



**Peace Corps**

**2022 Chief FOIA Officer Report**

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Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer**

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## **Section I: Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness**

The guiding principle underlying the Department of Justice (DOJ)'s [FOIA Guidelines](#) is the presumption of openness.

Please answer the following questions in order to describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA. You may also include any additional information that illustrates how your agency is working to apply the presumption of openness.

### **A. FOIA Leadership**

*1. The FOIA requires each agency to designate a Chief FOIA Officer who is a senior official at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(j)(1) (2018). Is your agency's Chief FOIA Officer at this level?*

Yes.

*2. Please provide the name and title of your agency's Chief FOIA Officer.*

Francisco Reinoso, Associate Director of Management.

### **B. FOIA Training**

*3. The FOIA directs agency Chief FOIA Officers to ensure that FOIA training is offered to agency personnel. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(j)(2)(F). Please describe the efforts your agency has undertaken to ensure proper FOIA training is made available and used by agency personnel.*

The Peace Corps FOIA Officer provides virtual face-to-face training twice a month to all incoming federal staff members as part of the New Employee Orientation program. Topics covered include an introduction to the law and the FOIA program, legal responsibility to comply with a FOIA records search, and our internal coordination process. The FOIA Officer also provides virtual in-briefs to all new political appointees or office leaders. Each briefing is tailored to the leader's responsibilities and subject matter. The FOIA Officer reviews and updates all training material and slide presentations to remain current.

4. *Did your FOIA professionals or the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend substantive FOIA training during the reporting period such as that provided by the Department of Justice?*

Yes.

5. *If yes, please provide a brief description of the type of training attended or conducted and the topics covered.*

Peace Corps FOIA staff attended DOJ's Office of Information Policy (OIP) virtual seminars through the year. These covered a wide variety of topics, discussing basic procedural steps in FOIA case processing, to more advanced topics, such as FOIA community forums or litigation matters. Members attended DOJ's Virtual Sunshine Week Kickoff Event March 15, 2021; the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Advisory Committee Meetings; Virtual Litigation Workshop (OIP); FOIA for Nerds; Virtual Best Practices for FOIA Programs in the Intelligence Community; Virtual Best Practices FOIA Administration During the Pandemic; Virtual Continuing FOIA Education; Virtual Procedural Requirement and Fees Workshop (July 2021); Virtual Annual/Quarterly FOIA Report Training; and the Virtual Procedural Requirements and Fees Training (December 2021).

6. *Please provide an estimate of the percentage of your FOIA professionals and staff with FOIA responsibilities who attended substantive FOIA training during this reporting period.*

All main office staff attended FOIA training. The Office of the Inspector General FOIA staff was not able to attend training due to schedule conflicts.

7. *OIP has directed agencies to "take steps to ensure that all of their FOIA professionals attend substantive FOIA training at least once throughout the year." If your response to the previous question is that less than 80% of your FOIA professionals attended training, please explain your agency's plan to ensure that all FOIA professionals receive or attend substantive FOIA training during the next reporting year.*

Training slides and summary updates are shared with staff members who cannot attend a particular event.

8. *Did the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend training in federal records management during this reporting period?*

Yes.

### **C. Outreach**

9. *Did your FOIA professionals engage in any outreach or dialogue, outside of the standard request process, with the requester community or open government groups regarding your administration of the FOIA? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue, and, if applicable, any specific examples of how this dialogue has led to improvements in your agency's FOIA administration.*

Peace Corps FOIA professionals participated in outreach events such as the Federal FOIA Advisory Committee meetings, the Chief FOIA Officers' Council Meetings and its subcommittee on technology; and the American Society of Access Professionals meetings. The Chief FOIA Officer also informs all new Peace Corps staff members that they have the right to submit a FOIA or Privacy Act request to the Peace Corps as a private citizen in the "Other" category requester. A request submission must be made using their own personal resources.

Our FOIA staff encourages FOIA requesters to contact either the assigned case specialist, or the FOIA Liaison, if there is a question about a pending closure, a final release decision, or clarification about an aspect of the final response, especially regarding withheld information or the records search results. This is intended to help the public achieve a better understanding of the FOIA process. A dissatisfied requester can also coordinate with the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) as a way of mediating with the FOIA Office. An individual can submit an appeal if there is still disagreement after OGIS mediation, or submit an appeal without engaging OGIS.

### **D. Other Initiatives**

10. *Describe any efforts your agency has undertaken to inform non-FOIA professionals of their obligations under the FOIA. In particular, please describe:*

- *How often and in what formats your agency provides FOIA training or briefings to non-FOIA staff; and*
- *If senior leaders at your agency received a briefing on your agency's FOIA resources, obligations and expectations during the FOIA process?*

The agency FOIA Officer provides virtual face-to-face FOIA training twice a month to all new staff members as part of the New Employee Orientation (NEO) program using a slide presentation and electronic handout material. Training includes the law's purpose,

legal and procedural requirements, including the responsibility of each staff member to cooperate with a FOIA records search, and common FOIA request topics. We also train each department's FOIA Point of Contact (POC) who facilitates the FOIA records search as a collateral duty. The FOIA Officer also provides specialized training for political appointees, leaders, and the Chief FOIA Officer. The FOIA Office hosts an intranet FOIA Resource Center page to provide relevant information, web links, and documents to Peace Corps personnel both domestically and overseas.

The FOIA Officer continues to distribute the performance standards and measures for FOIA support positions to all departmental FOIA POCs, as outlined in the Department of Justice memo, "Ensuring Compliance with Freedom of Information Act and Open Government Directive Requirements in Employee Performance Appraisal Records and Work Plans." This provides supporting staff who have collateral FOIA duties, such as performing record searches, with the details for the annual performance plan outlining performance standards, measures, as well as general responsibilities and duties in support of the FOIA. The FOIA Office also shared the web links to the original memorandum, dated October 2, 2015, and to OIP's web posting highlighting this matter, dated January 7, 2016.

New Peace Corps senior leaders meet with the FOIA Officer for an in-brief on the FOIA statute, the agency's FOIA program and request process, their responsibilities and the responsibilities of their staff members to respond to a record search and abide to the statute, the collateral duties of their designated staff members who conduct record searches, and the internal resource page.

11. *Optional -- If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied, please describe them here.*

New FOIA staff members are thoroughly trained to use the "presumption of openness" as a standard and as the guiding principle in administrative case processing. The Chief FOIA Officer and the program FOIA Officer emphasize this during briefings, staff meetings, final case reviews, and internal feedback.

## **Section II: Steps Taken to Ensure that Your Agency Has an Effective System in Place for Responding to Requests**

DOJ's FOIA Guidelines emphasize that "[a]pplication of the proper disclosure standard is only one part of ensuring transparency. Open government requires not just a

presumption of disclosure, but also an effective system for responding to FOIA requests.” It is essential that agencies effectively manage their FOIA program.

Please answer the following questions to describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the management of your FOIA program is effective and efficient. You should also include any additional information that that describes your agency's efforts in this area.

1. *For Fiscal Year 2021, what was the average number of days your agency reported for adjudicating requests for expedited processing? Please see Section VIII.A of your agency's Fiscal Year 2021 Annual FOIA Report.*

Seven days.

2. *If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was above ten calendar days, according to Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2021 Annual FOIA Report, please describe the steps your agency will take to ensure that requests for expedited processing are adjudicated within ten calendar days or less.*

This is not applicable (N/A).

3. *The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 required all agencies to update their FOIA regulations within 180 days. In 2016, OIP issued Guidance for Agency FOIA Regulations and the accompanying Template for Agency FOIA Regulations to assist agencies in updating their regulations in accordance with the statute. Has your agency updated its FOIA regulations in accordance with the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016? If not, what is your agency's plan to update your regulations?*

The Peace Corps completed its internal review and will submit the proposed rule to the Federal Register in the next month.

4. *Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) generally document your agency's internal processes for administering the FOIA beyond your FOIA regulations and FOIA Reference Guide. As noted in OIP's guidance, having SOPs can improve the consistency and quality of an agency's FOIA process. SOPs can also serve as a significant resource for incoming FOIA professionals and a way to preserve much of the agency's institutional knowledge on administering the FOIA from how to handle requests from start-to-finish, to identifying and making proactive disclosures, to maintaining a FOIA website. Does your agency have up-to-date internal SOPs for your FOIA administration?*

Yes.

*5. If not, please provide a timeline for when your agency plans to develop or update its SOPs.*

N/A.

*6. Has your agency established alternative means of access to first-party requested records outside of the FOIA process?*

Yes.

*7. If yes, please provide examples. If no, please explain if such opportunities exist at your agency and whether there are any challenges in establishing alternative means of access.*

Individuals have the opportunity to submit Privacy Act requests. Returned Peace Corps Volunteers (RPCVs) can request their medical service records to the Office of Health Services online request portal. RPCVs can also request and access certain service records through the RPCV Portal, sponsored by the Office of Third Goal.

*8. Did your agency conduct a self-assessment of its FOIA administration during the reporting period? If so, please describe the self-assessment methods used, such as analyzing Annual Report or raw data, using active workflows and track management, reviewing and updating processing procedures, etc. In addition, please specifically highlight any data analysis methods or technologies used to assess your agency's FOIA program.*

The Peace Corps main FOIA Office prepares weekly metrics and monthly reports to identify backlog cases and to follow up on overdue record searches. It also conducts an internal annual assessment to track the agency's overall workflow for responding to FOIA records searches. The purpose is to identify gaps, and reduce the overall case time, procedural steps, and the time involved for personnel. The main FOIA Office runs a quarterly review of all designated FOIA POC positions in the offices to ensure this position is filled. Record search results have been standardized to provide records in digital format. In some rare instances, the responsive records are long-term records that are both voluminous and maintained in paper format. The FOIA Office will then coordinate with the department's FOIA POC to determine the best way to scan such records, since the Peace Corps continues to operate at maximum telework due to the COVID pandemic.



9. *The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires additional notification to requesters about the services provided by the agency's FOIA Public Liaison. Please provide an estimate of the number of times requesters sought assistance from your agency's FOIA Public Liaison during FY 2021 (please provide a total number or an estimate of the number).*

Five times.

10. *Has your agency reviewed its FOIA-related staffing capabilities to identify resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands?*

Yes.

11. *Optional -- Please describe:*

- *Best practices used to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively*
- *Any challenges your agency faces in this area.*

The FOIA office staff meets on a weekly basis to discuss events, specific case questions, FOIA updates, and to share best practices. The FOIA Office provides the Chief FOIA Officer with weekly metrics. The FOIA Officer places a high priority on communication to ensure the mechanism of the FOIA process is understood and runs smoothly, from the early stage of a record search, to the final legal review. We categorize all requests based on search topics or themes to help identify identical or similar requests within our online FOIA database. The central FOIA inbox is also carefully monitored to provide timely responses to case status inquiries. Challenges include closing our top ten oldest cases and working with staff members who may be delayed or unable to respond to record searches because they are away from the original source of the records, especially when these records are overseas.

### **Section III: Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures**

The Department of Justice has long focused on the need for agencies to work proactively to post information online without waiting for individual requests to be received.

Please answer the following questions to describe the steps your agency has taken to increase the amount of material that is available on your agency websites. In addition

to the questions below, you should also describe any additional steps taken by your agency to make and improve proactive disclosures of information.

1. *Please describe what steps your agency takes to identify, track, and post (a)(2) proactive disclosures.*

The FOIA Officer is working with our Office of Chief Information Officer and our Enterprise Data Governance Council on answering these questions.

2. *Provide examples of any material that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including records that have been requested and released three or more times in accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D). Please include links to these materials as well.*

The Peace Corps FOIA Office posts its annual FOIA log on its FOIA Library:

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/foia/#library>

The Peace Corps webmaster posts country impact studies, policies, reports and statistical information on our Open Government page when an office or department requests a record be posted for public access. An online visitor can organize these into categories based on Report Type, Report Topic, Year, and Countries. The Peace Corps website also makes thousands of pages of general material accessible through the search tool located at the top right of every webpage. The online visitor must enter a key word or term for a query result.

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/reports/>

3. *Does your agency disseminate common types of material outside of FOIA, including in online databases where the public may access them? If yes, please provide examples and, if applicable, statutory authority.*

Please see the response provided above. The FOIA Office does have access to details to answer question regarding statutory authority concerning another federal program.

4. *Beyond posting new material, is your agency taking steps to make the posted information more useful to the public, especially to the community of individuals who regularly access your agency's website?*

Yes.

5. *If yes, please provide examples of such improvements. In particular, please describe steps your agency is taking to post information in open, machine-readable, and machine-actionable formats, to the extent feasible. If not posting in open formats, please explain why and note any challenges.*

The Peace Corps posts its statistical information, country impact studies, survey summaries, policies, and reports on its Open Government page. The information is machine-readable when possible (XML or CSV files). This is led by the agency's Chief Data Officer. The Records Management Officer also gives guidance on machine-readable format in the annual file plan training and written policy. Online material is made available in a timely manner. The Open Government pages are separate from the agency's general website search that is available to the public.

<https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/open-government/>

The Office of the Inspector General posts its reports on a separate webpage:

[https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/inspector-general/reports/?\\_ga=2.147505343.92273694.1586781029-1246879747.1577728713](https://www.peacecorps.gov/about/inspector-general/reports/?_ga=2.147505343.92273694.1586781029-1246879747.1577728713)

6. *Does your proactive disclosure process or system involve any collaboration with agency staff outside the FOIA office? If so, describe this interaction.*

The FOIA Office coordinates with the Office of General Counsel and the Office of External Affairs to provide reviews of some of the agency records considered for proactive disclosure.

Optional -- Please describe:

- *Best practices used to improve proactive disclosures*
- *Any challenges your agency faces in this area*

The Peace Corps is very proactive in routinely posting agency record releases, as seen when searching the website for a topic of interest.

#### **Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology**

A key component of FOIA administration is using technology to make information more accessible. In addition to using the internet to make proactive disclosures, agencies should also be exploring ways to utilize technology in responding to requests.

Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is utilizing technology to improve its FOIA administration and the public's access to information. You should also include any additional information that describes your agency's efforts in this area.

1. *Has your agency reviewed its FOIA-related technological capabilities to identify resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands?*

Yes.

2. *Please briefly describe any new types of technology your agency began using during the reporting period to support your FOIA program.*

We are working on adding an e-discovery tool to our FOIA record search process.

3. *OIP issued guidance in 2017 encouraging agencies to regularly review their FOIA websites to ensure that they contain essential resources, and are informative and user-friendly. Has your agency reviewed its FOIA website(s) during the reporting period to ensure it addresses the elements noted in the guidance?*

We have reviewed [OIP's 2017 guidance for agency FOIA websites](#) and the Peace Corps FOIA website during this reporting period. We will be adding the types of records maintained by the agency, the FOIA exemptions, the three statutory exclusions, and "an index of the agency's major information systems and a description of major information and record locator systems maintained by the agency."

4. *Did all four of your agency's quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2021 appear on your agency's website and on FOIA.gov?*

No.

5. *If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports, with information appearing on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2022.*

We are working with a component office to have this finalized by February 2022.

6. *The FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 requires all agencies to post the raw statistical data used to compile their Annual FOIA Reports. Please provide the link to this posting for your agency's Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report and, if available, for your agency's Fiscal Year 2021 Annual FOIA Report.*

Fiscal Year 2020:

[https://files.peacecorps.gov/documents/open-governement/Peace\\_Corps\\_Raw\\_Data\\_FY\\_2020\\_Annual\\_FOIA\\_Report.csv](https://files.peacecorps.gov/documents/open-governement/Peace_Corps_Raw_Data_FY_2020_Annual_FOIA_Report.csv)

7. *Optional -- Please describe:*

- *Best practices used in greater utilizing technology*
- *Any challenges your agency faces in this area*

The FOIA Office continues to use the online case management system, FOIAXpress, in place since 2018. The online FOIA case management system is linked to our FOIA request portal, Public Access Link (PAL). All computer user profiles are set up to restrict users from saving or storing files on their local C Drive. All file storage services are directed to secure network file servers. The Peace Corps network file servers have redundancy built in to ensure data integrity and availability. Peace Corps Records Management email policy fully enforces the email record retention, to include the use of Capstone emails, based on the National Archives Records Administration's General Records Schedule 6.1, Email Managed under a Capstone Approach (<https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/grs/grs06-1.pdf>). Capstone requires government email accounts to be categorized for retention or disposal based on the title or position of the email sender. The Peace Corps utilizes a preservation-in-place method of email record retention; Capstone officials cannot delete email records. Email accounts designated as Capstone are permanent records to be transferred 15 years after separating from the agency. All non-Capstone staff emails are treated as temporary records and destroyed seven years after separating from the agency. Other key technical best practice is use of the internal FOIA and Privacy Act Resources pages for agency-wide use, and setting up online training modules for all staff members through our Office of Staff Learning and Development. The Peace Corps continues to update its electronic Records Management program this past year in support of OMB Memo M-19-21, "Transition to Electronic Records," which is essential for a healthy FOIA program. Challenges for the FOIA program include the low number of staff members who fulfill both FOIA and Privacy Act Programs.

**Section V: Steps Taken to Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests and Reducing Backlogs**

The Department of Justice has emphasized the importance of improving timeliness in responding to requests. This section of your Chief FOIA Officer Report addresses both time limits and backlog reduction. Backlog reduction is measured both in terms of numbers of backlogged requests or appeals and by looking at whether agencies closed their ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations.

For the figures required in this Section, please use the numbers contained in the specified sections of your agency's FY 2020 and 2021 Annual FOIA Reports.

## **A. Simple Track**

Section VII.A of your agency's Annual FOIA Report, entitled "FOIA Requests – Response Time for All Processed Requests," includes figures that show your agency's average response times for processed requests. For agencies utilizing a multi-track system to process requests, there is a category for "simple" requests, which are those requests that are placed in the agency's fastest (non-expedited) track, based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.

1. *Does your agency utilize a separate track for simple requests?*

Yes.

2. *If your agency uses a separate track for simple requests, according to Annual FOIA Report section VII.A, was the agency overall average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer in Fiscal Year 2021?*

No.

3. *Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2021 that were placed in your simple track. Please use the following calculation based on the data from your Annual FOIA Report: (processed simple requests from Section VII.C.1) divided by (requests processed from Section V.A.) x 100.*

92.42%.

4. *If your agency does not track simple requests separately, was the average number of days to process all non-expedited requests twenty working days or fewer?*

N/A.

## **B. Backlogs**

When answering these questions, please refer to you Fiscal Year 2021 Annual FOIA Report, Sections XII.D-E, which compare the numbers of requests and appeals received, processed, and backlogged between Fiscal Years 2020 and 2021.

## **BACKLOGGED REQUESTS**

5. *If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2021, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.2, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2020?*

The backlog decreased from 79 cases to 64 cases.

6. *If not, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.1, did your agency process more requests during Fiscal Year 2021 than it did during Fiscal Year 2020?*

N/A.

7. *If your agency's request backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2021, please explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able to reduce its backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:*

- *An increase in the number of incoming requests.*
- *A loss of staff.*
- *An increase in the complexity of the requests received. If possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase.*
- *Impact of COVID-19 and workplace and safety precautions.*
- *Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible.*

N/A. Our overall backlog was reduced in Fiscal Year 2021.

8. *If you had a request backlog please report the percentage of requests that make up the backlog out of the total number of requests received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2021. Please use the following calculation based on data from your Annual FOIA Report: (backlogged requests from Section XII.A) divided by (requests received from Section V.A) x 100. This number can be greater than 100%. If your agency has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

57%.

## **BACKLOGGED APPEALS**

9. *If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2021, according to Section XII.E.2 of the Annual FOIA Report, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2020?*

We did not have an appeal backlog at the close of Fiscal Year 2021.

10. *If not, according to section XII.E.1 of the Annual FOIA Report, did your agency process more appeals during Fiscal Year 2021 than it did during Fiscal Year 2020?*

N/A.

11. *If your agency's appeal backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2021, please explain why and describe the causes that contributed to your agency not being able to reduce its backlog. When doing so, please also indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:*

- *An increase in the number of incoming appeals.*
- *A loss of staff.*
- *An increase in the complexity of the requests received. If possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase.*
- *Impact of COVID-19 and workplace and safety precautions.*
- *Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible.*

We did not have an appeal backlog at the close of Fiscal Year 2021.

12. *If you had an appeal backlog please report the percentage of appeals that make up the backlog out of the total number of appeals received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2021. Please use the following calculation based on data from your Annual FOIA Report: (backlogged appeals from Section XII.A) divided by (appeals received from Section VI.A) x 100. This number can be greater than 100%. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2021 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

N/A.

### **C. Backlog Reduction Plans**

13. *In the 2021 guidelines for Chief FOIA Officer Reports, any agency with a backlog of over 1000 requests in Fiscal Year 2020 was asked to provide a plan for achieving backlog reduction in the year ahead. Did your agency implement a backlog reduction plan last year? If so, describe your agency's efforts in implementing this plan and note if your agency was able to achieve backlog reduction in Fiscal Year 2021?*

N/A. We did not have a backlog of more than 1,000 requests.



14. *If your agency had a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in Fiscal Year 2021, please explain your agency's plan to reduce this backlog during Fiscal Year 2022. In particular, please also detail how your agency developed and plans to execute your backlog reduction plans.*

N/A. We did not have a backlog of more than 1,000 requests.

#### **D. Status of Oldest Requests, Appeals, and Consultations**

Section VII.E, entitled "Pending Requests – Ten Oldest Pending Requests," Section VI.C.(5), entitled "Ten Oldest Pending Administrative Appeals," and Section XII.C., entitled "Consultations on FOIA Requests – Ten Oldest Consultations Received from Other Agencies and Pending at Your Agency," show the ten oldest pending requests, appeals, and consultations. You should refer to these numbers from your Annual FOIA Reports for both Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2021 when completing this section of your Chief FOIA Officer Report.

#### **OLDEST REQUESTS**

15. *In Fiscal Year 2021, did your agency close the ten oldest pending perfected requests that were reported in Section VII.E. of your Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report?*

No, we did not close all of the ten oldest perfected requests reported for that year.

16. *If no, please provide the number of these requests your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.E of your Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.*

The Peace Corps closed three of the top ten oldest pending perfected requests.

17. *Beyond work on the ten oldest requests, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending requests.*

We have reviewed the more complex cases with a larger volume of pages to ensure the record content is responsive to the request. We continue to dialogue with some requestors to seek clarification on broad requests, and to reduce the scope, if possible.

## **TEN OLDEST APPEALS**

18. *In Fiscal Year 2021, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in Section VI.C.5 of your Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report?*

N/A.

19. *If no, please provide the number of these appeals your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VI.C.(5) of your Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.*

N/A.

20. *Beyond work on the ten oldest appeals, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending appeals.*

N/A.

## **TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS**

21. *In Fiscal Year 2021, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report?*

N/A.

22. *If no, please provide the number of these consultations your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2020 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.*

N/A.

## **E. Additional Information on Ten Oldest Requests, Appeals, and Consultations & Plans**

23. *Briefly explain any obstacles your agency faced in closing its ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations from Fiscal Year 2020.*

The top ten oldest open requests have voluminous responsive records, require the continued identification and removal of duplicate email chain records. Some of the top ten oldest cases listed in Fiscal year 2020 where listed in this top rank for the first time.

24. *If your agency was unable to close any of its ten oldest requests because you were waiting to hear back from other agencies on consultations you sent, please provide the date the request was initially received by your agency, the date when your agency sent the consultation, and the date when you last contacted the agency where the consultation was pending.*

N/A.

25. *If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those “ten oldest” requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2022.*

We are tracking the progress of each of the ten oldest requests in an effort to close these cases, with bimonthly status reports to the FOIA Officer and to the Chief FOIA Officer.

## **F. Success Stories**

*Out of all the activities undertaken by your agency since March 2021 to increase transparency and improve FOIA administration, please briefly describe here at least one success story that you would like to highlight as emblematic of your agency’s efforts. The success story can come from any one of the five key areas, but should not be something that you have reported in a prior year. As noted above, these agency success stories will be highlighted during Sunshine Week by OIP. To facilitate this process, all agencies should use bullets to describe their success story and limit their text to a half page. The success story is designed to be a quick summary of key achievements. A complete description of all your efforts will be contained in the body of your Chief FOIA Officer Report.*

The FOIA Office provided support to the Sexual Assault Risk, Reduction, and Response Program (SARRRP) by reviewing over 200 pages of Sexual Assault Advisory Council records as part of a proactive disclosure in an effort to provide agency transparency on this subject.