

2015 Chief FOIA Officer Report for Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency

Name and Title of your Agency's Chief FOIA Officer:

Sheila Stokes, Acting General Counsel

Section I: Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

FOIA Training

1. *Did your FOIA professionals or the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend any FOIA training or conference during the reporting period such as that provided by the Department of Justice?*
 - *Such training or events can include offerings from OIP, your own agency or another agency or organization.*

No training was attended this past year. We hired a new employee and will provide FOIA training.

2. *Provide an estimate of the percentage of your FOIA professionals and staff with FOIA responsibilities who attended substantive FOIA training during this reporting period.*

No staff attended training this past year as stated above.

3. *In the 2014 Chief FOIA Officer Report Guidelines, OIP asked agencies to provide a plan for ensuring that core, substantive FOIA training is offered to all agency FOIA professionals at least once each year. Please provide the status of your agency's implementation of this plan.*

- *Include any successes or challenges your agency has seen in implementing your plan.*

No plan has been established at this time since we only had one staff member (FOIA Officer) handling the work. In the past, staff has attended training.

Discretionary Releases

4. *Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to review records for discretionary release?*

Not at this time. The majority of our requests are for Privacy Act protected information.

- *If so, please briefly describe this process.*
- *If your agency is decentralized, please specify whether all components of your agency have such a process or system in place?*

5. During the reporting period, did your agency make any discretionary releases of information?

No releases were made.

6. What exemption(s) would have covered the material released as a matter of discretion? For a discussion of the exemptions that allow for discretionary releases, please see OIP's guidance *on implementing the President's and Attorney General's FOIA Memoranda*.

Not applicable.

7. Provide a narrative description, as well as some specific examples, of the types of information that your agency released as a matter of discretion during the reporting year.

Not applicable.

8. If your agency was not able to make any discretionary releases of information, please explain why.

Since the majority of our records are Privacy Act protected, we are not at liberty to make discretionary releases.

Other Initiatives

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

- *If any of these initiatives are online, please provide links in your description.*

No other initiatives have been undertaken at this time.

Section II: Steps Taken to Ensure that Your Agency Has an Effective System in Place for Responding to Requests

Processing Procedures

1. For Fiscal Year 2014, 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 2014 Annual FOIA Report.

- *Please note here if your agency did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing during Fiscal Year 2014.*

We did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing.

2. If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was above ten calendar days, please describe the steps your agency will take to ensure that requests for expedited processing are adjudicated within ten calendar days or less.

Not applicable.

Requester Services

3. Does your agency notify requesters of the mediation services offered by the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration? See OIP Guidance, "*Notifying Requesters of the Mediation Services Offered by OGIS.*" (July 9, 2010)

At this time, this information is not provided to requesters in the appeal process.

4. When assessing fees, does your agency provide a breakdown of how FOIA fees were calculated and assessed to the FOIA requester? For example, does your agency explain the amount of fees attributable to search, review, and duplication? See OIP Guidance, "*The Importance of Good Communication with FOIA Requesters 2.0: Improving Both the Means and the Content of Requester Communications.*" (Nov. 22, 2013)

Since the majority of our requesters only pay duplication fees, a breakdown is not done. However, if a requester is charged for search and review, we would advise of the breakdown.

5. If estimated fees estimates are particularly high, does your agency provide an explanation for the estimate to the requester? See *id.*

We do not do estimated fees since the fee is assessed after review of the records.

Other Initiatives

6. If there are any other steps your agency has undertaken to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively, such as conducting self-assessments to find greater efficiencies, improving search processes, eliminating redundancy, etc., please describe them here.

At this time, no such undertakings have been done.

Section III: Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

Posting Material

1. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to identify records for proactive disclosure? If so, please describe your agency's process or system.

As indicated, the majority of our requests deal with Privacy Act protected records. However, we do post agency records such as the Strategic Plan, current and past fiscal year budgets, offender profile statistics. The offender statistics are updated monthly. www.csosa.gov

2. Does your process or system involve any collaboration with agency staff outside the FOIA office? If so, describe this interaction.

The information posted to the agency's website is done regularly by non-FOIA staff.

3. Describe your agency's process or system for identifying "frequently requested" records that should be posted online.

At this time, we do not have any "frequently requested" records. As stated above, statistics dealing with our offender population can be found on the agency's website.

4. Provide examples of material that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including links to the posted material.

We post agency records such as the Strategic Plan, current and past fiscal year budgets, offender profile statistics. The offender statistics are updated monthly. www.csosa.gov

Other Initiatives

5. If there are any other steps your agency has taken to increase proactive disclosures, please describe them here.

Not at this time.

Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

Making Material Posted Online More Useful

1. 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?

Not at this time.

- *Steps can include soliciting feedback on the content and presentation of posted material, improving search capabilities on your agency website, posting material in open formats, making information available through mobile applications, providing explanatory material, etc.*

2. If yes, please provide examples of such improvements.

- *If your agency is already posting material in its most useful format, please describe these efforts.*

Not applicable.

3. Has your agency encountered challenges that make it difficult to post records you otherwise would like to post?

No.

4. If so, please briefly explain what those challenges are.

Not applicable.

Other Initiatives

5. Did your agency successfully post all four quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2014?

The 4th quarter report has been created but not yet posted.

- Please see OIP's *guidance* for posting of quarterly reports to ensure that your agency is following all required steps (including using the correct file type and URL structure) so that your quarterly reports are properly appearing on FOIA.gov. (If your reports are posted to your website but not appearing on FOIA.gov, please contact OIP in order to resolve the issue.)

6. If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports, with information appearing on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2015.

As indicated, last fiscal year we had one staff member responsible for processing FOIA. At that time, the emphasis was placed on ensuring the majority of our requests were processed in a timely fashion.

7. Do your agency's FOIA professionals use e-mail or other electronic means to communicate with requesters whenever feasible? See OIP Guidance, "*The Importance of Good Communication with FOIA Requesters 2.0: Improving Both the Means and the Content of Requester Communications.*" (Nov. 22, 2013) If yes, what are the different types of electronic means are utilized by your agency to communicate with requesters?

We do use email to communicate with requester, when necessary.

8. If your agency does not communicate electronically with requesters as a default, are there any limitations or restrictions for the use of such means? If yes, does your agency inform requesters about such limitations? See *id.*

If a requester cannot be contacted via email, we will make telephonic contact.

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

Simple Track

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

We do.

2. If so, for your agency overall in Fiscal Year 2014, was the average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer?

No.

3. Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014 that were placed in your simple track.

100%

4. 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?

Not applicable.

Backlogs

BACKLOGGED REQUESTS

5. If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2014, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2013?

No.

- *If not, explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able 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*

The backlogged increased by 2 requests. During this last fiscal year, we have had only one staff member responsible for all processing (logging in requests, scanning records, reviewing and producing the final response, etc.).

6. 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 2014. If your agency did not receive any requests in Fiscal Year 2014 and/or has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."

8%

- *To calculate your agency's percentage, you must divide the number of backlogged requests reported in Section XII.A. of your Fiscal Year 2014 Annual FOIA Report by the number of requests received in Fiscal Year 2014, which can be found in Section V.A. of your Annual FOIA Report. Once divided, you can multiply that number by 100 to get the percentage.*

BACKLOGGED APPEALS

7. *If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2014, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2013?*

Not applicable.

- *If not, explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able reduce backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:*
 - *An increase in the number of incoming appeal*
 - *A loss of staff*
 - *An increase in the complexity of the appeals received*

8. *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 2014. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2014 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

Not Applicable.

- *To calculate your agency's percentage, you must divide the number of backlogged appeals reported in Section XII.A. of your Fiscal Year 2014 Annual FOIA Report by the number of appeals received in Fiscal Year 2014, which can be found in Section VI.A. of your Annual FOIA Report. Once divided, you can multiply that number by 100 to get the percentage.*

Status of Ten Oldest Requests, Appeals and Consultations

TEN OLDEST REQUESTS

9. *In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest requests that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?*

Yes.

10. *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 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.*

- *For example, if you only had seven requests listed as part of your "ten oldest" in Section VII.E. and you closed six of them, you should note that you closed six out of seven "oldest" requests.*

11. *Of the requests your agency was able to close from your ten oldest, please indicate how many of these were closed because the request was withdrawn by the requester. If any were*

closed because the request was withdrawn, did you provide any interim responses prior to the withdrawal?

None of the requests were withdrawn.

TEN OLDEST APPEALS

12. In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?

Not Applicable.

13. 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 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.

- *For example, if you only had seven appeals listed as part of your "ten oldest" in Section VII.C.(5) and you closed six of them, you should note that you closed six out of seven "oldest" appeals.*

Not Applicable.

TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS

14. In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?

Not Applicable.

15. 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 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.

- *For example, if you only had seven consultations listed as part of your "ten oldest" in Section XII.C. and you closed six of them, you should note that you closed six out of seven "oldest" consultations.*

Not Applicable.

Additional Information on Ten Oldest Requests, Appeals, Consultations and Plans

16. Briefly explain any obstacles your agency faced in closing its ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations from Fiscal Year 2013.

Not applicable.

17. If your agency was unable to close any of its ten oldest requests because you were waiting to hear back from other agencies on consultations you sent, please provide the date the request was

initially received by your agency, the date when your agency sent the consultation, and the date when you last contacted the agency where the consultation was pending.

Not applicable.

18. If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those “ten oldest” requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2015.

Not applicable.

Use of FOIA’s Law Enforcement Exclusion

Did your agency invoke a statutory exclusion, 5 U.S.C. § 552(c)(1), (2), (3), during Fiscal Year 2014?

No.

If so, please provide the total number of times exclusions were invoked.

Not Applicable.