



U.S. Department of  
**JUSTICE**

# 2024 Freedom of Information Act Litigation and Compliance Report



March 7, 2025

Office of Information Policy

## **DESCRIPTION OF DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE EFFORTS TO ENCOURAGE AGENCY COMPLIANCE WITH THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires the Department of Justice (DOJ) to submit a report to Congress each year detailing the Department's efforts to encourage agency compliance with the law. 5 U.S.C. § 552(e)(6) (2023). During 2024, DOJ, through its Office of Information Policy (OIP), engaged in a wide range of activities to encourage agency compliance with the FOIA throughout the Executive Branch. OIP provided comprehensive guidance, training, counseling, and other resources to agencies concerning the administration of the FOIA. Through these efforts, OIP assisted federal agencies in administering the law with a presumption of openness, utilizing technology to achieve greater efficiencies, and making more information available proactively, so that the public is better informed about what is known and done by their government.

During 2024, OIP continued to provide comprehensive guidance and training to agencies concerning the FOIA and [DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines](#). Additionally, OIP managed the submission of agencies' [Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Reports](#) as well as their [2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports](#), which are compiled based on guidance developed and issued by OIP each year. After the submission of the 2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports, OIP prepared a comprehensive summary of the efforts made by agencies to comply with the FOIA and with DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines. For all agencies receiving more than fifty FOIA requests during the prior fiscal year, OIP once again assessed the efforts made by those agencies. OIP also managed the quarterly reporting requirement it instituted in 2013 for all agencies on four key FOIA statistics that are displayed in one central location on [FOIA.gov](#), the Department's comprehensive government-wide FOIA website.

A highlight of 2024 was the addition of a new law enforcement user journey as part of the [FOIA Search Tool](#) on FOIA.gov. The incorporation of this pre-defined user journey was structured to help the public more easily locate commonly requested law enforcement records. In introducing the new user journey, the machine learning functionality used to power the Search Tool was retrained and benefitted from recent advancements. As a result, search results are anticipated to be more accurate and precise. As the public interacts with the search tool, OIP will use data analytics to better understand how the tool is being used and assess the quality of the results so that improvements can be made.

These are just some examples of the many efforts OIP engaged in this past year to improve agencies' FOIA administration and to encourage compliance with the law. A full summary of OIP's efforts, as required by subsection (e)(6) of the FOIA, is set forth below.

### **A. Policy Guidance**

One of the primary means by which the DOJ encourages compliance with the FOIA is through the issuance of policy guidance designed to ensure that the Act is being properly implemented across the government. During 2024, OIP continued to provide comprehensive guidance to federal agencies, addressing a range of issues related to the FOIA. This policy guidance was provided in writing and made available to agencies and the public in the [OIP Guidance](#) section of OIP's website. In addition to issuing guidance, during

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2024, OIP worked directly with agencies and participated in multiple government-wide conferences to discuss the continued implementation of the DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines and OIP policy guidance.

*OIP Guidance on Chief FOIA Officer Reports*

DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines called on agency Chief FOIA Officers to review their agencies' FOIA administration and to annually report to DOJ on the steps taken to improve FOIA operations and to facilitate information disclosure. OIP is responsible for providing guidance to agencies on the content of their Chief FOIA Officer Reports. The guidance that OIP first issued [in September 2009](#), and has expanded upon in each subsequent year, requires agencies to address key areas covered in DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines. On October 15, 2024, OIP [issued new guidance](#) to agencies on the content of their 2025 Chief FOIA Officer Reports.

Under OIP's 2025 reporting guidelines, agencies are first required to describe their FOIA leadership and efforts to apply the presumption of openness. Second, agencies must describe the steps taken to ensure that they have a fair and effective system in place to respond to FOIA requests. Third, agencies are required to describe their efforts to increase proactive disclosures. Fourth, agencies are required to describe the steps taken to improve the use of technology in administering the FOIA. Fifth, agencies are required to describe steps taken to remove barriers to access, improve timeliness in responding to requests, and reduce backlogs.

Each year, OIP has modified the requirements for the Chief FOIA Officer Reports to build on the improvements made by the agencies in previous years. OIP adjusted the questions for the [2024 Chief FOIA Officer Report Guidelines](#) based on agencies' success in meeting a number of milestones over the years, as well as to address newer challenges and to incorporate input from various stakeholders. Updating the questions each year allows OIP, as well as the agencies themselves, to identify best practices and common challenges as we continue to refine our FOIA processes. For 2024, OIP modified or added new questions to four out of five sections of the Chief FOIA Officer Report.

Specifically, Section I asks agencies to identify steps they have taken to apply the presumption of openness, including through leadership, outreach, and training. OIP simplified the questions about tracking Glomar responses in light of agency responses in prior years.

Section II addresses the need for fair and effective systems to respond to FOIA requests. New for 2025, OIP asked agencies about their familiarity with the federal FOIA Advisory Committee, which was created in 2020 to foster dialogue between agencies and the requester community, solicit public comments, and develop recommendations for improving FOIA administration. OIP asked agencies to report on their familiarity with the FOIA Advisory Committee, whether they implemented any of its recommendations, and the level of usefulness these recommendations had within their agency.

Section III asks agencies to describe the steps taken to increase proactive disclosures. New for 2025, OIP asked the agencies that post logs of their FOIA requests to provide a link to any pages where such logs are posted, including individual component links.



Section IV asks agencies to report on their use of technology to improve efficiency in processing. As in prior years, for 2025, OIP asked agencies about their use of technology to make information available to the public and to gain efficiency in FOIA processing. For instance, OIP asked whether agencies reviewed FOIA-related technological capabilities, used technology to automate record processing, reviewed their FOIA websites to ensure they contain the elements noted in OIP guidance, and posted all four quarterly reports on FOIA.gov. Additionally, OIP asked agencies whether they were in compliance with the [Department of Justice and Office of Management and Budget Joint Guidance Establishing Interoperability for the National FOIA Portal on FOIA.gov](#).

In addition, OIP continued to provide separate questions for lower-volume agencies receiving 50 requests or less and higher-volume agencies receiving more than 50 requests. As in prior years, for 2025 OIP did not require lower-volume agencies receiving 50 requests or less to provide a Chief FOIA Officer Report if the agency believes that their Annual FOIA Report provides a sufficient accounting of their efforts to effectively and efficiently administer the FOIA. Providing separate reporting requirements for differently situated agencies allows OIP to more easily address the different circumstances and challenges faced by those agencies with lower-volume FOIA workloads, while continuing to focus in-depth on those agencies that receive a higher-volume of FOIA requests. For example, high-volume agencies are required to provide details about their use of technology, steps taken to increase proactive disclosures, and efforts to reduce backlogs, while lower-volume agencies have the option to describe any of the steps they have taken to improve their FOIA administration.

#### *OIP Guidance on Annual FOIA Reports*

Each year, agencies are required by law to submit an Annual FOIA Report to the Attorney General in accordance with [5 U.S.C. § 552\(e\)\(1\)](#). To assist agencies with their statutorily required Annual FOIA Reports, OIP continued to update and disseminate its comprehensive [Annual FOIA Report Handbook](#). The Handbook includes all of the legal, procedural, and technical requirements concerning agency Annual FOIA Reports; centralizes all of the guidance and instructions for agency Annual FOIA Reports into one resource designed for both agency FOIA professionals and those professionals responsible for producing the Annual FOIA Report after the end of each fiscal year; and contains instructions for using the [FOIA.gov](#) Annual FOIA Report Tool developed by the Department. The Handbook is a “living document” that OIP will continue to update as changes to legal, procedural, or technical requirements are made. OIP released the latest version of the handbook on September 9, 2024.

In 2024, OIP continued to make available a [raw data template](#) to assist agencies in compiling and posting the raw data from their Annual FOIA Reports, along with [guidance](#) issued during 2016 addressing the requirements of the *FOIA Improvement Act of 2016*. Additionally, as in previous years, OIP continued to provide agencies with an updated [“Agency Reporting Obligations At-A-Glance”](#) resource that summarizes all reporting obligations throughout the year and also provides a list of deadlines established by the FOIA, a suggested timeline, and links to key resources and guidance for each report.

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As done with the Chief FOIA Officer Reports, OIP managed the submission of agency Annual FOIA Reports by first reviewing all Annual FOIA Reports in draft form, then working with the agencies to resolve any issues, and finally clearing the reports for posting. As further discussed below, in 2024 OIP created and made available on its website a [summary](#) of the key statistics reported by agencies in their Fiscal Year 2023 [Annual FOIA Reports](#).

*OIP Guidance for Further Improvement Based on 2023 Chief FOIA Officer Report Review and Assessment*

As noted above, in 2024, OIP conducted a detailed [assessment](#) of agencies' progress in improving transparency and implementing the [DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines](#) based on a review of their [2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports](#) and the data reported in their [Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Reports](#). As a result of this review and assessment, on October 15, 2024, OIP issued [guidance](#) for all agencies to assist them in making additional improvements in the years ahead.

The guidance notes the requirement of agency Chief FOIA Officers to “offer training to agency staff regarding their responsibility under [FOIA],” noting that this responsibility applies to all agency staff, and not just FOIA professionals. The guidance echoes this sentiment from the DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines in the recognition that “FOIA is everyone's responsibility” and encourages senior leaders “to provide regular and proper training . . . that explains the importance of FOIA and every individual's role in administrating it.” The guidance suggests that some of these substantive trainings be mandatory at least once a year or upon hire, depending on the type of employee. The guidance reminds agencies that as part of the Chief FOIA Officer Report, agencies must report on steps taken to not only ensure that FOIA professionals receive substantive FOIA training annually, but to also inform non-FOIA professionals of their FOIA responsibilities. To assist agency Chief FOIA Officers in meeting their obligation to offer training, the guidance reminds them of several resources made available by OIP, such as a [FOIA Infographic](#) covering FOIA basics for all employees new to the federal workforce and three separate e-learning training resources accessible directly via web browser from the [Training Page](#) of OIP's website.

Additionally, the guidance encourages the use of agency FOIA websites to communicate key information and important updates to the public, such as how to submit a request, agency contact information, and other information that could impact an agency's processing of requests. The guidance reminds agencies to remove outdated information as soon as it is no longer needed, directs agencies to OIP's [Guidance for Agency FOIA Websites 2.0](#) for certain types of information that agency FOIA websites should include, and encourages agencies to review their sites for accuracy at least quarterly.

Finally, the guidance reminds agencies to adjudicate requests for expedited processing within ten calendar days. The FOIA provides for the expedited processing of requests when a requester demonstrates a “compelling need,” as defined by the FOIA, or other needs as defined in the agency's FOIA regulations. Agencies reporting average times greater than ten calendar days in Fiscal Year 2023 should take steps to identify and address the cause(s) of the delays. The guidance directs agencies to OIP's [FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit](#), Module 1: Initial Request Intake and Review, to assist them in examining their procedures.

## **B. Efforts to Promote Agency Accountability**

OIP has engaged in a number of efforts to keep agencies accountable for their administration of the FOIA. During 2024, these efforts included publishing a [summary and detailed assessment](#) of agencies' progress based on the [2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports](#), posting a detailed [summary of agencies' Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Reports](#), and overseeing the government-wide [quarterly FOIA reporting requirement](#).

### *Summary of 2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports and Assessment of Agency Progress*

As discussed in the Policy Guidance section above, 2024 marked the fifteenth year in which agencies submitted their Chief FOIA Officer Reports to DOJ. These reports detail each agency's efforts throughout the year to implement the DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines. After reviewing all the 2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports for completeness and clearing them for posting, OIP undertook an extensive analysis of the reports to determine the government's overall progress in implementing DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines and to identify any areas for improvement. As a result of this analysis, on October 15, 2024, OIP issued a [Summary of Agency Chief FOIA Officer Reports for 2024 and Assessment of Agency Progress in FOIA Administration with OIP Guidance for Further Improvement](#) ("Summary" and "Assessment").

OIP's Summary provides a wealth of examples from large and small agencies describing the various efforts made to implement each of the key areas addressed in the 2022 FOIA Guidelines. The Summary also highlights key areas in which further improvements can be made. The guidance accompanying the Summary addresses FOIA training and the role of the Chief FOIA Officer, efficient and effective use of agencies' FOIA websites for communication with the public, and the adjudication of requests for expedited processing .

In addition to the Summary, OIP for the eleventh year created a detailed Assessment of the efforts made by agencies in implementing DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines. Focusing on those agencies that receive higher numbers of requests, OIP's assessment covered agencies that received more than 50 requests during the prior fiscal year. In conducting this assessment, OIP identified and scored each of the agencies on several milestones tied directly to the five key areas addressed in the 2022 FOIA Guidelines. As in past years, with input from interested stakeholders, OIP continued to refine the milestones in 2024 to reflect agencies' progress in administering the FOIA. OIP used a five-level scoring system to illustrate the levels of success achieved by agencies and included a detailed methodology of how each milestone was scored.

The issuance of the Assessment was designed to promote greater accountability in implementing DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines, and to encourage improvement in the government's overall FOIA administration. The Assessment also showcases all the progress made by agencies over the past year. By assessing agencies on a wide variety of factors that contribute to improving information disclosure, the public, as well as the agencies themselves, can readily see where agencies have excelled, and where further work can still be done, in improving the administration of the FOIA.

Summary of Agency Annual FOIA Reports and FOIA.gov

As noted above, each year agencies are required by law to submit an Annual FOIA Report to the Attorney General. These reports detail a range of statistics regarding each agency's FOIA activities, such as the numbers of requests received and processed, and the time taken to process them. In addition to issuing guidance to agencies on the content of these reports and reviewing them for completeness, OIP, in accordance with [5 U.S.C. § 552\(e\)\(4\)](#), compiles and posts all agency Annual FOIA Reports in a "single electronic access point," by posting them on the [Reports](#) page of its website. For Fiscal Year 2023, 122 reports were submitted and centrally posted on [OIP's website](#).

During 2024, OIP also uploaded the data for agencies' [Fiscal Year 2023 Annual FOIA Reports](#) onto [FOIA.gov](#), the Department's comprehensive, government-wide FOIA website. In addition to many other features, [FOIA.gov](#) shines a light on agencies' administration of the FOIA by taking the detailed statistics contained in the Annual FOIA Reports and allowing them to be easily sorted and compared by agency and over time.

In order to provide a snapshot of government-wide FOIA activity, every year as part of its review of agencies' Annual FOIA Reports, OIP issues a detailed summary of the information contained in these reports for the given fiscal year. In 2024, OIP issued its [Summary of Annual FOIA Reports for Fiscal Year 2023](#) (AFR Summary). OIP prepared the AFR Summary by using [FOIA.gov](#), which allows for a detailed analysis and aggregation of statistics that was not readily available prior to creation of the site.

The AFR Summary highlights the number of requests received and processed by agencies, the disposition of those requests, and the time taken by agencies to respond. The AFR Summary also provides details about the number of consultations and administrative appeals received and processed, as well as data on backlogs of requests and appeals. Finally, the AFR Summary provides overall figures for the number of personnel working on FOIA and the overall costs to the government for administering the FOIA. By facilitating the comparison of data from agency Annual FOIA Reports across agencies and over time, the AFR Summary helps to ensure that agencies are accountable for their FOIA administration and that the government is fully transparent concerning its FOIA responsibilities.

Quarterly Reporting Requirement

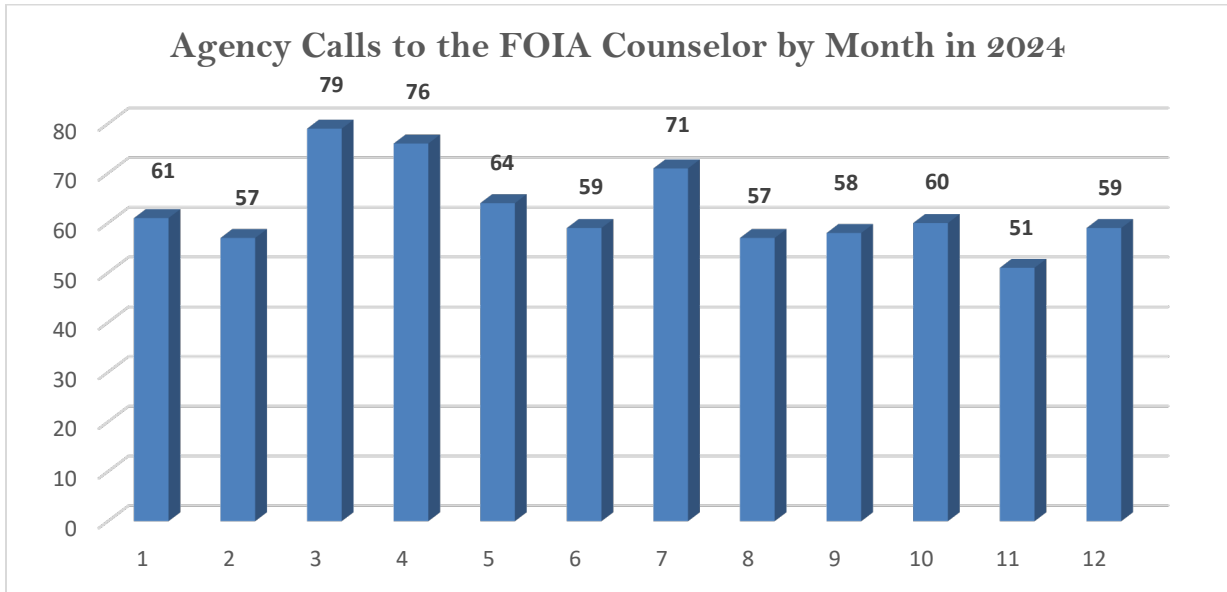
Pursuant to the [Quarterly FOIA Reporting](#) requirement instituted by OIP in January 2013, OIP continued to facilitate agencies' quarterly reporting of FOIA data in 2024. In accordance with OIP's [Quarterly Report Guidance](#), as updated in October 2021, agencies each input their quarterly data into [FOIA.gov](#) so that it then collectively appears on the [FOIA.gov Quarterly Data page](#). The quarterly data consists of: (1) the number of requests received during the reporting period; (2) the number of requests processed during the reporting period; (3) the number of requests in an agency's backlog at the end of the reporting period; and (4) the progress being made to close the agency's ten overall oldest pending FOIA requests from the prior fiscal year. This quarterly reporting of FOIA data allows for a more real-time assessment of the flow of FOIA requests handled by the government throughout the year. It not only provides the public with more timely access to important FOIA data, but it also assists agencies and agency components in actively

assessing the state of their FOIA caseloads through the year so they can take steps to reduce backlogs and improve timelines.

### C. Counseling and Consultations

In addition to providing written policy guidance to agencies, OIP also provided [direct, one-on-one counseling](#) for agency personnel during 2024, as a further means of encouraging agency compliance with the FOIA. OIP’s counseling activities were conducted largely over the telephone by experienced OIP attorneys known to FOIA personnel throughout the Executive Branch as “FOIA Counselors.” Through this [FOIA Counselor Service](#), OIP provided confidential legal advice and guidance to FOIA personnel government-wide. OIP widely publicizes the phone number of the FOIA Counselor Service – (202) 514-3642 (514-FOIA). While most of this counseling was conducted by telephone, other options were made available as well. The counseling services provided by OIP during the year are summarized below.

OIP provided FOIA Counselor guidance to agencies on a broad range of FOIA-related subjects, including guidance pertaining to the [DOJ’s 2022 FOIA Guidelines](#). Most of the FOIA Counselor calls received by OIP involve issues regarding proposed agency responses to initial FOIA requests or administrative appeals, but many are also more general anticipatory inquiries regarding agency responsibilities and administrative practices to comply with the FOIA. DOJ encourages agencies intending to deny FOIA requests raising novel issues to consult with OIP to the extent practicable. [See 28 C.F.R. § 0.24\(i\) \(2023\)](#). OIP has found that such consultations are very valuable in ensuring agency compliance with the FOIA. OIP handled 752 requests for agency guidance through its FOIA Counselor service during 2024.



Sometimes a determination is made that a [FOIA Counselor](#) inquiry requires more extensive discussion and analysis by OIP attorneys, including supervisory attorneys. On those occasions, OIP convenes a meeting between agency representatives and senior OIP



staff to thoroughly discuss and resolve all factual, legal, and policy issues related to the matter. OIP conducts similar discussions within the Department of Justice as well.

An additional counseling service provided by OIP pertains to FOIA matters in litigation. Further, OIP is consulted in all instances in which the Department must decide whether to pursue a FOIA or FOIA-related issue on appeal.

OIP also makes itself available to advise agencies on their FOIA processes generally, including on matters such as incorporating quality assurances into their workflows and using active case management to ensure an effective system for responding to requests. OIP may provide this advice in response to specific requests from agencies or more informally in the context of other discussions.

In addition to providing legal and policy advice to agencies, OIP also frequently receives calls from the public. Often these individuals contact OIP with questions about how to make a FOIA request or locate a particular document. OIP staff assists these callers and continue to serve as a resource where anyone can call and learn about the FOIA process. During 2024, OIP handled 615 calls from members of the public.

#### **D. Disseminating Information through *FOIA Post***

During 2024, OIP continued to disseminate a wide variety of news and information using the [FOIA Post blog](#). *FOIA Post* allows for quick transmittal of the most up-to-date FOIA news and information to both the public and government personnel. The blog includes a search feature that allows users to use key terms to search through all of OIP's blog posts for any information that is of particular interest. Similar full-text search tools are also provided for archived articles and guidance issued through predecessor publications. All the OIP guidance articles issued in 2024 were disseminated to agencies – and made available to the public – through announcements on *FOIA Post*. OIP also used *FOIA Post* to announce the issuance of the above-mentioned Annual FOIA Report [Summary](#), new Chief FOIA Officer Report [Guidelines](#), FOIA [reporting deadlines](#), and other relevant FOIA news. All training programs and FOIA conferences were likewise publicized on *FOIA Post*. Set out below are some highlights of OIP's use of *FOIA Post* to communicate with the FOIA community.

##### *Announcing Upcoming FOIA Reporting Deadlines*

OIP continued to use *FOIA Post* to [announce](#) deadlines for the submission of agencies' Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Reports, Fiscal Year 2025 Quarterly FOIA Reports, and 2025 Chief FOIA Officer Reports. As mentioned previously, the three reports serve a vital role in illustrating the steps taken and the progress made by agencies in administering the FOIA, and provide valuable information about how agencies promote efficiency, make more information available proactively, and use technology to improve FOIA administration.

##### *Best Practices Workshops*

OIP continued to use *FOIA Post* to announce FOIA *Best Practices* workshops held throughout the year. As part of the [Second United States Open Government National](#)

[Action Plan's](#) commitment to further modernize FOIA and improve internal agency FOIA processes, OIP began holding a series of FOIA *Best Practices* workshops in 2014, and continued the workshops in 2024. Each workshop in the Best Practices series focuses on a specific FOIA topic, with a panel of representatives sharing experiences, lessons learned, and strategies for success in these areas. Through these workshops, agencies can continue to learn from one another and leverage the successes of others in their own organizations for the overall benefit of FOIA administration across the government.

In 2024, OIP hosted a best practices [workshop](#) for agency FOIA professionals about creating and implementing backlog reduction plans. The workshop consisted of representatives from DOJ, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Defense, Department of the Interior, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission. The panelists discussed a range of best practices including approaching backlog reduction as an ongoing endeavor rather than a static plan, establishing short- and long-term goals, investing in personnel and technology, and the importance of leadership support in ensuring success. A recap of the workshop along with the best practices discussed are available on OIP's [Best Practices Workshop Series](#) site.

### *Sunshine Week Events*

OIP used *FOIA Post* to [announce](#) the DOJ's 2024 Sunshine Week Kick-off Event. [DOJ's FOIA 2022 Guidelines](#) emphasize the critical importance of FOIA professionals to the day-to-day implementation of the law. At its annual Sunshine Week event, the Department once again recognized and celebrated the accomplishments of these agency FOIA professionals. Agencies were [invited](#) to nominate FOIA professionals for various awards recognizing their service. At the event, the Department presented awards for Exceptional Service by a FOIA Professional or Team of FOIA Professionals, Advancements in Government-Wide FOIA Administration, Outstanding Contributions by a New Employee, Exceptional Advancements in IT to Improve the Agency's FOIA Administration, Exceptional Advancements in Proactive Disclosure of Information, and Lifetime Service Awards.

The 2024 Sunshine Week event began with keynote remarks from the Acting Associate Attorney General of the United States, who highlighted the importance of Sunshine Week as “an opportunity to recommit ourselves to the broader principles of openness, transparency, and accountability that FOIA serves.” The Acting Associate Attorney General also recognized the momentous year FOIA programs across the federal government had, including processing over one million requests and uploading over 226 million proactive disclosures to agency websites in 2024, emphasizing that “hour-by-hour and line-by-line,” FOIA professionals have worked “to apply the presumption of openness and shine light on the government’s policies and operations.”

Following the keynote remarks, the Director of OIP discussed some of OIP's ongoing initiatives to support agencies in their FOIA operations over the past year. Those efforts included providing FOIA training and guidance, updating the DOJ [Guide to the Freedom of Information Act](#), completing draft FOIA business standards in line with the Federal Integrated Business Framework, and launching a new interactive Search Tool on FOIA.gov. OIP's Director also highlighted OIP's new policy guidance on a range of topics including: [Standard Operating Procedures for FOIA Offices](#) and [OIP Guidance for Further Improvement Based on its 2023 Chief FOIA Officers Report Review and Assessment](#).

Chief FOIA Officers Council Updates

OIP also used *FOIA Post* to provide updates about the work of the Chief FOIA Officers Council. This included announcing Council meetings in [April](#) and [November](#). Additional information about the Chief FOIA Officer Council is available under Additional Government-wide Initiatives to Further Improve the Administration of the FOIA, below.

FOIA.gov Search Tool Adds Law Enforcement User Journey

OIP also used *FOIA Post* to provide updates on the FOIA.gov [Search Tool](#) launched in 2023. As of 2024, FOIA.gov now includes additional functionality to help users locate commonly requested law enforcement and related records. The FOIA.gov Search Tool was updated to add a “law enforcement records” pre-defined user journey that helps the public more quickly locate commonly requested information. This user journey supplements the existing journeys that help users identify agencies with some of the most common types of requested records, including Immigration/Travel records, Tax records, Social Security records, Medical records, Personnel records, and Military records. The new law enforcement records user journey not only helps requesters identify the multitude of federal law enforcement agencies subject to the FOIA, but also provides useful guidance for those seeking state and local records.

Since the launch of the Search Tool in October 2023, OIP has observed that most users enter a predefined user journey, making the predefined journeys instrumental in helping requesters identify agencies and documents of interest. In introducing the new law enforcement user journey, the machine learning functionality used to power the Search Tool was retrained and benefitted from recent advancements. As a result, search results are anticipated to be more accurate and precise. Additional information about OIP’s work on FOIA.gov generally is included under Additional Government-wide Initiatives to Further Improve the Administration of the FOIA, below.

Open Government National Action Plan Updates

OIP also used *FOIA Post* to share the [call for public comment](#) for the upcoming Sixth U.S. Open Government National Action Plan (NAP). The Government Services Administration (GSA) invited input from a wide and diverse array of stakeholders from the public, private, advocacy, not-for-profit, and philanthropic sectors, including state, local, tribal, and territorial governments. Members of the public as well as agency personnel were encouraged to provide feedback. Public and agency input is critical in shaping a NAP that reflects the needs and priorities of the American people. Additional information about OIP’s work on NAP commitments is included under Additional Government-wide Initiatives to Further Improve the Administration of the FOIA, below.

**E. Providing Additional FOIA Reference Materials**

In addition to using *FOIA Post* to timely disseminate policy guidance and other useful information concerning the FOIA, OIP also creates or makes available additional FOIA reference materials for agencies to use.

Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act

The preeminent reference document created by OIP is the [United States Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act](#). This online publication is a legal treatise on the FOIA and is widely relied upon, as intended, by government personnel. Members of the public also consult it. The Guide contains an extensive discussion of the case law interpreting the FOIA's many procedural requirements, its exemptions, and other relevant topics such as litigation considerations and reverse FOIA actions. In 2024, OIP's subject matter experts prepared updates to the [Guide](#), taking into account recent changes in the FOIA, hundreds of court decisions impacting the interpretation of the FOIA, and guidance issued by OIP. OIP is currently updating individual chapters on a rolling basis to continue to provide the most up-to-date treatise on the current state of the FOIA. In 2024, OIP posted updated chapters concerning the Introduction, Exemption 3, Exemption 7, Exemption 7(B), Exclusions, and Litigation Considerations.

Resources on Exemption 3 Statutes

OIP has a dedicated section on its website under [FOIA Resources](#) to address Exemption 3 of the FOIA. This section is designed to offer resources to assist agencies in properly processing FOIA requests and to aid requesters in understanding the scope of Exemption 3. In 2024, OIP continued to make available its chart of all [the statutes that courts have found to qualify as Exemption 3 statutes](#) under the FOIA. OIP also continued to make available its charts reflecting all the [Exemption 3 statutes cited by agencies in their Annual FOIA Reports](#).

Summaries of Court Decisions

Each year, the federal courts issue several hundreds of decisions in FOIA cases, addressing all aspects of the law. These decisions shape the way the law is interpreted and applied by the thousands of attorneys and access professionals across the government who handle FOIA requests, administrative appeals, and litigation. As a resource for those professionals, in addition to substantive and procedural policy guidance, OIP provides agencies as well as the public with [detailed summaries](#) of every FOIA case decided in the United States, at both the district court and appellate levels. For every court decision in its summaries, OIP highlights each FOIA exemption and procedural or litigation-related issue that was discussed in the opinion. Because court decisions play such an important part in the interpretation of the FOIA and its proper administration, OIP provides these summaries to help ensure that all FOIA professionals have ready and current access to the most recently decided court opinions. All the summaries are compiled in one central location on the [Court Decisions](#) section of OIP's website. These cases can all be searched by topic, chronologically, and through key words.

Centralized Access to all Agency Annual FOIA Reports

As noted above, agencies are required to compile and submit to the Attorney General an Annual FOIA Report. As part of its government-wide guidance responsibilities, every year OIP reviews each agency's Annual FOIA Report. This review was conducted in accordance with a [2002 Government Accountability Office \(GAO\) report](#), which encouraged such discretionary OIP review activities and found that they "have resulted in improvements



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to both the quality of agencies' annual reports and on-line availability of information." A [follow-up GAO study](#) published in 2004 likewise found improvements in agencies' annual reporting due to OIP's government-wide review efforts.

In accordance with another provision of the FOIA, [5 U.S.C. § 552\(e\)\(4\)](#), and as mentioned above, the Department of Justice in 2024 maintained "[a single electronic access point](#)" for the consolidated availability of the Annual FOIA Reports of all federal agencies. In 2024, OIP posted [all agency Annual FOIA Reports](#) in a human-readable and uniform "open" format on its centralized Annual FOIA Report website, as well as included all the data from the reports on FOIA.gov.

*FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit*

In 2024, OIP continued to make available its [FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit](#), which was developed as a resource for agencies to use when assessing their administration of the FOIA. The [Toolkit](#) consists of 15 modules, each focusing on a distinct aspect of the FOIA process, such as Initial Mail Intake, Adjudicating Requests for Expedited Processing, Proactive Disclosures, and Administrative Appeals. Each module contains various milestones to help agencies evaluate their FOIA programs and identify areas for improvement. These milestones also address the use of technology, allocation of resources, and use of data to further agency FOIA administration. At the end of each module, OIP offers best practices and guidance covering the topic.

The Toolkit also incorporates requirements from the [DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines](#) and the latest [OIP guidance](#). Finally, to make it easier for agencies to complete the assessment and track progress towards achieving milestones, OIP has made available fillable spreadsheets containing all milestones and visual snapshots of agencies' progress.

*Proactive Disclosures*

In keeping with the Department's focus on increasing proactive disclosures, OIP proactively posted a variety of information concerning the FOIA that is useful to both agencies and the public on its website. In 2024, OIP continued to update the [FOIA Resources](#) section of its website with the Exemption 3 charts discussed above. As noted above, OIP also posted government-wide [guidance](#) on the FOIA on its website and regularly used its blog, [FOIA Post](#), to notify agencies and the public about new FOIA developments and events. Under the [Court Decisions](#) section of OIP's website, OIP regularly posted summaries of the new FOIA decisions issued by the federal courts. OIP also continued to update the [Training](#) section of its website to notify agency personnel and the public of upcoming FOIA training opportunities and events.

OIP also continued to post [monthly FOIA logs](#) for requests made to OIP and the Offices of the Attorney General, Deputy Attorney General, Associate Attorney General, Legislative Affairs, Public Affairs, and Legal Policy. In addition to posting frequently requested records on [various topics](#), OIP also continued to make available [operational documents](#) that had not previously been requested.

*FOIA Reference Guide*

OIP continues to maintain an electronic copy of its [Department of Justice Freedom of Information Act Reference Guide](#) on the Department’s FOIA website. This reference guide provides the public with information about how to make a request to the Department, describes how the FOIA process works, and contains descriptions of each of the Department’s components and the type of records they maintain.

### Spanish Language Content

In 2024, OIP updated and expanded the [Spanish content](#) on OIP’s website. This page directs to various information provided across the site, including information about OIP, its leadership, the FOIA, and government transparency overall. It also provides links to Spanish versions of newly translated pages, including the FOIA Library, FOIA Resources page, and instructions for how to make a FOIA request to the Department of Justice.

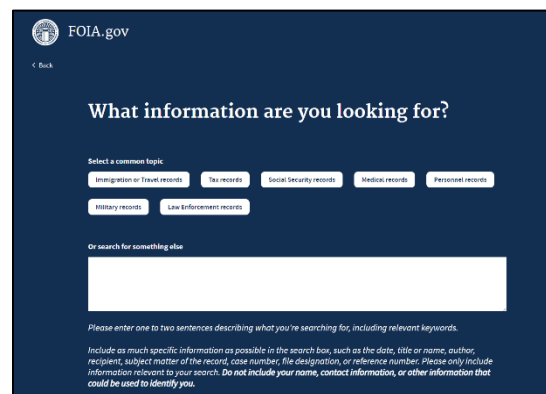
## **F. Additional Government-wide Initiatives to Further Improve the Administration of the FOIA**

During 2024, OIP made substantial progress on several other FOIA initiatives, including enhancing the services provided on FOIA.gov, co-chairing the Chief FOIA Officers Council, and participating as a member of the FOIA Federal Advisory Committee and Open Government Federal Advisory Committee. OIP also made progress on multiple commitments related to FOIA as part of the [Fifth U.S. Open Government National Action Plan](#) (NAP).

### FOIA.gov

Since its launch in 2011, [FOIA.gov](#) has continued to serve as a central resource for educating the public on the FOIA both in terms of agency Annual FOIA Report data and taking part in the FOIA process. While it was initially a project undertaken by the Department in response to a strong interest by open government groups in having a “dashboard” that illustrates statistics collected from agencies’ Annual FOIA Reports, the Department almost immediately began to expand its capabilities and has continued to add new features over time.

In 2024, OIP was pleased to advance its new [Search Tool](#), launched in October 2023, to help the public more quickly locate commonly requested information. The [Search Tool](#) is designed to simplify the process of making FOIA requests and finding federal government documents. The [tool](#) contains “common topics” that launch users into logic-based pathways that ask a series of questions to help get the user to the right place. Alternatively, users can enter their own search terms. The tool relies on a combination of logic and machine learning to provide a user with publicly available documents or a suggestion of where to request information.



[FOIA.gov Search Tool Landing Site](#)

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During 2024, the Search Tool was updated to include a new user journey to help members of the public locate commonly requested law enforcement and related records. Prior to the launch of this user journey, site usage data showed a high volume of searches for law enforcement and related records. Adding this pre-defined user journey helps the public more efficiently locate commonly requested information.

During 2024, OIP also implemented a new data acquisition capability that will generally allow for quarterly updates to the data powering the Search Tool, with minimal work required by agencies. OIP also began efforts to significantly improve the relevancy and accuracy of the Search Tool's suggested agency and document results. Advancements in artificial intelligence capabilities since the launch of the Search Tool offer new opportunities for improvement and OIP continues to build on these advancements to optimize the tool for both agencies and the public.

As in prior years, in 2024 OIP continued to improve the data validation and other functionality released in 2019 as part of the FOIA.gov Annual Report Tool. The Annual Report Tool provides agencies a centralized location to submit and validate their Annual FOIA Report data. In 2024, all 122 submitting agencies were again required to upload their Annual FOIA Reports through the tool.

Further, consistent with its [guidance](#) issued in light of the *FOIA Improvement Act of 2016*, OIP continued efforts to help agencies maintain interoperability with the National FOIA Portal on [FOIA.gov](#). OIP assessed agencies on their compliance with interoperability requirement as part of the [2024 Assessment of Agency Chief FOIA Officer Reports](#) and reminded agencies of the ongoing requirement in its [Guidance for Further Improvement Based on 2024 Chief FOIA Officers Report Review and Assessment](#).

In addition, [FOIA.gov](#) continues to include individual agency and component pages containing a description of key FOIA resources and average processing times by agency for simple and complex requests. The website also provides contact information for each agency, including FOIA Requester Service Centers and FOIA Public Liaisons, which agencies can update themselves as needed. There are also tools to assist the public in locating the right agency and aids to assist in making a request. For each agency, a customized request form incorporates any specific regulatory requirements of that agency to ensure that the requester provides the agency with all the required information right at the outset of the request process. The request forms all follow a similar pattern to bring more consistency to the request-making process. All these features are designed to educate the public, simplify the process, and improve FOIA administration overall.

In 2024, [FOIA.gov](#) continued to serve as an educational resource for the public by providing useful information about how the FOIA works, where to make requests, and what to expect through the FOIA process. As in prior years, explanatory videos are embedded into the website and the site contains a section addressing frequently asked questions, as well as a glossary of FOIA terms.

*Chief FOIA Officers Council*

The *FOIA Improvement Act of 2016* established the [Chief FOIA Officers \(CFO\) Council](#), which is composed of all agency Chief FOIA Officers, the Directors of OIP and the

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Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), and the Deputy Director for Management from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The CFO Council is tasked with developing recommendations for increasing FOIA compliance and efficiency; disseminating information about agency experiences, ideas, best practices, and innovative approaches related to FOIA; identifying, developing, and coordinating initiatives to increase transparency and FOIA compliance; and promoting the development and use of common performance measures for agency compliance with the FOIA.

The CFO Council held two public meetings in 2024. On April 17, 2024, the Council met virtually with agency FOIA professionals and members of the public. The Council heard updates from the GSA, OIP, and OGIS. GSA provided an overview of the Open Government Partnership (OGP), an international partnership promoting government transparency, of which the United States is a founding member. GSA explained the primary missions of its Open Government Secretariat, which include implementing the current NAP 5, developing the NAP 6, and stakeholder engagement with federal and public stakeholders to increase awareness of OGP and NAP 5. OIP highlighted some government-wide metrics from Fiscal Year 2023's FOIA data, specifically noting that agencies processed a record number of over 1 million requests during the year. OIP provided updates on the draft FOIA Business Standards, and reviewed recent Government Accountability Office FOIA recommendations. OGIS discussed the FOIA Advisory Committee and its three subcommittees: Implementation, Modernization, and Resources, and reviewed recommendations that had been passed by the Committee. The CFO Council's two subcommittees, the Committee on Cross-Agency Collaboration and Innovation (COCACI) and the Technology Committee also provided updates.

Subsequently, on November 7, 2024, the Council met again. The Open Government Federal Advisory Committee, a new Committee created by the GSA to advise the GSA Administrator on federal open government and public engagement efforts, including the development of Open Government National Action Plans, shared updates on its first-ever meeting. OIP gave updates on the 2024-2025 reporting season, updates to the FOIA.gov Search Tool, and Sunshine Week 2025. OGIS highlighted several actions that the FOIA Federal Advisory Committee voted to be recommended to the CFO Council. The Council's two committees, COCACI and the Technology Committee, gave updates as well on the continued progress they have made over the year and looked to their next steps.

These 2024 meetings were open to the public and livestreamed online. OIP published all meeting materials on the CFO Council page on [FOIA.gov](https://www.foia.gov). In addition to these public meetings, the Council's two Committees meet regularly throughout the year and made noticeable achievements in sharing best practices on key areas of FOIA administration.

In May 2024, the Technology Committee hosted the [NexGen 2.0 FOIA Tech Showcase](#). The purpose of this showcase is to identify FOIA technology solutions for federal agencies in response to existing FOIA case processing and backlog challenges, and to raise awareness within federal agencies of different technological capabilities to consider for future case processing.



FOIA Advisory Committee

The Director of OIP continued serving on the [FOIA Federal Advisory Committee](#). The Advisory Committee's work was conducted over two sequential terms: 2022-2024 and 2024-2026. In total, the committee met seven times in 2024 (2022-2024 term: March 5, April 4, May 9, June 13; 2024-2026 term: September 9, September 13, December 5). The 2022-2024 term of the Committee included the Implementation Subcommittee, Modernization Subcommittee, and Resources Subcommittee, while the 2024-2025 Committee created three as well, keeping the Implementation Subcommittee and adding the Statutory Reform Subcommittee and Volume and Frequency Subcommittee.

At the conclusion of the 2022-2024 term, the Committee issued the [2022-2024 Term FOIA Advisory Committee Final Report and Recommendations](#). The report includes a discussion of the 16 recommendations to improve the implementation of FOIA. After the issuance of the report, new members were selected, and the Committee began its 2024-2026 term, with the Director of OIP continuing his service. OIP continues its work to review and consider the recommendations of the FOIA Advisory Committee.

Open Government Federal Advisory Committee

The Director of OIP also serves on the newly-established [Open Government Federal Advisory Committee](#) (OG FAC), a GSA advisory body on federal open government initiatives. OG FAC assists in the development on the United States National Action Plans, with the initial focus of the Committee for the 2024-2026 term to be “provid[ing] advice on the development of the 6th U.S. National Action Plan and federal open government policy and public engagement.” In 2024, OG FAC held three public meetings on May 10, October 23, and December 11. OG FAC's bylaws, approved at an October 18, 2024 administrative meeting, can be found on the [Oct. 18, 2024 meeting page](#).

National Action Plan

In 2024, OIP continued work on the initiatives established by the [Fifth Open Government National Action Plan](#). OIP is leading the National Action Plan efforts to strengthen access to government information through the FOIA. Building on its work to implement DOJ's 2022 [FOIA Guidelines](#), OIP had previously completed the following commitments:

- Issued an updated FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit to reflect additional milestones for proactive disclosures, use of technology, and requirements of the DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines.
- Developed an interactive FOIA Search Tool to help the public more easily locate records online or find the right agency to submit their FOIA requests when information is not already posted.

In 2024, OIP continued progress on the following:

- Leading the development of shared FOIA business standards to make it easier for agencies to acquire technology and, in turn, improve efficiency and consistency in

processing FOIA requests. During 2024, OIP sought public comment on draft business capabilities and activities in line with the Federal Integrated Business Framework. OIP incorporated feedback and is in the last stages of finalizing the baseline standards for publication. OIP will continue to work collaboratively with the working group, Business Standards Council, and OGIS to continue developing additional elements of the business standards. Once finalized, the standards will be published on the [Federal Integrated Business Framework](#) website.

OIP looks forward to providing updates on these initiatives and development of NAP 6 in the coming months via [FOIA Post](#), the Chief FOIA Officers Council, and the [National Action Plan Commitment Tracker](#).

## G. Outreach

To improve not only the Department's, but also the government's, overall FOIA administration, the Department engages in outreach with the requester community and other outside stakeholders in a variety of ways. For example, in 2024 OIP invited members of the public and civil society to attend its annual Sunshine Week kickoff event. OIP staff attended a student outreach event at George Washington University. OIP's Director presented at events that included members of the requester community, in addition to meeting with them individually. In 2024, OIP's Director participated in four outreach events: the American Society of Access Professionals National Training Conference in early June, a meeting of the National Association for Legal Support Professionals of Portland on June 13, a meeting with a Seton Hall University professor on October 11, and the Yale Access and Accountability Conference on November 1.

OIP continued to engage with outside stakeholders and advocates, as well as the public, through its participation in the Chief FOIA Officers Council its membership on the FOIA and Open Government Federal Advisory Committees, and participation in outreach efforts related to the development of the Sixth Open Government National Action Plan.

## H. Training, Public Presentations, and Briefings

As yet another method for encouraging compliance with the FOIA, OIP held a [variety of training programs](#) throughout the year. Additionally, OIP provided briefings and engaged with international delegations and officials interested in the U.S. experience with open government.

OIP conducted numerous FOIA-training programs in 2024, which ranged from half-day introductory sessions for non-FOIA personnel to advanced programs for highly experienced FOIA personnel. Over 8,500 individuals attended OIP-hosted training during 2024. Specifically, in 2024 OIP hosted the following events for government officials:

- *Virtual Introduction to the Freedom of Information Act* – This course provides a basic overview of the FOIA for agency personnel who do not specialize in access law. It is designed for those who either work with the FOIA only occasionally or need only a general familiarity with the FOIA to recognize and handle FOIA-related problems that may arise in other areas of agency activity. This training was held twice in 2024.

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- *Virtual Processing a Request from Start to Finish Workshop* – This workshop takes attendees through the process of a FOIA request from receipt by the agency to final response to the requester. This training was held once in 2024.
- *Virtual Procedural Requirements and Fees/Fee Waivers Workshop* – This workshop provides an overview of the FOIA’s procedural requirements, fees, and fee waivers, and a discussion of the FOIA’s proactive disclosure requirements. This training was held twice in 2024.
- *Virtual Litigation Workshop* – This workshop covers considerations that arise during FOIA litigation, including guidance on successful litigation strategy, as well as the preparation of Vaughn Indices and declarations. This training was held twice in 2024.
- *Virtual Administrative Appeals, FOIA Compliance, and Customer Service* – This training event covers the FOIA administrative appeal process, an overview of how agency FOIA professionals can help their agency accurately report about their FOIA administration, and an overview of OGIS with a focus on providing good customer service. This training was held twice in 2024.
- *Virtual Exemption 1 and Exemption 7 Workshop* – The Exemption 1 workshop gives an overview of Executive Order 13526 and the withholding of classified national security information. The Exemption 7 workshop gives an overview of the FOIA’s primary exemption for law enforcement records, including this exemption’s threshold requirement and substantive subparts. This training was held twice in 2024.
- *Virtual Exemption 4 and Exemption 5 Workshop* - The workshop provides an overview of Exemption 4, which protects trade secrets, certain commercial and financial information, and the submitter-notice process for exemption determinations. Additionally, the workshop provides an overview of Exemption 5, which incorporates civil discovery privileges into the FOIA. This training was held twice in 2024.
- *Virtual Continuing FOIA Education* – This course is designed as a program for experienced FOIA professionals with lectures on new or recent developments in FOIA administration as well as an update on recent FOIA court decisions. This training was held once in 2024.
- *Virtual Annual/Quarterly FOIA Report Training* – This training event provided agencies with a refresher on their FOIA reporting obligations. This training event was held once in 2024.
- *Virtual Chief FOIA Officer Report Training* – This training event provided agencies with a refresher on their Chief FOIA Officer reporting obligations. This training event was held once in 2024.

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- *Virtual Privacy Considerations* - This course covers the FOIA's privacy exemptions and the Privacy Act. Topics include the interface between the FOIA and the Privacy Act, as well as an overview of FOIA Exemptions 6 and 7(C). This training was held once in 2024.
- *Virtual Advanced Freedom of Information Act Training* – This course covers advanced topics in FOIA administration, including advanced privacy considerations and advanced procedural requirements. This course was held once in 2024.
- [\*Best Practices Workshops\*](#) – As noted above, OIP launched the Best Practices Workshop Series in 2014 as a part of the [Second United States Open Government National Action Plan's](#) commitment to modernizing FOIA and improving internal agency FOIA processes. Each workshop focuses on a specific FOIA topic, with a panel of representatives sharing experiences, lessons learned, and strategies for success in these areas. Through these workshops, agencies can continue to learn from one another and leverage the successes of others in their own organizations for the overall benefit of FOIA administration across the government. As mentioned above, in 2024, OIP hosted a best practices [workshop](#) focused on creating and implementing backlog reduction plans, specifically looking at backlog reduction as an ongoing endeavor, establishing short and long term goals, investing in personnel and technology, and the importance of leadership support in ensuring success.

In addition to the events hosted by OIP, approximately 16 professional staff members from OIP gave a total of 10 individual agency trainings during the year. Such individualized training sessions were conducted for the:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- National Archives and Records Administration
- Department of Defense components
- Department of the Interior
- Social Security Administration
- Department of Energy
- Federal Trade Commission
- Federal Housing Finance Agency

In addition, OIP provided training for components of the Department of Justice at an annual DOJ Component FOIA Conference held each spring, as well as through individual trainings upon request.

OIP continued to make available its [e-learning training modules](#). OIP designed the modules to address the unique needs of multiple levels of the federal workforce. An in-depth course for FOIA professionals covers the major procedural and substantive requirements of the law. A shorter course for federal employees provides a brief primer on the FOIA and highlights their responsibilities under the law. Finally, a brief course for agency senior executives emphasizes the importance of leadership support for an agency's FOIA program. OIP also continued to make available its [FOIA Infographic](#), a one-page resource to help new employees understand what the FOIA is and how the FOIA process works at their agencies.



Finally, in 2024 OIP participated in multiple international delegations and meetings concerning access to information. OIP's Director and staff members provided overviews of the United States' FOIA administration at nine delegation meetings held in Washington, D.C. The meetings included participants from Africa, Central and South America, Japan, Burkina Faso, Iraq, Kyrgyz Republic, and India.

## I. Legislative and Regulatory Proposals

During 2024, OIP reviewed numerous draft or preliminary legislative proposals relating to the FOIA or to information policy more generally. As a result of this review, OIP made recommendations in many instances, most frequently in connection with the technical sufficiency of proposed statutory nondisclosure provisions intended to serve as Exemption 3 statutes under the Act. OIP likewise continues to review and make suggested revisions to language contained in proposed FOIA regulations of other agencies.

## J. Congressional and Compliance Inquiries

In 2024, OIP responded to four congressional inquiries pertaining to FOIA-related matters. OIP also looked into 34 matters (sometimes involving multiple issues) from members of the public who had concerns about how the FOIA was being administered at an agency. In response to each of these compliance inquiries, OIP discussed the issues with the agency involved and, where appropriate, provided guidance on the steps needed to address the concern.

### LISTS OF FOIA LITIGATION CASES RECEIVED AND DECIDED DURING 2024

In accordance with [5 U.S.C § 552\(e\)\(6\)](#), the Department of Justice is required to provide a "listing of the number of cases arising under this section; a listing of each subsection, and any exemption, if applicable, involved in each case arising under this section; the disposition of each case arising under this section; and the cost, fees, and penalties assessed under subparagraphs (E), (F), and (G) of subsection (a)(4)." Because FOIA cases are often brought in one year, but not resolved until a subsequent year, the Department attaches to this report two separate lists of FOIA litigation cases for 2024, one showing the FOIA cases "received" or filed during 2024 and the second showing the dispositions "rendered" or decided in 2024. These lists will also be posted on OIP's website in an "open" format so that the public may manipulate and sort through the data in accordance with their particular interests.

#### List of Cases Received in 2024

The first list contains all of the cases filed as FOIA claims in federal district court during 2024. This information is derived directly from the federal courts' docketing systems through the Public Access to Court Electronic Records (PACER). According to PACER, in 2024, 889 cases were filed in the federal district courts as FOIA claims.

It is important to note that not all claims that are originally filed as FOIA claims remain as such on the court's docket. In many instances, a court will determine after a case is filed that the lawsuit does not actually pertain to an agency action under the FOIA. During 2024, OIP observed sixteen cases in which the courts dismissed claims because they

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were not actually FOIA actions. This can happen, for example, when a requester attempts to file a lawsuit against a state agency or public organization that is not subject to the FOIA. This list does not include those cases.

*List of Decisions Rendered in 2024*

The second list attached to this report contains all of the FOIA cases in which a decision was rendered by the federal courts in 2024. The list was compiled through the [Summary of Court Decisions](#) issued by OIP on a weekly basis and a survey of [PACER](#). The list is organized alphabetically, and as required by [Section \(e\)\(6\) of the FOIA](#), contains a description of the disposition in each case, each subsection and the exemptions (if any) involved, and any costs, fees or penalties assessed. If a court assessed attorney fees and costs pursuant to [5 U.S.C. § 552\(a\)\(4\)\(E\)](#), the amount is noted under “Fees and Costs” and subsection (a)(4)(E) is noted under “Subsections and Exemptions.” Going beyond the requirements of the FOIA, the “Fees and Costs” list also reflects those cases where court filings indicate that a party agreed to pay attorney fees or costs. In such cases, the amount is included under “Fees and Costs,” however, no subsection is listed since fees and costs were not assessed by the court.

The list does not include cases that were dismissed as non-FOIA claims (e.g., a case brought against a state agency) or “reverse” FOIA lawsuits, which are actions brought under the Administrative Procedure Act. They do include cases involving the National Labor Relations Board, the Securities and Exchange Commission, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the National Railroad Passenger Corporation, all of which, by statutory authority or agreement with the Attorney General, handle FOIA cases in which they are the defendant. Finally, it should be noted that this list of cases may include cases which were listed in previous reports. For example, a case initially decided in 2023, but appealed and affirmed in 2024, would be found on the lists of cases in which a decision was rendered for both 2023 and 2024.

*Report on any Notification to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel*

During 2024, the United States courts made no written findings pursuant to [5 U.S.C. § 552\(a\)\(4\)\(F\)\(i\)](#). Accordingly, no notification to the U.S. Office of Special Counsel was necessary.