



Seton Hall University

From the Selected Works of Lisa DeLuca, MLIS, MPA

October 4, 2023

Using FOIA Libraries to Your Advantage

Lisa DeLuca, *Seton Hall University*



Available at: https://works.bepress.com/lisa_deluca/S8/

National FOI Summit '23

OCT. 3-5 | ONLINE

Using FOIA Libraries to your advantage

Lisa DeLuca, Assistant Dean/Associate Professor
Seton Hall University Libraries, South Orange, NJ

<https://library.shu.edu/FOIA-Libraries>

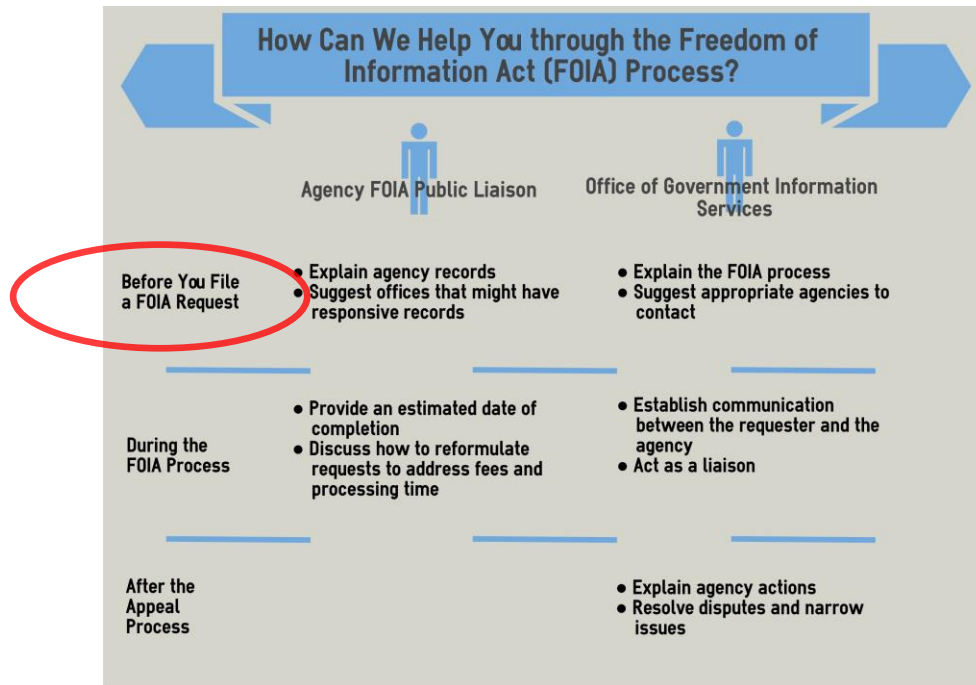
October 4, 2023



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

BEFORE you file a FOIA Request



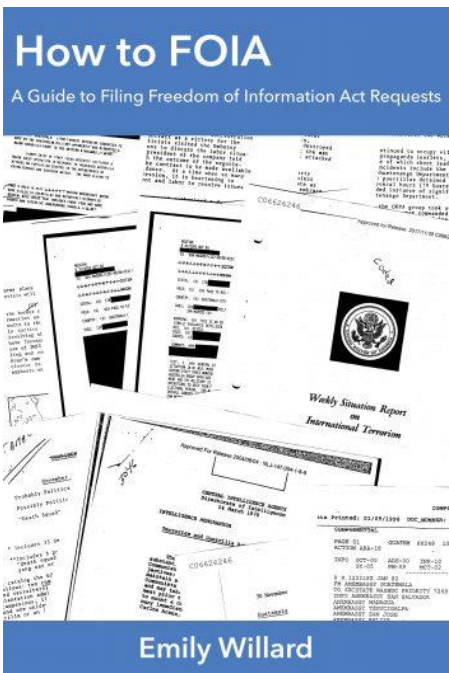
Need centralized information about preparing/researching PRIOR to submitting a FOIA request

FOIA requesters can learn more about existing documents in FOIA Libraries

Use academic librarians to share primary source documents across new channels

Access ideas could be transferred to Open Public Records Act (OPRA), Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

Source: FOIA Improvement: Improving Agency FOIA Regulations available at <https://foia.blogs.archives.gov/2017/01/04/foia-improvement-improving-agency-foia-regulations/>



FOIA Research Resources

[The Art of Access: Strategies for Acquiring Public Records](#) (2019) - David Cuillier & Charles N. Davis

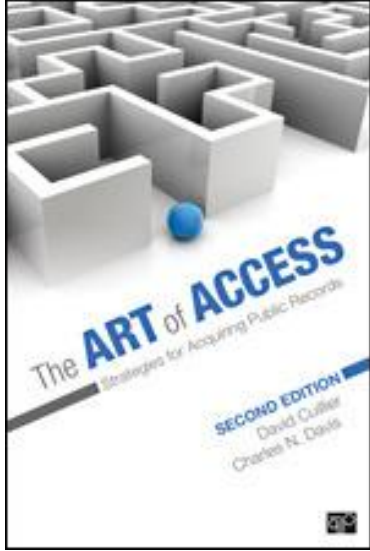
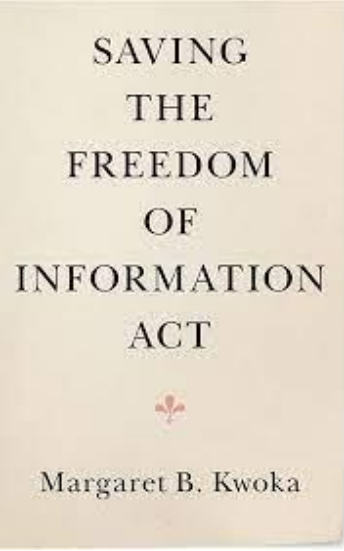
[Saving the Freedom of Information Act](#) (2021) Margaret B. Kwoka

[Open Source - How to FOIA: A guide to filing Freedom of Information Act requests](#) (2019) - Emily Willard

[Video: Everything you need to know about FOIA | How to be a journalist:](#) (2017) Washington Post

[Video: #FOISummit22: FOI Training - Stick to the Basics!](#) (2022) David Cuillier

[James R. Jacobs, Stanford University](#) – since 2004 co-created [freegovinfo.info](#), [gov doc initiatives](#) LOCKSS-USDOCS, [PEGI Project](#), [GODORT](#), [FDLP](#), [GPO initiatives](#)



More FOIA Research Resources

[OGIS: Tips for Requesters – Technical Committee of Chief FOIA Officers Council – 9/29/2021](#)

[NARA: How to Search for Records for a FOIA Request – 3/2021](#)

[MuckRock: FOIA 101: Tips and Tricks to Make You a Transparency Master](#)

[MuckRock News: FOIA Log Explorer](#)

[MuckRock News: After a decade, FOIAonline is shutting down. What's next for FOIA requestors? – 9/26/2023](#)

“A new tool, referred to as a “FOIA Wizard,” is being developed by the Department of Justice’s Office of Information Policy”



• Type: Cabinet Level Agencies
 • Agency: Cabinet Level Agencies
 Large Independent Agencies (1000 or more employees)
 Medium Independent Agencies (100-999 employees)
 Small Independent Agencies (less than 100 employees)

Organization Types	
Federal Government -	201477
Organizations	
National Oceanic...	76692
U.S. Census...	42943
Department of the Interior -	33022
National...	21997
U.S. Environmental...	5761
Department of Energy -	3112
Department of Agriculture -	2463
U.S. Department of...	2201
Department of Commerce -	1612
Department of Justice -	1421
Show More Organizations	



Your first question: Do you have the correct agency?

Federal Agencies– text and data sources

- [A-Z index - usa.gov](#)
- [Other Gov't Research Resources – Dept of Labor](#)
- [Research by Federal Government Organization – NARA](#)
- [Society for History in the Federal Government](#)
- [Open Government - Data - Federal Agencies List](#)
- [Data.gov –Federal Government -> Organizations, Publishers, Bureaus](#)

What can these different systems tell you?

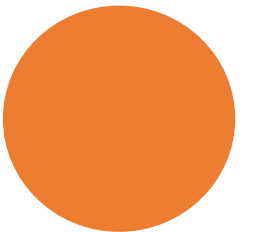
What lives in FOIA Libraries

1. Final opinions and orders
2. Statements of agency policy not published in the Federal Register
3. Administrative staff manuals and instructions
4. Proactive Disclosures (Affirmative Disclosures)
5. Records requested 3 or more times



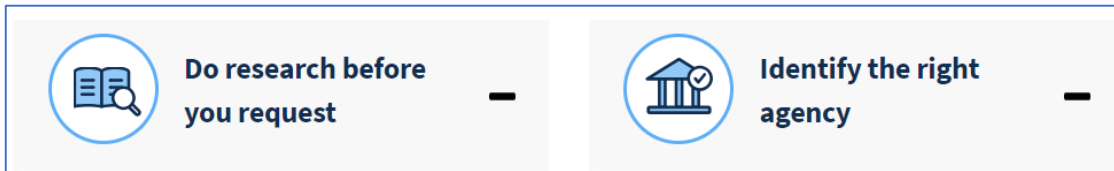
Source: https://foia.wiki/wiki/Affirmative_Disclosures

Also: Agency Reports, Agency FOIA Reports, datasets in many formats including GIS, historical reports, links to other agency information portal, FOIA Logs, documents/files with varying amounts of redaction



FOIA.gov

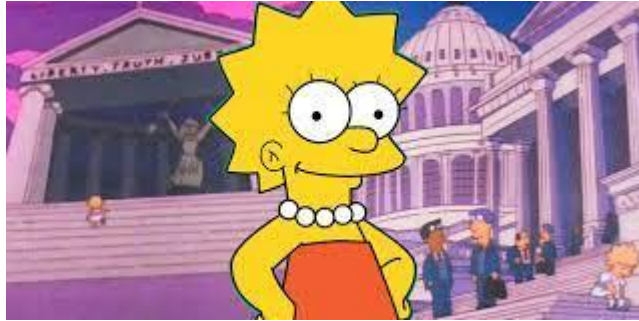
FOIAonline.gov



- Many clicks to get to FOIA Library
- If you want to browse FOIA Libraries, you have to look up each agency
- Excel list allows for quicker browsing
- Access to FOIA Libraries may reduce FOIA requests or allow requesters to create better FOIA requests

The screenshot shows the FOIAonline.gov website interface. At the top, there is a dark blue header with the FOIAonline logo, a search bar, and links for "Log In" and "Create Account". Below the header is a "FOIAonline Partner Status" section with two columns: "Active" (green background) and "No Longer Active" (red background). The "Active" column lists agencies with green checkmarks, and the "No Longer Active" column lists agencies with red X marks. Below this is an "Advanced Search" section with a "Search Criteria" dropdown menu. The "Look Up By" dropdown is open, showing options like "Agency", "Appeal Disposition", and "Closed Date".

Active	No Longer Active
Submit request via FOIAonline.gov	Submit request via FOIA.gov
<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board✓ Defense Logistics Agency✓ Department of Defense Office of Inspector General✓ Department of the Navy✓ Environmental Protection Agency✓ Federal Communications Commission✓ Federal Labor Relations Authority✓ General Services Administration✓ Merit Systems Protection Board✓ National Labor Relations Board (NLRB)✓ Surface Transportation Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✗ DOJ - U.S. Parole Commission✗ National Archives and Records Administration✗ Nuclear Regulatory Commission✗ Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation✗ Small Business Administration✗ Social Security Administration✗ U.S. Customs and Border Protection✗ U.S. Department of Commerce✗ U.S. Department of the Interior



Some good examples

<https://home.treasury.gov/footer/freedom-of-information-act/electronic-reading-room>

<https://www.fda.gov/regulatoryinformation/foi/electronicreadingroom/default.htm>

<https://www.fda.gov/regulatory-information/freedom-information/electronic-reading-room>

<https://www.federalreserve.gov/foia/readingrooms.htm>

<https://www.fhfa.gov/AboutUs/FOIAPrivacy/Pages/Reading-Room.aspx>

<https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/foia/foia-reading-room.htm>



FOIA Library

[NPS Policy, Directives, and Administrative Manuals](#)

[National Park Service Unit List](#)

[Department of the Interior Final Opinions and Adjudications](#)

[Frequently Requested Documents](#)

[History e-Library](#). Contains thousands of electronic publications covering t

[Integrated Resource Management Applications \(IRMA\)](#). This portal p
partners and the public.

[Park Planning Documents](#). Current and completed NPS planning projects

[Inventory of the Records of the National Park Service Record Group](#)

[Technical Information Center \(TIC\)](#). The oldest and largest information s
NPS records that include drawings, specifications, scientific, and technical repor

[National Park Service Record Retention Schedules](#)

Frequent Reports

FOIA Request Logs

FOIA Logs are fiscal reports of FOIA requests submitted to the National Park Service. Each log is a compiled
the respective year. To access, click on the desired year to download. The asterisk (*) indicates a change in t
format however did not affect the data collection.

[2015](#), [2016](#), [2017](#), [2018](#), [2019](#), [2020 Part 1*](#), [2020 Part 2*](#), [2021](#), [2022](#), [2023](#)

NPS Mortality Data

The Public Risk Management Program (PRMP) Mortality data is a compiled MS Excel file from CY2007 to C
at the time of the report creation.

[CY2007 to CY2023 with Expanded Environmental Causes \(Released August 2023\)](#)

Frequently Requested by NPS Location

The information below is frequently requested records provided by the respective NPS park or office. The do
In such instances, the download time will vary based on your internet speed.

National Park Service - General Request to Washington Office

- [Trump Organization Correspondence](#) (Added July 29, 2016)



FOOTER

Freedom of Information Act

[How To Write a FOIA Request](#)[Submit a Request](#)[Check the Status of a Request](#)[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

Electronic Reading Room

This Electronic Reading Room contains only those materials specifically required to be maintained under subsection (a)(2) of the FOIA, as amended. These are:

- A. Final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of cases;
- B. Those statements of policy and interpretations which have been adopted by the Departmental Offices and are not published in the Federal Register;
- C. Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public;
- D. Copies of all records, regardless of form or format, which have been released to any person under the FOIA and which, because of the nature of their subject

[SUBMIT A REQUEST](#)[CHECK THE STATUS OF AN ONLINE REQUEST](#)[Frequently Requested FOIA-processed Records](#)[How to Write a FOIA or Privacy Act Request](#)[FOIA Frequently Asked Questions](#)[FOIA Requester Service Centers and FOIA Public Liaison](#)[FOIA Reports](#)

Electronic Read Room

Calendars and Travel of the Secretary

OFAC Frequently Requested

Other Frequently Requested FOIA Records

Enron Frequently Requested FOIA Processed Records

FOIA Contacts

Privacy Act

Prohibited Personnel Practices and Whistleblower Protection

No Fear Act


FINAL OPINIONS

- Office of Foreign Assets Control SDN List
- [OFAC Legal Documents](#)

STATEMENTS OF POLICY AND INTERPRETATION

- Treasury Orders & Directives
- Treasury Acquisition Bulletins
- Treasury Equal Employment Opportunity and Civil Rights Policies
- Statement of Policy on Accepting Accounts From Foreign Governments 
- OIG Equal Employment Opportunity and Diversity Policy
- OIG Policies
- OFAC Sanctions Programs
- OFAC Civil Penalties and Enforcement Information

STAFF MANUALS AND INSTRUCTIONS

- Freedom of Information Act Handbook 
- Inspector General Deskbook

FREQUENTLY REQUESTED FOIA-PROCESSED RECORDS

- Enron Related Documents
- OFAC FOIA Documents
- Treasury Secretary's Calendar
- Other Records

QUICK LINKS

[Contacts](#)

[Other Agencies' FOIA Contacts](#)

[Treasury Bureaus FOIA Contacts](#)

[Inspector General Reports](#)

Electronic Reading Room

[Share](#) [Tweet](#) [LinkedIn](#) [Email](#) [Print](#)

This index contains categories of frequently requested FDA documents. Before submitting an FOIA request, please check to see if the records you seek are already available on an [FDA Web site](#). You can use this index to locate a specific category of documents. In addition, you can check specific FOI sites which have been established by the following agency offices:

CATEGORIES OF DOCUMENTS

Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)

- [Drugs](#)
- [CDER FOIA Electronic Reading Room](#)
- [Drug Approvals and Databases](#)
- [Clinical Investigator Inspection List \(CIIL\) Database Codes](#)

Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER)

- [Biologics Electronic Reading Room \(eFOI\)](#)

Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM)

- [CVM FOIA Electronic Reading Room](#)
- [Animal & Veterinary](#)
- [FOIA Drug Summaries](#)

Division of Dockets Management Branch (DMB)

- [Division of Dockets Management](#)
- [Advisory Committees](#)

Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA)

- [ORA FOIA Electronic Reading Room](#)
- [Guide to International Inspection and Travel](#)
- [Inspection Guides](#)
- [Enforcement Reports](#)
- [Application Integrity Policy](#)
- [FDA Public Affairs Specialists](#)
- [Import Alerts](#)
- [OASIS Report For Import Refusals](#)
- [Inspection Technical Guides](#)
- [Compliance Manuals](#)
- [Clinical Investigators - Disqualification Proceedings](#)
- [Inspections Database](#)
- [FDA Data Dashboard](#)

Center for Tobacco Products

- [CTP FOIA Electronic Reading Room](#)

Agency Manuals

- [Manual of Compliance Policy Guides](#)
- [Compliance Programs](#)
- [Field Science - Laboratory Manual](#)
- [Investigations Operations Manual](#)
- [Regulatory Procedures Manual](#)
- [Staff Manual Guides](#)

Frequently Requested Regulatory Records

- [Notice of Opportunity for Hearing \(NOOH\)](#)
- [FDA Memoranda of Understanding](#)



[Home](#)

Reading Room

This page shows Department of Transportation content pertaining to a specific tag. If you cannot find what you are looking for, please contact us in the top right of our website.

[FOIA Electronic Reading Room - Category Three](#)

A collection of documents and links to manuals and instructions to Department of Transportation (DOT)

[FOIA Electronic Reading Room - Category Two](#)

This section of the OST Electronic Reading Room includes links to policy decisions and interpretations

[FOIA Log Policy \(2008\)](#)

The purpose of this memorandum is to

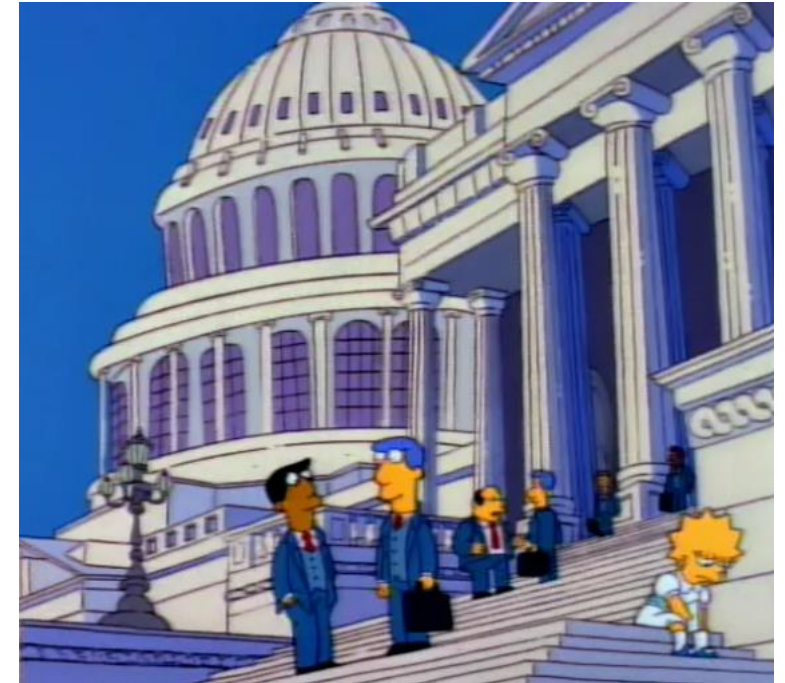
[Wage Garnishment Decision March 2010](#)

Redacted Wage Garnishment Decision from March 2010.

[FOIA Electronic Reading Room - Category One](#)

Final Opinions/Orders in Adjudicated Cases Aviation, Hazardous Materials, and Motor Carrier-Related Decisions Decisions by the Department of Transportation
Aviation and International Affairs [1996-present]

These decisions are located in Regulations.gov unless otherwise...



CPSC FOIA Log - FY23/Q1



United States
Consumer Product Safety Commission

23-F-00030	within the CPSC and also the ASTM. Please see attached. 1. Any and all "In-depth Investigation" ("IDI") reports or	FOIA	Dickie, McCamey & Chilcote, P.C.	10/24/2022-	-	-
23-F-00090	many other consumer items. We are submitting a FOIA request for cumulative and recent data for recalled "Fisher-Price 4-in-1 Rock 'n Glide	FOIA	Kids In Danger	11/23/2022	12/08/2022	Denied in Full
23-F-00016	treated/handled. We are requesting certified records regarding the Fisher Price Rock & Play Sleeper which was originally produced in 2009 and recalled in 2019. This request should include, but not be limited to, investigation reports, correspondence/communications with manufacturer (Fisher Price/Mattel), recalls, notes, consumer complaints etc. (Date Range for Record Search: From 01/01/2009 To 10/11/2022)	FOIA	Marsh, Rickard & Bryan	10/11/2022	11/15/2022	Denied in Full
23-F-00091	Soothers and 2-in-1 Soothe 'n Play Gliders" by Fisher-Price, on June 03, 2021. The recall number for the product is 21-147. Please send all monthly corrective action tracking forms to date on this product. (Date Range for Record Search: From 06/03/2021 to 11/23/2022) (Date Range for Record Search: From 06/03/2021 To 11/23/2022) We are submitting a FOIA request for	FOIA	Kids In Danger	11/23/2022	02/03/2023	Granted in Full

Environmental Laws and Regulations

- [Clean Air Act ↗](#)
- [Clean Water Act ↗](#)
- [Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Act of 1980 \(CERCLA\) ↗](#)
- [Endangered Species Act ↗](#)
- [Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act \(FIFRA\)](#)
- [National Environmental Policy Act \(NEPA\)](#)
- [CEQ Regulations](#)
- [Solid Waste Disposal Act \(SWDCA\)](#)
- [Toxic Substances Control Act \(TSCA\)](#)

FEDERAL INSECTICIDE, FUNGICIDE, AND RODENTICIDE ACT

[As Amended Through P.L. 110–246, Effective May 22, 2008]

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COUNCIL ON ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION WITH TRIBAL NATIONS April 26, 2021

Purpose: The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Action Plan for Consultation and Coordination with American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal Nations (Plan) serves to express CEQ’s commitment to meaningful and sustained consultation and coordination with Tribal Nations and establish principles, goals, and actions to guide CEQ consultation and coordination with Tribal Nations.

Background: The United States government has a unique relationship with federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribes (Tribes) as set forth in the Constitution of the United States, treaties, statutes, and court decisions. The Federal Government recognizes the right of self-determination and self-governance for Tribal Nations and the obligation to work with federally recognized Tribes in a Nation-to-Nation relationship.

What else lives in FOIA Libraries



Electronic Reading Room

The USCIS Electronic Reading Room provides access to inform Act (FOIA). We will update the Electronic Reading Room when we proactively identify documents likely requested for release

Related Links:

- [Video: FOIA Online Services](#)
- [Immigration Policy and Procedural Memoranda](#)
- [Immigration and Citizenship Data](#)
- [Department of Homeland Security FOIA](#)
- [AAO Decisions](#)

FOIA Library Collection

DHS maintains FOIA libraries for itself, the Office of the Secretary (including the Military Advisor's Office and the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs), and the following components: CISOMB, DNDO, ESEC, FEMA, MGMT, NPPD, OHA, OGC, OLA, OPA, PLCY, and TSA.

[Return to the Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\) page.](#)

Search Collections

Enter Search Term(s)

Topics: - Any -

Sort by: Newest First

Items per page: -

- Any -
- Academic Engagement
- Border Security
- Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
- Cybersecurity
- Disasters
- Do Business with DHS
- Election Security
- Homeland Security Careers
- Homeland Security Enterprise
- Human Trafficking
- Immigration and Customs Enforcement
- Intelligence and Analysis
- International Engagement
- Law Enforcement
- National Terrorism Advisory System
- Office of the Citizenship and Immigration Services Ombudsman
- Preventing Terrorism
- Privacy

- Publications Library
- Academic Engagement
- Border Security
- Citizenship And Immigration Services Ombudsman
- Citizenship and Immigration Services
- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
- Cybersecurity
- Disasters
- Do Business with DHS
- Election Security
- Homeland Security Careers
- Homeland Security Enterprise
- Human Trafficking
- Immigration and Customs

Available Records

FOIA Library

DHS Open Government Data Sets

Improvement Plan

Management Directives

Procurement Awards & Orders

Weekly Reports

Component Libraries

Component FOIA Logs

DHS Major Information Systems (MIS)

FOIA Library

DHS regularly posts frequently requested and other categories of records that provide transparency into the agency's operations. Before you submit your request, [browse what has already been released on our DHS FOIA Library](#). The DHS Privacy Office FOIA Library has records from most headquarters-level offices, including the Office of the Secretary, and other high-profile releases made by Components.

Search the [DHS FOIA Library](#), [Component FOIA Libraries](#), and [Major Information Systems](#) to learn what records have already been released.

Use the links below to learn more about the agency and our operations:

- [DHS Open Government Data Sets](#)
- [Improvement Plan](#)
- [Management Directives](#)
- [Procurement Awards & Orders](#)
- [Weekly Reports](#)

DHS Open Government Data Sets

DHS Open Government data sets pursuant to the Federal Funding and Transparency Act (FFATA).

[Close all](#) [Open all](#)

Office of Procurement Operations, Grants and Financial Assistance Division FFATA +

FEMA Disaster Grants FFATA +

FEMA Disaster Grants New Jersey FFATA +

FEMA Non Disaster Grants FFATA +



FOIA Library Data: 2019-2023



Three datasets – 2019, 2021, 2023

Also called Electronic Reading Room, Public Reading Room



Supports open government + data plans + citizen engagement, data literacy



Information repositories with 1000's of government files, .xls files saves keystrokes

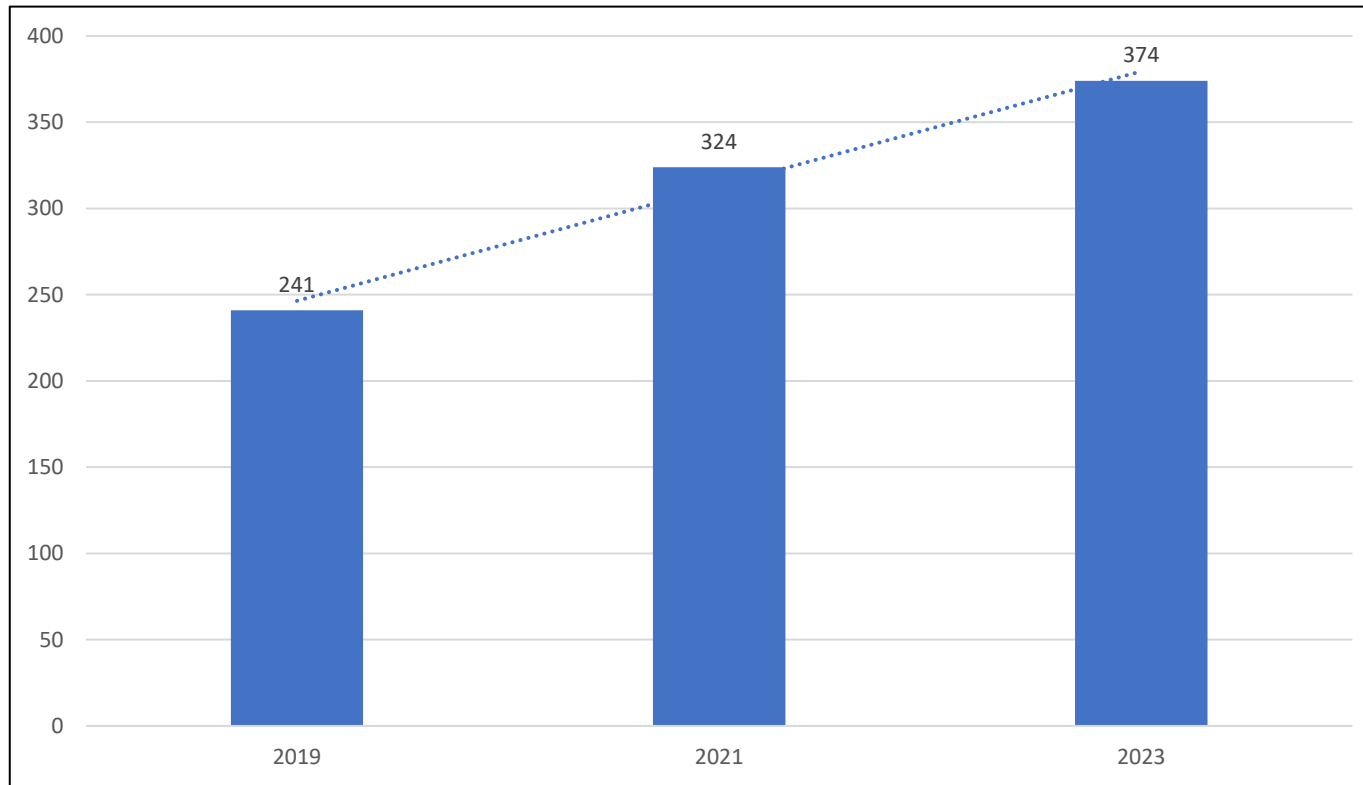


Short/medium term solution for research PRIOR to making a FOIA request



Access ideas could be transferred to Open Public Records Act (OPRA), Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA)

FOIA Library Growth 2019-2023



54% over
5 years

[Source: DeLuca, FOIA Libraries 2023 dataset](#)

Note: Parent federal agencies have multiple links for their agency's FOIA Libraries. Individual agencies also may have multiple links for required and frequently requested FOIA.

Additional Resources



Search “Research Guide” or “LibGuide + topic” for civic engagement, voting, government information



[PolicyMap](#) – free mapping tool that aggregates state, county and city data



[BetaNYC – Civic Engagement Lab](#) + [NYC School of Data](#)



Google Scholar Alerts for tracking coverage areas

Need more FOIA tags + metadata sharing

- Fifth U.S. Open Government National Action Plan - December 2022
- [Federal Data Strategy \(FDS\)](#)
- Strengthening Access to Government Information through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). #FOIA (Public Law 89-487) Enhancement of the user experience on [FOIA.gov](#),
- [Using Metadata in FOIA Documents Posted Online to Lay the Foundation for Building a Government-Wide FOIA Library](#) XLS
- Data.gov implements The OPEN Government Data Act ([Title II of the Foundations for Evidence-Based Policymaking Act of 2018, Public Law 115-435](#)).
- Chief Information Officer's Council - ([OMB M-19-18. Federal Data Strategy - A Framework for Consistency. 6/4/2019.](#))

2.2. Make high-value data and content in at least two existing, major customer-facing systems available through web APIs, apply metadata tagging and publish a plan to transition additional high-value systems

Overall Status: Completed

Source: Digital Government Strategy Milestones (Treasury)
<https://home.treasury.gov/data/digital-government-strategy-milestones>

Are these documents useful for your research?

- Can you now be more specific with some requests?
- Agency background and operations
- Redactions
- Currency
- Do file formats (PDF, XLS, CSV) received match your needs?
- Cross check multiple agencies for information
- Managing record viewers
- Feedback from state information portals



National FOI Summit '23

OCT. 3-5 | ONLINE

Questions? Please reach out:

lisa.deluca@shu.edu

[@ldeluca1101](https://twitter.com/ldeluca1101)

<https://library.shu.edu/FOIA-Libraries>



UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

SETON HALL UNIVERSITY