

# CHIEF FOIA OFFICERS COUNCIL



**Public Meeting**

**November 7, 2024**


**10:00 am - 12:00 pm**

**Bobby Talebian and Martha W. Murphy (for Alina M. Semo)**


**Co-Chairs**





# Welcome and Housekeeping

 Use Webex chat for housekeeping and procedural matters only. Please submit substantive comments to: [www.foia.gov/chief-foia-officers-council/public-comments](https://www.foia.gov/chief-foia-officers-council/public-comments)

 The YouTube chat function is not on. Please submit comments to: [www.foia.gov/chief-foia-officers-council/public-comments](https://www.foia.gov/chief-foia-officers-council/public-comments)

 Oral public comments will be heard at the end of today's meeting.

 The meeting will be recorded and posted online at: <https://www.foia.gov/chief-foia-officers-council>

 The meeting will start at 10:00 a.m. and end at 12:00 p.m. ET.



# **Presentation: Open Government Federal Advisory Committee**

**Daniel Schuman, Advisory Committee Chair**



# Updates from the Office of Information Policy

Bobby Talebian, Director  
Office of Information Policy  
U.S. Department of Justice



# Guidance for Improvement Based on 2024 Chief FOIA Officer Reports

## **Importance of FOIA Training and Role of CFO:**

- Encourages CFOs to consider requiring all FOIA professionals attend substantive FOIA training each year and non-FOIA professionals to complete training upon hire, or more frequently as needed.
- Highlights OIP e-learning resources

## **FOIA Websites:**

- Reminds agencies to keep websites current, including by removing outdated information.

## **Processing Requests for Expedition and Calculating Report Metrics**

- Emphasizes importance of timely processing of requests for expedited processing
- Reminds agencies how to calculate agency overall medians and average as part of the Annual FOIA Report.



# FOIA Reporting

- **Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Annual FOIA Reports** are due November 12, 2024.
- **2025 Chief FOIA Officer Reports** are due January 13, 2025 for agencies that received 50 or more requests in FY 2023. Agencies that received fewer than 50 requests in FY 2023 that choose to report should submit by February 7, 2025.
- **FY 2025 Quarter 1 data submissions** are due January 31, 2025.
- Guidance for all reporting requirements is available on [OIP's Reports](#) page.
- Additional resources can also be found on [OIP's Guidance & Resources](#) page including a [FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit](#), OIP's FOIA Counselor Service line (202-514-FOIA (3642)), and more.



# Sunshine Week Awards

**The nomination period for 2025 Sunshine Week FOIA Awards is now open!**

- The earlier submission timeline is a change from prior years to allow us more time to review submissions and notify awardees earlier.
- Agency Chief FOIA Officers or principal FOIA contacts may submit nominations to [DOJ.OIP.FOIA@usdoj.gov](mailto:DOJ.OIP.FOIA@usdoj.gov) by **December 6, 2024**. Read more in our [blog post!](#)
- Winners will be highlighted during DOJ's Sunshine Week Celebration on Monday, March 17, 2025.
- Award categories:
  - Exceptional Service by a FOIA professional or Team of FOIA Professionals
  - Outstanding Contributions by a New Employee
  - Exceptional Advancements in IT to Improve the Agency's FOIA Administration
  - Exceptional Advancements in Proactive Disclosures of Information
  - Lifetime Service Award



# FOIA Resources

- [Department of Justice Guide to the FOIA](#): Learn about FOIA
- [Court Decisions](#): Keep up on the latest FOIA case law
- [OIP Policy Guidance](#): Review OIP policy guidance on various FOIA topics
- Additional [OIP Resources](#) include:
  - [Exemption 3](#) information
  - [FOIA Self-Assessment Toolkit](#)
  - [FOIA Counselor Service](#) for agency FOIA professionals







# FOIA Training

- OIP continues to host free FOIA training for employees with a .gov/.mil email address. Upcoming training topics include: Procedural Requirements, Exemption-specific training, Litigation issues, and more!
- Training dates through February 2025 as well as links to register can be found on OIP's [Key Dates](#) page.
- If you are unable to attend a training, all [training material](#) is posted on OIP's [Training](#) page, along with links to [FOIA e-learning modules](#).
- OIP is available to provide specialized training for agencies upon request.



# FOIA.gov Reminders

- Reminder to include interoperability as a requirement if you are switching case management systems. Reach out to OIP Compliance Team with any questions or to test a new integration.
- Please work with your agency's FOIA.gov Agency Manager to keep FOIA contact information and links updated.
- All Chief FOIA Officers Council materials are posted to [FOIA.gov](https://www.foia.gov).



# One Year of the FOIA.gov Search Tool – Stats and Highlights

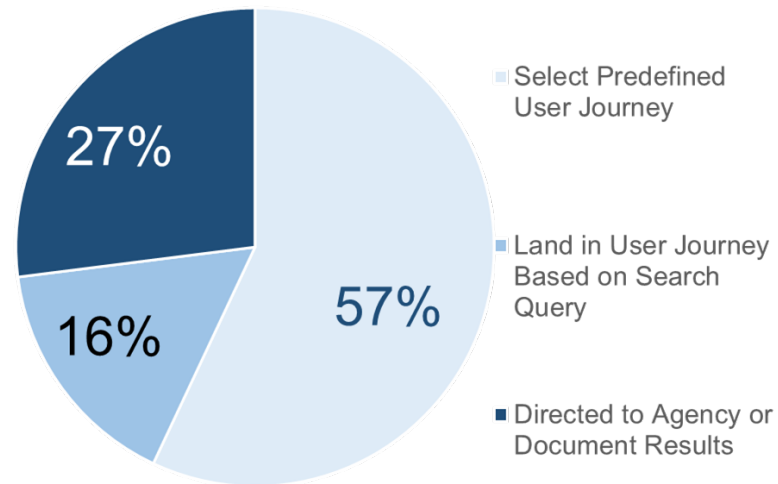
- The search tool has been used over **120,000** times since its launch in October, 2023
- The search tool is the **5<sup>th</sup> most viewed** page on FOIA.gov
- Over **140,000** queries have been submitted to the Search Tool





# One Year of the Wizard Search Tool – Stats and Highlights

- Most users (57%) independently select the predefined user journeys
- Additional users (16%) are directed to the journeys based on their search terms
- The remaining 27% of search terms entered into the Search Tool are followed-up with an agency or document recommendation result





# Top FOIA.gov Agency/Component Pages Selected from Search Tool Results

- 1st: DHS/CBP
- 2nd: DHS/USCIS
- 3rd: DOS
- 4th : DOD/DCSA
- 5th : DOJ/FBI

*Okay, you're looking for:*

**"Records of apprehension, detention, deportation, legal international travel, illegal attempted entry, expedited removal, voluntary removal, or inspections by Customs and Border Protection (CBP)"**

To request any of these records, submit a FOIA request to Customs and Border Protection (CBP).

[Learn more about why you got these results.](#)

*Suggested agency recommendation when searching for immigration records on FOIA.gov*




# Top External Resources Suggested by the Search Tool

- DHS i94 website
- National Archives Military Service Records and Personnel Records websites
- DHS/DCSA: Requesting Background Investigation
- Treasury/IRS: How to Access IRS Records
- DOJ/FBI: Background Investigations Information

*Suggested results when searching for  
Background Investigation Records on FOIA.gov*

For additional information about requesting background investigation records:

[Visit the Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency \(DCSA\) website](#) 

[Submit a FOIA request to the DSCA](#)

For additional information about U.S. Department of State background investigation records:

[Visit the Bureau of Diplomatic Security website](#) 

[Submit a FOIA request to the Department of State](#)

For additional information about Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) background investigation records:

[Visit the Federal Bureau of Investigation website](#) 

[Submit a FOIA request to the FBI](#)



# Top User Journey Searches

*The 7 predefined user journeys currently available on FOIA.gov*

## What information are you looking for?

Select a common topic

Immigration or Travel records

Tax records

Social Security records

Medical records

Personnel records

Military records

Law Enforcement records

5. **Immigration or Travel Records:** International travel records
4. **Immigration or Travel Records:** Records of apprehension/detention/deportation by CBP
3. **Law Enforcement User Journey:** State or local law enforcement records
2. **Personnel Records:** Background Investigations





# Top User Journey Searches: 1st Most Common User Journey

*Custom query box as  
seen on FOIA.gov*

Or search for something else

*Please enter one to two sentences describing what you're searching for, including relevant keywords.*

*Include as much specific information as possible in the search box, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, subject matter of the record, case number, file designation, or reference number. Please only include information relevant to your search. **Do not include your name, contact information, or other information that could be used to identify you.***

Requesters are inputting custom queries more than anything else.





# The Wizard: Next Steps in Improving Search Results

- New technology currently in development will allow for improved searchability of frequently requested documents posted on agency websites
- Increased capabilities in searching for other forms of records including text messages, images, etc.
- Forthcoming proactive disclosures guidance will address how agencies post FOIA logs and frequently requested records, which will improve consistency and facilitate more robust and accurate search results.

HOME LEARN SEARCH REQUEST CONTACT

Home » Search » Virtual Reading Room Documents Search

### Virtual Reading Room Documents Search

Search Terms

Document Date

From  To

Posted Date

From  To

Case Number

Vault Home

## The Vault

The Vault is our FOIA Library, containing 6,700 documents and other media that have been scanned from paper into digital copies so you can read them in the comfort of your home or office.

Included here are many FBI files that have been released to the public but never added to this website; dozens of records previously posted on our site but removed as requests diminished; files from our previous FOIA Library, and, previously unreleased files.

The Vault includes several tools and resources for your convenience:

### Vault Links

- FOIA Home
- Vault Home
- Search Vault
- Recently Added
- A-Z Index
- Categories( click to retract )
  - Administrative Policy Procedures
  - Anti-War
  - Bureau Personnel

*FOIA Library homepages for Department of State (top image) and for the FBI (bottom image)*



# Updates from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)

Martha W. Murphy, Deputy Director, OGIS  
National Archives and Records Administration

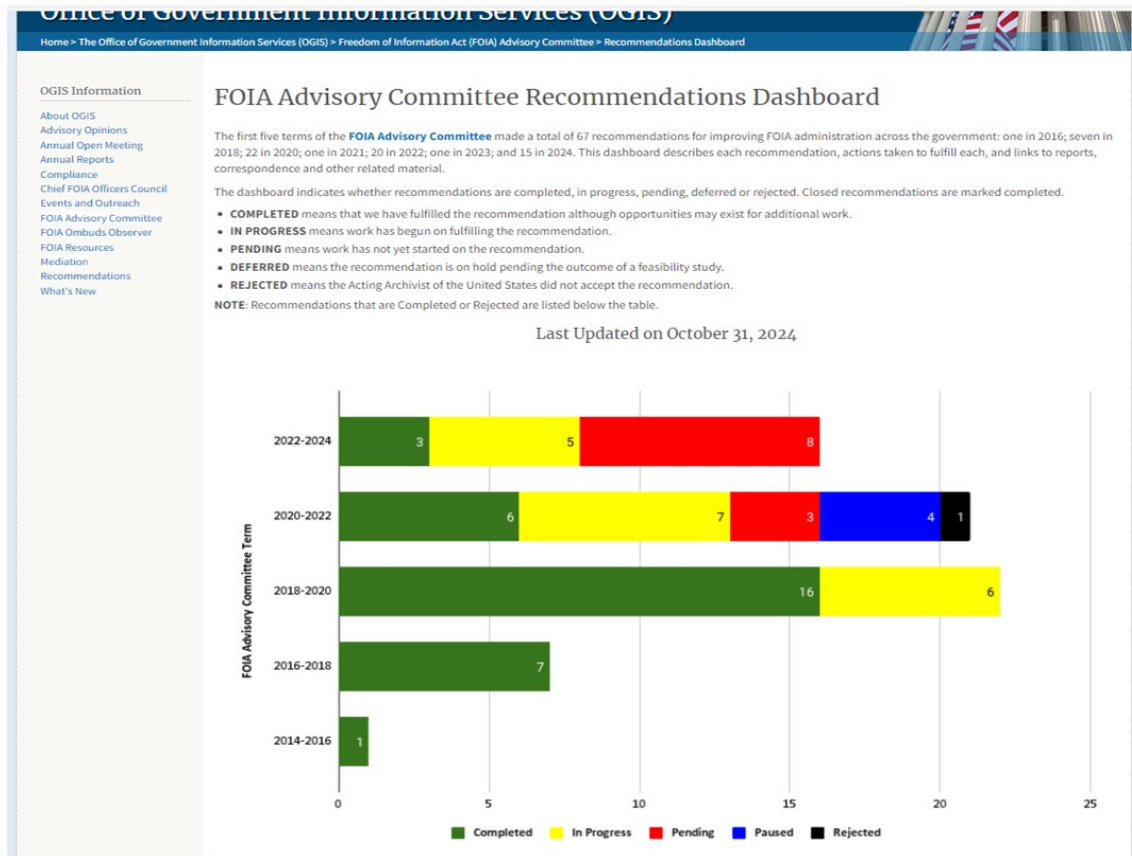


# FOIA Advisory Committee Recommendations to Council

- Recommendation 2024-06: The Committee on Cross-Agency Collaboration and Innovation —COCACI—should organize agencies to participate in a “talent pool” posting through OPM.
- Recommendation 2024-07: COCACI should create and maintain a database on its website of position descriptions in the Government Information Specialist (GIS) job series at various grades.
- Recommendation 2024-11: The Chief FOIA Officers Council should form a working group to analyze the interest in and need for 1) a shared FOIA case management system and 2) a centralized records repository for use by federal agencies and the public.
- Recommendation 2024-12: The Technology Committee and interested agencies should publish requests for information (RFIs) on the subject of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and techniques as an aid to FOIA processing.



# Recommendations Dashboard



Available at: [archives.gov/ogis/foia-advisory-committee/dashboard](https://archives.gov/ogis/foia-advisory-committee/dashboard)



# **Updates from the FOIA Business Standards Working Group**

**Lindsay Steel, Chief, FOIA Compliance Staff  
Office of Information Policy  
U.S. Department of Justice**



# FOIA Business Standards

## Recent Progress:

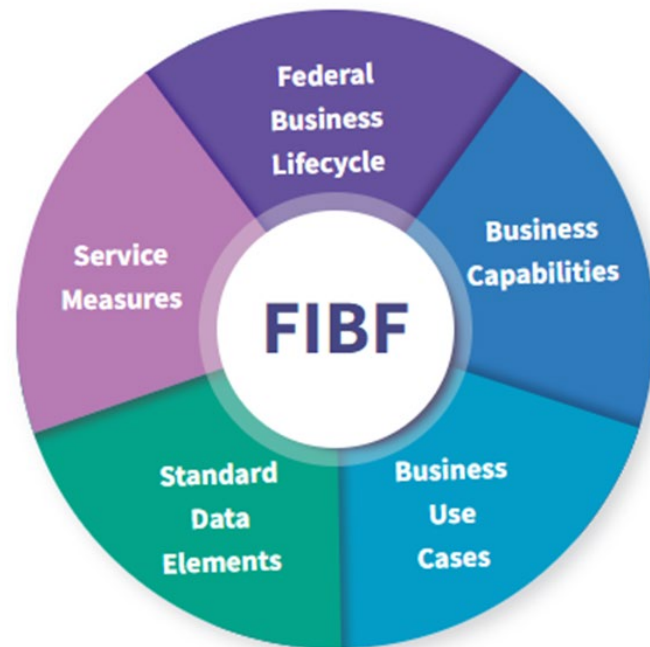
- FOIA Business Standards incorporated feedback following the public comment period.
- Standards are pending final approval with the Office of Management and Budget. Once approved, they will be published on the [Federal Integrated Business Framework – FOIA](#) website.



# FOIA Business Standards

## Fiscal Year 2025 Plans:

- Reconstitute and refresh the Working Group – contact OIP if interested in joining!
- Develop FOIA Business Use Cases
- Consider vendor outreach and engagement





# Updates from the Technology Committee

Michael Sarich and  
Gorka Garcia-Malene, Co-Chairs





In September 2018, the CFO Council established a technology committee to study the utilization and deployment of technology in FOIA programs across agencies, and to identify best practices and recommendations that can be implemented across agencies. Two senior FOIA professionals at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the National Institutes of Health co-chair the Committee; membership includes FOIA professionals from several Department-level and independent agencies. The Committee liaises with the Council's co-chairs, the Directors of OIP and OGIS.

### **[NexGen FOIA Tech Showcase 2.0 \(May 14-16, 2024\)](#)**

[NexGen FOIA Tech Showcase \(February 9-10, 2022\)](#) and [Follow Up Workshop for Agencies \(March 31, 2022\)](#)

[Report of the Technology Committee of the CFO Council - Best Practices and Recommendations \(February 14, 2020\)](#)

[Presentation Slides – Artificial Intelligence 101 \(November 5, 2020\)](#)

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## NEXGEN FOIA SHOWCASE 2.0





# Casepoint FOIA

## A Transformative AI-based FOIA Solution

NARA NexGen FOIA Tech Showcase 2.0 - May 2024

Power. Productivity. Results.

2024 NexGen FOIA Tech Showcase 2... ✕

US National Archives - 6 / 26

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- 1 Agility Technologies  
US National Archives
- 2 ArkCase FOIA by Armedia  
US National Archives
- 3 AWS FOIA with Generative AI  
US National Archives
- 4 CaseGuard AI Redaction Solution  
US National Archives
- 5 **Casepoint FOIA**  
US National Archives
- 6 Deloitte SecureRelease Overview  
US National Archives
- 7 DTG OpenText Demo  
US National Archives
- 8 Exterro NexGen FOIA Showcase  
US National Archives
- 9 Feith System FOIA Workbench  
US National Archives

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## Working Groups



<b>Data</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>508 Compliance and Collaborative Tools</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>FOIA and Classified Information</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>FOIA IT Platforms</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>FOIA Reference Model</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Search/Artificial Intelligence</b>	<b>+</b>
<b>Technology Best Practices</b>	<b>+</b>





# FY25 – FAC Focus



  **Introduction of Committee Members**

- Alina M. Semo – Chair, National Archives and Records Administration, Office of Government Information Services
- Jason R. Baron – University of Maryland
- Kevin Bell – Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
- Nieva Brock – Department of Defense, Defense Intelligence Agency
- David Cuillier – University of Florida, Brechner Center for the Advancement of the First Amendment
- Whitney Frazier-Jenkins – Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation
- Elizabeth Hempowicz – American Oversight
- Scott Hodes – Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Shelley Kimball – Johns Hopkins University
- Margaret Kwoka – The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION 5



# FOIA Advisory Committee Recommendations Dashboard

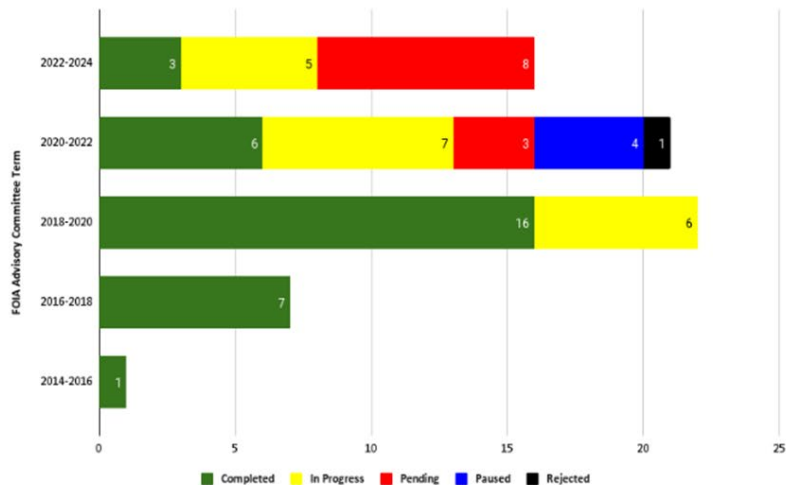
The first five terms of the **FOIA Advisory Committee** made a total of 67 recommendations for improving FOIA administration across the government: one in 2016; seven in 2018; 22 in 2020; one in 2021; 20 in 2022; one in 2023; and 15 in 2024. This dashboard describes each recommendation, actions taken to fulfill each, and links to reports, correspondence and other related material.

The dashboard indicates whether recommendations are completed, in progress, pending, deferred or rejected. Closed recommendations are marked completed.

- **COMPLETED** means that we have fulfilled the recommendation although opportunities may exist for additional work.
- **IN PROGRESS** means work has begun on fulfilling the recommendation.
- **PENDING** means work has not yet started on the recommendation.
- **DEFERRED** means the recommendation is on hold pending the outcome of a feasibility study.
- **REJECTED** means the Acting Archivist of the United States did not accept the recommendation.

**NOTE:** Recommendations that are Completed or Rejected are listed below the table.

Last Updated on October 31, 2024





<b><u>2024-12</u></b>	The Chief FOIA Officers Council Technology Committee and interested agencies publish requests for information (RFIs) on the subject of artificial intelligence (AI) tools and techniques as an aid to FOIA processing.
<b>2024-11</b>	The Chief FOIA Officers Council should form a working group to analyze the interest in and need for 1) a shared FOIA case management system and 2) a centralized records repository for use by federal agencies and the public.
<b>2022-09</b>	The Chief FOIA Officers Council should establish a working group to study and recommend resolutions to challenges between FOIA and section 508 compliance.
<b>2022-08</b>	The Chief FOIA Officers Council will establish a working group within two years to determine best practices for release of records in native format, including metadata.

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**2020-11**

The Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy (OIP), will provide guidance to agencies on the use of e-discovery tools to assist agencies in their searches of electronic records in response to FOIA requests.



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# **Updates from the Committee on Cross-Agency Collaboration and Innovation (COCACI)**

**Michael Bell and Paul Chalmers, Co-Chairs**



# Government Information Specialists Professionalization Subcommittee

Nicole Rementer and Madeline Van Nostrand, Co-Chairs

Mission: We advocate for the advancement of the Government Information Specialist (GIS) profession through transparency and standardization across the Federal government.



# Pandemic/Virtual Subcommittee

Chantay Stanley, Chair

Mission: The Pandemic/Virtual FOIA Offices subcommittee is focused on taking lessons learned from the remote work environment experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic to transform FOIA Offices to thrive in a virtual environment, with an emphasis on identifying the tactics, techniques, and procedures necessary for effective virtual/telework to process agency FOIA responses.



# Resources Subcommittee

Brandon Gaylord, Chair

Mission: Identify opportunities for standardization of a variety of resources (including procurement vehicles and technology) that should be made available to FOIA offices to increase efficiency and ease of use across government agencies, especially smaller FOIA Requester Service Centers.



# FOIA Toolkit Working Group

Abi Oyewole, Chair



# FOIA Advisory Committee Recommendations



# COCACI is always welcoming new members

Paul Chalmers [chalmers.charles@pbgc.gov](mailto:chalmers.charles@pbgc.gov)

or

Michael Bell [Michael.bell1@dot.gov](mailto:Michael.bell1@dot.gov)





# Public Comments



Please limit your  
oral comments to  
3 minutes.

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See you in Spring 2025!