

§ 304.2

for efficient and appropriate compliance with the FOIA and these implementing regulations. The General Counsel has designated the agency's Deputy General Counsel as its FOIA Public Liaison.

§ 304.2 Public reading room.

(a) ACUS maintains a public reading room that affords access to the records that the FOIA requires it to make regularly available for public inspection and copying even in the absence of a FOIA request, including a current subject-matter index of its reading room records that will be updated quarterly with respect to newly included records.

(b) ACUS also makes all reading room records that have been created by the agency regularly available to the public electronically on its Web site (<http://www.acus.gov>).

§ 304.3 Requirements for making requests.

(a) *How made and addressed.* You may make a request for records by sending an e-mail message addressed to info@acus.gov, or by using the FOIA Request form on the ACUS Web site at <http://www.acus.gov/foia>. You may also send a written request letter to the agency either by mail addressed to FOIA Public Liaison, Administrative Conference of the United States, 1120 20th Street, NW., South Lobby, Suite 706, Washington, DC 20036, or by fax delivery to (202) 386-7190. For the quickest possible handling of a mail request, you should mark both your request letter and the envelope "Freedom of Information Act Request." (You may find the agency's "Freedom of Information Act Reference Guide"—which is available on its Web site and in paper form—helpful in making your request.) If you are making a request for records about yourself, see § 304.21(d) for additional requirements. If you are making a request for records about another individual, then either a written authorization signed by that individual permitting disclosure of those records to you or proof that that individual is deceased (for example, a copy of a death certificate or an obituary notice) will help the processing of your request. Your request will be considered received as of the date upon

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which it is logged in as received by the agency's FOIA Public Liaison.

(b) *Description of records sought.* You must describe the records that you seek in enough detail to enable agency personnel to locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. Whenever possible, your request should include specific information about each record sought, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, and subject matter of the record. If known, you should include any file designations or similar descriptions for the records that you want. As a general rule, the more specific you are about the records or type of records that you want, the more likely that the agency will be able to locate those records in response to your request. If the agency determines that your request does not reasonably describe records, then it will tell you either what additional information is needed or why your request is otherwise insufficient. It also will give you an opportunity to discuss your request by telephone so that you may modify it to meet the requirements of this section. Additionally, if your request does not reasonably describe the records you seek, the agency's response to it may be delayed as an initial matter.

(c) *Agreement to pay fees.* When you make a FOIA request, it will be considered to be an agreement by you to pay all applicable fees charged under § 304.9, up to \$50.00, unless you specifically request a waiver of fees. The agency ordinarily will confirm this agreement in an acknowledgment letter. When making a request, you may specify a willingness to pay a greater or lesser amount. Your agreement will not prejudice your ability to seek a waiver or reduction of any applicable fee at a later time.

§ 304.4 Responsibility for responding to requests.

(a) *In general.* The agency will be responsible for responding to a request in all respects, except in the case of a referral to another agency as is described in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section. In determining which records are responsive to a request, the agency ordinarily will include only records in its possession and control as of the date upon which it begins its search for

them. If any other date is used, the agency will inform the requester of that date.

(b) *Consultations and referrals.* When the agency receives a request for a record in its possession and control, it will determine whether another agency of the Federal Government is better able to determine whether the record is exempt from disclosure under the FOIA and, if so, whether it should be disclosed as a matter of administrative discretion. If the agency determines that it is best able to process the record in response to the request, then it will do so. If the agency determines that it is not best able to process the record, then it will either:

(1) Respond to the request regarding that record, after consulting with the agency that is best able to determine whether to disclose it and with any other agency that has a substantial interest in it; or

(2) Refer the responsibility for responding to the request regarding that record to another agency that originated the record (but only if that agency is subject to the FOIA). Ordinarily, the agency that originated a record will be presumed to be best able to determine whether to disclose it.

(c) *Notice of referral.* When the agency refers all or any part of the responsibility for responding to a request to another agency, it ordinarily will notify the requester of the referral and inform the requester of the name of the agency to which the request has been referred and of the part of the request that has been referred.

(d) *Timing of responses to consultations and referrals.* All consultations and referrals will be handled according to the date upon which the FOIA request initially was received by the first agency, and not any later date.

(e) *Agreements regarding consultations and referrals.* The agency may make agreements with other agencies designed to eliminate the need for consultations or referrals regarding particular types of records.

§ 304.5 Timing of responses to requests.

(a) *In general.* The agency ordinarily will respond to requests according to their order of receipt.

(b) *Multi-track processing.* The agency may use two or more processing tracks by distinguishing between simple and more complex requests based on the amount of work and/or time needed to process the request, including according to the number of pages involved. If it does so, then it will advise requesters in its slower track(s) of the limits of its faster track(s) and may provide requesters in its slower track(s) with an opportunity to limit the scope of their requests in order to qualify for faster processing within the specified limits of its faster track(s). The agency will contact the requester by telephone, e-mail or letter, whichever is most efficient, in each case.

(c) *Unusual circumstances.* (1) Where the statutory time limits for processing a request cannot be met because of "unusual circumstances," as defined in the FOIA, and the agency determines to extend the time limits on that basis, it will as soon as practicable notify the requester in writing of the unusual circumstances and of the date by which processing of the request can be expected to be completed. Where the extension is for more than ten business days, it will provide the requester with an opportunity either to modify the request so that it may be processed within the time limits or to arrange an alternative time period processing the request or a modified request.

(2) Where the agency reasonably believes that multiple requests submitted by a requester, or by a group of requesters acting in concert, constitute a single request that would otherwise involve unusual circumstances, and the requests involve clearly related matters, they may be aggregated. Multiple requests involving unrelated matters will not be aggregated.

(d) *Expedited processing.* (1) Requests and appeals will be taken out of order and given expedited treatment whenever it is determined that they involve:

(i) Circumstances in which the lack of expedited treatment could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual;

(ii) An urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged federal