



U.S. Department of
JUSTICE

2024 Annual FOIA Report Summary



April 28, 2025

Office of Information Policy

*2024 Annual FOIA Report Summary
United States Department of Justice*

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Introduction

Each year, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires agencies to submit to the Attorney General a report covering the prior fiscal year that includes details regarding the agency's administration of the FOIA. [5 U.S.C. § 552\(e\)\(1\) \(2018\)](#). In Fiscal Year 2024, 122 agencies were subject to the FOIA, and one of the ways agencies are held accountable for their administration of the FOIA is through these Annual FOIA Reports.¹ This Summary provides an overview of government-wide FOIA data as reported in agencies' Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Annual FOIA Reports.

Based on the FY 2024 data, we saw a continuing trend in the administration of the FOIA with record high numbers of requests received and processed. The government as a whole received approximately 25% more requests (+301,733) and processed approximately 34% more requests (+377,054) than in FY 2023. Additionally, in FY 2024, we saw the first increase in total full-time FOIA personnel since 2020.

Agencies also showed improvement in several other areas. For example, 94% of all requests for expedited processing were adjudicated within the statutory deadline of 10 calendar days. The government also continued to make a significant amount of information available proactively, with FOIA Offices posting 400% more (a)(2) proactive disclosures compared to FY 2023.

All data used to compile this Summary is available to view and download in .csv format on [FOIA.gov](#). Complete sets of the FOIA.gov data, both government-wide and by agency, are available on the [Data Set Downloads](#) page.

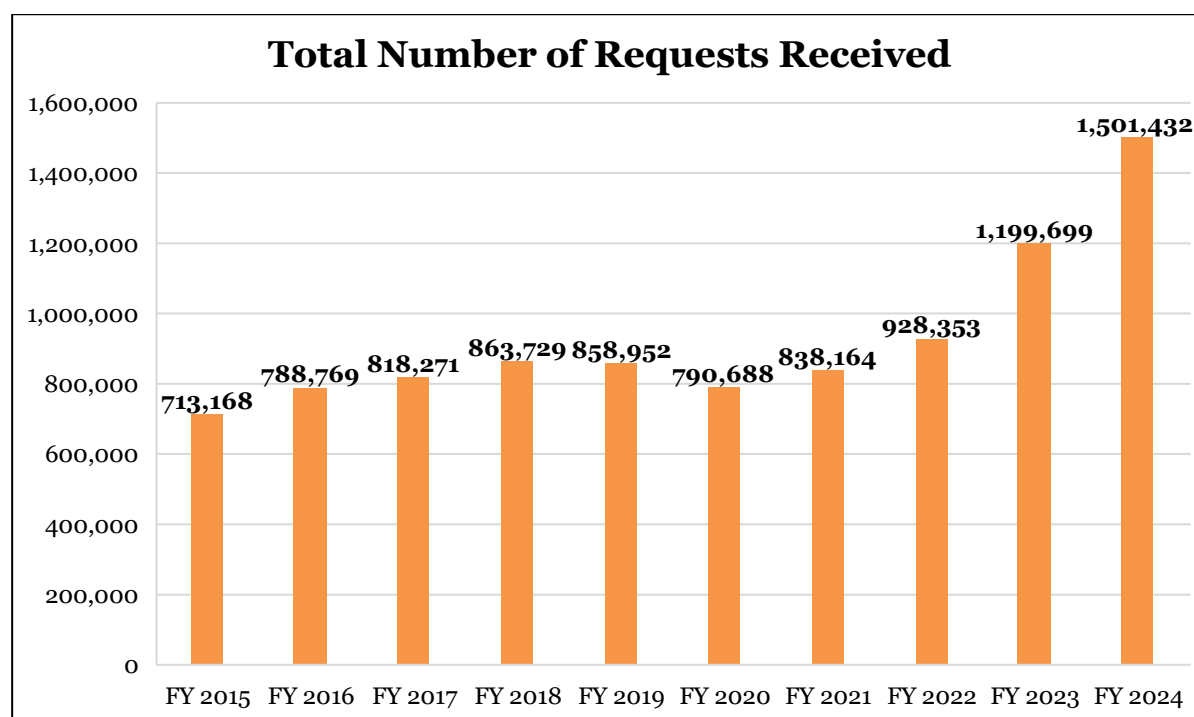
¹ For additional information about the information covered in the Annual FOIA Report, see the [Department of Justice Annual FOIA Report Handbook](#).

FOIA Requests

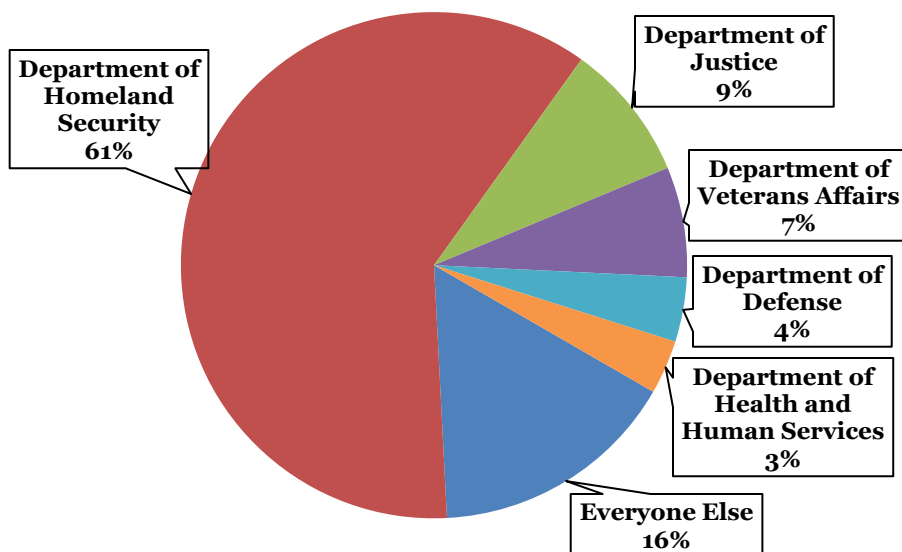
Number of Requests Received

In FY 2024, 122 federal agencies were subject to the FOIA. The federal government overall received a record high of 1,501,432 FOIA requests. This is a 25.15% increase from the number of requests received in FY 2023 (+301,733). As illustrated in the pie chart below, five agencies collectively received the vast majority (84%) of all FOIA requests government-wide: the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), Department of Justice (DOJ), Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), Department of Defense (DOD), and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

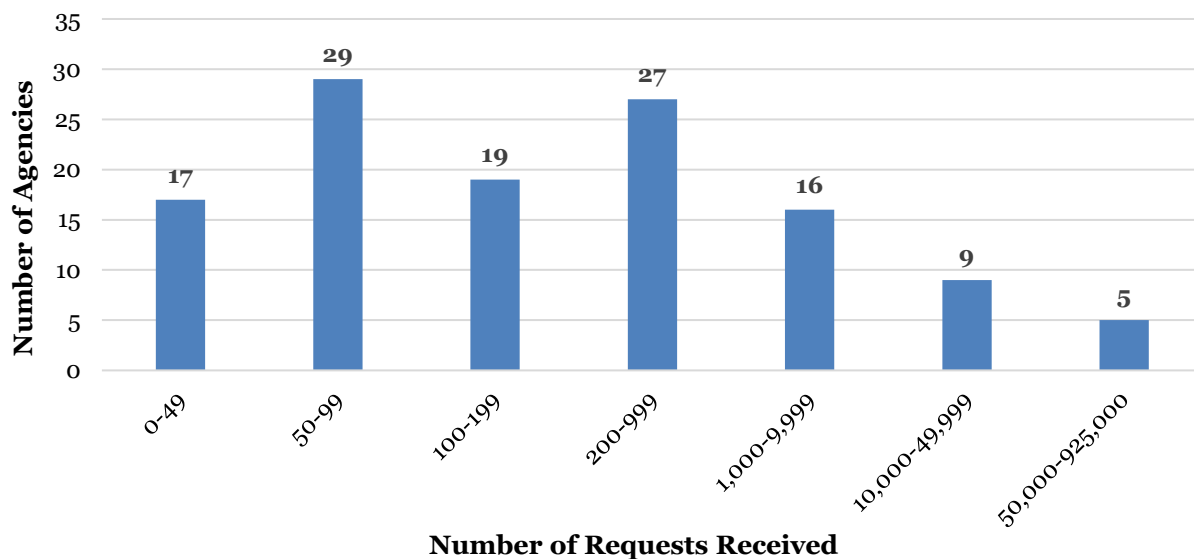
Over 92% of agencies received more requests in FY 2024 than in FY 2023. Forty-three agencies received more than double the number of requests they received in FY 2023. Roughly half of the Department-level agencies received 30% or more requests than in FY 2023. DOJ (+21,593 requests), VA (+26,135), and DHS (+236,679) saw the largest numerical increases in requests received in comparison to FY 2023.

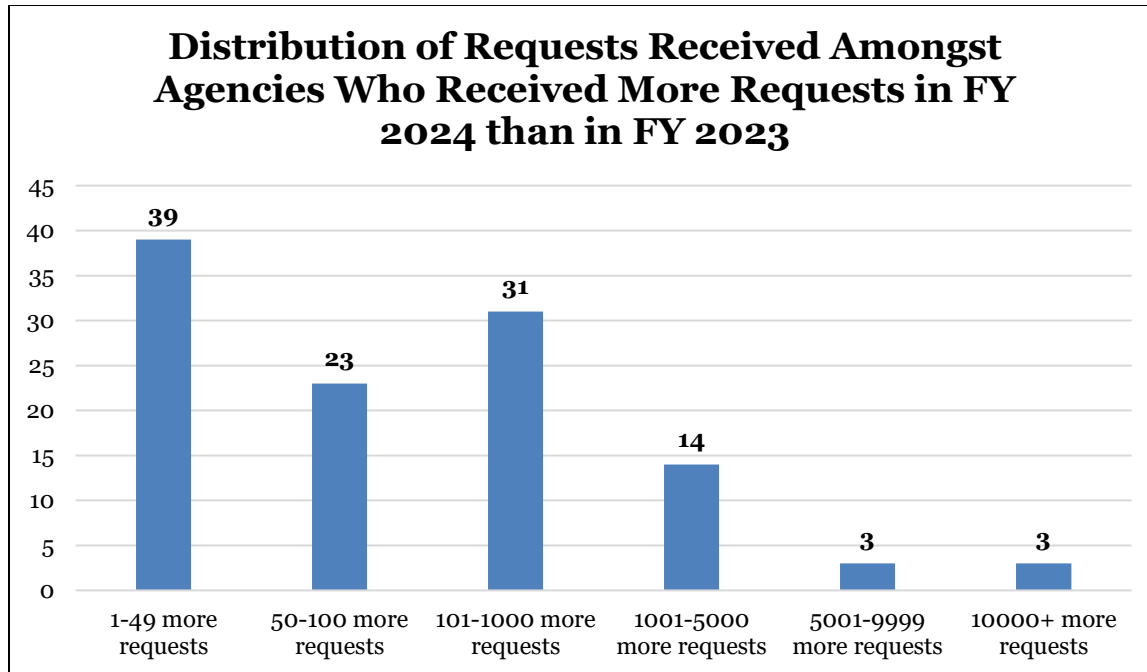


Top 5 Agencies in Requests Received



Distribution of Requests Received

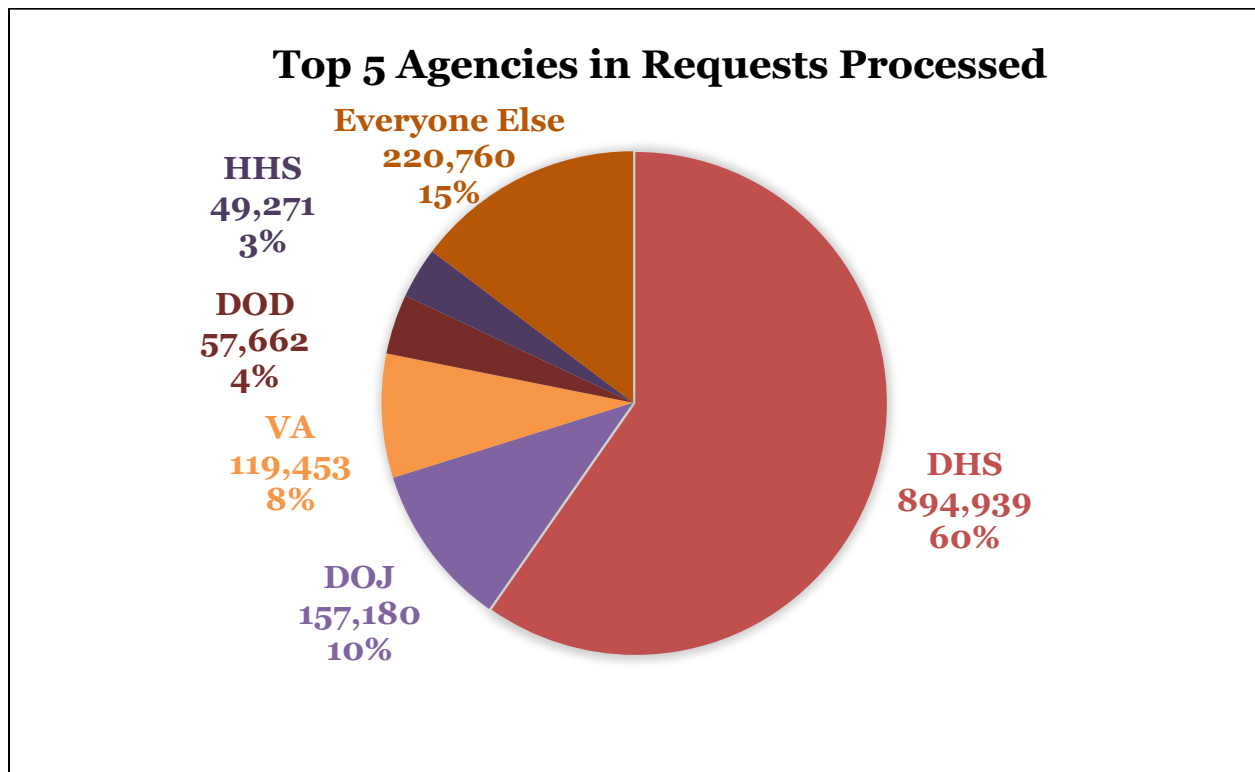
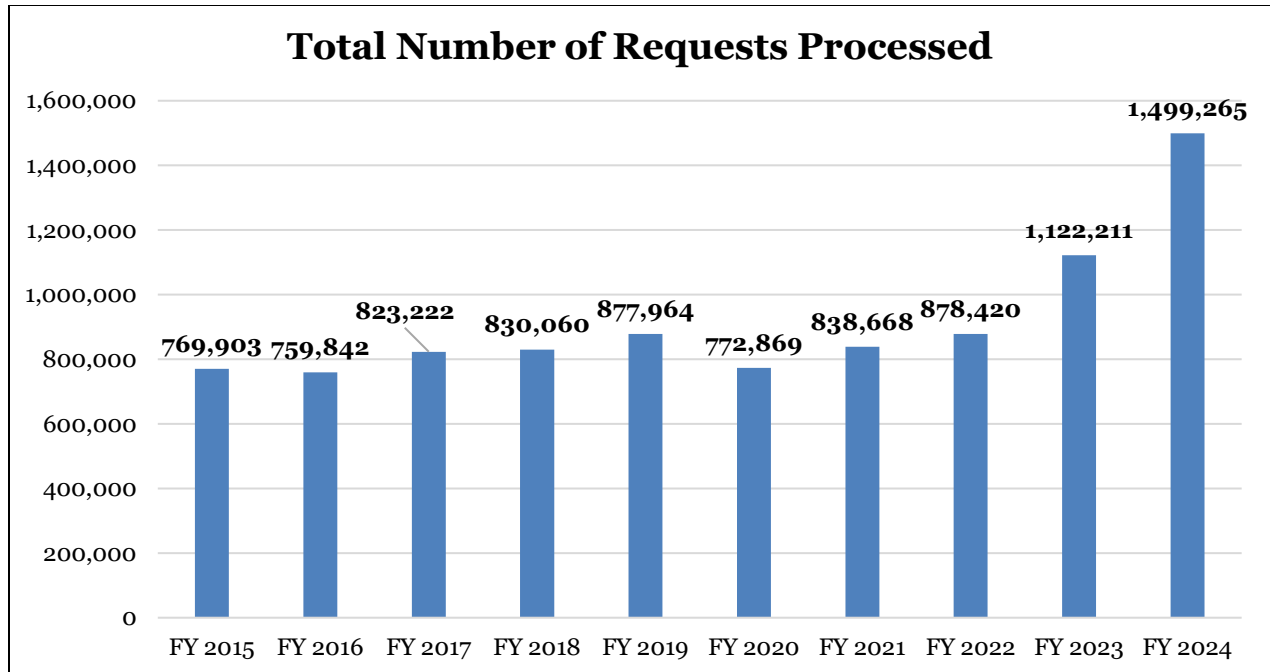


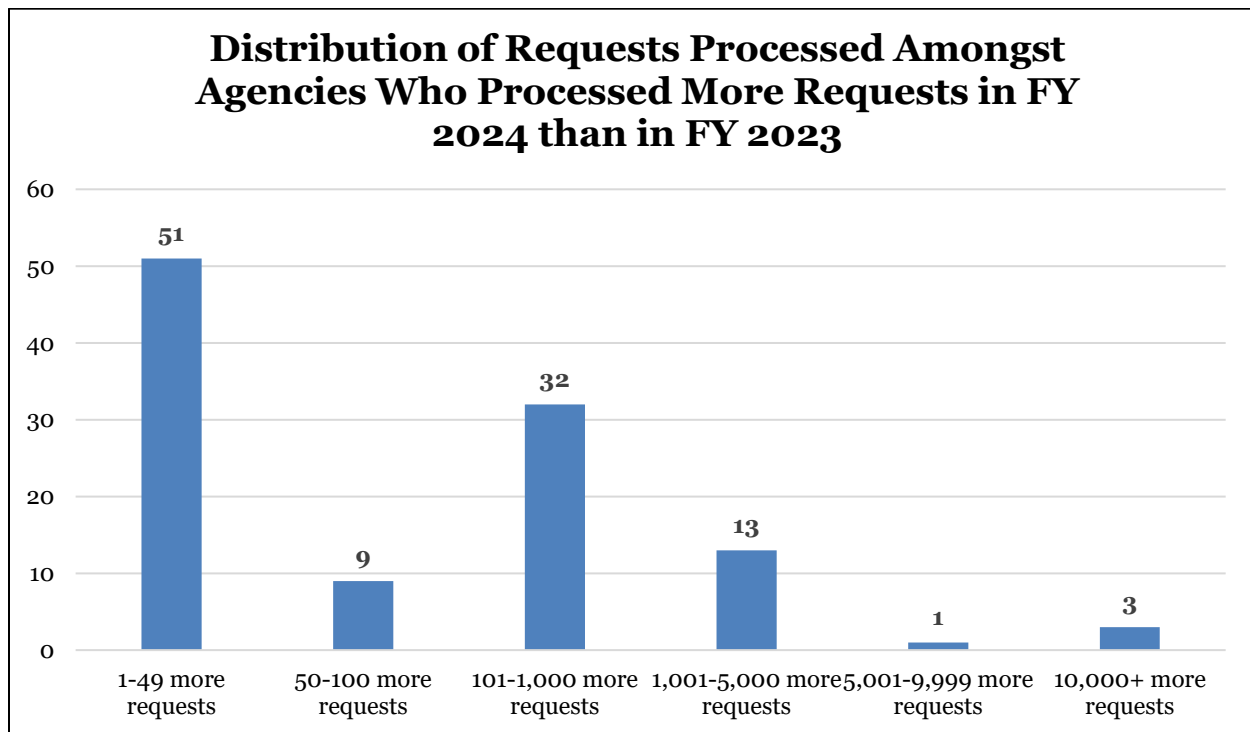
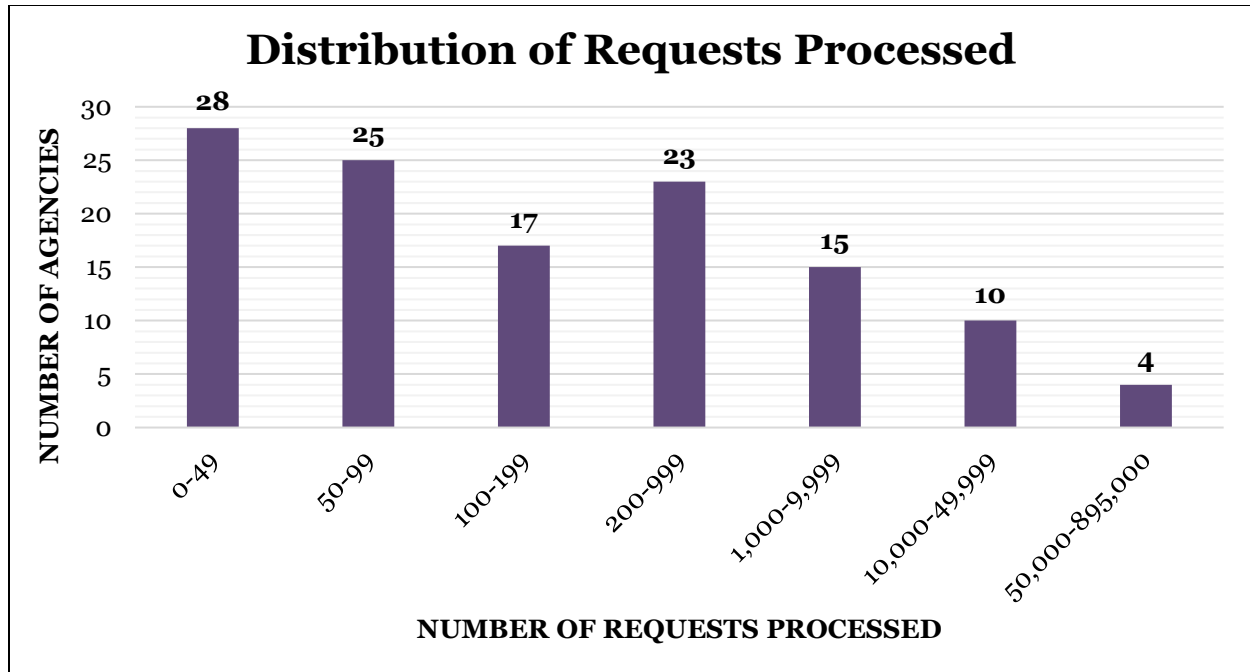


Number of Requests Processed

Collectively, the government processed 1,499,265 requests in FY 2024, which is an increase of nearly 33.6% from FY 2023. The same five agencies that received the most FOIA requests also processed the vast majority (85%) of FOIA requests government-wide. Ninety percent of agencies processed more requests in FY 2024 than in FY 2023 (110 agencies). Three agencies processed over 10,000 more requests than they did in the previous fiscal year. DOJ (+13,115 requests), VA (+46,439), and DHS (+314,734) saw the largest increase of requests processed in comparison to FY 2023.

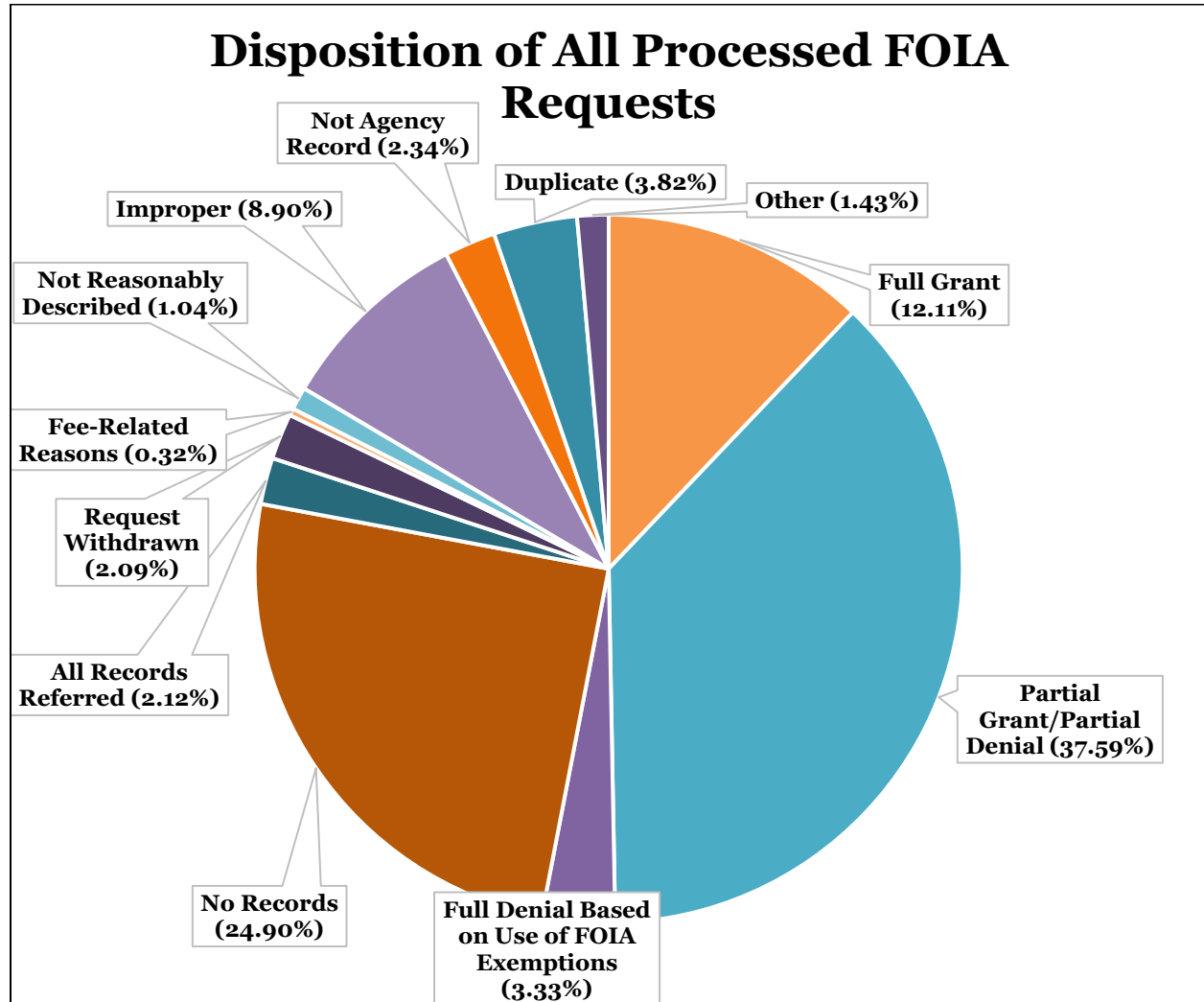
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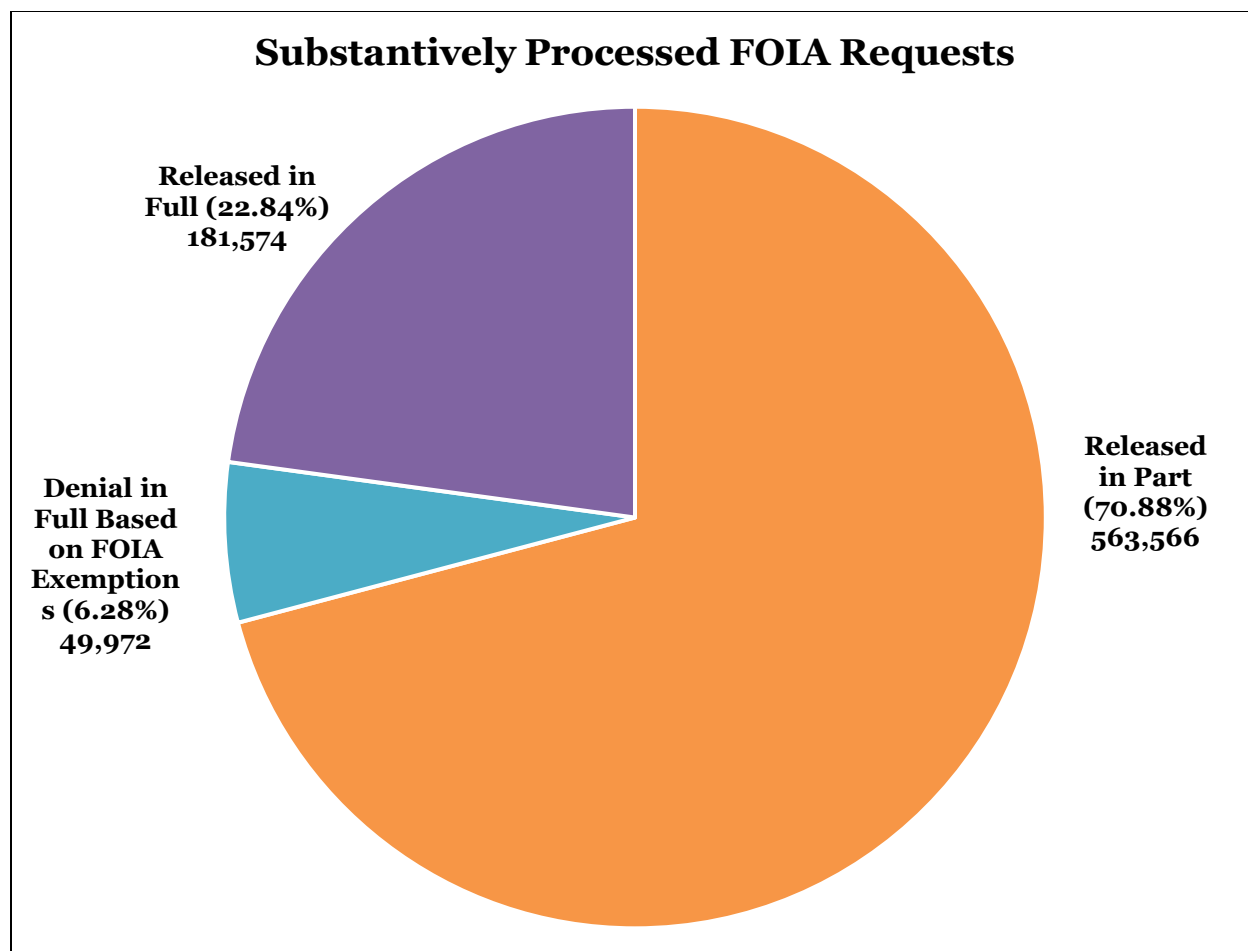
Disposition of Requests

Of the 1,499,265 requests processed by agencies, 53.03% (795,112 requests) were closed after being substantively processed, with decisions made to release or withhold information based upon the FOIA's exemptions. The remaining requests processed by agencies during FY 2024, 46.97% (704,153), were closed for procedural or administrative reasons.



Requests Processed for Exemption Applicability

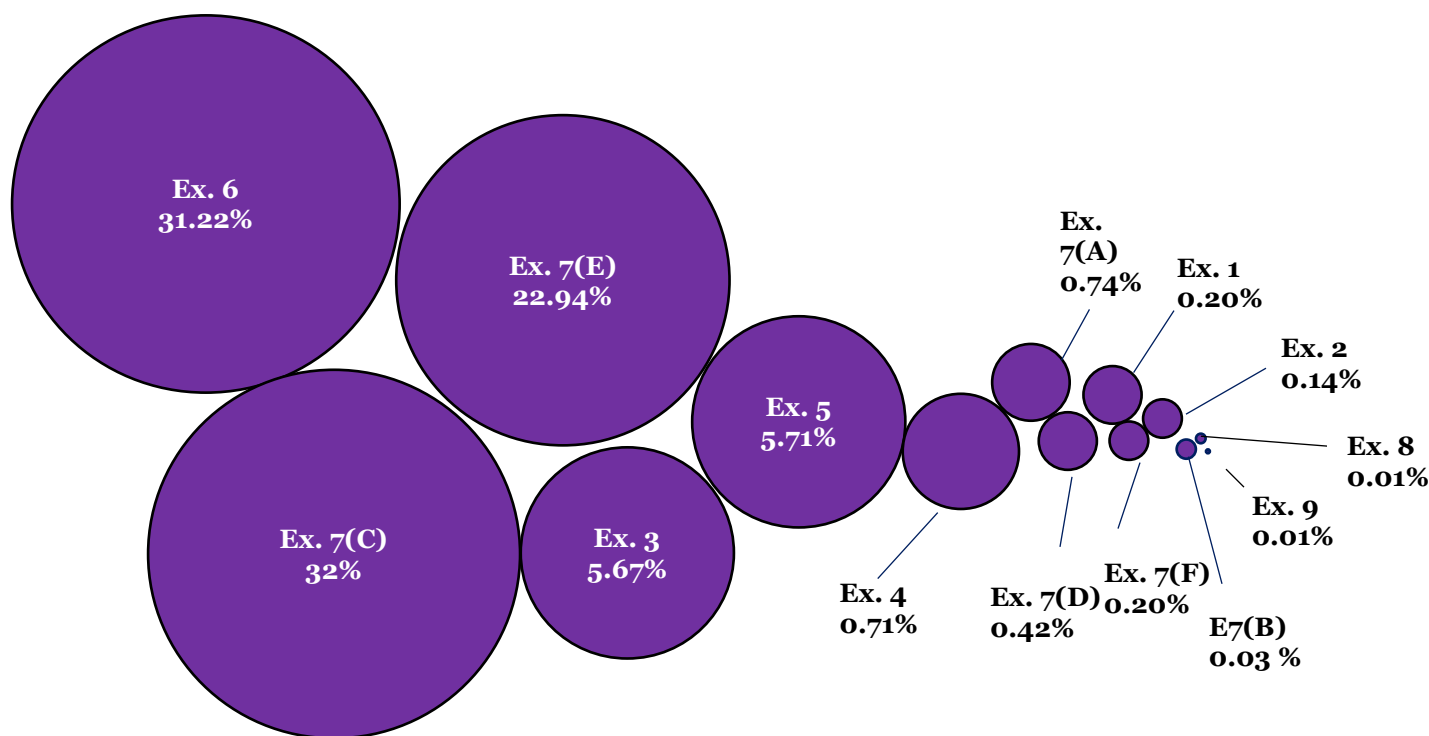
As noted above, of the 1,499,265 requests processed by agencies, 53.03% (795,112 requests) were closed after being substantively processed, with decisions made to release or withhold information based upon the FOIA's exemptions. Of the 795,112 requests that were processed for exemption applicability in FY 2024, 93.72% (745,140 requests) resulted in either a full or partial release of records. Of those requests, as illustrated below, 22.83% were full disclosures, 70.88% were partial disclosures, and 6.28% were full denials based on exemptions.



Use of Exemptions

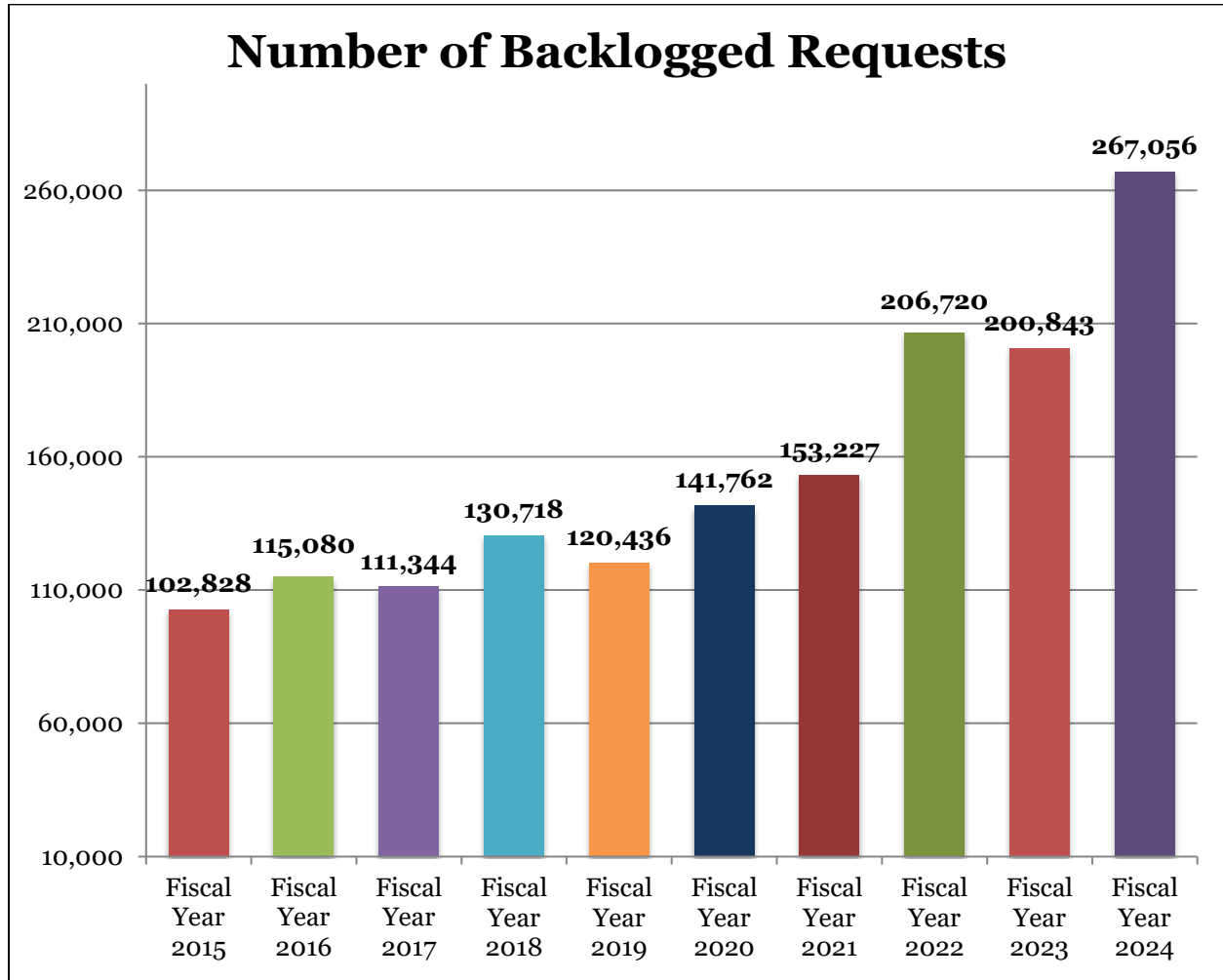
The FOIA includes nine exemptions from disclosure that protect important interests such as national security, personal privacy, and certain law enforcement interests. As has been the case for many years, the FOIA's privacy exemptions – Exemption 6 (31.22%), which protects information that, if disclosed, would invade another individual's personal privacy, and Exemption 7(C) (32%), which protects information compiled for law enforcement purposes that could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy – were the most cited FOIA exemptions in FY 2024. A little more than 60% of the exemptions cited by agencies were those two exemptions (63.22%). Exemption 7(E) (23%), which protects law enforcement techniques, procedures, and guidelines, was the third most cited exemption.

Total Exemption Usage



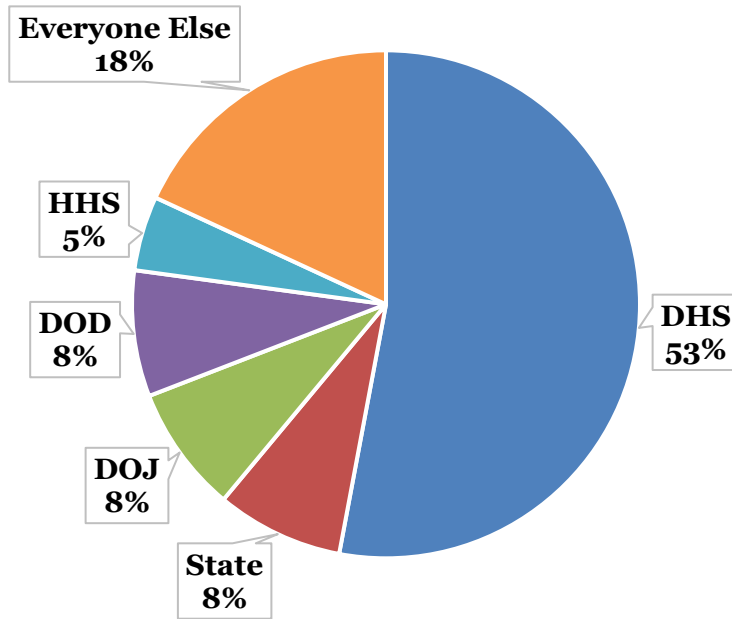
Backlogged Requests

The total number of backlogged requests across the government at the end of FY 2024 was 267,056 which is a 33% increase from the number of backlogged requests reported at the end of FY 2023.²

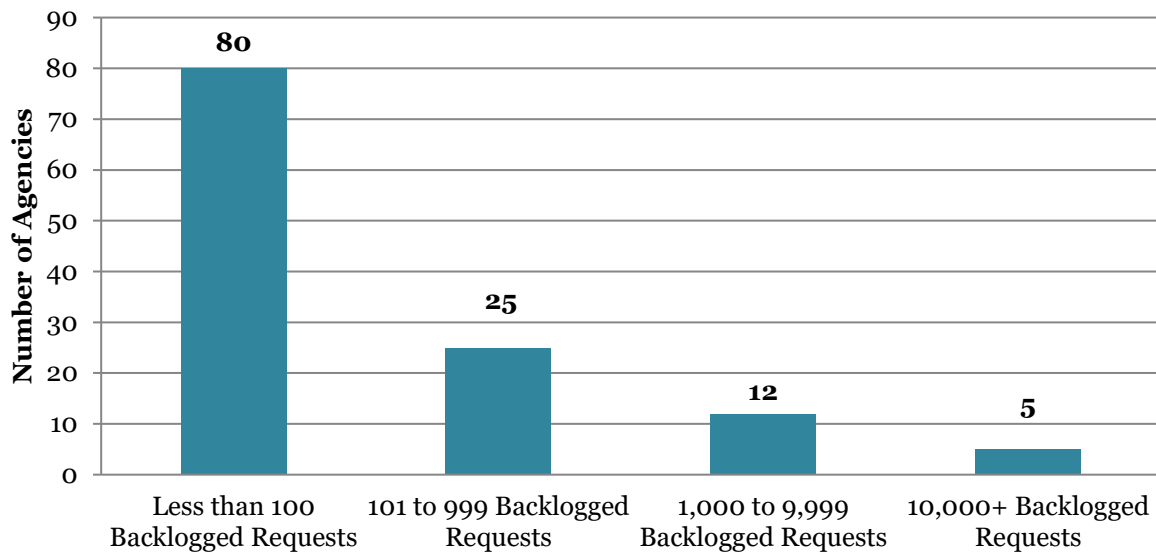


² A request is reported as “backlogged” when it has been pending at an agency longer than the statutory time period of twenty working-days or, if unusual circumstances are present, up to thirty working-days.

Top 5 Agency Backlogs



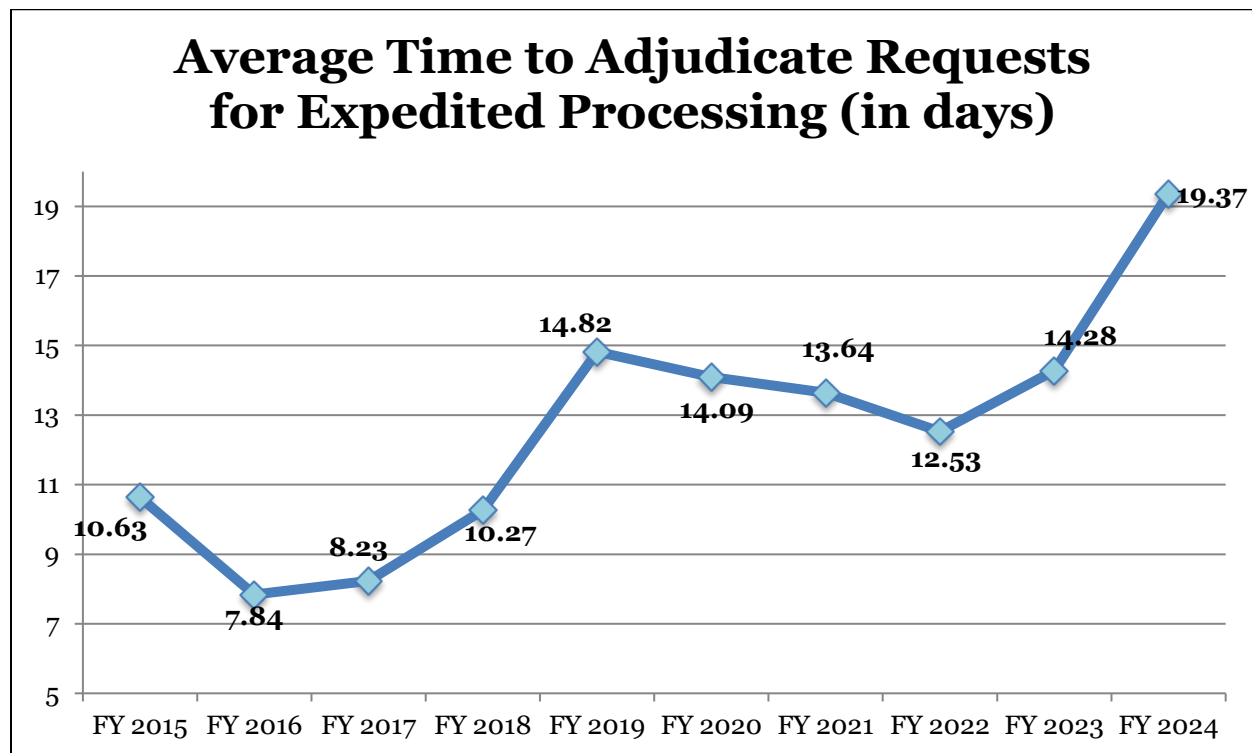
Distribution of Backlogged Requests



Requests for Expedited Processing

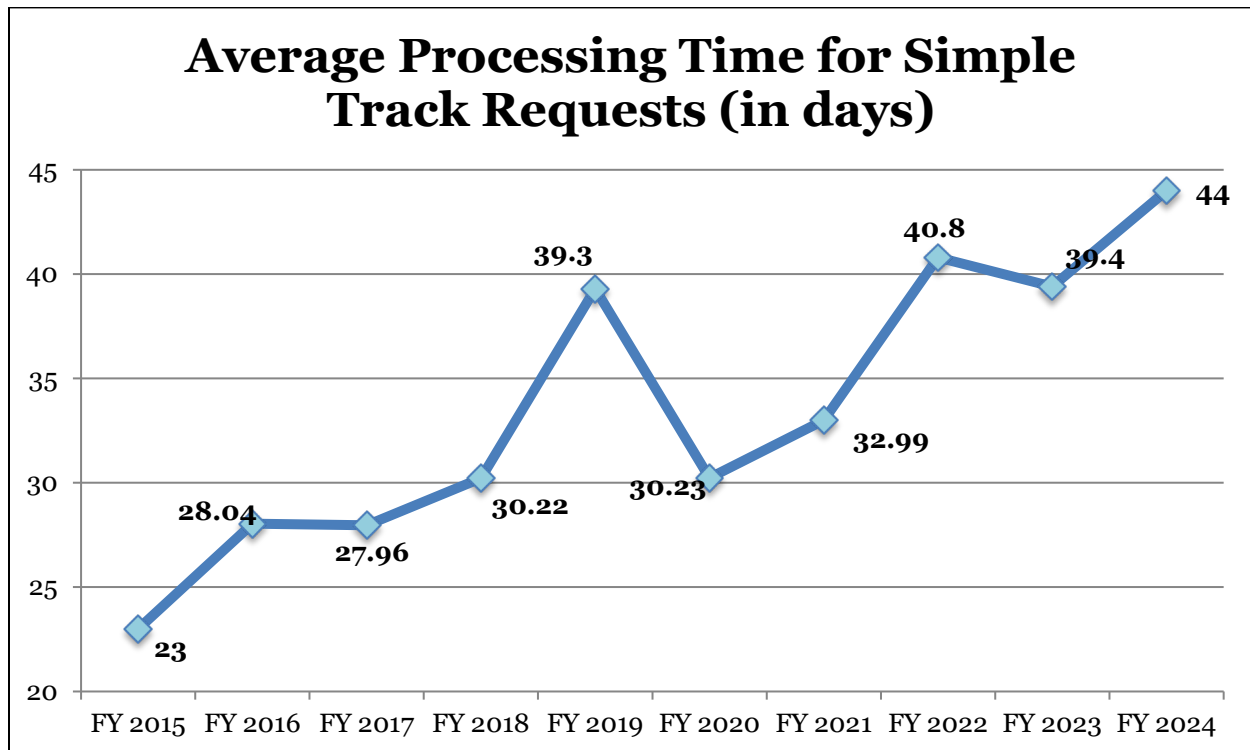
In FY 2024, the government overall determined whether to grant or deny 70,200 requests for expedited processing. This is a 37% increase (+18,935) from the total number of expedited processing determinations made during FY 2023 (51,265).

The average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing increased across the government. Agencies averaged 19.37 days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing, a more than five-day increase from FY 2023. In total, agencies adjudicated 94% (65,747) of all requests for expedited processing during FY 2024 within ten calendar days.



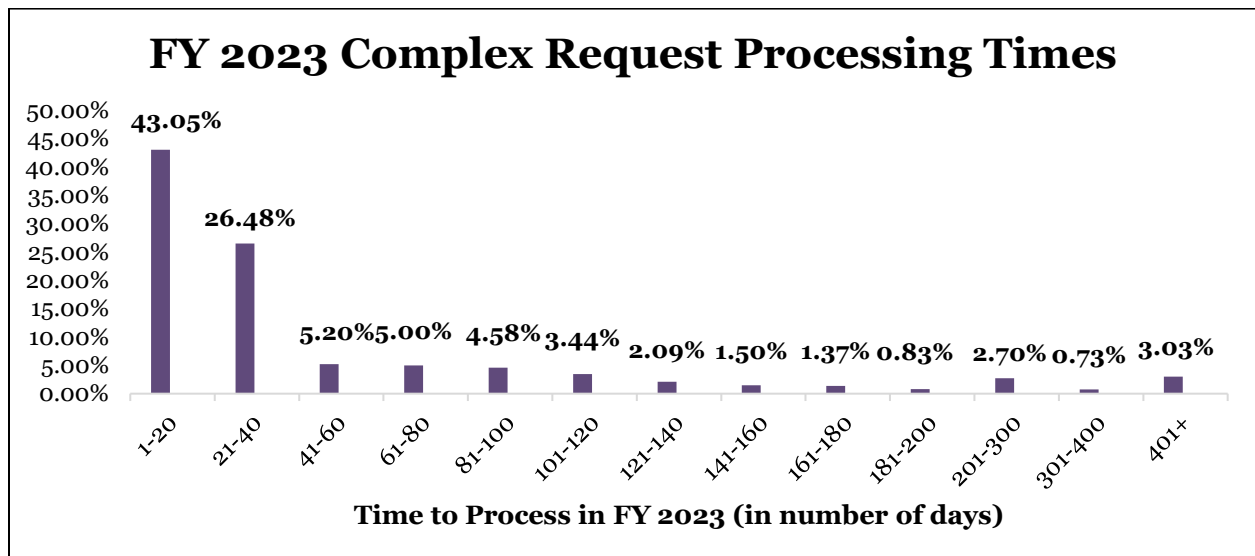
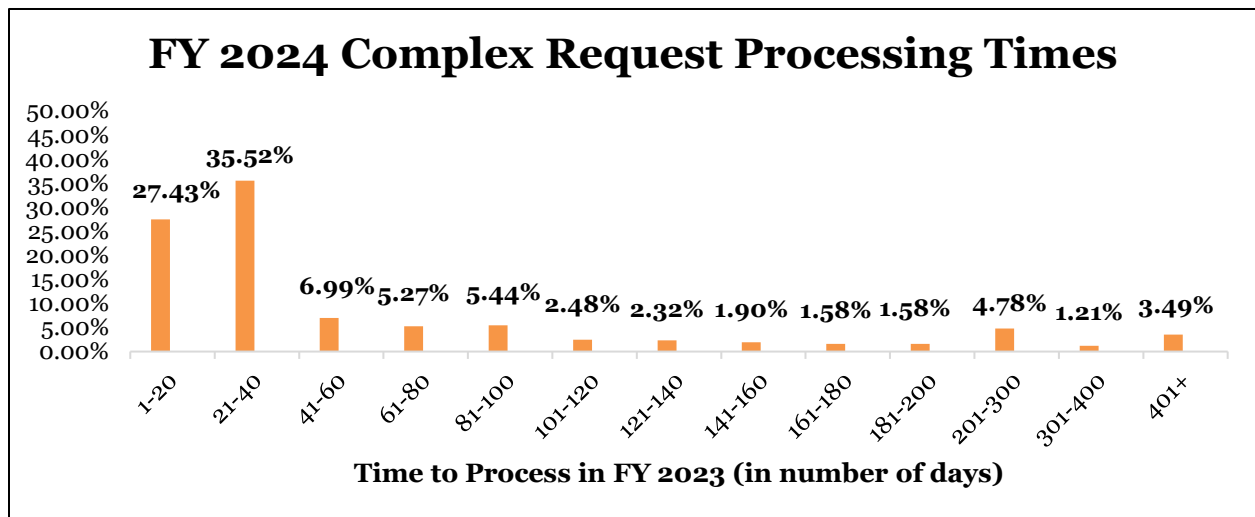
Average Processing Time for Simple Requests

The average processing time for simple track requests for agencies that reported data in this field in their FY 2024 Annual FOIA Report was 44 days. This is an increase of almost 5 days from the FY 2023 average of 39.4 days. Fifty-seven agencies, including five departments – Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Treasury, State, and Labor – reported processing their simple track requests within an average of twenty days or less. Nineteen agencies, including USDA and HHS, reported processing these requests between an average of 21.13 days and 30 days.



Time to Process Complex Requests

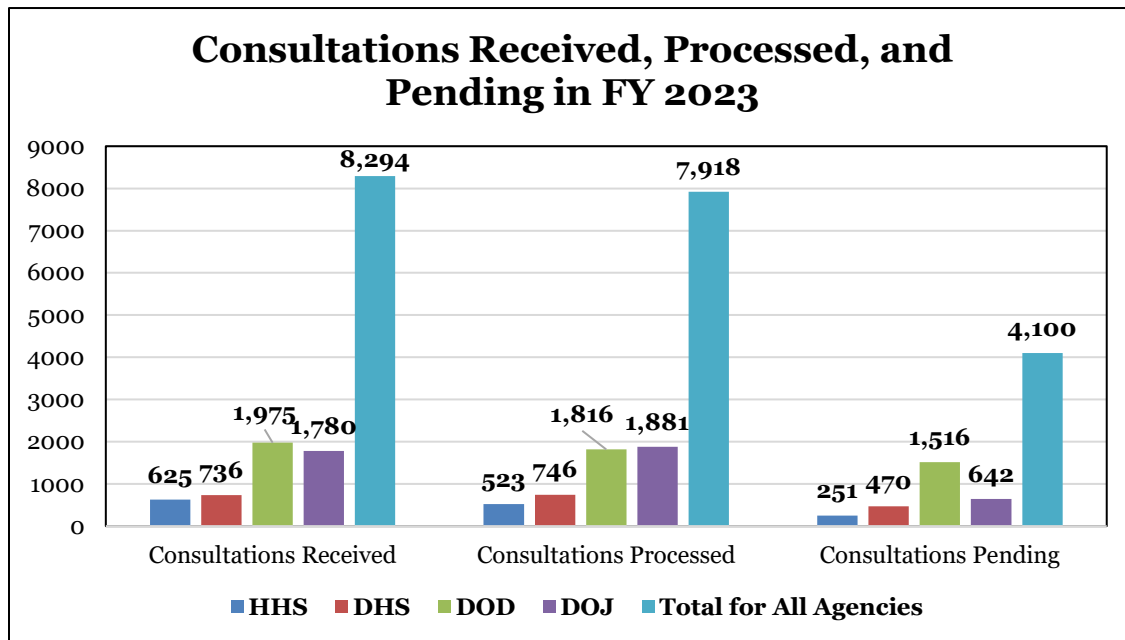
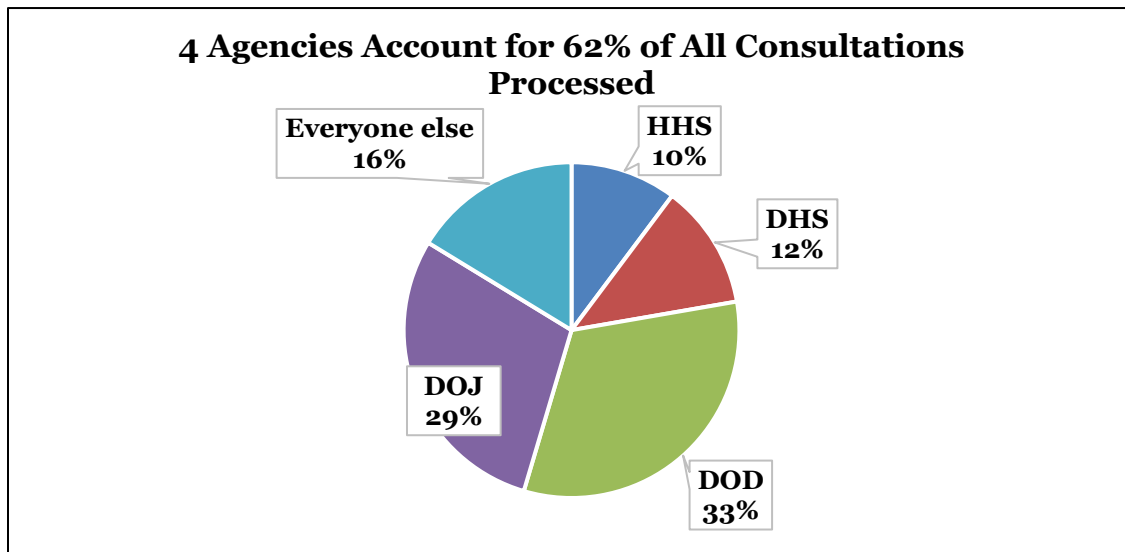
Complex requests typically seek a high volume of material or require additional steps to process, such as the need to search for records in multiple locations or conduct multiple consultations. Complex requests often take longer to process than more targeted “simple” requests. The percentage of complex requests processed in fewer than 20 days decreased in FY 2024, but the majority of complex requests were processed in less than 40 days. In FY 2024, there was an 18% increase in processed complex requests (+111,726). A total of 80.66% of complex requests were processed in 100 days or less.



Consultations on FOIA Requests

Consultations Received, Processed, and Pending

During FY 2024, ninety agencies received documents on consultation from another agency. Agencies in receipt of such consultations are asked to provide their views on the disclosability of records that are being processed by another agency. A total of 8,294 consultations were received by agencies in FY 2024, with DOD, DOJ, DHS, and HHS receiving and processing the majority of consultations (61.68% received and 62.72% processed). The number of consultations pending overall increased from 3,624 at the end of FY 2023 to 4,100 at the end of FY 2024.

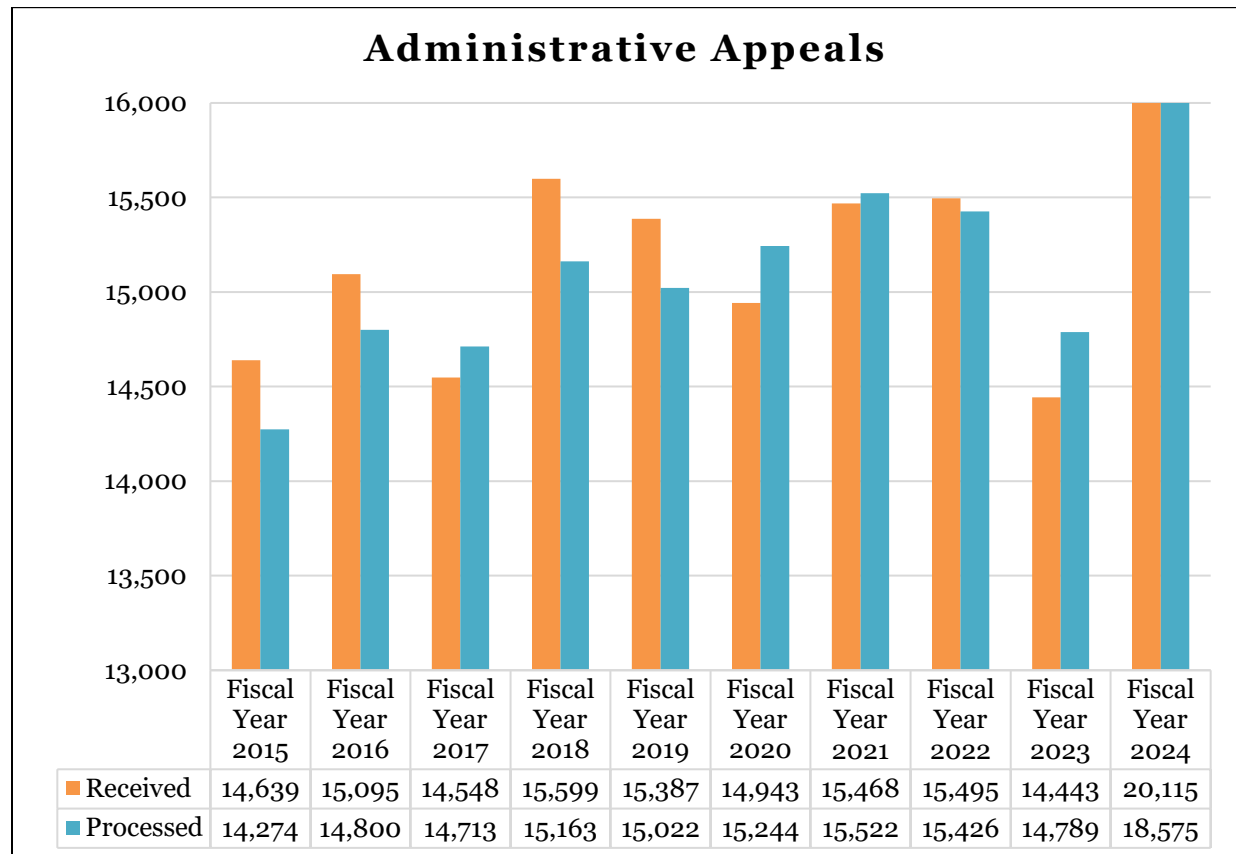


Administrative Appeals

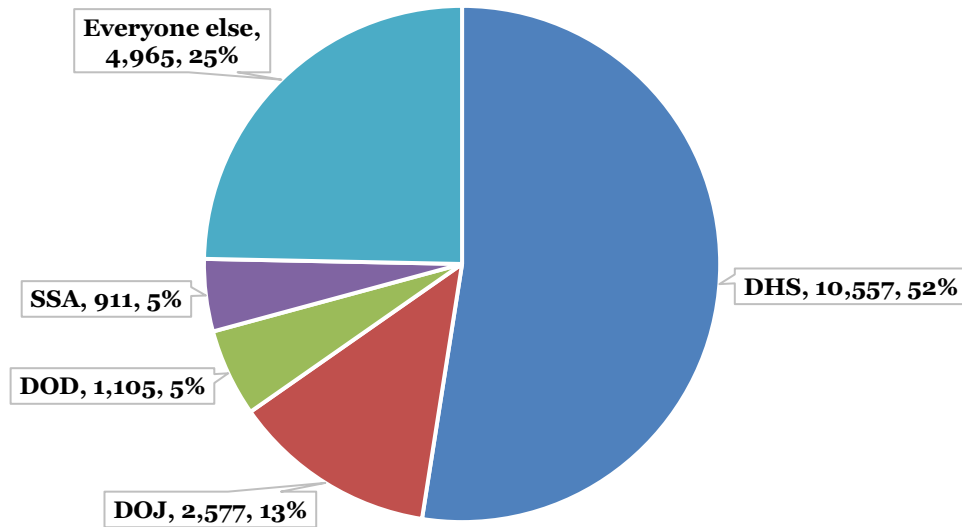
Number of Administrative Appeals Received and Processed

In FY 2024, the government overall received 20,115 appeals, which is a 39.27% increase from the 14,443 appeals received in FY 2023. Forty-eight agencies received no appeals during the fiscal year.

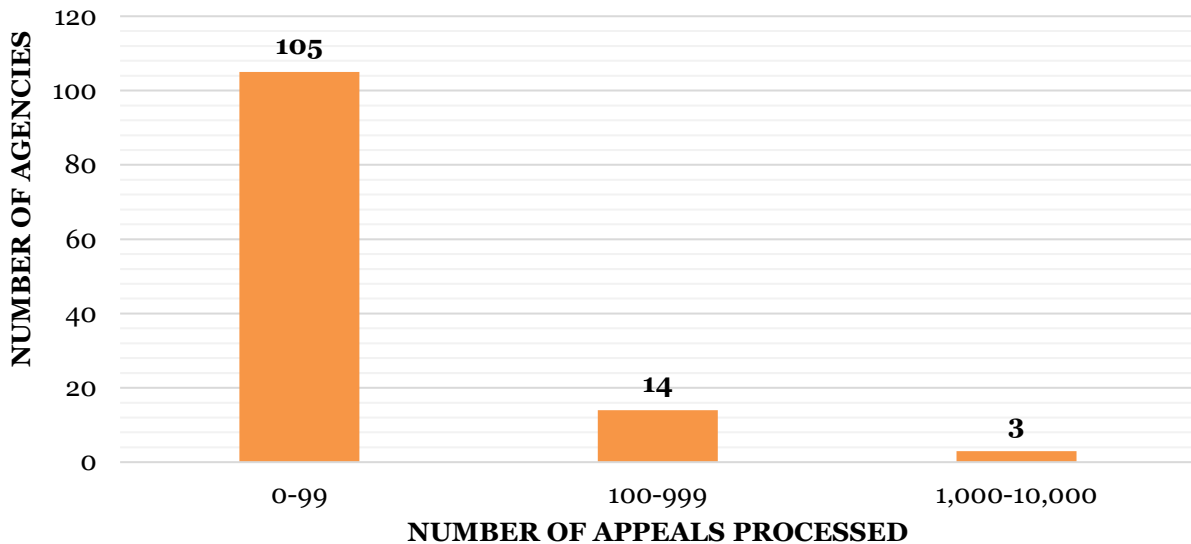
The government overall processed 18,575 appeals during FY 2024. This is a 25.60% increase from the 14,789 appeals processed during FY 2023. The four agencies that received the most appeals also processed the most appeals: DHS (10,557 received, 9,137 processed), DOJ (2,577 received, 2,479 processed), DOD (1,105 received, 1,105 processed), and the Social Security Administration (SSA) (911 received, 839 processed). These four agencies together processed 73% of the total number of appeals processed by the entire government in FY 2024.



4 Agencies Received 75% of FOIA Appeals

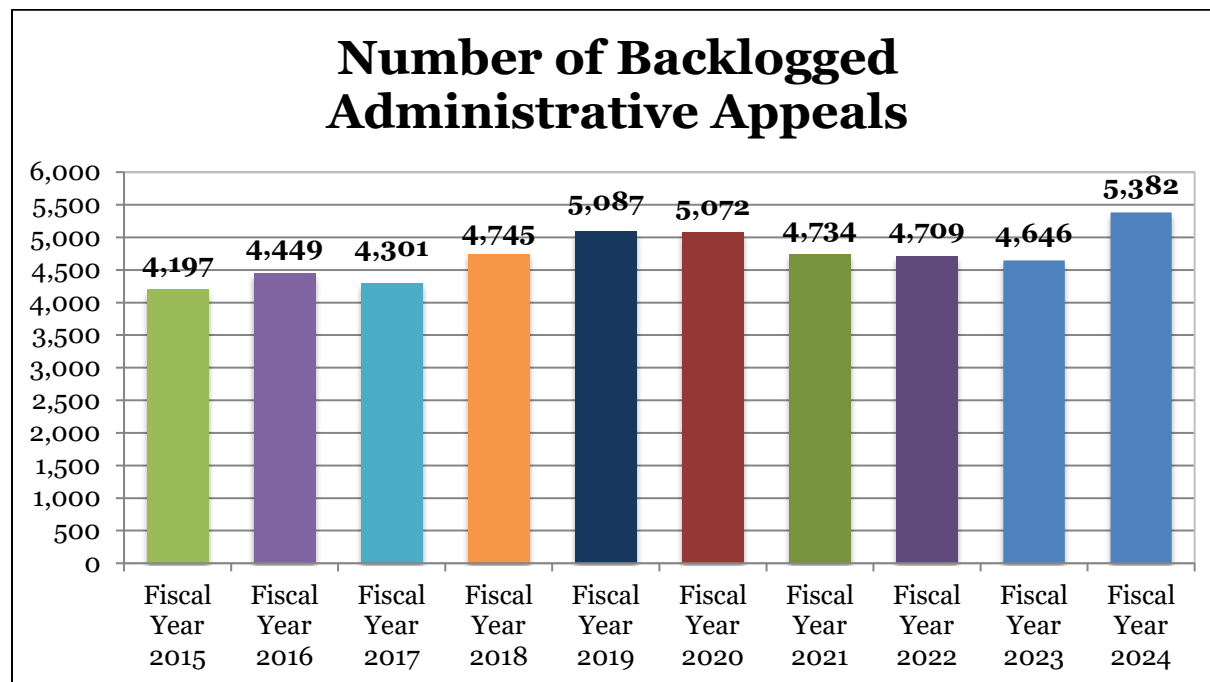


Distribution of Appeals Processed

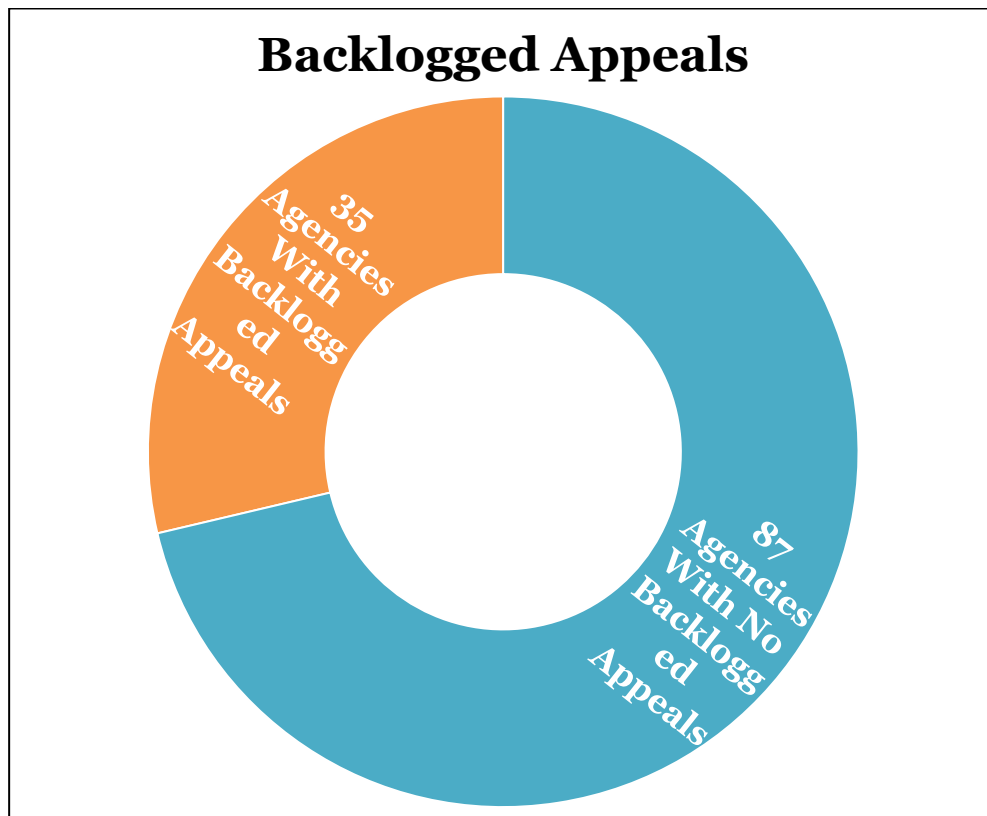


Backlogged Administrative Appeals

The overall backlog of administrative appeals at the end of FY 2024 was 5,382, which is an increase of 736 appeals governmentwide (15.84%) as compared to FY 2023.



Eighty-seven of the 122 agencies subject to the FOIA ended FY 2024 with no pending appeals in their backlog.

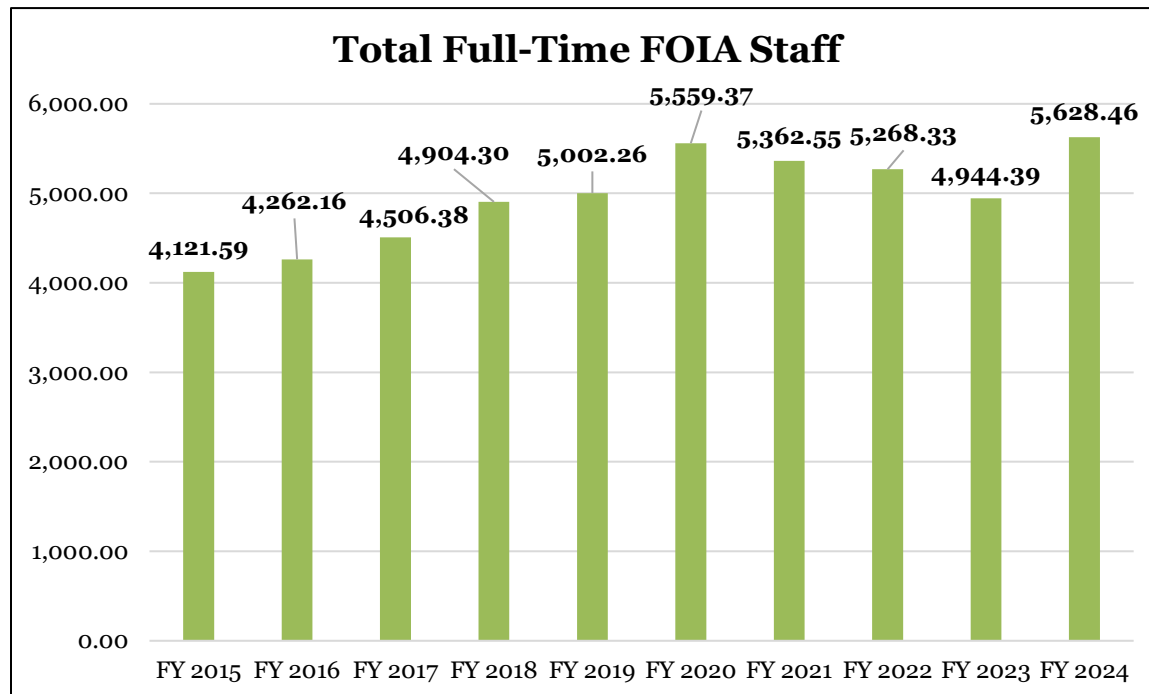


Processing Time for Administrative Appeals

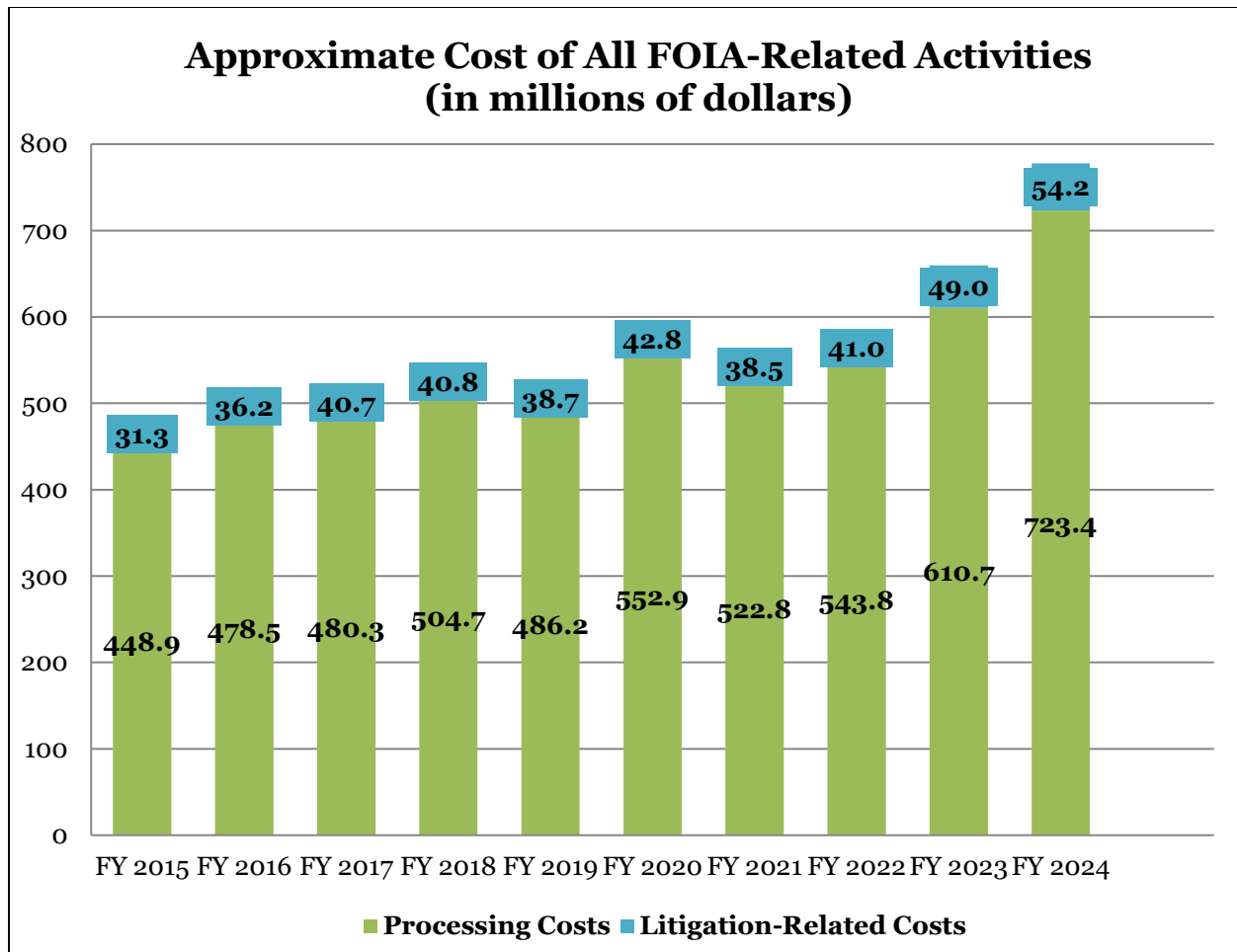
The average processing time for adjudicating appeals for those agencies that reported processing appeals in their FY 2024 Annual FOIA Report is 96.91 days. This is an increase of 9.92 days from the average of 86.99 days reported in FY 2023. The average processing times for the agencies that processed the most appeals were 12 days (DHS), 68.82 days (DOJ), 173.22 days (DOD), and 17 days (SSA).

Staffing Levels & Costs

During FY 2024, 5,628.46 “full-time FOIA staff” were devoted to the administration of the FOIA throughout the government.³ The total estimated cost of all FOIA-related activities across the government was \$723,415,561.35. Of this total, 92.51% (\$669,226,281.12) of total costs were attributed to the administrative processing of requests and appeals by agencies. 7.49% (\$54,189,280.23) was reported to have been spent on litigation-related activities. By the end of the fiscal year, agencies reported collecting a total of \$2,434,243.69 in FOIA fees. The FOIA fees collected in FY 2024 are approximately 0.34% of the total estimated cost of the government’s FOIA-related activities.



³ This includes both full-time FOIA professionals and the cumulative percentages of the time spent on FOIA by personnel who work on FOIA as a part of their duties.



Exclusions

There are three categories of law enforcement and national security records not subject to the requirements of the FOIA. The provisions protecting these categories of records are known as exclusions. During FY 2024, exclusions were invoked 125 times by three agencies: Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) (76); DOJ (48); and DOD (1). This is a 26% increase in exclusion use as compared to FY 2023 (99 total uses). When compared to the 795,112 requests reviewed by the government this past fiscal year for exemption applicability, exclusions were used in response to 0.015% of requests processed for disclosure.

Proactive Disclosures

Subsection (a)(2) of the FOIA requires agencies to proactively make available to the public non-exempt information from certain categories of records without waiting for a specific request to be received. These categories are:

1. Final agency opinions and orders rendered in the adjudication of cases,
2. Specific policy statements that are not published in the Federal Register,

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3. Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public, and
4. Records that have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests or those records that have been requested three or more times – commonly referred to as frequently requested records.

Agency program offices typically publish the first three categories of records while agency FOIA offices are more directly involved in identifying and posting the final category of records. Approximately 251,335,184 records that qualified as subsection (a)(2) records were posted online during FY 2024. This is a 0.77% increase in proactive disclosures over FY 2023. The vast majority of (a)(2) disclosures (249,410,162) were made available by agency program offices outside of the FOIA office. The National Archives and Records Administration, the Department of Commerce, and the Federal Communications Commission reported the highest numbers of (a)(2) records posted by program offices, comprising 98.56% of all program office postings. The FOIA offices across the government reported posting 1,945,022 subsection (a)(2) records online. This is an over 400% increase in postings compared to FY 2023 (377,472 postings). Among the FOIA offices, the Environmental Protection Agency reported posting the highest number of proactive disclosures (946,533) followed by the Department of Labor (690,041) and the Department of State (125,544).

The numbers of subsection (a)(2) postings can vary based on the opportunities each agency may have to post the four required categories of proactive disclosures in a given year. For example, not all agencies adjudicate cases that would result in the agency having records that would fall into the first category above. Other agencies, particularly smaller ones, may also not have new records every year that fall into the other categories, such as frequently requested records. As noted above, the number of requests received by agencies varies significantly, with 17 agencies receiving less than 50 requests during FY 2024.

Furthermore, agencies may proactively disclose other information even if they did not have any (a)(2) disclosures in a given fiscal year, and those postings would not be counted in this section of an agency's Annual FOIA Report.

During FY 2024, 24 agencies reported zero (a)(2) proactive disclosures. All of these agencies explained to OIP that they did not have any (a)(2) disclosures because, for example, they process primarily first-party requests, did not have frequently requested records during the reporting period, or did not have any updates to policies or other documents required to be disclosed pursuant to (a)(2).