Department of War

**Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer
Report to the Department of Justice For 2026**

Table of Contents

Summary

The Director of Administration and Management serves as the Department of War (DoW) Chief Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer. The Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency Directorate's FOIA Division (FD), within the Office of the Director of Administration and Management (ODA&M), provides FOIA oversight and compliance guidance to the DoW Components. This structure realigns the responsibilities of the former Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency (PCLT) to ODA&M. The FD ensures DoW Components fully comply with the FOIA and Privacy Act (PA), relevant case law, and DoW policy. This report details the DoW's accomplishments from March 2025 through March 2026 to promote transparency and openness in government through execution of the DoW FOIA Program.

The DoW has a decentralized FOIA Program, with each of its Components maintaining their own FOIA programs through 35 individual FOIA Requester Service Centers, referred to as Components. DoW Components establish and maintain FOIA programs uniquely tailored to their organizations while providing top tier support and expertise to requesters.

The DoW demonstrated a significant commitment to the principles of the FOIA during the reporting period, marked by increased processing output and strategic integration of FOIA into core organizational missions. Notably, DoW Components adopted new technologies, including elements of Artificial Intelligence (AI), into their FOIA processes. During the reporting period, the DoW received a total of 77,423 FOIA requests, a 25% increase from FY 2024's 61,858 received requests, and processed 70,441 requests, a 22% increase over last FY's 57,662 processed FOIA requests. Despite these successes, the DoW FOIA Program faced significant challenges, which include a surge in the volume and complexity of incoming requests, an overall increase in case backlogs, and a critical loss of personnel. Across DoW, Components experienced a 37% loss or turnover of their FOIA cadre due to career transitions and retirements. These events directly impacted the overall DoW FOIA backlog, which increased by 27% from 21,436 to 30,476.

In response to those challenges, DoW Components are increasingly embedding FOIA into their leadership dashboards and organizational structures, treating it as a core mission function, rather than a mere compliance task. The DoW aims to address the resource and staffing shortages that are currently hindering its FOIA Program. In FY 2026, the DoW will prepare a formal Backlog Reduction Plan, which will include methods to increase efficiency and capitalize on available technologies and automation dedicated towards facilitation of FOIA demands.

FOIA training remains an imperative element for all DoW military, civilian, and contract personnel. To ensure fair and effective administration of FOIA programs, nearly all Components attended substantive FOIA training during the reporting period, primarily in virtual settings, covering the entire FOIA lifecycle. Significant effort was also made to educate non-FOIA professionals and senior leaders on their obligations through briefings, onboarding sessions, and widely available guidance.

I am confident that through the continued performance of proven strategies and best practices, the DoW FOIA Program will continue to push beyond historical boundaries in the pursuit of organizational excellence. It is necessary for the DoW to collectively engage requesters in a customer-centric mindset and reinforce positive interactions. The DoW strives towards promoting transparency and maintaining the presumption of openness across the Department.

I am proud of the FOIA professionals throughout the DoW and look forward to reaching new heights and milestones throughout FY 2026.

Robert G. Salesses
Director of Administration and Management

DoW FOIA Program Components

ASBCA	Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals
DAF	Department of the Air Force
DA	Department of the Army
DCAA	Defense Contract Audit Agency
DCMA	Defense Contract Management Agency
DCSA	Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency
DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service
DHA	Defense Health Agency
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DISA	Defense Information Systems Agency
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DON	Department of the Navy
DoWEA	Department of War Education Activity
DoW OIG	Department of War Office of Inspector General
DTIC	Defense Technical Information Center
DTRA	Defense Threat Reduction Agency
JPRA	Joint Personnel Recovery Agency
NGA	National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
NGB	National Guard Bureau
NRO	National Reconnaissance Office
NSA	National Security Agency
OSW/JS	Office of the Secretary of War/Joint Staff
USAFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
USCENTCOM	U.S. Central Command

USCYBERCOM	U.S. Cyber Command
USEUCOM	U.S. European Command
USINDOPACOM	U.S. Indo-Pacific Command
USNORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
USSOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
USSOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
USSPACECOM	U.S. Space Command
USSF	U.S. Space Force
USSTRATCOM	U.S. Strategic Command
USTRANSCOM	U.S. Transportation Command

SECTION I: FOIA LEADERSHIP AND APPLYING THE PRESUMPTION OF OPENNESS

The guiding principle underlying the Department of Justice's (DOJ) 2022 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Guidelines is the presumption of openness. The Guidelines also highlight the importance of agency leadership in ensuring effective FOIA administration. Please answer the following questions about FOIA leadership at your agency and describe the steps your agency has taken to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied to all decisions involving the FOIA.

A. Leadership Support for FOIA

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 or above this level?**

    Yes.

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

    The Chief FOIA Officer for the Department of War (DoW) is Mr. Robert G. Salesses, Director of Administration and Management (DA&M).

3. **What steps has your agency taken to incorporate FOIA into its core mission? For example, has your agency incorporated FOIA milestones into its strategic plan?**

    DoW Components have taken significant steps to integrate FOIA into their core mission. A primary method of integration is through alignment and leadership visibility. Several Components have formally incorporated FOIA milestones into their strategic plans, including the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency (DCSA), and Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). This elevates FOIA from a simple administrative function to a measured strategic objective. Others ensure high-level awareness by embedding FOIA metrics into leadership dashboards and performance tracking. The U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), for example, features FOIA backlog and processing data on its Commander's and senior leaders' dashboards, while the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) briefs its senior leadership monthly on FOIA performance as part of the Component's overall operational health.

    Another key approach is organizational restructuring to give the FOIA program greater prominence and authority. The Department of the Army (DA) and DIA have realigned their FOIA programs under the Chief Information Officer and Chief of Staff, respectively. These moves are designed to strengthen FOIA operations by giving them a more central role within the command structure. Similarly, the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) placed its

FOIA office under the Command Knowledge Management Division to improve information-sharing and better leverage command information technology infrastructure.

Many Components are also demonstrating their commitment by highlighting FOIA responsibilities in official policy and embedding them in training. The Department of the Navy (DON) provides a strong example, with a formal instruction that defines FOIA as an integral mission obligation and makes compliance a responsibility of all Commanding Officers and activities heads, a standard that is now being incorporated into DON Inspector General inspections. Additionally, the National Security Agency (NSA) noted that its core values explicitly embrace transparency and that its strategic goals include earning public trust, framing FOIA as essential to its mission. On the training front, the Office of the Secretary of War/Joint Staff (OSW/JS) incorporates FOIA training into its action officer course, the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) presents FOIA topics to new security officers, and the National Guard Bureau (NGB) has initiated plans to make FOIA part of its onboarding process.

Finally, the Component-level commitment is also evident through the dedication of tangible resources. The PCLT Directorate of ODA&M has embraced technological solutions to assist Components with case management and report automation. Additionally, U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM) has successfully established a dedicated budget line item for FOIA technology and staffing. Additionally, the National Security Agency (NSA) noted that its core values explicitly embrace transparency and that its strategic goals include earning public trust, framing FOIA as essential to its mission. Collectively, these actions demonstrate a clear and growing trend across the DoW to treat FOIA not just as a legal requirement, but as a fundamental element of the mission.

B. Presumption of Openness

4. **DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines provide that "agencies should confirm in response letters to FOIA requesters that they have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying FOIA exemptions." Does your agency provide such confirmation in its response letters?**

In FY 2025, 94% of all DoW Components indicated that they do include the application of the foreseeable harm standard in their responses. The DoW's goal for the next reporting period is 100% compliance with DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines.

5. **In some circumstances, agencies may respond to a requester that it can neither confirm nor deny the existence of requested records if acknowledging the existence of records would harm an interested protected by a FOIA exemption. This is commonly referred to as a Glomar response. If your agency tracks Glomar responses, please provide:**

   - **The number of times your agency issued a full or partial Glomar response during Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 (please separate full and partial if possible);**

- **the number of times a Glomar response was issued by exemption during FY 2025 (e.g., Exemption 7(C) – 20 times, Exemption 1 – 5 times).**

During this reporting period, DoW Components issued Glomar responses approximately 867 times.

Of note, some issuances of a Glomar response necessitate simultaneous use of exemptions. As such, the specified count of issued exemptions does not directly equate to the number of Glomar issuances given.

In asserting Glomar responses, Components cited the following exemptions:

(b)(1) – 589 times
(b)(2) – 3 times
(b)(3) – 621 times
(b)(4) – 6 times
(b)(5) – 4 times
(b)(6) – 162 times
(b)(7) – 85 times

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

To ensure a presumption of openness, DoW Components are employing a wide range of strategies, primarily focused on proactive disclosure, internal training, and enhanced review processes.

A primary strategy involves proactive disclosure and enhancing public access to information. Several Components are improving their public-facing websites and online FOIA libraries. For example, DIA launched a new, more user-friendly online FOIA library designed for proactive releases, while DA is currently enhancing its own to improve navigation and access. Other Components focus on publishing specific types of information: the Defense Contract Audit Agency (DCAA) publishes its annual reports to Congress, as required by Title 10 U.S.C. §3847 (formerly Section 805 of the 2012 National Defense Authorization Act), to its public website to provide oversight, transparency, and accountability for defense spending. Also, the Department of War Education Activity (DoWEA) ensures access to data on student programs and performance, while the Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals (ASBCA) provides extensive guidance and access to over 6,000 published decisions.

A significant number of Components are also focusing on internal education to cultivate a culture of openness among their organizations. These efforts range from high-level communication to detailed procedural updates. For instance, DON's FOIA Policy Lead communicates the core mission of FOIA to its leadership, while OSW/JS regularly trains its officers on the importance of openness and segregability. At a more granular level, NGA has updated its Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and provides training for new employees.

Additionally, a key aspect of this effort is the foreseeable harm analysis. To ensure that information is only withheld when absolutely necessary, Components have implemented more rigorous review processes, which include legal reviews. DoW FOIA Managers regularly discuss the foreseeable harm standard with employees of their respective Components to ensure they understand its application. The DoW highlights the importance of this analysis and our obligation to apply it before every response.

SECTION II: ENSURING FAIR AND EFFECTIVE FOIA ADMINISTRATION

DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines provide that "ensuring fair and effective FOIA administration requires proper training and a full understanding of FOIA obligations by the entire agency workforce." The Guidelines reinforce longstanding guidance to "work with FOIA requesters in the spirit of cooperation." DOJ also "urges agency Chief FOIA Officers to undertake a comprehensive review of all aspects of their agency's FOIA administration" as part of ensuring fair and effective FOIA administration.

A. FOIA Training

1. **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.**

   DoW Components employ a multifaceted approach to ensure their personnel receive adequate FOIA training. A common approach is leveraging resources such as DOJ-offered training sessions, the DoW Joint Knowledge Online, and courses offered through the American Society of Access Professionals. In addition, the FD facilitates quarterly DoW-wide virtual training sessions addressing various topics and Components' concerns by providing focused instructions. Components also develop and conduct internal training programs for FOIA professionals and general workforce. These range from formal workshops and newcomer onboarding sessions (USCYBERCOM and DIA) to one-on-one mentoring, desk-side assistance, and specialized instruction for subject matter experts involved in record searches (Defense Logistics Agency (DLA), Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), and NGB). To ensure accountability, several Components integrate FOIA training into employee performance plans to ensure accountability. Components widely use internal SharePoint sites and websites to host training materials and training session recordings for on-demand access. Generally, Components are actively training their FOIA professionals and workforce, though personnel shortages and reorganizations resulted in temporary pauses within several Components.

2. **Did your FOIA professionals, or other personnel at your agency with FOIA responsibilities, attend substantive FOIA training during the reporting period, such as training provided by the Department of Justice?**

   Yes, the majority of FOIA professionals throughout the DoW have attended substantive FOIA training.

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

   DoW personnel engaged in a comprehensive range of FOIA training, primarily sourced from the DoW and the DOJ. The training was delivered through various formats, including virtual series, online webinars, and in-person workshops. It ranged from foundational "FOIA 101" sessions and processing FOIA requests from start to finish, to advanced subjects addressing procedural requirements, fees and fee waivers, and litigation. The DoW placed a significant emphasis on the correct application of FOIA exemptions, with specific sessions dedicated to exemptions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 7. The training also addressed handling specific record types (e.g., reports of investigation, contracts, and electronic communications), negotiating with requesters, and understanding the foreseeable harm standard. Additionally, Component training addressed emerging topics such as the use of AI in FOIA management and processing.

4. **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.**

   Based on Components data, the DoW estimate is that 82% of DoW FOIA professionals participated in FOIA training.

5. **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.**

   N/A.

6. **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 DoW employs a wide array of approaches to educate non-FOIA professionals about their obligations under the FOIA. A primary method is direct training in various formats and frequencies. Several Components, such as NGA and NRO, conduct formal "roadshows" or

quarterly briefings across their organizations. Others, such as USCYBERCOM and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), have integrated FOIA overview into their mandatory newcomer onboarding programs to ensure all assigned personnel understand their responsibilities. Training is often tailored to specific roles, with Components like DLA and JPRA providing individualized instruction to Subject Matter Experts (SME) on how to conduct thorough record searches.

In addition to formal training sessions, Components make resources and guidance widely available and accessible. It is common practice to maintain internal SharePoint sites or websites to house FOIA processing guides, training slides, and other reference materials for on-demand access. Components also use service-wide emails or newsletters to disseminate updates and reminders about the FOIA program and responsibilities.

Engaging senior leadership is a critical and frequently reported activity. FOIA officers in many Components, including ASBCA, DFAS, and Defense Information Systems Agency (DISA), provide re-occurring leadership briefings on FOIA operations, high-profile cases, and Component compliance. This ensures command-level awareness of obligations, particularly for those serving as FOIA Initial Denial Authorities.

Components' reporting indicates various levels of maturity of FOIA training programs. While many Components have robust, multi-layered educational programs, others such as the Department of the Air Force (DAF) and U.S. Space Force (USSF) reported that they are in the process of building Component-level training programs and developing a standardized training plan for non-FOIA professionals. Some smaller Components only offer training on as-needed or on-request basis.

B. Outreach

7. **As part of the standard request process, do your FOIA professionals proactively contact requesters concerning complex or voluminous requests in an effort to clarify or narrow the scope of the request so requesters can receive responses more quickly? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue and, if applicable, any specific examples.**

Proactively contacting requesters concerning complex or voluminous requests is a widespread and consistent practice across the DoW. Active engagement with requesters is a standard part of the DoW FOIA process and is seen as a critical tool for managing FOIA backlogs effectively. The exchanges are aimed at creating a more manageable and targeted request, which benefits both the Department and the requester by enabling a more efficient and timely response.

Common examples of this interaction include FOIA professionals asking requesters for specific keywords, date ranges, or offices of interest to refine a search. Many Components also provide requesters with estimated processing times for large requests as a way to inform the requester of the status of an open request and encourage dialogue if the requester would prefer to narrow the scope of a request description. This collaborative process helps educate

requesters on what types of information the Component holds, ultimately leading to a more successful and faster fulfillment of their request.

8. **Outside of the standard request process or routine FOIA Liaison or FOIA Requester Service Center interactions, did your FOIA professionals engage in any outreach or dialogue, with the requester community or open government groups regarding your administration of the FOIA? For example, did you proactively contact frequent requesters, host FOIA-related conference calls with open government groups, or provide FOIA training to members of the public? 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.**

DoW Components described a range of proactive and collaborative outreach efforts with the public. These dialogues are primarily aimed at educating requesters and improving the efficiency of the FOIA process.

A common theme is direct engagement with requesters to guide them through the FOIA process. ASBCA, for instance, communicates directly with individuals to help narrow the scope of requests, which in turn helps limit potential fees and guides requesters to available resources, e.g., the DoW FOIA Handbook. Similarly, U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) explains to frequent requesters how to format their requests more effectively using keywords or specific parameters, resulting in quicker processing and more precise results.

Several Components detailed how they build relationships with requesters. DCSA highlighted its successful professional relationship with many media requesters, thus fostering greater transparency. It uses emails, phone calls, or Microsoft Teams meetings to provide a high level of customer service. The U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) also proactively telephonically contacts frequent requesters to provide further insight on the FOIA process.

In a notable example of in-depth collaboration, DISA described how it assisted a doctoral candidate researching the Component's history. Instead of merely processing the request, DISA provided the candidate with on-site access to historical archives and coordinated interviews with relevant SMEs. Other forms of outreach include OSW/JS hosting collaborative events on educational activities. Overall, the dialogues have led to tangible improvements in FOIA administration by making the process more efficient, transparent, and collaborative.

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 Fiscal Year 2025 (please provide a total number or an estimate of the number for the agency overall).**

The frequency with which requesters sought assistance from a FOIA Public Liaison varied across the DoW. The majority of Components reported little or no contact from the public requesting FOIA Public Liaison support. The most common response, provided by 66% of Components, was either never or a low volume of 1–15 instances. This shows that for over half of the DoW Components, the Public Liaison is a resource used sparingly. A smaller group experienced moderate engagement, with three Components falling in the 16–31 times range, two in the 32–50 range, and another two reporting 51–100 interactions. In stark contrast, a few Components served as high-volume hubs for requester assistance: two Components each reported interactions in the 101–250 range. Three Components stood out significantly, two reporting in the 500–800 range (DA and OSW/JS) and one reporting over 800 instances (DON), making it the highest by a large margin.

C. Other Initiatives

10. **Has your agency evaluated the allocation of agency personnel resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands? If so, please describe what changes your agency has or will implement.**

The DoW, by way of having a decentralized FOIA Program, allows its Components to establish the management and execution of FOIA programs based on their specific size and mission. Evaluation of personnel resources remains a consistent priority across the DoW. Components are employing a multifaceted approach to address insufficient FOIA program staffing and resources, with the most common solutions revolving around increasing manpower, implementing structural changes, and adopting new technology.

Components have taken multitude of steps and actions to increase FOIA program manning: cross-training Component staff to assist with FOIA processing (DCAA, NRO); hiring additional employees (NGA); expanding contractor support (USINDOPACOM, OSW/JS) or adding FOIA-specific requirements to new contracts (NSA); and leveraging military reserve personnel to support increased demands (DON, USSOCOM, USEUCOM). Components have established specific goals for newly authorized manpower to support FOIA requests and significantly reduce backlog.

Multiple Components are implementing structural and process-oriented changes to identify efficiencies and improve FOIA processing. DAF and USSF, for example, identified that the high turnover of uniformed FOIA professionals was a major issue in maintaining its pace for responding to FOIA requests and are assessing a shift to civilian or contractor workforce to ensure continuity. DFAS is continuously monitoring performance metrics to reassess workload distribution. In a different structural move, the Defense Threat Reduction Agency

(DTRA) realigned its FOIA office under the Chief of Staff to elevate the office and increase its authority across the agency in processing FOIA requests.

Components' forward-looking approach consists of the continued pursuit of technologies to improve efficiency and introduce automation. USSOCOM and USCENTCOM are actively exploring and evaluating AI programs and automation tools to streamline their FOIA processes. USNORTHCOM and USCYBERCOM have also identified the need for FOIA software tools to support FOIA case management and are actively identifying resources.

Despite these efforts, several Components highlighted ongoing struggles. Many Components reported a net loss of staff due to career transitions and retirement, raising concerns about future productivity. In contrast, a few Components, like USSPACECOM, stated their current staffing is sufficient for their workload, indicating that the resource challenge, while widespread, is not universal.

11. **How does your agency use data or processing metrics to ensure efficient management of your FOIA workload? For example, case management reports, staff processing statistics, etc. In addition, please specifically highlight any data analysis methods or technologies used.**

Component management of FOIA workload centers on the use of data and metrics, but FOIA workload management varies. The level of automation and analytical depth also differs. Some Components use a basic manual tracking system while others implemented sophisticated software solutions.

A substantial number of Components rely on manual tracking systems. The most frequently mentioned tools in this category are Microsoft Excel (U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) and DISA) and SharePoint sites. ASBCA has created its own databases using a combination of tools to manage their FOIA workload. This manual approach, however, comes with significant challenges and creates inefficiencies. USAFRICOM reported system instability, including disappearing folders and crashing redaction software.

In contrast, several Components have invested in a specialized FOIA case management software, with FOIAXpress being the most prominently named solution. Through FOIAXpress Components generate a rich array of automated reports, including detailed case management lifecycle data, staff processing statistics, backlog trends, and tracking of the oldest pending requests. NGA highlighted the use of an Electronic Document Review (EDR) tool within FOIAXpress to de-duplicate documents and save time, while the Defense Health Agency (DHA) uses the data to identify bottlenecks and predict workload patterns. DON uses an alternative system, SecureRelease, for similar comprehensive tracking.

Regardless of the tool, nearly all Components use the data they collect to inform leadership and manage resources. Periodic reports on key metrics—such as cases received and closed, processing times, and backlogs—are standard practice. DCSA, for example, conducts statistical analysis to rebalance workloads and prioritize requests, while the DoW OIG generates a comprehensive suite of biweekly, quarterly, and annual reports to inform

stakeholders. More advanced data analysis methods are also emerging; USCENTCOM utilizes Microsoft Teams and Power BI to capture and report data on metrics like redaction page counts and case closures, while DFAS employs trend analysis and formal Risk Management Internal Control policies to mitigate backlog risks.

Components with automated, data-rich case management platforms execute more efficient and proactive management of their FOIA workloads.

12. **If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure fair and effective FOIA administration, please describe them here:**

The DoW is implementing a variety of proactive and innovative initiatives to enhance the fairness and effectiveness of its FOIA Program. It is focusing on technology, collaboration, communication, and quality control.

Several Components are looking to technologies to drive efficiency. NGA is implementing a new FOIAXpress AI module, and both USSOCOM and NSA are actively exploring or acquiring AI programs to assist with document review and processing. Others are focused on foundational system improvements, with USINDOPACOM seeking to purchase a new database system to more effectively track and manage their FOIA requests, while DCSA is enhancing its case tracking tools with new data fields to improve reporting and reduce delays.

DA has established an Army enterprise-wide Microsoft Teams Channel to serve as a networking and resource hub for its FOIA professionals, enabling them to exchange best practices and access peer support. At DIA, senior leaders meet monthly to develop consistent operational guidance. DFAS is proactively building strong working relationships with key collaborators in other functional areas to ensure prompt and efficient responses.

DoW OIG used findings from a self-assessment of its FOIA program to recertify and improve its process flows, while DIA has a dedicated quality control team to review FOIA staff work. In a move toward proactive transparency, DTRA evaluates previously released documents for wider public release, and OSW/JS emphasizes a "presumption of openness" by proactively posting frequently requested records to their online FOIA library.

SECTION III: PROACTIVE DISCLOSURES

DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines emphasize that "proactive disclosure of information is . . . fundamental to the faithful application of the FOIA." The Guidelines direct agencies to post "records online quickly and systematically in advance of any public request" and reiterate agencies should post records "in the most useful, searchable, and open formats possible."

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

   In addition to posting records pursuant to the "three or more" requirement, which directs agencies to post records that are requested three or more times, some DoW Components reported more aggressive practices aimed at promoting transparency. OSW/JS and USCENTCOM regularly post most, or all records released in response to FOIA requests, regardless of the number of times they have been requested.

   Many Components have also institutionalized formal review processes and collaborative workflows to increase proactive disclosures. These range from NGA's bi-weekly case coordination meetings to DFAS' monthly reviews and USCYBERCOM's quarterly evaluations. This process often involves close collaboration with other offices within the Component, particularly Public Affairs Offices (PAO) and legal counsel, to determine which records are suitable for public release. DISA and USTRANSCOM both detailed their coordination process with PAO and other stakeholders to approve documents before they are posted to their respective online FOIA library.

   The types of documents being proactively disclosed by Components differs. Beyond records that meet the frequent-request threshold, Components are posting materials of inherent public interest. ASBCA posts its final decisions daily, while DON proactively releases court-martial trial results. Others, such as DIA, focus on high-interest topics, having posted records related to COVID-19 and the Advanced Aerospace Threat Identification Program, while OSW/JS's posts records related to Unidentified Anomalous Phenomena (UAP).

   Finally, some Components, like DA, have developed a comprehensive, centralized system that includes logging potential disclosures, routing them through formal review channels, and tracking their status from identification through final posting to ensure a consistent and compliant process. While some Components noted they are still reviewing and updating their procedures, the overall responses indicate a widespread effort to enhance public access to information through proactive disclosures.

2. **Does your agency post logs of its FOIA requests?**

   - **If so, what information is contained in the logs?**
   - **Are they posted in CSV format? If not, what format are they posted in?**
   - **Please provide a link to the page where any FOIA logs are posted. If applicable, please provide component links.**

   Yes. DoW Components post FOIA logs, as outlined in the 2008 DoW FOIA memorandum located at: https://pclt.defense.gov/Portals/140/FOIA/Documents/FOIALogPolicy.pdf. These logs are regularly updated and made available on Components' public-facing websites to ensure compliance with FOIA's proactive disclosure requirements and to promote transparency. FOIA logs typically contain a variety of data elements that track the progress and outcome of each request submitted. The specific information included in these logs varies slightly between Components, but generally contain the FOIA case number, name of

requester, requester's organization (if applicable), description of the request, date the request was received, date the request was closed, and final disposition. Component FOIA logs are primarily posted in PDF or MS Excel format.

Links to DoW Component FOIA Libraries:

ASBCA:
- https://www.asbca.mil/Decisions/

DAF:
- https://efoia.cce.af.mil/app/Home.aspx

DA:
- https://foia.army.mil/library/Landing.aspx

DCAA:
- https://www.dcaa.mil/Freedom-of-Information-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

DCMA:
- https://www.dcma.mil/HQ/FOIA1/

DCSA:
- https://www.dcsa.mil/Contact-Us/Privacy-Civil-Liberties-FOIA/FOIA-Requests/

DeCA:
- https://corp.commissaries.com/our-agency/FOIA/FOIA-Electronic-Reading-Room

DFAS:
- https://www.dfas.mil/foia/electronicreadingroom/

DHA:
- https://dhapal.health.mil/app/ReadingRoom.aspx

DIA:
- https://www.dia.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Electronic-Reading-Room/

DISA:
- https://www.disa.mil/About/Legal-and-Regulatory/Freedom-of-Info-Act-Program/FOIA-Reading-Room

DLA:
- https://www.dla.mil/Information-Operations/FLIS-Data-Electronic-Reading-Room/

DON:
- https://www.secnav.navy.mil/foia/readingroom/SitePages/Home.aspx

DoWEA:
- https://www.dodea.edu/offices/executive-services/freedom-information-act-foia

DoW OIG:
- https://www.dodig.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Reading-Room/

DTIC:
- https://discover.dtic.mil/foia-reading-room/

DTRA:
- https://www.dtra.mil/About/Mission/Freedom-of-Information-Act-and-Privacy-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

JPRA:
- https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOIA/Reading-Room/Reading-Room-List_2/FOIA_Log/

NGA:
- https://www.nga.mil/foia/foia.html

NGB:
- https://www.nationalguard.mil/Resources/FOIA/Library/

NRO:
- https://www.nro.gov/foia-home/foia-resources-foia-for-all/

NSA:
- https://www.nsa.gov/Helpful-Links/NSA-FOIA/Declassification-Transparency-Initiatives/FOIA-Reports-and-Releases/#foia-logs

OSW/JS:
- https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOIA/Reading-Room/Reading-Room-List_2/FOIA_Log/

USAFRICOM:
- https://www.africom.mil/foia-freedom-of-information-act-requests

USCENTCOM:
- https://www3.centcom.mil/FOIALibrary/Search

USCYBERCOM:
- https://www.cybercom.mil/FOIA-Privacy-Act/Reading-Room/

USINDOPACOM:
- https://www.pacom.mil/About-USINDOPACOM/Freedom-of-Information-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

USNORTHCOM:
- https://www.northcom.mil/FOIA/

USEUCOM:
- https://www.eucom.mil/policies-and-compliance/useucom-freedom-of-information-act-foia-requester-service-center/foia-reading-room

USMC:
- https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/USMC-FOIA/FOIA-Reports/

USSOCOM:
- https://www.socom.mil/foia/pages/foia-logs.aspx

USSOUTHCOM:
- https://www.southcom.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Reading-Room/

USSPACECOM:
- https://www.spacecom.mil/Support/FOIA/Reading-Room/

USSF:
- https://efoia.cce.af.mil/app/Home.aspx

USTRANSCOM:
- https://www.ustranscom.mil/foia/index.cfm?thisview=readroom#hideFYLogs

3. **Provide examples of any material (with links) 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)**

During the reporting period, several Components proactively disclosed materials in compliance with FOIA requirements. Examples of such disclosures include:

ASBCA:
- Decisions, rules and guidance, annual reports, alternative dispute resolution information, biographies, and charter.
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Decisions/
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Rules-and-Guidance/
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Charter/Annual-Reports/
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Alternative-Dispute-Resolution/
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Biographies/
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Charter/
  - https://www.asbca.mil/Contact/

DCAA:
- Contractor listings, administrative documents, and agency FOIA policies.
  - https://www.dcaa.mil/Freedom-of-Information-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

DHA:
- Contracts, FOIA logs:
  - https://health.mil/Reference-Center/FOIA-Documents

DIA:
- Medical records related to COVID-19:
  - https://www.dia.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Electronic-Reading-Room/

DLA:
- Procurement history, medical/pharmaceutical data reports, and Aqueous Film-Forming Foam contracts:
  - https://www.dla.mil/FOIA/Electronic-Reading-Room/

DoW OIG:
- Audit and investigation reports, including those related to UAP:
  - https://media.defense.gov/2024/Oct/15/2003564382/-1/-1/1/OIR%20AND%20OTHER%20OCOS%20APPENDIX.PDF
  - https://media.defense.gov/2025/Nov/13/2003819868/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2024-112_REDACTED_FINAL.PDF
  - https://media.defense.gov/2024/Jan/25/2003381254/-1/-1/1/UAP-RELATED%20RECORDS%20FOIA%20RELEASE.PDF
  - https://media.defense.gov/2023/May/30/2003231874/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2023-050.PDF
  - https://media.defense.gov/2025/Dec/10/2003840446/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2026-025_REDACTED%20SECURE.PDF

DON:
- Aircraft mishaps, Amphibious Assault Vehicle mishaps, courts-martial summaries, historical records, FOIA request logs, and National Environmental Policy Act information:
  - https://www.secnav.navy.mil/foia/readingroom/SitePages/Home.aspx
  - https://pacific.navfac.navy.mil/About-Us/National-Environmental-Policy-Act-NEPA-Information/
  - https://www.navsup.navy.mil/Contact/FOIA/
  - https://www.history.navy.mil/foia/foia-reading-room.html
  - https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/USMC-FOIA/FRR/

DTRA:
- Information related to COVID-19 FOIA requests:
  - https://www.dtra.mil/About/Mission/Freedom-of-Information-Act-and-Privacy-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

DA:
- Records related to prominent individuals:
  - https://foia.army.mil/library/Landing.aspx

NRO:
- Declassified satellite records, frequently requested material, and fiscal year reports:
  - https://www.nro.gov/foia-home/foia-declassified-nro-programs-and-projects/
  - https://www.nro.gov/foia-home/foia-fiscal-year-2025/

NSA:
- Historical releases and internal periodicals/publications:
  - https://www.nsa.gov/Helpful-Links/NSA-FOIA/Declassification-Transparency-Initiatives/Historical-Releases
  - https://www.nsa.gov/Helpful-Links/NSA-FOIA/Declassification-Transparency-Initiatives/Internal-Periodicals-Publications

OSW/JS:
- UAP material, including emails and interview invitations:
  - https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/UFOsandUAPs/21-F-0299%20_UAP_The_Debrief_Emails_12-2020.pdf
  - https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/UFOsandUAPs/24-F-0266_AARO_Invitations_to_Interview_Mr._David_Grusch.pdf
  - https://www.esd.whs.mil/Portals/54/Documents/FOID/Reading%20Room/UFOsandUAPs/23-F-0241_UAP_Reporting_Procedures_FY2023.pdf

USCENTCOM:
- Operations reports, plans reports, and Command regulations:
  - https://www3.centcom.mil/FOIALibrary/Search

USSOCOM:
- Contract related records:
  - https://www.socom.mil/FOIA/Pages/FOIAContracts.aspx

USSPACECOM:
- Command publications and online FOIA library documents:
  - https://www.spacecom.mil/Support/FOIA/Reading-Room/

4. **Please provide a link (or Component links, if applicable) where your agency routinely posts its frequently requested records.**

ASBCA:
- https://pclt.defense.gov/DIRECTORATES/FOIA/DoD-Annual-Reports-to-AG.aspx

DAF:
- https://efoia.cce.af.mil/app/Home.aspx

DA:
- https://foia.army.mil/library/Landing.aspx

DCAA:
- https://www.dcaa.mil/Freedom-of-Information-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

DCMA:
- https://www.dcma.mil/HQ/FOIA1/

DCSA:
- https://www.dcsa.mil/Contact-Us/Privacy-Civil-Liberties-FOIA/FOIA-Requests/

DeCA:
- https://corp.commissaries.com/our-agency/FOIA/FOIA-Electronic-Reading-Room

DFAS:
- https://www.dfas.mil/foia/electronicreadingroom/

DHA:
- https://dhapal.health.mil/app/ReadingRoom.aspx

DIA:
- https://www.dia.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Electronic-Reading-Room/

DISA:
- https://www.disa.mil/About/Legal-and-Regulatory/Freedom-of-Info-Act-Program/FOIA-Reading-Room

DLA:
- https://www.dla.mil/Information-Operations/FLIS-Data-Electronic-Reading-Room/

DON:
- https://www.secnav.navy.mil/foia/readingroom/SitePages/Home.aspx

DoWEA:
- https://www.dodea.edu/offices/executive-services/freedom-information-act-foia

DoW OIG:
- https://www.dodig.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Reading-Room/

DTIC:
- https://discover.dtic.mil/foia-reading-room/

DTRA:
- https://www.dtra.mil/About/Mission/Freedom-of-Information-Act-and-Privacy-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

JPRA:
- https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOIA/Reading-Room/Reading-Room-List_2/FOIA_Log/

NGA:
- https://www.nga.mil/foia/foia.html

NGB:
- https://www.nationalguard.mil/Resources/FOIA/Library/

NRO:
- https://www.nro.gov/foia-home/foia-resources-foia-for-all/

NSA:
- https://www.nsa.gov/Helpful-Links/NSA-FOIA/Declassification-Transparency-Initiatives/FOIA-Reports-and-Releases/#foia-logs

OSW/JS:
- https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOIA/Reading-Room/Reading-Room-List_2/FOIA_Log/

USAFRICOM:
- https://www.africom.mil/foia-freedom-of-information-act-requests

USCENTCOM:
- https://www3.centcom.mil/FOIALibrary/Search

USCYBERCOM:
- https://www.cybercom.mil/FOIA-Privacy-Act/Reading-Room/

USINDOPACOM:
- https://www.pacom.mil/About-USINDOPACOM/Freedom-of-Information-Act/FOIA-Reading-Room/

USNORTHCOM:
- https://www.northcom.mil/FOIA/

USEUCOM:
- https://www.eucom.mil/policies-and-compliance/useucom-freedom-of-information-act-foia-requester-service-center/foia-reading-room

USMC:
- https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Agencies/USMC-FOIA/FOIA-Reports/

USSOCOM:
- https://www.socom.mil/foia/pages/foia-logs.aspx

USSOUTHCOM:
- https://www.southcom.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Reading-Room/

USSPACECOM:
- https://www.spacecom.mil/Support/FOIA/Reading-Room/

USSF:
- https://efoia.cce.af.mil/app/Home.aspx

USTRANSCOM:
- https://www.ustranscom.mil/foia/index.cfm?thisview=readroom#hideFYLogs

5. **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? If yes, please provide examples of such improvements, such as steps taken to post information in open and machine-readable formats. If your agency is not taking steps to make posted information more useful, please explain why.**

Yes, the DoW is actively working to enhance usability and accessibility of information posted to its public websites. A major focus is on improving site searchability and navigation. Several Components are ensuring their documents are Optical Character Recognized (OCR), making the text within PDFs searchable. ASBCA and DA are going a step further by implementing and further improving search engines that utilize key terms and metadata to help users pinpoint specific information. Others, like USCYBERCOM, DCSA, and NRO, are restructuring their electronic reading rooms with clearer categories, logical organization, and better labeling to make navigation more intuitive.

Enhancing the overall website design and user experience is at the forefront of Components' interaction with requesters. Components like DoWEA and DFAS are actively working with their Communications and PAOs to improve website navigation and information currency by providing daily updates. USEUCOM is making incremental changes to its site by updating Component FOIA program contact information and upgrading its submission forms.

Finally, Components are leveraging new technology to achieve Section 508 compliance, assuring records remain accessible to people with disabilities. NGA is implementing a new version of FOIAXpress on their unclassified network, which will provide a more efficient FOIA library user experience with easier access for its customers. DA is also undertaking a significant enhancement to its FOIA library by adding tools and search engines to its website to better locate records using metadata. DA is further developing an internal SOP to assist DA FOIA professionals when submitting records for posting to the online FOIA library. Collectively, these enhancements and upgrades represent a major DoW investment in accessibility and transparency.

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

The collaboration between FOIA offices and other Component staffs is a critical to effective and compliant proactive disclosure of information. This includes interactions that primarily involve Information Technology (IT) departments, legal counsel, and security personnel, all of whom play a distinct role in the FOIA process.

The most frequently cited collaborators are the communications offices or PAOs, which typically act as the final gatekeepers for public-facing content. These offices are often responsible for maintaining the Component's websites and posting the FOIA-related information and documents. Components like DoWEA, USCYBERCOM, and DIA describe a process where their PAO manages all external communications and website updates. This partnership is deliberate; USSPACECOM, for instance, found that linking its FOIA and Public Affairs websites gave the public more information without increasing workloads, as both offices often handle similar topics of public interest.

The technical implementation of proactive disclosure relies heavily on IT staff. Their involvement ranges from retrieving older documents from archives (ASBCA) to the installation and maintenance of specialized systems like FOIAXpress (NGA). IT staff is also crucial for ensuring website functionality, data validation (DCSA), and making documents Section 508 compliant.

Ensuring that information is legally sound and does not compromise security is a vital aspect of Component's FOIA program. USTRANSCOM detailed a comprehensive, multi-layered, documents review by Public Affairs, legal, privacy, operations security, and the web team before final posting. Similarly, JPRA requires reviews from security and operations security offices, and NRO's Office of Public Affairs and Security personnel review all documents prior to posting. This cross-functional teamwork assures accuracy and relevance to the request, ultimately creating a robust and trustworthy FOIA program.

7. **Please describe the best practices used to improve proactive disclosures and any challenges your agency faces in this area.**

DoW Components are actively identifying and pursuing best practices shared amongst the DoW FOIA enterprise to improve proactive disclosures. Frequently, best practices enable Components to overcome aforementioned challenges and obstacles, thus maintaining sound FOIA programs.

Best Practices for Proactive Disclosures:

Components focus on both systematic identification and technical enhancement of records. A common method for identifying records is the "rule of three," now codified, where documents requested three or more times are flagged for posting to online FOIA libraries. More aggressive approaches are also in use, with USCENTCOM noting its practice of posting nearly all records reviewed for public release, regardless of the number of requests.

Components like NRO and NGA have formalized this process by establishing review panels and coordination meetings to deliberately identify topics and programs for declassification and public release. A key goal of FOIA proactive disclosure is to ensure information is genuinely useful to requesters, which is a step beyond simply posting records for public access. ASBCA affirmed its disclosures are machine-readable and text-searchable, while OSW/JS works to provide records in their original format and ensures they are processed with OCR to the greatest extent possible.

Challenges in Proactive Disclosure:

Decreases in the FOIA workforce has hindered ambitions to support proactive disclosures. This was explicitly cited by DCMA, USSOCOM, USTRANSCOM, DA, and USNORTHCOM. Staffing shortages force FOIA offices to prioritize processing of backlogs, leaving little to no capacity for proactive disclosure. As one Component noted, even when they identify material for posting, the Component does not have the capacity to process the material for public posting.

Additional challenges in proactive disclosure included a wide range of complexities. For example, reviews of classified information necessitate appropriately cleared personnel and systems that are dedicated to processing open requests. Further, OSW/JS reported time constraints with ensuring documents are Section 508 compliant. DIA also reported limited control over the web platforms that host their records.

SECTION IV: STEPS TAKEN TO MAKE BETTER USE OF TECHNOLOGY

A key component of FOIA administration is using technology to make information available to the public and to gain efficiency in FOIA processing. The Attorney General's 2022 FOIA Guidelines emphasize the importance of making FOIA websites easily navigable and complying with the FOIA.gov interoperability requirements. Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is using technology to improve its FOIA administration and the public's access to information.

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 uses to support your FOIA Program.**

   DoW Components are actively embracing a spectrum of technological advancements to support their FOIA programs, with a clear trend toward automation, AI, and the modernization of core case management systems. While adoption is at different stages across the DoW enterprise, Component FOIA programs have begun to shift from basic tools to more sophisticated solutions.

A prominent theme is the exploration and implementation of AI and automation to tackle time-consuming tasks. DISA has already deployed an automated bot specifically designed to redact financial information, while DLA is updating its Robotic Process Application bot to address increased demand and is also discussing further AI integration. Similarly, NGA anticipates its new FOIAXpress AI module will significantly reduce case completion times. Other Components, like DoW OIG and USINDOPACOM, are actively reviewing how Generative AI can be integrated into legal research and requests search process.

Several Components are undertaking major overhauls of their foundational case management systems. DON has launched the "SecureRelease" processing system with intent to incorporate AI for deduplication and machine learning for redactions. DFAS is in the development phase of a new platform called "SPARTA" to manage its cases, and the NSA recently completed a major upgrade to their internal FOIA processing system, "DATAWARDEN," to improve efficiency.

Beyond system replacements, many Components are adopting targeted tools that provide specific, high-impact benefits. OSW/JS has expanded its use of software to deduplicate email searches, reducing a task that once took days to mere minutes. DIA uses RedactXPress, which allows analysts to directly import redactions made by subject matter experts, eliminating the need for manual duplication. Other improvements across the DoW enterprise focus on enhancing collaboration and basic functionality, such as ASBCA's use of Microsoft Teams for calendaring and video conferences and USEUCOM's greater use of SharePoint for case tracking.

Finally, a significant number of Components are in the active planning and evaluation stage of technologies for their FOIA programs, continuing the trend of accelerated technological adoption. USSOUTHCOM has acquired FOIAXpress, while the DAF, USSF, and DHA have engaged with industry to identify and learn about new tools and systems. This collectively demonstrates the DoW's commitment to technological adoption in Components' FOIA programs to meet the growing complexities and demands of modern FOIA administration.

3. **Does your agency currently use any technology to automate request intake, customer service, or record processing? For example, does your agency use artificial intelligence or other tools to conduct searches or make redactions? If so, please describe and, if possible, estimate how much time and financial resources are saved since implementing the technology.**

Twenty percent of DoW Components indicated that they currently utilize some form of automation or advanced technology for tasks like conducting searches or making redactions. The remaining 80% reported no use of automation technologies in their record processing. The use of technology has garnered significant attention across DoW; there remain ample opportunities for the Department to introduce automated record processing.

For those Components using automation, the primary benefits include gains in time and labor efficiency, rather than financial savings. However, DLA reported that its "FOIA BOT"

provides a cost savings approximately equivalent to one full-time GS-9 employee. At DHA, FOIAXpress has automated roughly 90% of its records processing, from generating correspondence to completing document reviews. Similarly, DIA uses FOIAXpress' EDR feature to efficiently search large email datasets and automatically redact specific text strings, while DTRA utilizes FOIAXpress for processing and redactions.

Other Components are using more common but still effective technologies such DFAS' use of Adobe redaction software to save time during search and redaction tasks. DON also uses Adobe products for manual redactions and is planning to implement machine learning for deduplication and redaction in FY 2026.

Several Components are in the process of implementing new systems to assist in the tracking and management of their FOIA requests or are actively identifying opportunities for new systems. NGA is implementing an AI module with the expectation that it will reduce case completion times. DA has initiated a vendor review to identify modern case tracking systems, and USTRANSCOM is using Content Manager and EnCase eDiscovery for record processing.

Savings in time and finances have not been fully calculated. However, the forward-looking trend of implementing AI and new technology indicates a growing recognition and importance across the DoW to leverage automation to improve the efficiency of FOIA administration.

4. **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?**

   Yes.

5. **Did all four of your agency's quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2025 appear on FOIA.gov?**

   Yes.

6. **If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2026.**

   N/A.

7. **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 2024 Annual FOIA Report and, if available, for your agency's Fiscal Year 2025 Annual FOIA Report.**

   https://pclt.defense.gov/DIRECTORATES/FOIA/DoD-Annual-Reports-to-AG.aspx

8. **In February 2019, DOJ and OMB issued joint Guidance establishing interoperability standards to receive requests from the National FOIA Portal on FOIA.gov. Are all components of your agency in compliance with the guidance?**

   No.

9. **Please describe your agency best practices in better utilizing technology and any challenges your agency faces in this area.**

   DoW Components have identified and shared myriads of technological best practices to enhance their FOIA programs, which enables Components to overcome aforementioned challenges and obstacles, thus maintaining sound FOIA programs.

   Best Practices:

   Components are leveraging both enterprise-level systems and common office tools to improve program efficiencies. DCSA and NGA are utilizing sophisticated, dedicated platforms; DCSA employs ServiceNow as a centralized case management system that provides real-time data dashboards for leadership, while NGA uses FOIAXpress with its EDR capability to streamline processing. On a more accessible level, Components are making smart use of existing technologies. USSPACECOM and DON reported utilizing DoW Secure Access File Exchange (SAFE) for the secure transfer of large files, and ASBCA effectively uses Microsoft Teams and Excel to track and manage its activities, demonstrating resourcefulness in the absence of a dedicated system. A key focus is also on the user experience where DCAA ensures its posted records are Section 508 compliant, ASBCA makes its documents text-searchable, and USCYBERCOM has redesigned its reading room categories for easier navigation.

   Challenges:

   The most pervasive challenge for Components is limited resources, including time, funding, and personnel, as explicitly cited by DCMA, USSOCOM, OSW/JS, and USNORTHCOM. As such, Components must focus resources to address extensive backlogs over proactive technological improvements.

   Components also face significant technical and systemic roadblocks. DIA highlighted its difficulty in processing audiovisual material and the challenge of working across three separate computer network levels without an interface to manage metadata between them. NGA faces a similar issue, needing a cross-domain solution for its classified and unclassified

platforms. Other Components like JPRA are operating without essential tools necessary for modern case management system or deduplication software.

SECTION V: STEPS TAKEN TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS, IMPROVE TIMELINESS AND RESPONDING TO REQUESTS, AND REDUCE BACKLOGS

DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines instruct agencies "to remove barriers to requesting and accessing government records and to reduce FOIA processing backlogs." Please answer the following questions to describe how your agency is removing barriers to access, improving timeliness in responding to requests, and reducing FOIA backlogs.

A. Remove Barriers to Access

1. **Has your agency established alternative means of access for any categories of first-party requested records, outside of the typical FOIA or Privacy Act process?**

   Yes. The DoW has adopted alternative access mechanisms for civilian and military personnel and their dependents seeking to obtain their own records. This has been beneficial for requesters seeking to bypass formal FOIA/PA channels. For Components, the traditional FOIA or PA processes remain the primary venue for individuals seeking their own records.

2. **If yes, please provide examples. If no, please indicate why not. Please also indicate if you do not know.**

   DoW Components that have established alternative means of access for first-party records focused on creating direct, self-service pathways and intelligently routing requesters to the correct information source. However, these efforts are often balanced against significant security concerns and resource limitations.

   A primary and effective method is the use of dedicated online self-service portals where individuals can directly access their own personnel records. For example, OSW federal employees are directed to the "MyBiz" portal, while DAF uses the Personnel Records Display Application. DON directs personnel to the Defense Manpower Data Center or Bureau of Naval Personnel site to access their own records, and DA uses the Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System for their Official Military Personnel Files (OMPF). Similarly, NSA allows current employees to retrieve specific records from an internal NSA website, and DFAS has developed a custom secure online tool called "askDFAS" for this purpose.

   Several Components explained that they deliberately adhere to the formal FOIA/PA request process to ensure proper review, handling, and release of sensitive information. The most significant reason cited is security and the sensitivity of the records and vulnerabilities alternative means of access present. DoW OIG, for instance, noted that the sensitive nature

of its investigative records requires a formal review to prevent accidental release of protected information. JPRA echoed this sentiment for their classified records.

3. **Please describe any other steps your agency has taken to remove barriers to accessing government information.**

Many Components highlighted their use of the National FOIA Portal, FOIA.gov, to receive online requests, therefore standardizing requester accessibility to information. Others ensure accessibility by accepting requests through multiple channels, including mail, email, and fax, and provide clear request submission instructions on their FOIA websites. Lastly, DAF and USSF both reported that they are in the process of reviewing their procedures to identify existing barriers and develop procedures to systematically remove them.

Proactive disclosure is also seen as a powerful tool for removing barriers. OSW/JS noted that it posts records onto its online FOIA library from most processed cases, going beyond the "rule of three" to make more information publicly available by default. Similarly, DHA continuously publishes frequently requested documents to its public access link, making them immediately accessible. Components are also improving their internal processes for direct engagements with requesters. ASBCA proactively calls requesters to offer assistance, while USEUCOM makes rolling partial releases of processed records to reduce public wait times. DCSA has taken a notable step by offering translation services for requests and inquiries, removing language as a potential barrier.

B. Timeliness

4. **For Fiscal Year 2025, 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 2025 Annual FOIA Report.**

The DoW's combined average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing is 14.67 days.

5. **If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was more than ten calendar days, according to Section VIII.A. of your agency's Fiscal Year 2025 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.**

DoW Components that exceeded the 10-day adjudication period for expedited processing are implementing a combination of prioritization, process refinement, and targeted training to conform to the timeline. For instance, USSOCOM will annotate and segregate all expedited requests, effectively heightening Command's attention to them, and NGB will highlight expedited requests during periodic meetings with leadership to ensure that they are acted upon immediately.

In addition to basic flagging of expedited requests, some Components are refining their overall workflow to create a more in-depth tracking spreadsheet and actively monitoring the adjudication days for incoming requests. This improves Components' oversight of these requests.

Another key focus is on personnel training, where DHA plans to reinforce the need for prompt adjudication through ongoing employee training. Both DAF and USSF will provide additional Component-wide training addressing expedited processing.

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

   Yes.

7. **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 2025?**

   No. The average time to process simple requests was 36.33 days.

8. **If not, did the simple track average processing time decrease compared to the previous Fiscal Year?**

   No. The average processing time to process simple requests increased from 30 days to 36.33 days.

9. **Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2025 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.**

   Forty-five percent of the DoW's processed requests were placed in the simple track.

10. **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.

C. Backlogs

Backlogged Requests

11. **If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2025, 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 2024?**

No. The DoW received 25% more requests in FY 2025 (77,423) than in FY 2024 (61,858) and processed 22% more requests in FY 2025 (70,441) than in FY 2024 (57,662). The influx of received requests resulted in the DoW's backlogged requests increasing by 42% (9,040).

12. **If not, according to Annual FOIA Report Section XII.D.1, did your agency process more requests during Fiscal Year 2025 than it did during Fiscal Year 2024?**

Yes. Despite a 42% increase in backlogged requests, the DoW processed 22% more requests, closing 70,441 in FY 2025 compared to 57,662 in FY 2024.

13. **If your agency's request backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2025, 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 requests received (if possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase)**
    - **Litigation**
    - **Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples of when possible**

The increase in DoW FOIA backlogs in FY 2025 may be attributed to loss of staff, increases in the number of incoming requests, to include complexity of those requests, and litigation.

A widespread loss of staff across the DoW was the primary driver of the backlog increases, the Deferred Resignation Program being the most frequently cited. Collectively, DoW Components experienced a 37% loss or turnover of their Component FOIA Officers. The problem was particularly acute for some, as DISA noted its day-to-day operations were handled by a single individual, and DTIC saw its FOIA staff reduced to zero.

The sharp increase in the DoW's incoming requests, 25% over FY 2025, meant Components managed higher workload with less staff. DLA reported a staggering 87% jump from 1,600 requests in FY 2024 to 2,990 in FY 2025, while DISA saw its request volume surge by 80%, from 279 to 502 requests. Components also reported an influx of requests from spam or bot accounts or high number of requests by a single individual. A growing number of individuals use bots and other technology to submit hundreds of electronic FOIA requests in short periods of time, inundating Components well beyond what is considered normal capacity.

Compounding aforementioned factors was a marked increase in the complexity of the received requests. Components reported receiving requests for voluminous records, such as large email datasets requiring extensive search and review time. DTRA noted that 95% of its perfected requests were placed in the complex track. The complexity was also subject-matter-driven, such as NGB citing requests concerning the deployment of the National Guard across the country. JPRA highlighted the difficulty of handling historical records for which it does not have release authority, necessitating time-consuming consultations with other Components or Federal agencies.

14. **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 2025. 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."**

In FY 2025, the DoW received 77,423 requests. Of those, 39% (30,476) have been added to the DoW's backlog for FY 2026.

Backlogged Appeals

15. **If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2025, 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 2024?**

No. Although the DoW processed more appeals in FY 2025 (1,352) than in FY 2024 (1093), the DoW's backlogged appeals increased 14% (607 to 692).

16. **If not, according to section XII.E.1 of the Annual FOIA Report, did your agency process more appeals during Fiscal Year 2025 than it did during Fiscal Year 2024?**

Yes. As stated above, the DoW processed 24% more appeals, closing 1,352 in FY 2025 compared to 1,093 in FY 2024.

17. **If your agency's appeal backlog increased during Fiscal Year 2025, 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)**
    * **Litigation**
    * **Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible**

The increase in FOIA appeal backlogs during FY 2025 may be attributed to loss of staff and increased workload, a situation that mirrored the challenges faced with initial requests.

A widespread loss of staff across the DoW was the most frequently cited cause for the backlog increase. One Component highlighted a unique aspect of this challenge, noting that a high turnover of supporting legal personnel disrupted the legal sufficiency review process, thereby creating delays. An increase in the number of incoming appeals also contributed to the overall increase in FOIA appeal backlogs.

For some, the complexity of the underlying cases and the burden of litigation added further pressure to offices that are not adequately staffed for the mission they are given. Both DHA and DA identified an increase in the complexity of the requests as a contributing factor, requiring a more extensive, in-depth review. NRO and the DA also cited litigation as a cause. In summary, the higher number of appeals to process, fewer people to process them, and more complex or legally intensive cases resulted in increased appeal backlogs.

18. **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 2025. 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 2024 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."**

In FY 2026, 48% of the DoW's appeals have been placed in the backlog.

D. Backlog Reduction Plans

19. **In the 2025 guidelines for Chief FOIA Officer Reports, any agency with a backlog of over 1000 requests in Fiscal Year 2024 were 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 2025.**

While the DoW did not implement an overall backlog reduction plan for FY 2025, several DoW Components implemented successful multi-faceted individual backlog reduction plans in FY 2025. They achieved particularly significant results through a combination of process changes, targeted staffing, and enhanced collaboration.

The most significant achievements were reported by DON, OSW/JS, and USCENTCOM, each demonstrating impressive reductions through deliberate strategies.

- DON implemented a reduction plan that vastly exceeded its goal. The Component set a target of 5% reduction and it achieved a remarkable 23% decrease in its backlog. This success stemmed from circulating a monthly report of the top 25 backlogs within DON to increase accountability, organizing staff standdown days to focus on clearing simple

requests, and mandating the use of its new "SecureRelease" processing system to boost efficiency.

- USCENTCOM achieved a 34% reduction in its FOIA backlog by creating additional processing queues to better distribute the workload, enhancing requester outreach to improve communication, bringing on temporary personnel to increase capacity, and breaking down complex cases into smaller, more manageable parts to accelerate processing.

- OSW/JS achieved a backlog reduction despite a 24% increase in incoming requests. Its plan focused on close collaboration with its sub-component offices, soliciting assistance from senior leadership to speed up tasker returns, and providing direct assistance to the most backlogged offices to help identify and clear cases.

It is important to note that events may occur during the year that impact Component reduction plans. In FY 2025, NRO was on track for a reduction by focusing on its oldest cases, but a significant loss of personnel mid-year forced them to abandon their reduction plan and pivot to handling new requests and litigation.

20. If your agency had a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in Fiscal Year 2025, please explain your agency's plan to reduce this backlog during Fiscal Year 2026.

The DoW will prepare a formal Backlog Reduction Plan for FY 2026. Components will continue and expand upon prior successful reduction plans. Some Components focus on improving internal processes and leveraging new technology to reduce the backlog. OSW/JS will continue to collaborate with its subcomponents and senior leadership while also expanding the use of newest technology, "CasePoint," to drastically reduce the time needed for record identification and deduplication. DIA is taking a deep dive into FOIA personnel professional development and process maturity. It is establishing a new onboarding process for junior employees with weekly progression meetings and monthly sessions with experienced analysts to address challenges in order to prevent case stagnation. USSOCOM is implementing a more data-driven approach, tracking the number of backlog cases closed each month and requiring analysts to actively work a set number of old cases at all times.

A significant focus is also being placed on training and resourcing. DAF and USSF both plan to implement monthly training for their FOIA enterprise, including a dedicated "FOIA 101" training for personnel in FOIA-specific positions. NSA stated its plan is straightforward and is looking for ways to add more personnel to its FOIA office to handle the workload.

E. Reducing the Age of Requests, Appeals, and Consultations

TEN OLDEST REQUESTS

21. In Fiscal Year 2025, did your agency close the ten oldest pending perfected requests that were reported in Section VII.E. of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report?

Yes, the DoW closed all ten of the oldest pending perfected requests reported in FY 2024.

22. 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 2024 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

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

The strategies DoW is taking can be broadly categorized into three main areas: targeted case management and prioritization, enhanced requester and inter-agency engagement, and strategic resource allocation and process improvement.

Targeted Case Management and Prioritization: Transitioning from a traditional "first-in, first-out" system to a more intelligently managed and prioritized caseload. DoW OIG exemplifies this with a sophisticated, multi-pronged approach, holding biweekly meetings to review its 40 oldest requests (not just the top 10), monthly tracking of consultation status, and holding quarterly case reviews with individual specialists. Similarly, USCENTCOM conducts a comprehensive evaluation of all cases from a three-year period (FY 2017 – FY 2019), prioritizing them based on complexity to identify those that could be feasibly closed within the year. This approach has resulted in a remarkable 60% reduction in USCENTCOM's backlog. Other Components, like DCSA, use performance analytic tools and aging metrics to guide daily case assignments, while DIA gives targeted attention to all requests received before a certain year.

Enhanced Requester and Inter-Agency Engagement: Many Components have found success by proactively engaging with both requesters and other Components or Agencies. DTRA reaches out to requesters of complex or voluminous requests to negotiate the scope, and DAF and USSF work closely with requesters to ensure they have all the necessary information to proceed. DoW OIG and NRO regularly engage with other DoW Components to follow up on pending consultations, which are a common cause of delays for responding to classified or CUI-related requests.

Strategic Resource Allocation and Process Improvement: Components are also making smart decisions about allocation of limited resources. DLA, for instance, increased its staffing and upgraded its Robotic Process Application bot, while USTRANSCOM brought

on temporary paralegal support. USSOCOM assigned the majority of its oldest cases to a single analyst to create a focused effort, and the NGB requires team members to actively process one of the ten oldest cases each month. Process improvements are also key; USSPACECOM has built strong relationships with its SMEs and Records Manager to improve document search times.

TEN OLDEST APPEALS

24. In Fiscal year 2025, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in Section VI.C.5 of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report?

No.

25. 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 VII.C.(5) of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.

The DoW closed six of the ten oldest appeals reported in FY 2024.

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

A key strategy is enhancing legal and inter-agency collaboration to resolve complex issues and break through regular bottlenecks. DoW OIG proactively engages with other DoW Components by sending monthly follow-up communications to get responses on pending consultations, a common source of delay. Similarly, DCSA utilizes its Office of General Counsel (OGC) to conduct secondary reviews to resolve complex exemption issues and expedite resolutions. On a case-specific basis, the Department of Homeland Security is coordinating directly with the DoW OGC and DOJ to resolve matters through mediation. The appeals team supporting OSW/JS targeted and closed its top 30 oldest appeals for FY 2025.

Several Components are also implementing more strategic prioritization and processing workflows. The Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency Directorate oversees the appeals for 16 DoW Components and targets the Department's oldest 30 cases reported in FY 2024. DON uses a "dual-prong" approach, quickly resolving improper appeals while maintaining a strict "first-in, first-out" queue for more substantive cases. DCSA takes a data-driven approach, prioritizing all pending appeals from oldest to newest and uses workload and aging metrics to guide its daily case assignments. DAF and USSF are focusing on process improvement at the source, reviewing how appeals are received and forwarded to the appellate authority to identify and fix inefficiencies.

Finally, some Components are achieving reductions by allocating specialized personnel resources. DA has found great success by utilizing Drilling Individual Mobilization Augmentee attorneys to specifically focus on the appeals backlog, which has significantly reduced the overall age of pending cases. Similarly, USINDOPACOM hired a full-time

contractor to assist with reducing its pending appeals, and DTIC has assigned a dedicated full-time employee to work through its pending queue.

TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS

27. In Fiscal Year 2025, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2024 Annual FOIA Report?

No.

28. 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 2024 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that?

The DoW closed nine of the ten oldest consultations reported in FY 2024.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION REGARDING TEN OLDEST

29. If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please explain why and provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those "ten oldest" requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2026.

As mentioned, reduction in personnel across the DoW FOIA enterprise directly impacted closing the ten oldest pending requests. USTRANSCOM was without any FOIA staff for several months; USSOCOM and NGA experienced disruptive personnel changes; and DLA and NSA lost staff due to downsizing and retirement. Overall, the smaller size of the FOIA enterprise resulted in lesser capacity to work on complex, aged cases, forcing Components to focus on simple requests and litigation.

The second major barrier was dependency on external entities. Delayed responses from other agencies or Components prevented the closure of many of the oldest cases. DoW OIG, USSPACECOM, and DIA all reported that their oldest cases remained open primarily because they were waiting for responses from Original Classification Authorities or other government agencies. Litigation was also a contributing factor for USEUCOM and USAFRICOM where they had to prioritize active litigation cases to meet established deadlines, diverting resources from the oldest pending requests.

Components plan to close their ten oldest cases in FY 2026 by addressing manpower shortages. DLA and USSOUTHCOM plan to add personnel, NGA is hiring new analysts, and DTIC is assigning a dedicated full-time employee to work through its backlog. To tackle the processing delays, Components are implementing more structured and aggressive case management strategies and leveraging technologies. USSOCOM has instituted a plan where analysts are required to work a specific number of backlog cases at any given time, while NGB will assign each team member one of the ten oldest cases per month. USTRANSCOM is implementing a strict "first-in, first-out" system to ensure older cases are addressed

systematically. Finally, there is a strong focus on proactive engagement and follow-up; NRO will be sending quarterly reminders to the Intelligence Community Components from which it is awaiting consultations.

F. Additional Information about FOIA Processing

30. Were any requests at your agency the subject of FOIA litigation during the reporting period? If so, please describe the impact on your agency's overall FOIA request processing and backlog. If possible, please indicate:

- **The number and nature of requests subject to litigation**
- **Common causes leading to litigation.**
- **Any other information to illustrate the impact of litigation on your overall FOIA administration.**

FOIA litigation emerged as a significant and resource-intensive challenge for many DoW Components during the reporting period. The lead factor was the failure to meet statutory deadlines, and the resulting legal actions had a severe, cascading impact on the Component's overall FOIA processing capabilities and backlog reduction efforts.

The most common cause of litigation, cited by a wide array of Components including DON, DIA, USTRANSCOM, and OSW/JS, was the failure to respond to requests within the mandated 20-day statutory time limit. The failure has been attributed to lower numbers of staff and increased request complexity. Other causes included disputes over the adequacy of a search and the appropriateness of redactions.

A critical aspect highlighted by several Components, like NSA, USEUCOM, and OSW/JS was the absence of separate, dedicated litigation teams. Frequently, the same staff responsible for processing the regular queue of FOIA requests and reducing the backlog are pulled away to prioritize court-ordered cases. NSA noted that this reality is not only detrimental to their backlog but is also unfair to other requesters, as litigated cases often have higher priority than traditional cases.

The scale of the litigation varied: OSW/JS reported managing over 60 litigation cases, while USCENTCOM was handling 18 cases with court-ordered productions requiring the release of 1,200 pages per month. The nature of the requests subject to litigation was diverse, covering high-interest and sensitive topics such as military operations, operational plans for domestic civil disturbance, COVID, and Guantanamo Bay.

SECTION VI: Conclusion

This Fiscal Year presented countless challenges and obstacles; however, the DoW is positioned to make advancements in the FOIA Program in the upcoming Fiscal Year. It is imperative that the Department continue to place emphasis on transparency and advance relationships between FOIA requesters and DoW FOIA professionals.

The DoW will seek uniformity in its approach to transparency. It will continue to aggressively pursue advancements in technology to process and deliver records to requesters in significantly less time. Training and education for new and current FOIA professionals will remain as a fundamental priority. Maintaining these priorities at the forefront of the Department's efforts will provide lasting effects on the execution of the DoW's FOIA Program.