



U.S. Department of
JUSTICE

2025 Annual FOIA Report Summary



July 1, 2026

Office of Information Policy

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
FOIA Requests	3
Number of Requests Received.....	3
Number of Requests Processed.....	6
Disposition of Requests	8
Requests Processed for Exemption Applicability	9
Use of Exemptions	10
Backlogged Requests.....	11
Requests for Expedited Processing	13
Average Processing Time for Simple Requests	14
Time to Process Complex Requests	15
Consultations on FOIA Requests	16
Consultations Received, Processed, and Pending.....	16
Administrative Appeals.....	17
Number of Administrative Appeals Received and Processed.....	17
Backlogged Administrative Appeals.....	19
Processing Time for Administrative Appeals.....	20
Staffing Levels & Costs	21
Exclusions	23
Proactive Disclosures.....	23

Introduction

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requires agencies, each year, 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\(e\)\(1\) \(2024\)](#). In Fiscal Year 2025, 117 agencies were subject to the FOIA, and one of the ways agencies are held accountable for their administration of the FOIA is through the Annual FOIA Reports.¹ This Summary provides an overview of government-wide FOIA data as reported in agencies' Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 Annual FOIA Reports.

Based on the FY 2025 data, we observed a continuing trend in the administration of the FOIA with record high numbers of requests received and processed. In FY 2025, the government as a whole received approximately 14% more requests (+205,765) and processed approximately 10% more requests (+135,790) than in FY 2024.

Agencies also showed improvement in several other areas. For example, 91% of all requests for expedited processing were adjudicated within the statutory deadline of ten calendar days. The government also continued to make a significant amount of information available proactively, with FOIA Offices posting 115% more (a)(2) proactive disclosures compared to FY 2024.

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.

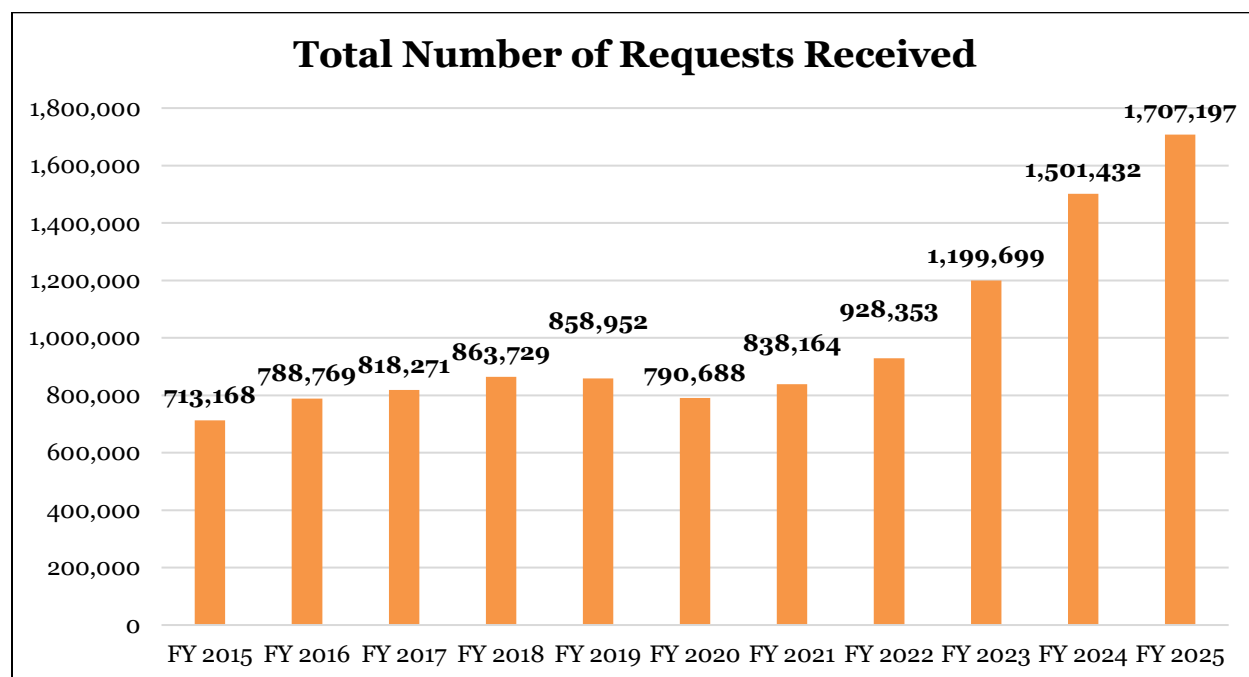
¹ For additional information about the information covered in the Annual FOIA Report, see the [Department of Justice Annual FOIA Report Handbook](#).

FOIA Requests

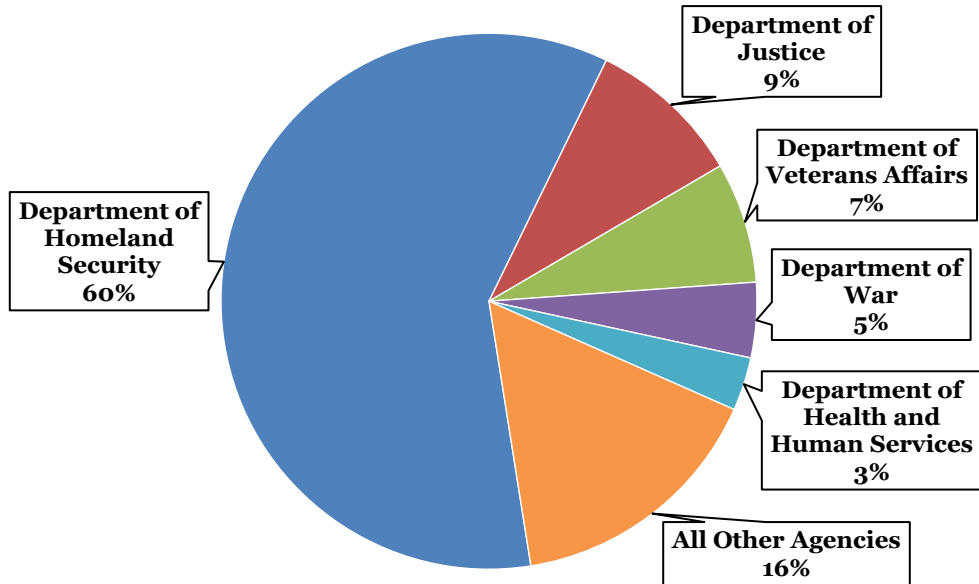
Number of Requests Received

In FY 2025, 117 federal agencies were subject to the FOIA. The federal government overall received a record high of 1,707,197 FOIA requests. This is a 13.7% increase from the number of requests received in FY 2024 (+205,765). 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 War (DOW), and Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

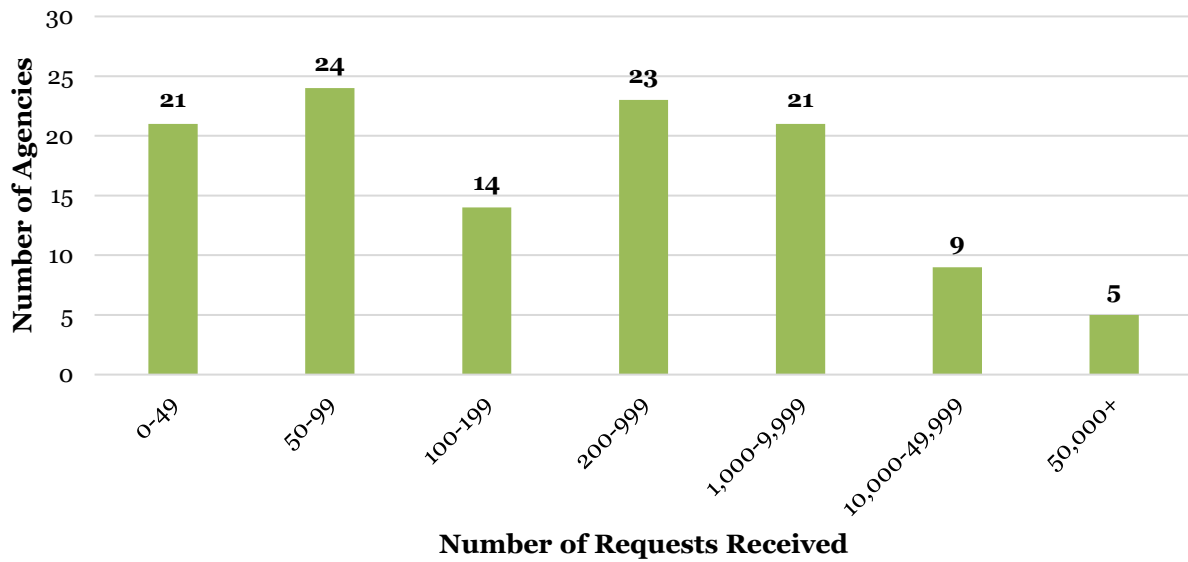
About 56% of agencies received more requests in FY 2025 than in FY 2024. Twenty-one agencies received at least 30% more requests than they received in FY 2024. Roughly half of the Department-level agencies received at least 15% more requests than in FY 2024. VA (+18,710), DOJ (+27,216 requests), and DHS (+107,961) saw the largest numerical increases in requests received in comparison to FY 2024.

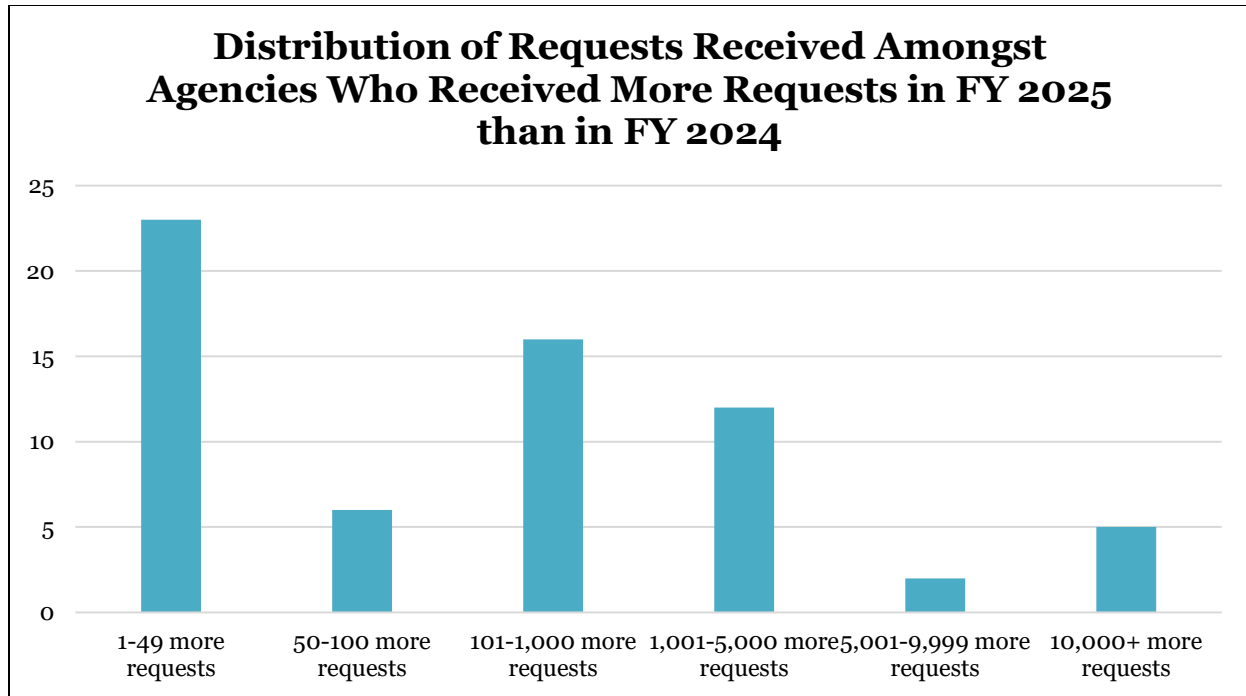


Top 5 Agencies in Requests Received



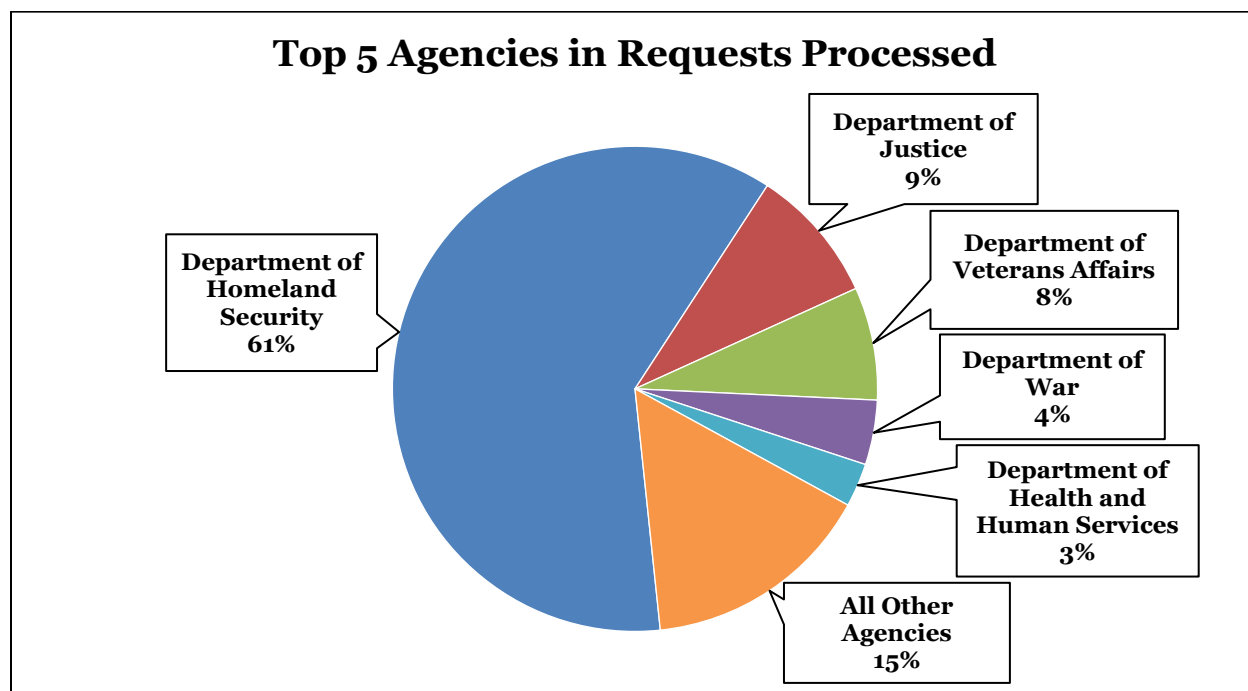
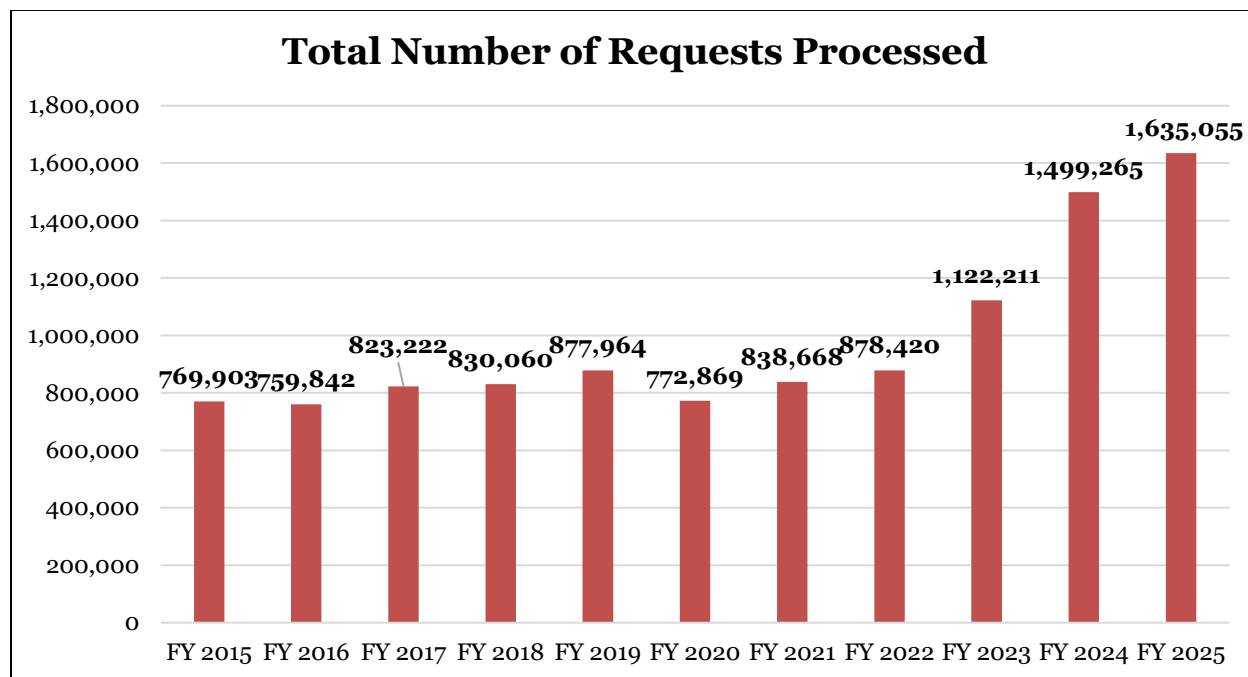
Distribution of Requests Received



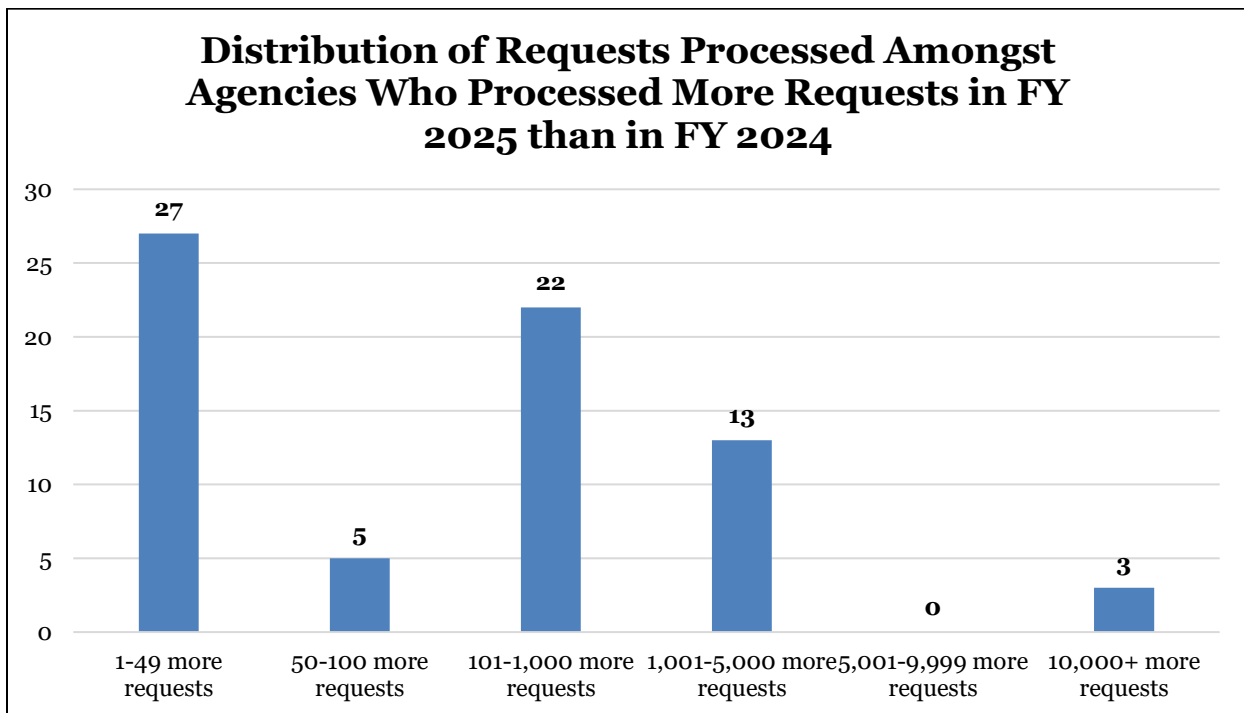
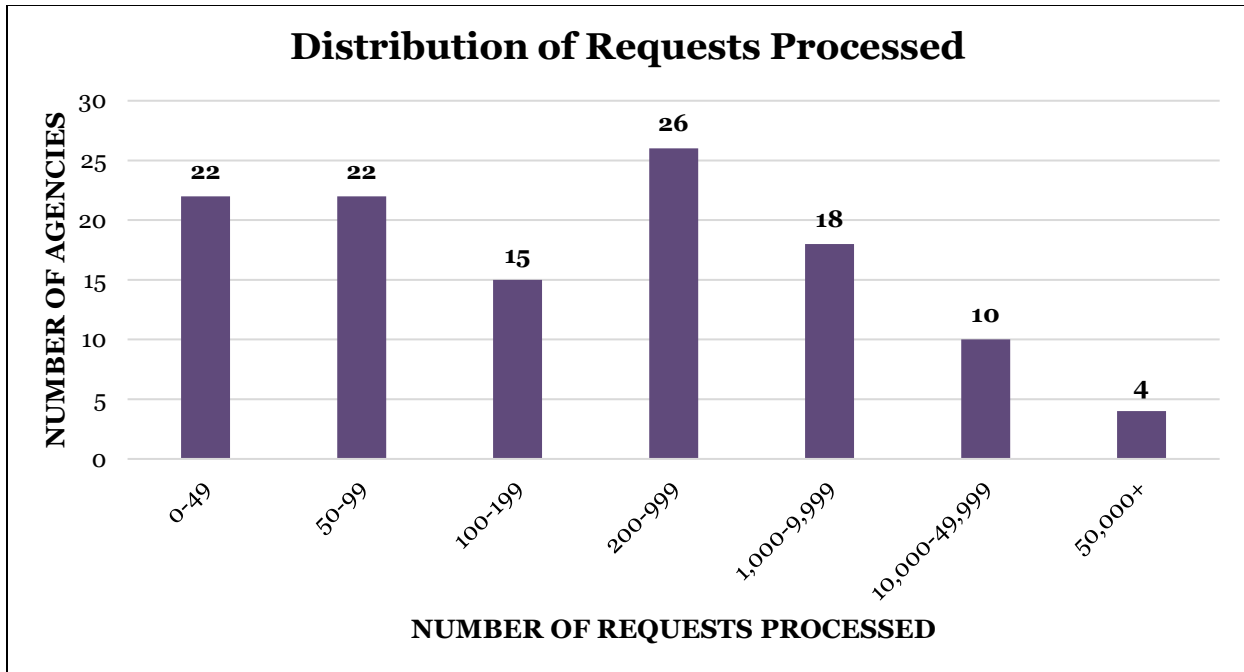


Number of Requests Processed

Collectively, the government processed 1,635,055 requests in FY 2025, which is an increase of nearly 9% from FY 2024. The same five agencies that received the most FOIA requests also processed the vast majority (85%) of FOIA requests government-wide. Sixty percent of agencies processed more requests in FY 2025 than in FY 2024 (70 agencies). Two agencies processed over 10,000 more requests than they did in the previous fiscal year. DOW (+12,779 requests) and DHS (+100,053) saw the largest increase in requests processed in comparison to FY 2024.

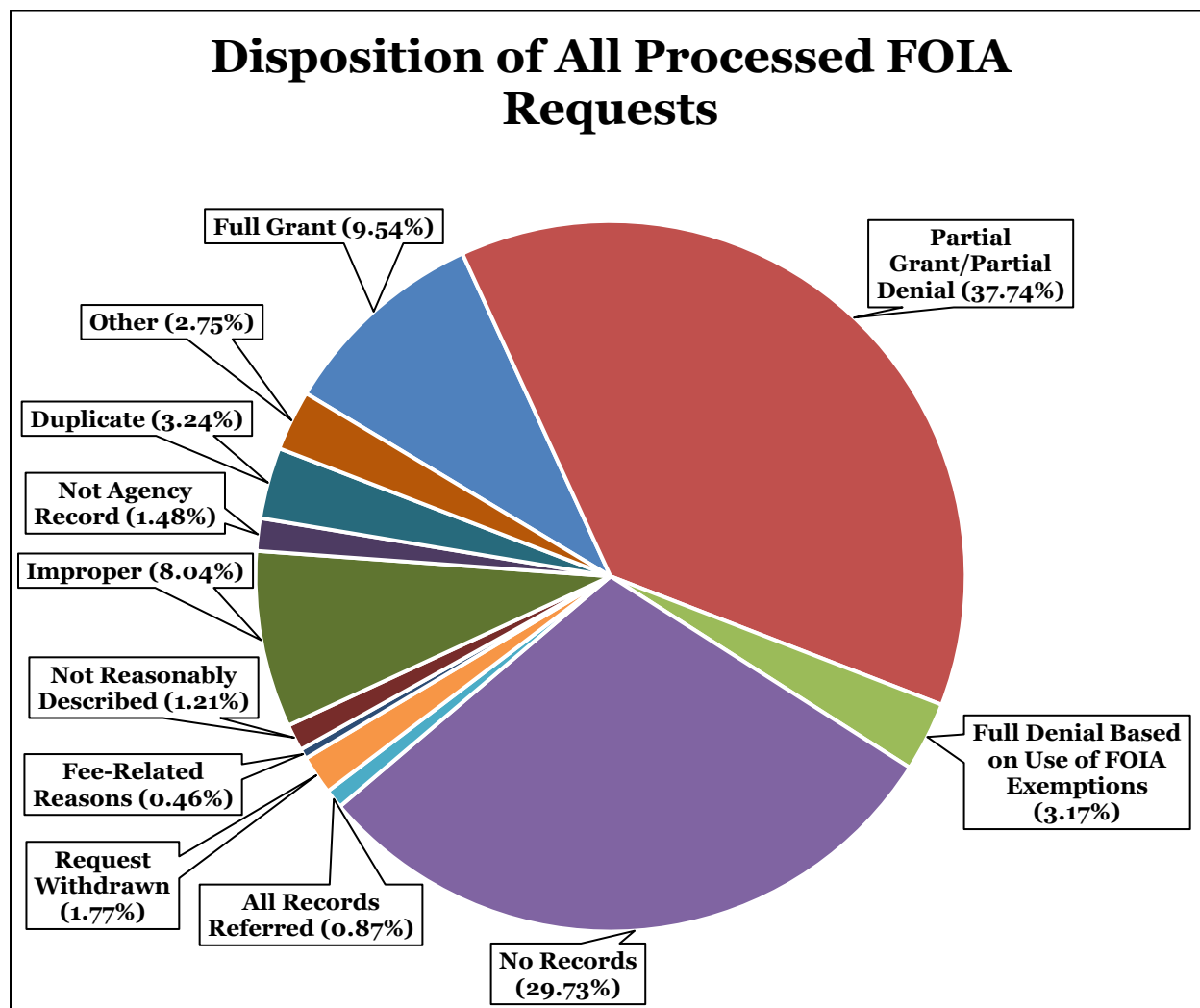


2025 Annual FOIA Report Summary
United States Department of Justice



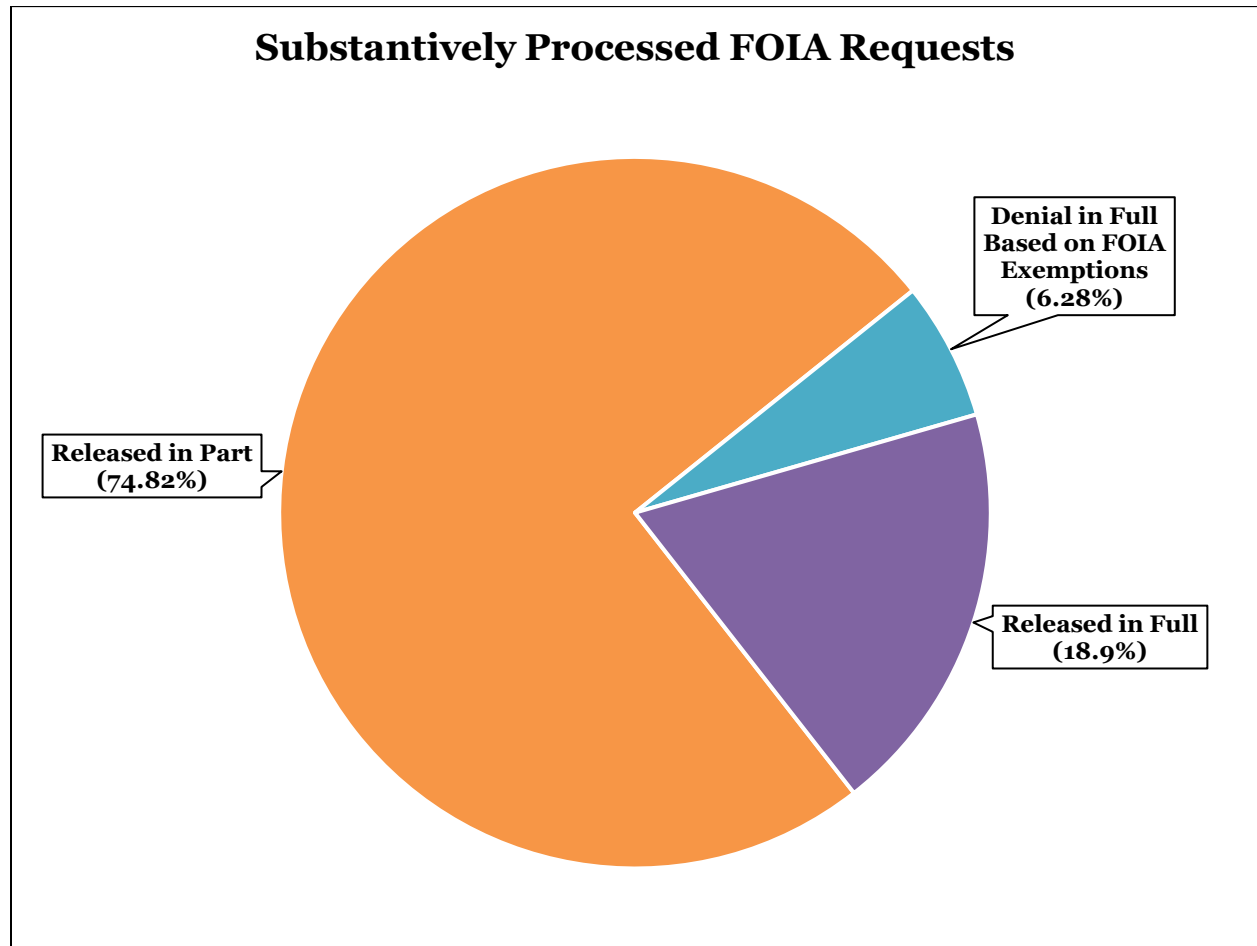
Disposition of Requests

Of the 1,635,055 requests processed by agencies, 50.44% (824,767 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 2025, 49.56% (810,290), were closed for procedural or administrative reasons.



Requests Processed for Exemption Applicability

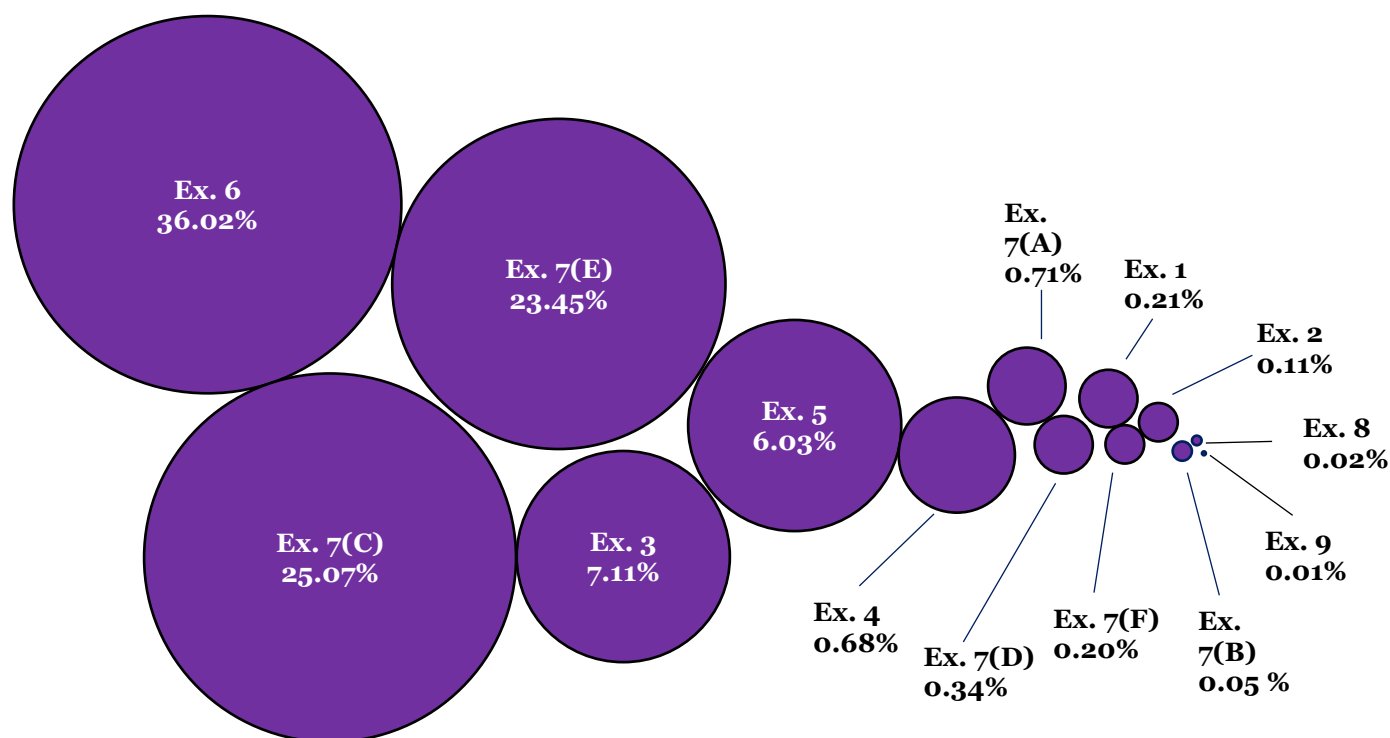
As noted above, of the 1,635,055 requests processed by agencies, 50.44% (824,767 requests) were closed after being substantively processed, with decisions made to release or withhold information based upon the FOIA's exemptions. Of the 824,767 requests that were processed for exemption applicability in FY 2025, 93.72% (772,999 requests) resulted in either a full or partial release of records. Of those requests, as illustrated below, 18.9% were full disclosures, 74.82% were partial disclosures, and 6.28% were full denials based on exemptions.



Use of Exemptions

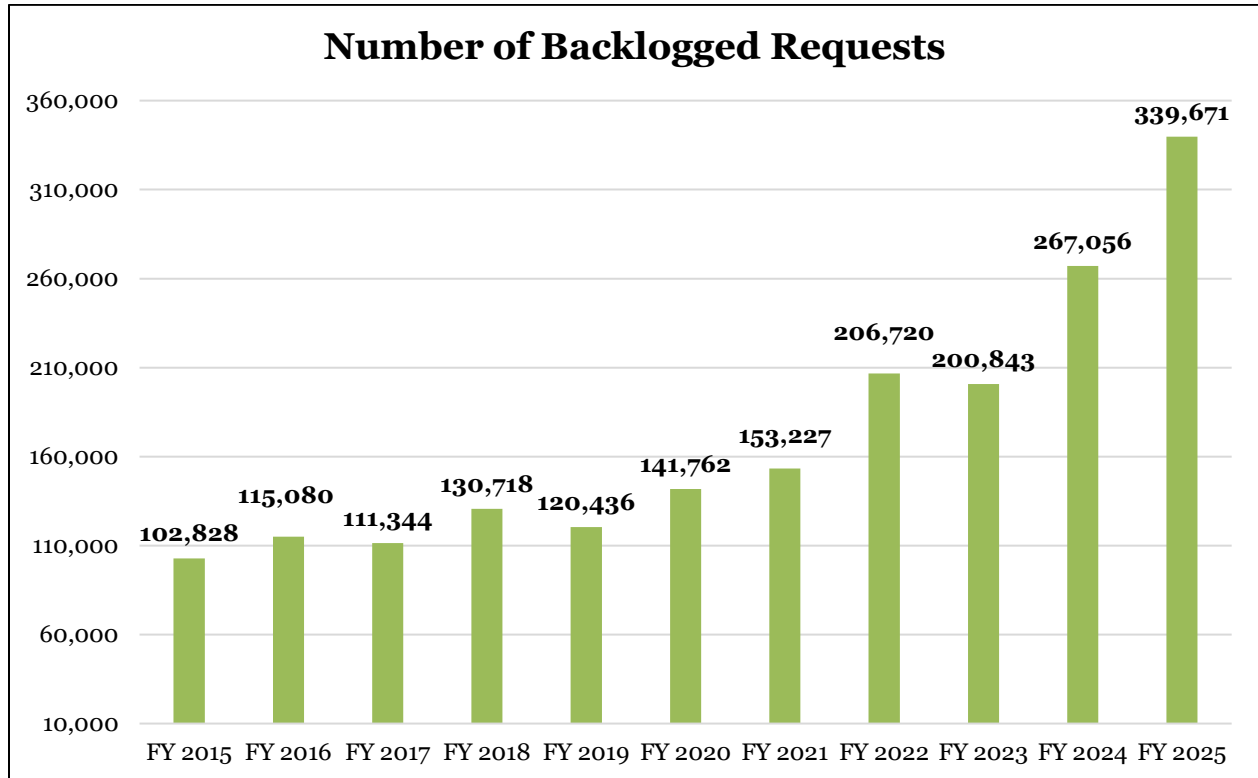
The FOIA includes nine exemptions from disclosure that protect important interests such as national security, personal privacy, and certain law enforcement interests. As has been the case for many years, the FOIA's privacy exemptions – Exemption 6 (36.02%), which protects information that, if disclosed, would invade another individual's personal privacy, and Exemption 7(C) (25.07%), 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 2025. A little more than 60% of the exemptions cited by agencies were those two exemptions (61.09%). Exemption 7(E) (23.45%), which protects law enforcement techniques, procedures, and guidelines, was the third-most cited exemption.

Total Exemption Usage



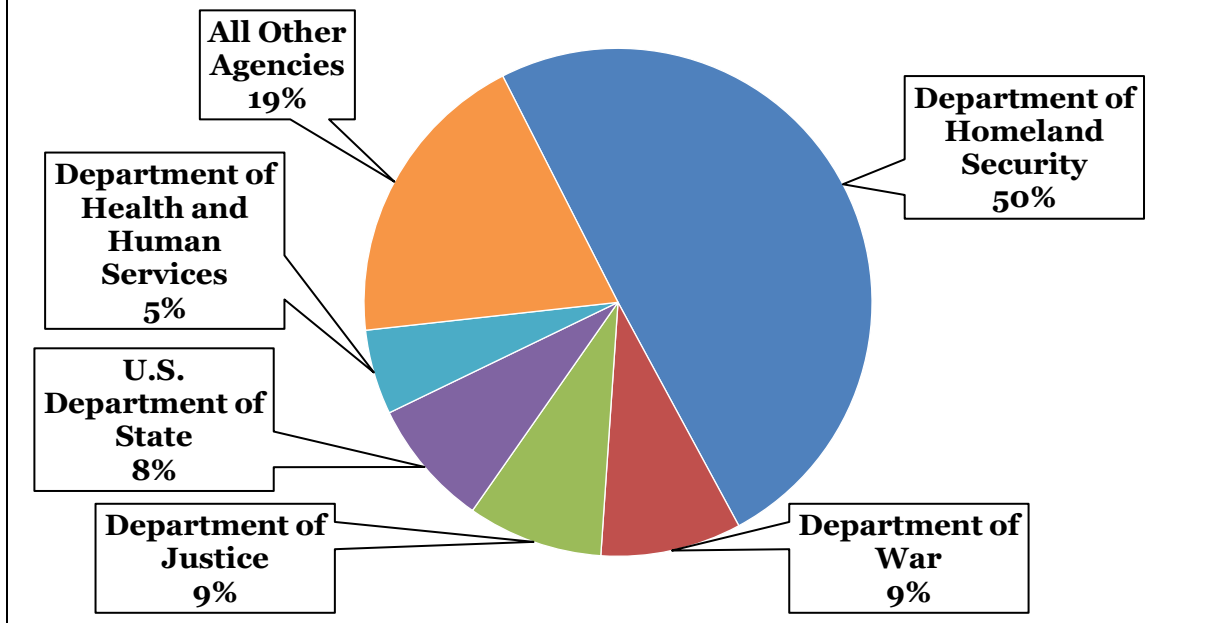
Backlogged Requests

The total number of backlogged requests across the government at the end of FY 2025 was 339,671, which is a 27% increase from the number of backlogged requests reported at the end of FY 2024.²

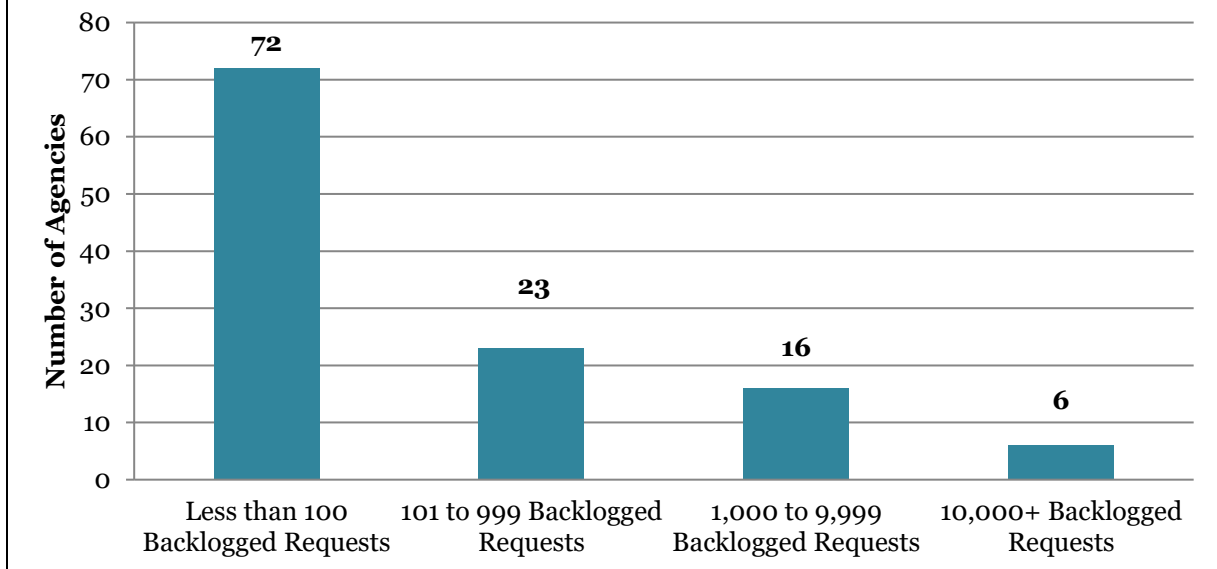


² A request is reported as “backlogged” when it has been pending at an agency longer than the statutory time period of twenty working-days or, if unusual circumstances are present, up to thirty working-days.

Top 5 Agency Backlogs



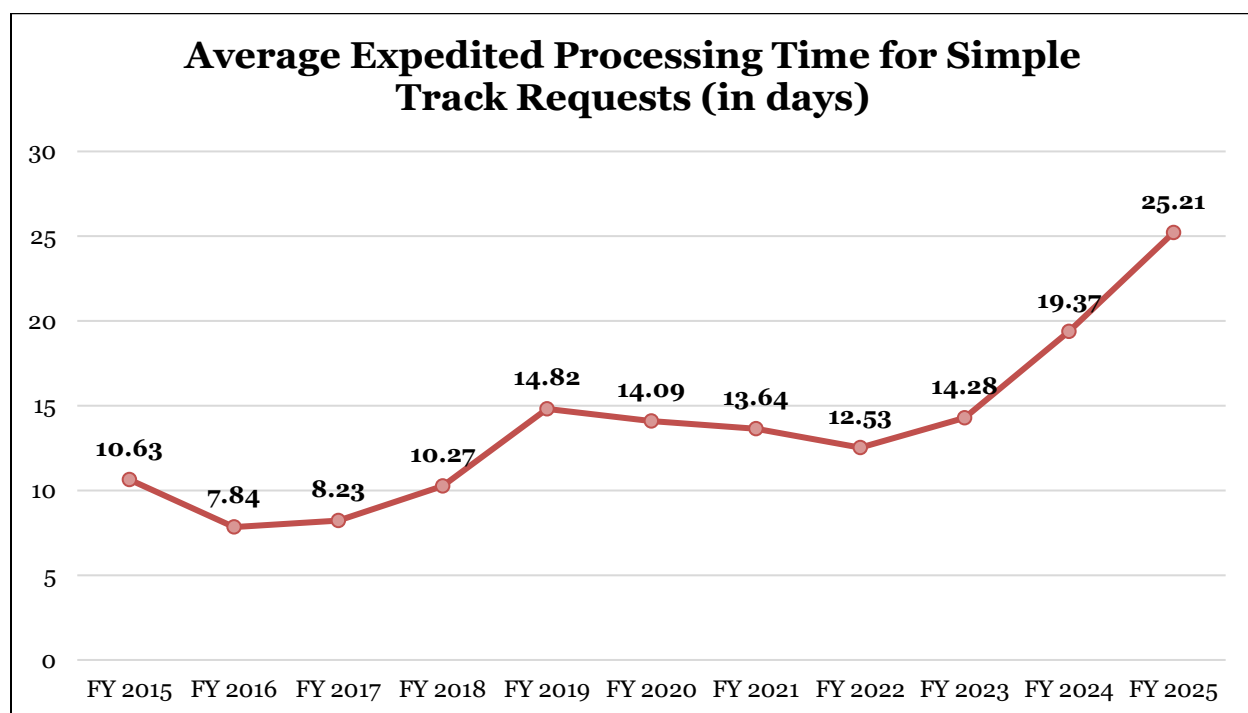
Distribution of Backlogged Requests



Requests for Expedited Processing

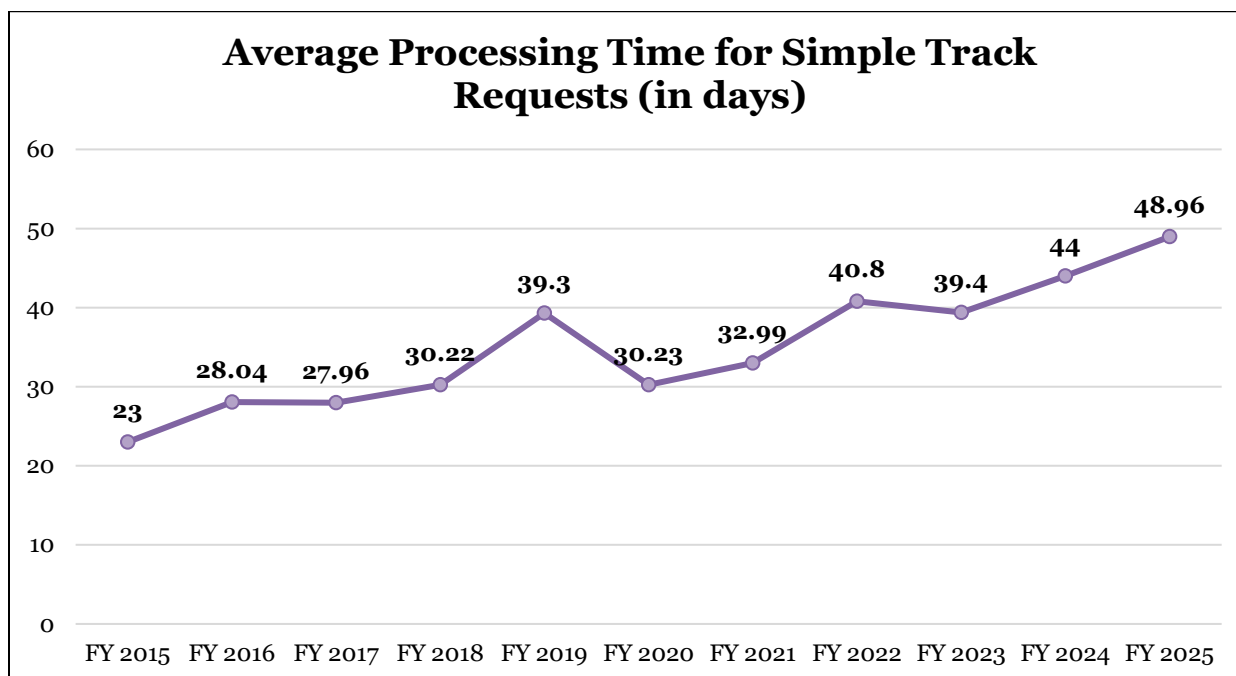
In FY 2025, the government overall determined whether to grant or deny 77,737 requests for expedited processing. This is an 11% increase (+7,537) from the total number of expedited processing determinations made during FY 2024 (70,200).

The average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing increased across the government. Agencies averaged 25.21 days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing, a more than five-day increase from FY 2024. In total, agencies adjudicated 91% (71,103) of all requests for expedited processing during FY 2025 within ten calendar days.



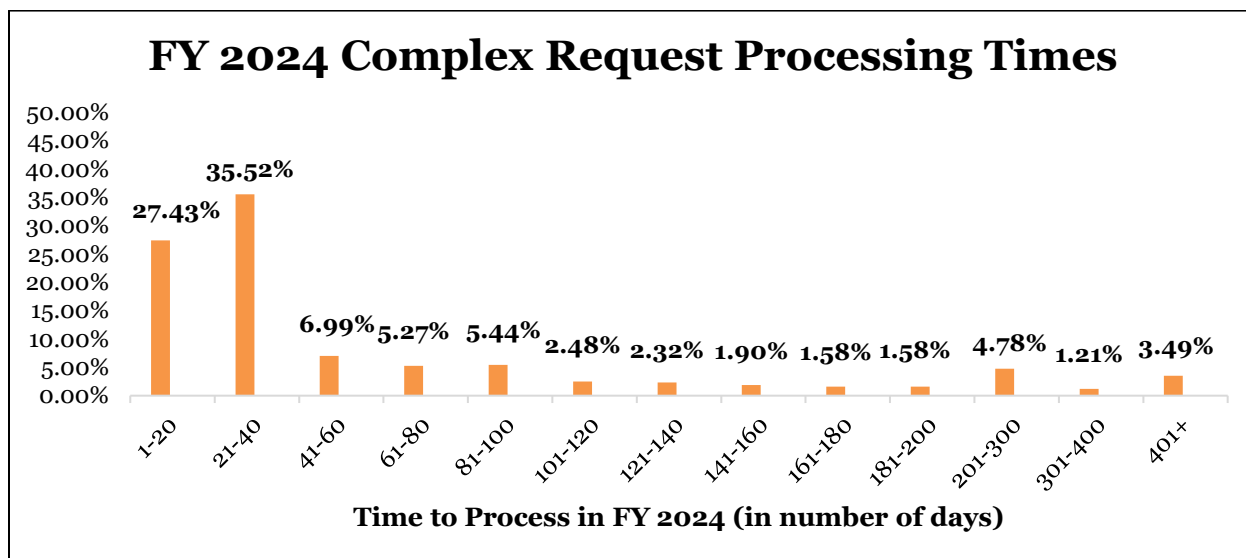
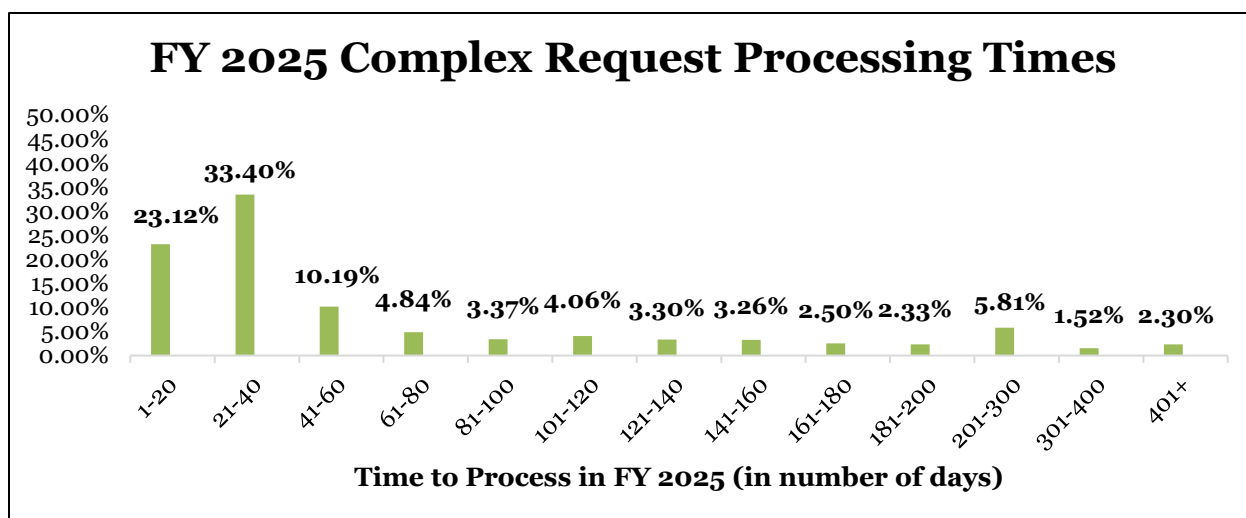
Average Processing Time for Simple Requests

The average processing time for simple track requests for agencies that reported data in this field in their FY 2025 Annual FOIA Report was 48.96 days. This is an increase of almost 5 days from the FY 2024 average of 44 days. Fifty-eight agencies, including four departments – Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, and State – reported processing their simple track requests within an average of twenty days or less. Seventeen agencies, including Agriculture, Commerce, Labor, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs, reported processing these requests between an average of 20.01 days and 30 days.



Time to Process Complex Requests

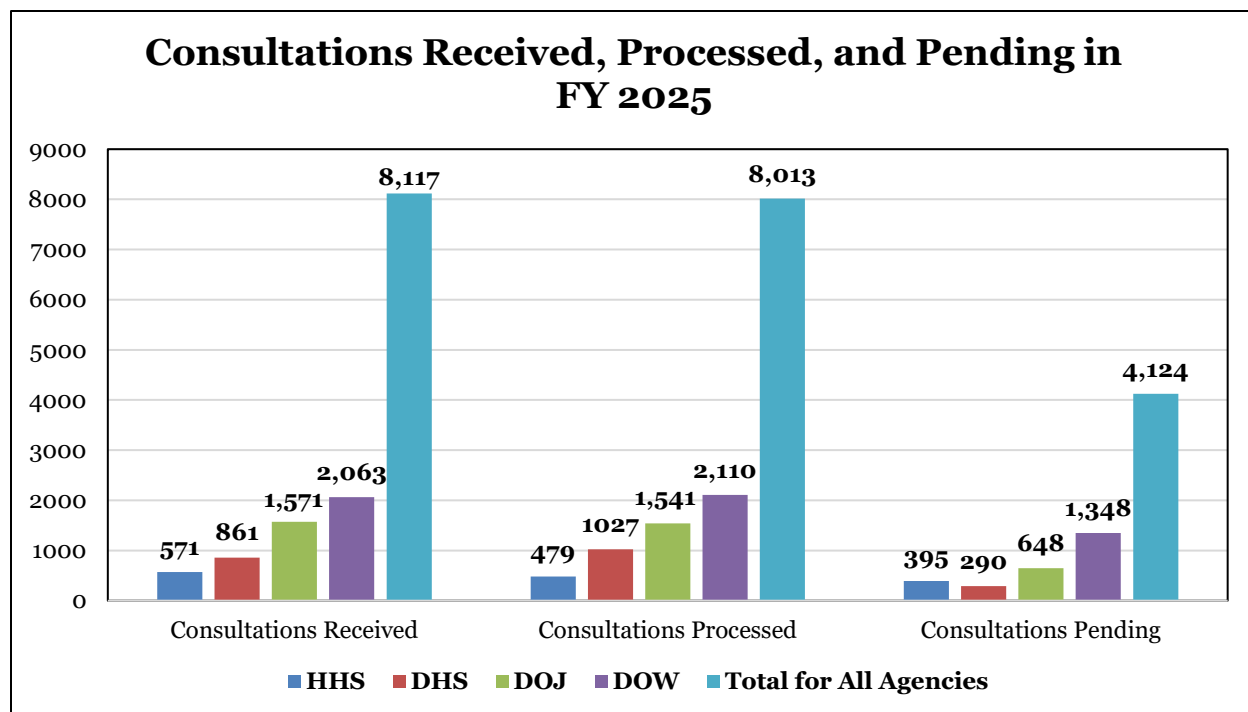
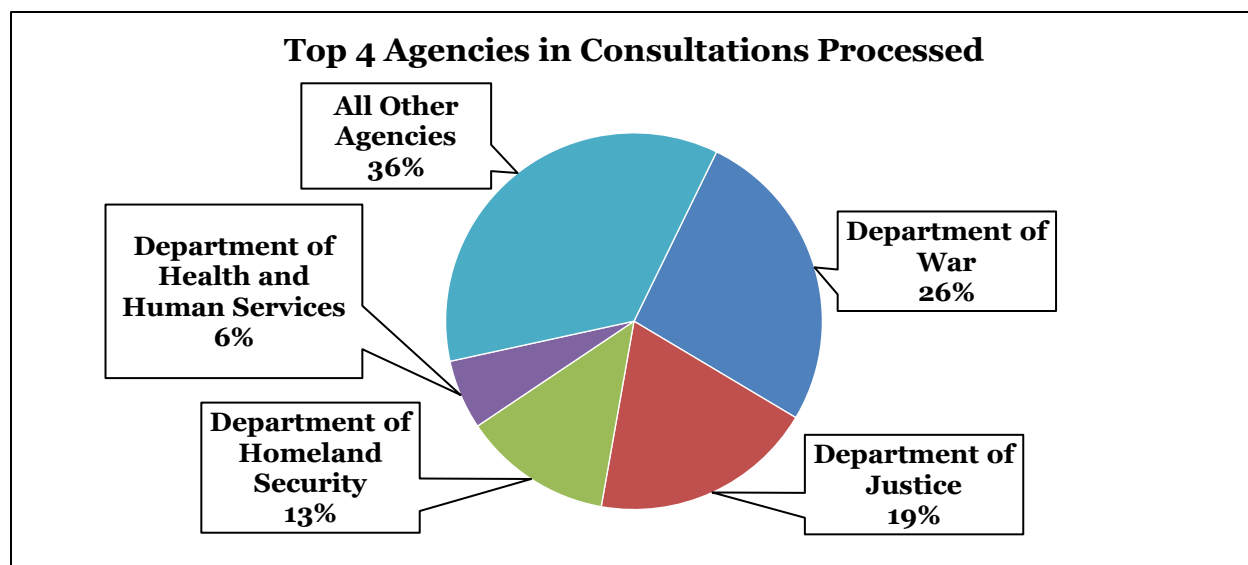
Complex requests typically seek a high volume of material or require additional steps to process, such as the need to search for records in multiple locations or conduct multiple consultations. Complex requests often take longer to process than more targeted “simple” requests. The percentage of complex requests processed in fewer than 20 days decreased in FY 2025, but the majority of complex requests were processed in less than 40 days. In FY 2025, there was an 14.85% increase in processed complex requests (+108,637). A total of 74.92% of complex requests were processed in 100 days or less.



Consultations on FOIA Requests

Consultations Received, Processed, and Pending

During FY 2025, eighty-two 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 8,117 consultations were received by agencies in FY 2025, with DOW, DOJ, DHS, and HHS receiving and processing the majority of consultations (62.41% received and 64.36% processed). The number of consultations pending overall slightly increased from 4,100 at the end of FY 2024 to 4,124 at the end of FY 2025.

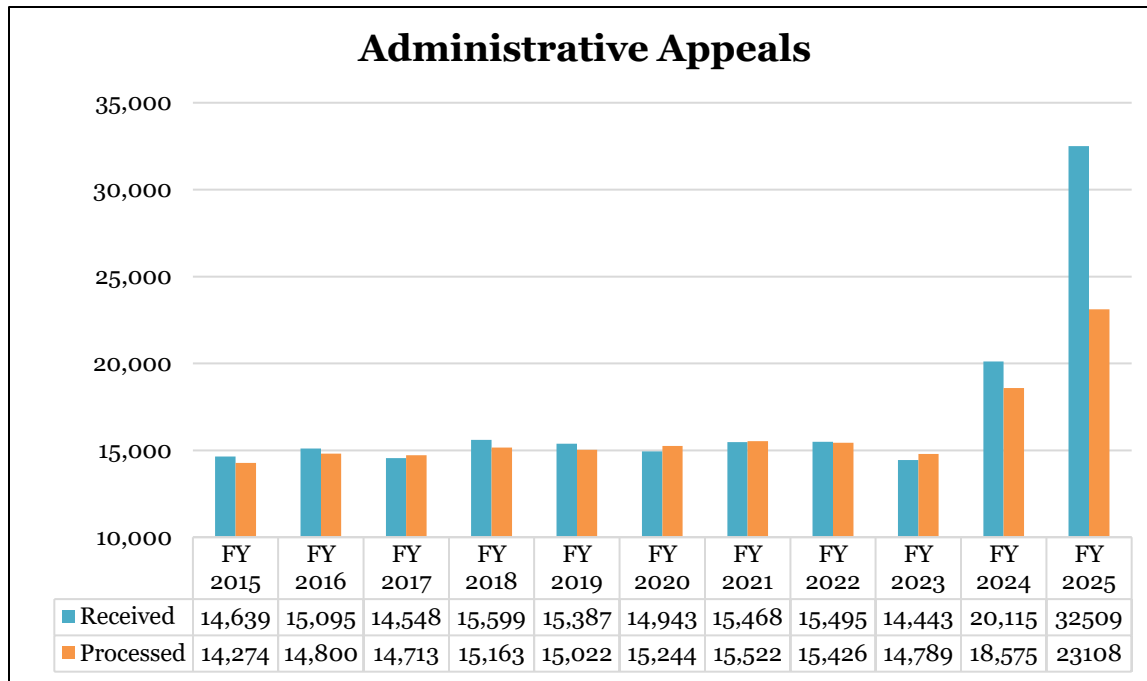


Administrative Appeals

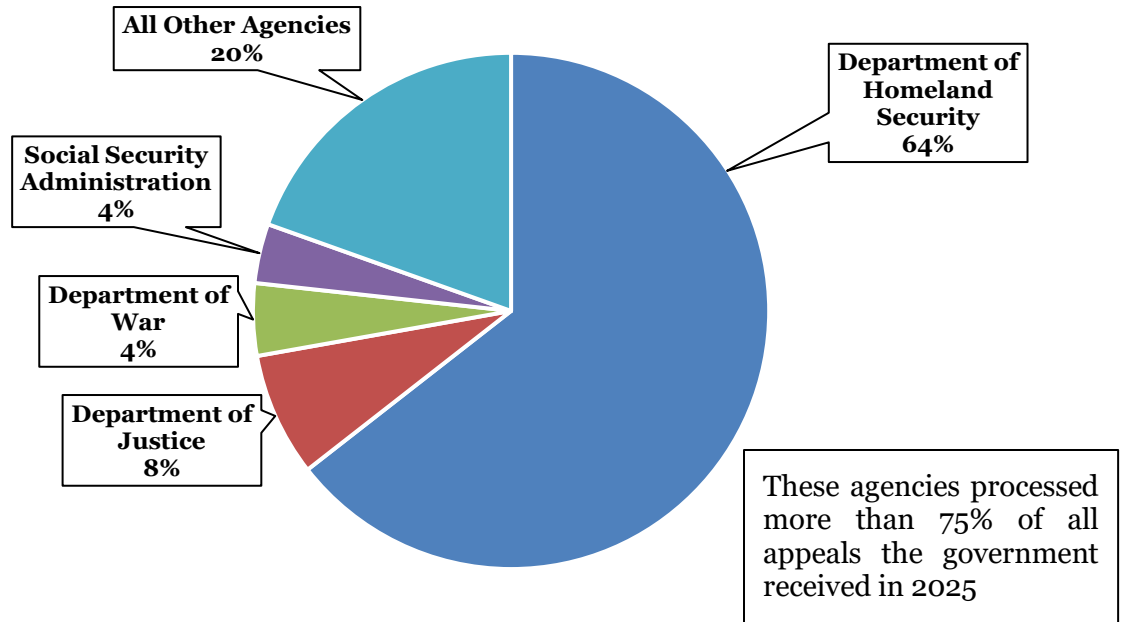
Number of Administrative Appeals Received and Processed

In FY 2025, the government overall received 32,059 appeals, which is a 59.38% increase from the 20,115 appeals received in FY 2024. Forty-one agencies received no appeals during the fiscal year.

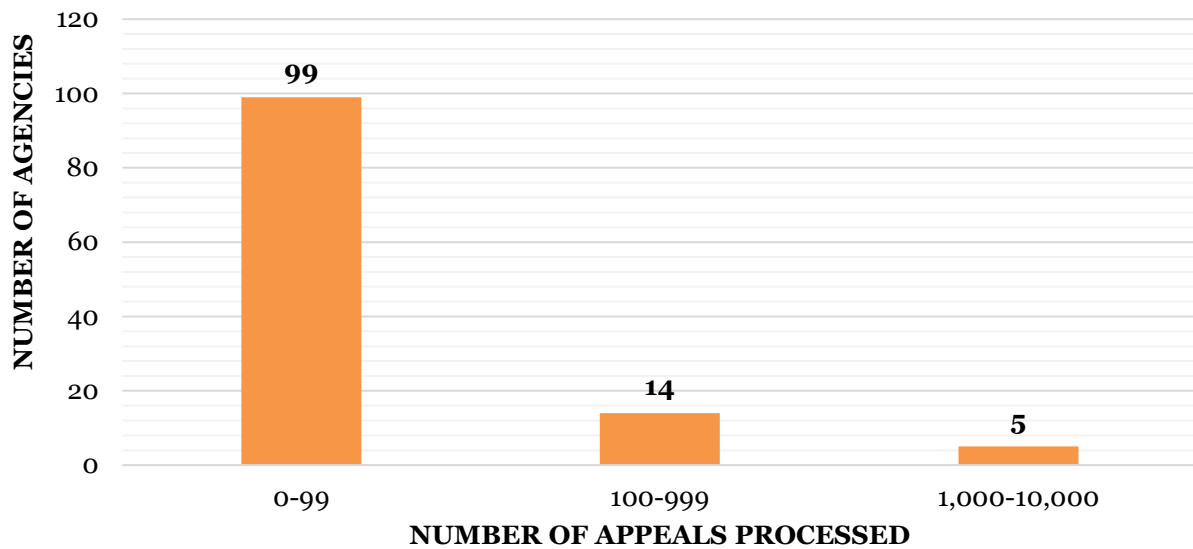
The government overall processed 23,108 appeals during FY 2025. This is a 24.40% increase from the 18,575 appeals processed during FY 2024. The four agencies that received the most appeals also processed the most appeals: DHS (20,664 received, 12,707 processed), DOJ (2,484 received, 2,586 processed), DOW (1,452 received, 1,352 processed), and the Social Security Administration (SSA) (1,193 received, 1,161 processed). These four agencies together processed 77.1% of the total number of appeals processed by the entire government in FY 2025.



Top 4 Agencies in Appeals Received

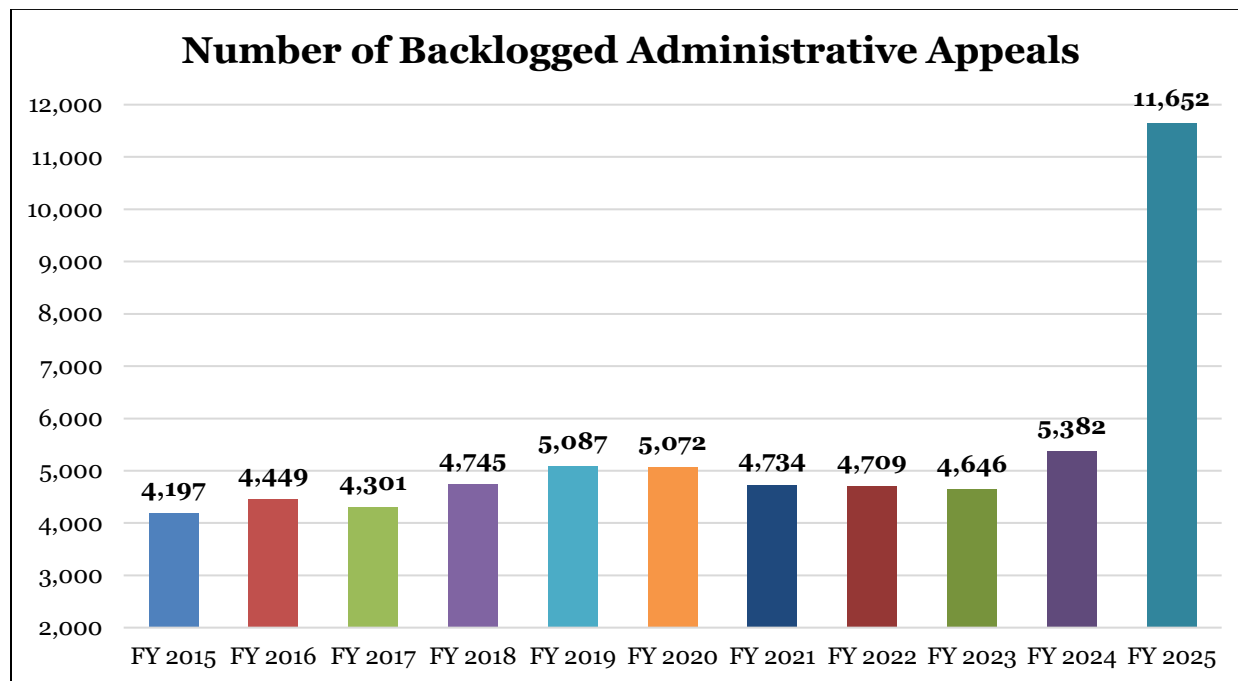


Distribution of Appeals Processed

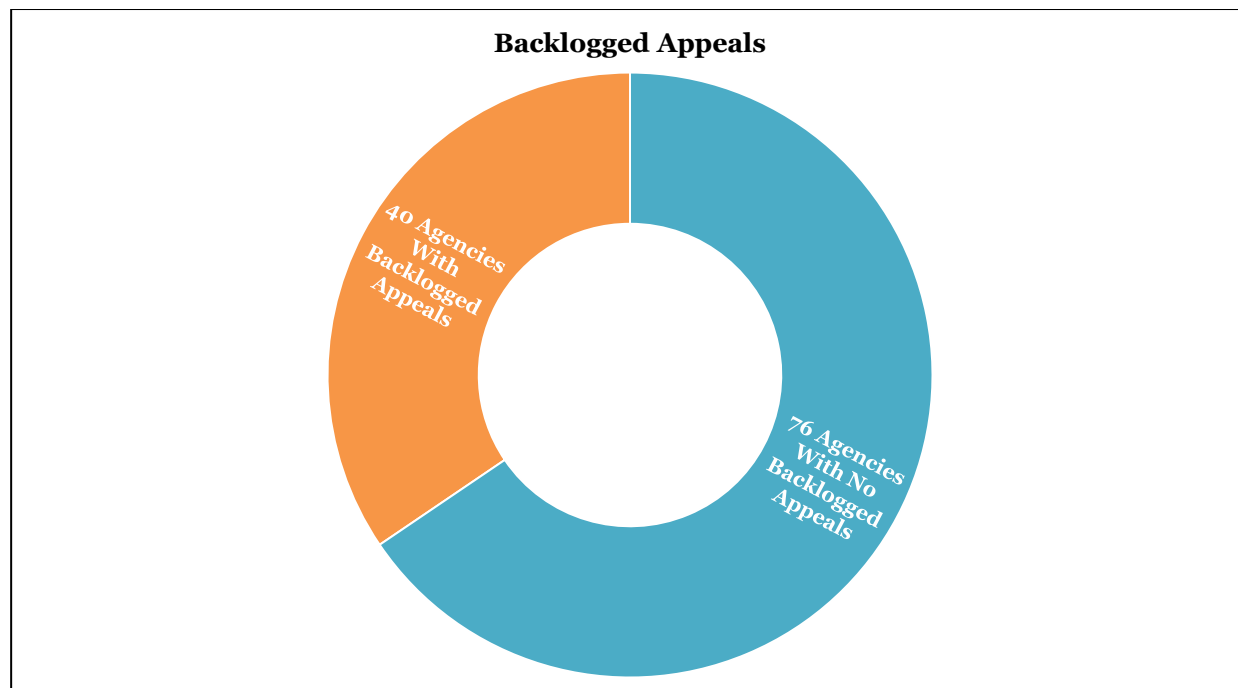


Backlogged Administrative Appeals

The overall backlog of administrative appeals at the end of FY 2025 was 11,652, which is an increase of 6,270 appeals governmentwide (116.5%) as compared to FY 2024.

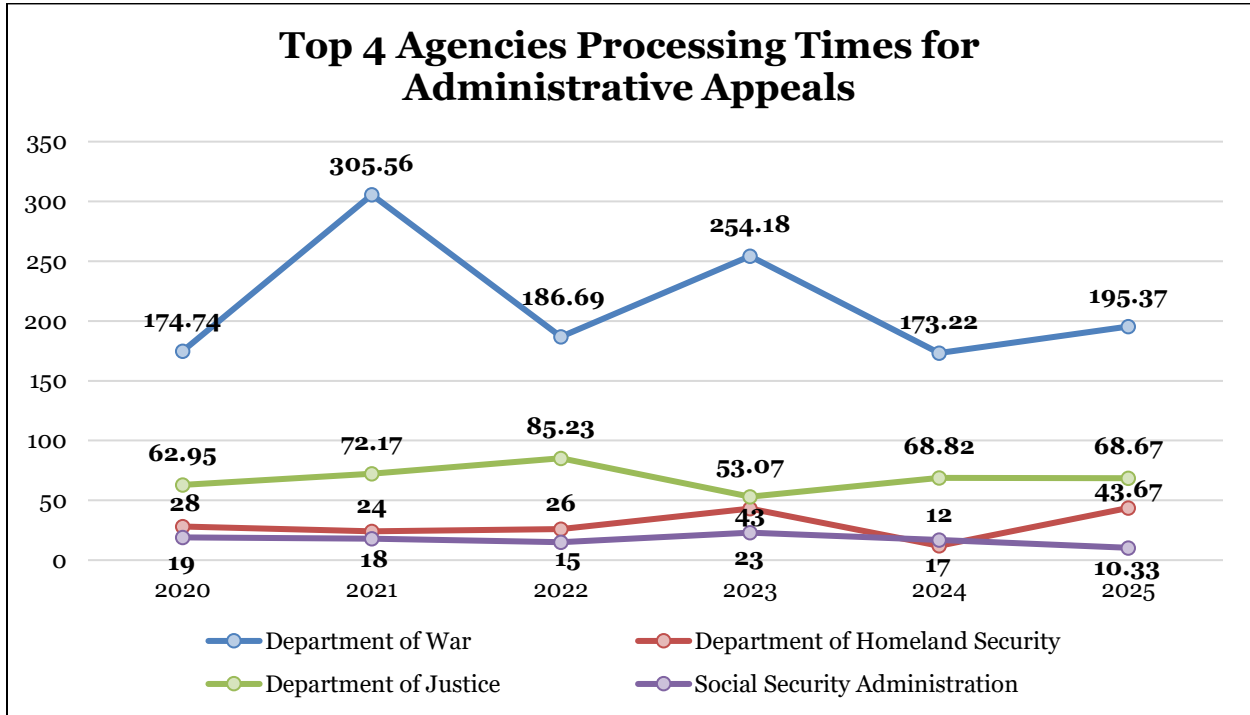


Seventy-six of the 117 agencies subject to the FOIA ended FY 2025 with no pending appeals in their backlog.



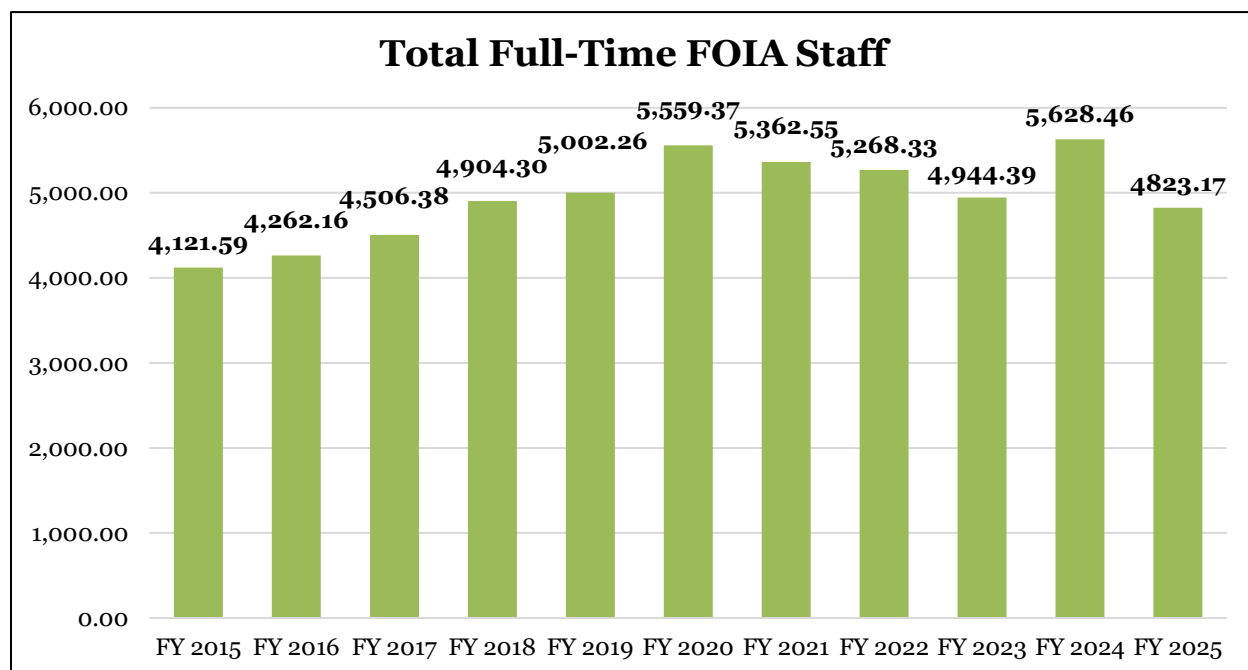
Processing Time for Administrative Appeals

The average processing time for adjudicating appeals for those agencies that reported processing appeals in their FY 2025 Annual FOIA Report is 93.76 days. This is a decrease of 3.15 days from the average of 96.91 days reported in FY 2024. The average processing times for the agencies that processed the most appeals were 43.67 days (DHS), 68.67 days (DOJ), 195.37 days (DOW), and 10.33 days (SSA).

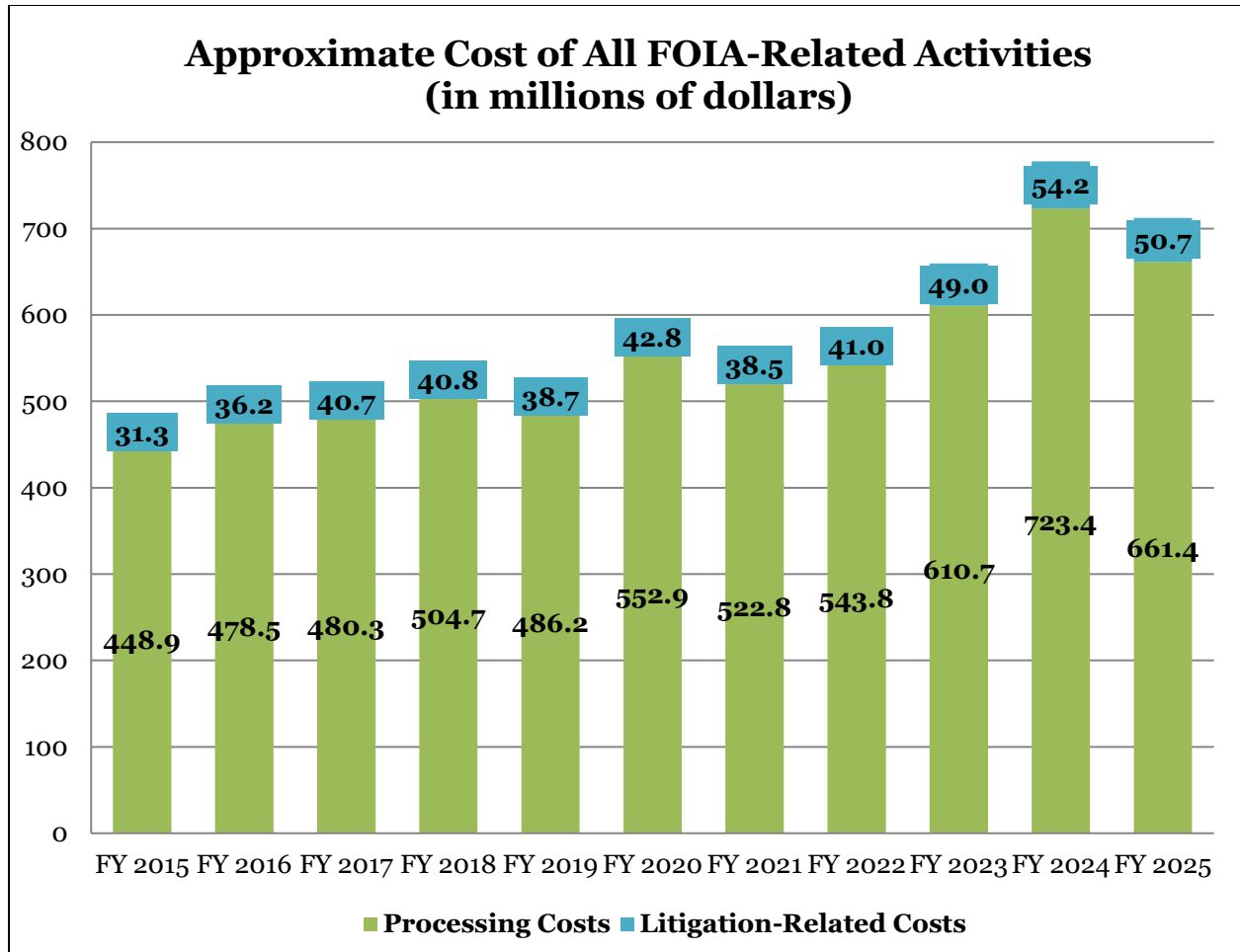


Staffing Levels & Costs

During FY 2025, 4823.17 “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 \$661,394,858.43. Of this total, 92.33% (\$610,670,216.34) of total costs were attributed to the administrative processing of requests and appeals by agencies. 7.67% (\$50,724,642.09) was reported to have been spent on litigation-related activities. By the end of the fiscal year, agencies reported collecting a total of \$2,511,193.04 in FOIA fees. The FOIA fees collected in FY 2025 are approximately 0.38% 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 2025, exclusions were invoked 75 times by four agencies: DOJ (34); the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) (33); DHS (7); and DOW (1). This is a 40% decrease in exclusion use as compared to FY 2024 (125 total uses). When compared to the 824,767 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,
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 253,302,092 records that qualified as subsection (a)(2) records were posted online during FY 2025. This is a 0.78% increase in proactive disclosures over FY 2024. The vast majority of (a)(2) disclosures (249,124,382) 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 99.57% of all program office postings. The FOIA offices across the government reported posting 4,177,710 subsection (a)(2) records online. This is a 115% increase in postings compared to FY 2024 (1,945,022 postings). Among the FOIA offices, the Environmental Protection Agency reported posting the highest number of proactive disclosures (3,236,002) followed by the Department of Labor (405,406) and the Department of State (183,988).

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 21 agencies receiving less than 50 requests during FY 2025.

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United States Department of Justice*

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 2025, 25 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).