

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Enacted in 1966, and taking effect on July 5, 1967, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) provides that any person has a right, enforceable in court, to obtain access to federal agency records, except to the extent that such records (or portions of them) are protected from public disclosure by one of nine exemptions or by one of three special law enforcement record exclusions. A FOIA request can be made for any agency record. Before sending a request to a federal agency, you should determine which agency is likely to have the records you are seeking. Each agency's website will contain information about the type of records that agency maintains.

The FOIA is a law that gives you the right to access information from the federal government. It is often described as the law that keeps citizens in the know about their government. Under the FOIA, agencies must disclose any information that is requested – unless that information is protected from public disclosure. The FOIA also requires that agencies automatically disclose certain information, including frequently requested records. As Congress, the President, and the Supreme Court have all recognized, the FOIA is a vital part of our democracy.

It is the Executive Branch, led by the President, that is responsible for the administration of the FOIA across the government. The Department of Justice's Office of Information Policy oversees agency compliance with these directives and encourages all agencies to fully comply with both the letter and the spirit of the FOIA.

President Obama and Attorney General Holder have directed agencies to apply a presumption of openness in responding to FOIA requests. The Attorney General specifically called on agencies not to withhold information just because it technically falls within an exemption and he also encouraged agencies to make discretionary releases of records. The Attorney General emphasized that the President has called on agencies to work in a spirit of cooperation with FOIA requesters. The Office of Information Policy at the Department of Justice oversees agency compliance with these directives and encourages all agencies to fully comply with both the letter and the spirit of the FOIA. President Obama has pledged to make this the most transparent Administration in history.

To obtain a FOIA application click here: [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) Requests](#)
For more information visit <http://www.foia.gov>