (NSTC) reports online, as well as materials and other contents that may be of interest to the public.

2. Does your agency post logs of its FOIA requests?

No. However, we post the raw data which contains the number of FOIA requests on our website.

If so, what information is contained in the logs?

Are they posted in CSV format? If not, what format are they posted in?

N/A.

3. Provide examples of any material (with links) that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including records that have been requested and released three or more times in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D).

When OSTP receives repeated requests for the same information, we post that material and others that may be of interest to the public at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/legal/>. Examples include staffing lists, calendar entries, Requests for Information (RFIs) and responses to those RFIs, and important agency announcements such as Executive Orders, Presidential Memoranda and Directives.

4. Please provide a link (or component links, if applicable) where your agency routinely posts its frequently requested records.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/legal/>.

5. Beyond posting new material, is your agency taking steps to make the posted information more useful to the public, especially to the community of individuals who regularly access your agency’s website? If yes, please provide examples of such improvements, such as steps taken to post information in open and machine readable formats. If not taking steps to make posted information more useful, please explain why.

Yes. We are in the process of revamping our FOIA website to make it more user-friendly. Additionally, we routinely inform requestors of the information that is available on our website as well future postings. This enables the public to access the records without having to submit a FOIA request. In addition, OSTP has been taking steps to make posted materials Section 508 compliant.



6. Does your proactive disclosure process or system involve any collaboration with agency staff outside the FOIA office, such as IT or data personnel? If so, describe this interaction. formats, to the extent feasible. If not posting in open formats, please explain why and note any challenges.

We routinely work with the communications team to proactively post frequently requested records or those that are likely to be requested by members of the public to our website at <https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/information-resources/>.

7. Optional -- Please describe the best practices used to improve proactive disclosures and any challenges your agency faces in this area.

Regular communication with requestors helps to identify possible situations where certain information has already been released as well as information that may be of interest to the public. In addition, in response to growing interest by the public, we have been working with our staff to release not only RFIs, but public comments received in response to the RFIs, including through the use of [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

#### **Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology**

A key component of FOIA administration is using technology to make information available to the public and to gain efficiency in FOIA processing. The Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines emphasize the importance of making FOIA websites easily navigable and complying with the FOIA.gov interoperability requirements. Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is using technology to improve its FOIA administration and the public's access to information.

1. Has your agency reviewed its FOIA-related technological capabilities to identify resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands?

Yes.

2. Please briefly describe any new types of technology your agency uses to support your FOIA program.

OSTP works with the Office of Administration (hereafter "OA"), another component within the Executive Office of the President (henceforth "EOP") network, as well as with the E-Discovery team at the EOP. The E-Discovery team provides technical expertise in the collection of documents. In addition to the collection of responsive documents, the eDiscovery team also maintains the software that allows each EOP component to review those records. This software greatly assists in the production phase of FOIA requests by ensuring that correct file types are provided so documents that are potentially responsive to the requests are easily disseminated. This team has provided OSTP with helpful tools that allow for a more efficient review of large-scale electronic documents. Those tools are helpful in identifying duplicate documents and extremely useful for mass coding such records as well as categorizing documents by custodian, time frame, or keywords to provide a more efficient review process. E-Discovery and EOP components meet regularly to examine tools and discuss solutions for the e-Discovery review process to ensure that best practices are adopted in the collection, review, and production phases.

3. Does your agency currently use any technology to automate record processing? For example, does your agency use machine learning, predictive coding, technology assisted review or similar tools to conduct searches or make redactions? If so, please describe and, if possible, estimate how much time and financial resources are saved since implementing the technology.

Yes. OSTP uses predictive coding software and technology assisted reviews in processing FOIA requests to ensure faster and accurate review of potentially responsive records.

4. OIP issued guidance in 2017 encouraging agencies to regularly review their FOIA websites to ensure that they contain essential resources and are informative and user-friendly. Has your agency reviewed its FOIA website(s) during the reporting period to ensure it addresses the elements noted in the guidance?

Yes.

5. Did all four of your agency's quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2023 appear on FOIA.gov?

Yes.

6. If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2025.

N/A

7. The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires all agencies to post the raw statistical data used to compile their Annual FOIA Reports. Please provide the link to this posting for your agency's Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report and, if available, for your agency's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/ostp/information-resources/>

8. In February 2019, DOJ and OMB issued joint Guidance establishing interoperability standards to receive requests from the National FOIA Portal on FOIA.gov. Are all components of your agency in compliance with the guidance?

Yes.

9. Optional -- Please describe the best practices used in greater utilizing technology and any challenges your agency faces in this area.

**Section V: Steps Taken to Remove Barriers to Access, Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests, and Reduce Backlogs**

The Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines instruct agencies "to remove barriers to requesting and accessing government records and to reduce FOIA processing backlogs." Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is removing barriers to access, improving timeliness in responding to requests, and reducing FOIA backlogs.

**A. Remove Barriers to Access**

1. Has your agency established alternative means of access to first-party requested records, outside of the typical FOIA or Privacy Act process?

No. First-party requested records are processed under the FOIA and Privacy Act.

2. If yes, please provide examples. If no, please indicate why not. Please also indicate if you do not know.

OSTP processes first-party requested records under the FOIA and Privacy Act.

3. Please describe any other steps your agency has taken to remove barriers to accessing government information.

We do not have opportunities for providing such records outside of the FOIA or Privacy Act process, and we rarely receive such requests outside of these established processes.

#### B. Timeliness

4. For Fiscal Year 2024, what was the average number of days your agency reported for adjudicating requests for expedited processing? Please see Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report.

10.

5. If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was above ten calendar days, according to Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report, please describe the steps your agency will take to ensure that requests for expedited processing are adjudicated within ten calendar days or less.

The high number is due to a request for expedited processing from our backlog that was closed in Fiscal Year 2024. We are working on closing out our backlogs.

6. Does your agency utilize a separate track for simple requests?

Yes.

7. If your agency uses a separate track for simple requests, according to Annual FOIA Report section VII.A, was the agency overall average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer in Fiscal Year 2024?

Yes. The average number of days is 11.4.

8. If not, did the simple track average processing time decrease compared to the previous Fiscal Year?

N/A.

9. Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2024 that were placed in your simple track. Please use the following calculation based on the data from your Annual FOIA Report: (processed simple requests from Section VII.C.1) divided by (requests processed from Section V.A.) x 100.

32.02%

10. If your agency does not track simple requests separately, was the average number of days to process all non-expedited requests twenty working days or fewer?

N/A.

### C. Backlogs

#### Backlogged Requests

11. If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2024, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.2, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2023?

No. It increased by 24 requests, due, in part, to the vast number of complex requests received over the last few years, especially, those received in Fiscal Year 24.

12. If not, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.1, did your agency process more requests during Fiscal Year 2024 than it did during Fiscal Year 2023?

Yes. We almost quadrupled the number of requests processed in the previous Fiscal Year.

13. If your agency's request backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2024, please explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able to reduce its backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:

An increase in the number of incoming requests

A loss of staff

An increase in the complexity of the requests received (if possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase)

Litigation

Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible

The backlog increased due to a number of factors:

#### **INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF FOIA REQUESTS:**

We saw an increase of over 300% in Fiscal Year 2024. We went from 64 requests in FY23 to over 200 requests in FY24. Additionally, most of those requests were complex and, in some instances, overly broad. Thus, requiring us to work with the requestors to narrow the scope. Furthermore, we saw a significant increase in the number of consults and referrals.

#### **LOSS OF STAFF**

We had two FOIA contractors to assist with the influx of requests. However, one of them only worked for approximately 6 months before departing OSTP. Thus, we only had one full time contractor that worked on FOIA requests for the entire Fiscal Year.

## LITIGATION:

OSTP had two requests that were in litigation and required monthly productions per the Joint Status Report ("JSR"). Thus, those requests had to be prioritized over the backlogged requests.

14. If you had a request backlog, please report the percentage of requests that make up the backlog out of the total number of requests received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2024. Please use the following calculation based on data from your Annual FOIA Report: (backlogged requests from Section XII.A) divided by (requests received from Section V.A) x 100. This number can be greater than 100%. If your agency has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."

92.5%

Backlogged Appeals

15. If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2024, according to Section XII.E.2 of the Annual FOIA Report, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2023?

OSTP did not have a backlog appeals in FY24.

16. If not, according to section XII.E.1 of the Annual FOIA Report, did your agency process more appeals during Fiscal Year 2024 than it did during Fiscal Year 2023?

N/A.

17. If your agency's appeal backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2024, please explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able to reduce its backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:

An increase in the number of incoming appeals

A loss of staff

An increase in the complexity of the requests received (if possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase)

Litigation

Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible

N/A.

18. If you had an appeal backlog, please report the percentage of appeals that make up the backlog out of the total number of appeals received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2024. Please use the following calculation based on data from your Annual FOIA Report: (backlogged appeals from Section XII.A) divided by (appeals received from Section VI.A) x 100. This number can be greater than 100%. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2024 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."

N/A.

#### D. Backlog Reduction Plans

19. In the 2024 guidelines for Chief FOIA Officer Reports, any agency with a backlog of over 1000 requests in Fiscal Year 2023 were asked to provide a plan for achieving backlog reduction in the year ahead. Did your agency implement a backlog reduction plan last year? If so, describe your agency's efforts in implementing this plan and note if your agency was able to achieve backlog reduction in Fiscal Year 2024?

N/A.

20. If your agency had a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in Fiscal Year 2024, please explain your agency's plan to reduce this backlog during Fiscal Year 2025.

N/A.

#### E. Reducing the Age of Requests, Appeals, and Consultations

##### Ten Oldest Requests

21. In Fiscal Year 2024, did your agency close the ten oldest pending perfected requests that were reported in Section VII.E. of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report?

Yes.

22. If no, please provide the number of these requests your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.E of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

23. Beyond work on the ten oldest requests, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending requests.

At the beginning of Fiscal Year 2024, OSTP prioritized closing the ten oldest requests as well as other backlogged requests and devised a plan to do so—more resources were devoted to those requests. That plan was fully executed even though we experienced an increase of over 300% in the number of incoming requests as well as other challenges (loss of staff, litigation and an influx of complex requests).

##### Ten Oldest Appeals

24. In Fiscal Year 2024, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in Section VI.C.5 of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report?

OSTP did not have any backlog appeals in FY23.

25. If no, please provide the number of these appeals your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.C.(5) of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

26. Beyond work on the ten oldest appeals, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending appeals.

N/A.

#### Ten Oldest Consultations

27. In Fiscal Year 2024, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report?

OSTP did not have any pending consultations from FY23.

28. If no, please provide the number of these consultations your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

#### Additional Information Regarding Ten Oldest

29. If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please explain why and provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those “ten oldest” requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2025.

N/A.

#### F. Additional Information about FOIA Processing

30. Were any requests at your agency the subject of FOIA litigation during the reporting period? If so, please describe the impact on your agency’s overall FOIA request processing and backlog. If possible, please indicate:

The number and nature of requests subject to litigation

Common causes leading to litigation

Any other information to illustrate the impact of litigation on your overall FOIA administration

Yes. The FOIA litigations adversely impacted our overall FOIA administration because they shifted resources from the backlogged and/ or other pending requests to those under litigation to ensure compliance with court orders or consensus reached with opposing counsels.

We had two FOIA lawsuits. The first involved a requestor who alleged that the records were not produced in a timely manner, even though OSTP was in communications with the requestor regarding the status of the request.

The second lawsuit involved a requestor who filed suits against multiple Federal agencies and included OSTP as part of the litigation.