

FOIA Frequently Asked Questions

What is "FOIA"?

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), is a Federal law that provides for public access to agency records. The FOIA is located in Section 552 of Title 5 of the United States Code (5 U.S.C. 552). CSOSA's FOIA regulations will be located at Parts 800-899 of Title 28 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 8 (28 C.F.R., Chapter 8, Parts 800-899).

Any agency records in CSOSA's possession or control are subject to the FOIA. The requested records will be provided in full, unless one or more of the nine FOIA exemptions applies. For example, CSOSA may withhold confidential business information that is contained within an agency record. The nine exemptions are all described in detail in the text of the FOIA.

Do I have to submit a FOIA request to receive agency records from CSOSA?

If you are looking for a document that is not already in our [Electronic Reading Room](#), you may submit a written FOIA request to us –

By mail or in person at:

Court Services & Offender Supervision Agency
Office of the General Counsel
633 Indiana Avenue, NW, Room 1220
Washington, DC 20004-2902
ATTN: Privacy Act Request

By facsimile at:

(202)220-5350
ATTN: Sheila Stokes

Online at:

Please submit your FOIA request via the National FOIA Portal at <https://www.foia.gov>.

If required, please submit the following releases:

[CSOSA FOIA Release Forms](#)

You may not need to make a FOIA request. Please thoroughly research your topic before submitting a request. Many documents are available on the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency's or other websites. Also you may want to visit the CSOSA electronic reading room.

To make a FOIA request, please follow the guidelines provided here so that we can respond to your request as quickly as possible.

What should a FOIA request contain?

If you are requesting records pertaining to yourself or another individual, you must submit a written request. Since this type of request is protected by the Privacy Act, you should describe the records sought to include the original, notarized authorization or self-sworn authorization pursuant to 28 § U.S.C. 1746 from the subject of the records. You should also provide us with the date of birth, social security number and DCDC or PDID number. Also, your authorization should be dated within three months of your request.

Your written request must include your name, organization (if any), address, and phone number. Also, you must reasonably describe the records you seek; the more detail you give us, the more quickly we will be able to respond to your request. You may even specify the format (e.g., PDF) in which you would like the information released. We will make a reasonable effort to provide the information to you in your requested format. Finally, you must state your willingness to pay fees (you may state the maximum amount you are willing to pay) or request a waiver of fees (see below).

What are the fees for a FOIA request?

In many cases, FOIA requesters are not charged any fees by CSOSA. The FOIA, however, permits agencies to recover part of the cost incurred in complying with FOIA requests. Specifically, CSOSA may recover the following costs:

Search and Review Time: \$7 per 15 minutes for clerical staff
 \$10 per 15 minutes for professional staff
 \$14 per 15 minutes for managerial staff

Photocopying: 25¢ per page after the first 100 pages may be assessed

Please note that CSOSA will provide records to educational institutions, non-commercial scientific institutions, and representatives of the news media for the cost of reproduction alone. Further, we will not charge entities for the costs of photocopying the first 100 pages of documents. Commercial use requesters will be charged all costs listed above. Requesters that are not otherwise described in this paragraph will be charged for search and duplication, but will not be charged for the first two hours of search time or the cost of photocopying the first 100 pages of documents. Please note that CSOSA is authorized to recover search and review costs even if no responsive records are found or, after review, there is no disclosure of records.

You may indicate in your request the maximum amount that you are willing to pay in fees. If CSOSA estimates that the total fees for processing your request will exceed \$25, we will notify you in writing of the estimate and offer you the opportunity to narrow your request in order to reduce the fees. If you agree to pay fees for a records search, you may be required to pay such fees even if the search does not yield any releasable records.

A waiver or reduction of fees may be authorized in cases where disclosure of information is in the public interest – for example, if the disclosure 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.

CSOSA may require advance payment of fees if the requester has previously failed to pay fees in a timely fashion or if the agency determines that the fees will exceed \$250.

Does CSOSA have an on-site FOIA reading room?

The FOIA requires agencies to make certain records available for public inspection and copying in an agency "reading room." Because CSOSA rarely receives requests to review FOIA records onsite, the agency does not maintain a permanent reading room. Upon reasonable notice, however, CSOSA will make space available for reading room purposes at its office in Washington, D.C.

Does CSOSA have an electronic reading room?

Yes. [CSOSA's Electronic Reading Room](#) contains documents specifically identified for inclusion by the Electronic FOIA Amendments of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-231. Other documents of general interest will also be included. Documents will be added on an ongoing basis as they are created or identified.

How do I submit a FOIA request to CSOSA?

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I still have questions!

If this information has not answered all of your FOIA questions, please contact CSOSA's Chief FOIA Officer, Sheila Stokes, at (202) 220-5338 or email foia@csosa.gov.