

# 2018 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT

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The U.S. Copyright Office operates an effective system for responding to FOIA requests by centralizing FOIA staff and database management, uses tracking numbers, maintaining secure electronic files, and following appropriate retention policies. This system allows the Office to maintain regular operations and monitor requests to identify any “frequently requested” records. The Office received an unusual amount of complex FOIA requests in the reporting period, and maintains openness with requesters by favoring multiple interim disclosures and providing status updates as the Office prepares those disclosures.

In accordance with both the Department of Justice’s *2009 FOIA Guidelines* and the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016, Pub. L. 114-185, the Office released interim regulations on February 7, 2017, that provide a clear structure for the required regulatory provisions of FOIA, formalize the Office’s practices of multitrack processing and aggregation, and enhance customer service. The Office is incorporating OIP feedback in its drafting of the final rule.

When responding to a FOIA request, the Office adheres to the presumption of openness when evaluating responsive documents. When preparing a record for release, the Office minimizes the number of redactions to comments or identifying information of a personal nature. In addition, in order to promote a spirit of cooperation,

Office staff endeavor to provide direct lines of communication with requesters, grant fee and expediting requests whenever possible, and openly engage with requesters regardless of the purpose of the request.

As the *FOIA Guidelines* state, the responsibility for effective FOIA administration belongs to every agency employee, and is not merely a task assigned to an agency's FOIA staff. To that end, the Office has used cross-department resources to increase proactive disclosures and enhance accessibility to records through online technology. The Office introduced two new categories of proactively disclosed records. First, the Office published decisions issued by the Copyright Office Review Board, who hears final administrative appeals of refusals of copyright registration. Second, the Office published an archive of briefs and legal opinions issued by the Office in litigation and Copyright Royalty Board. The Office also proactively disclosed a draft form of the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices* for public feedback and comment. Then, the Office increased its social media outreach to drive members of the public to newly available records.

Finally, the Office has made multiple improvements to its online systems in order to provide greater access to its proactively disclosed records, including 1201 Rulemakings and the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*. The [copyright.gov](http://copyright.gov) website was redesigned to be more organized, responsive, and easier to digest.



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