

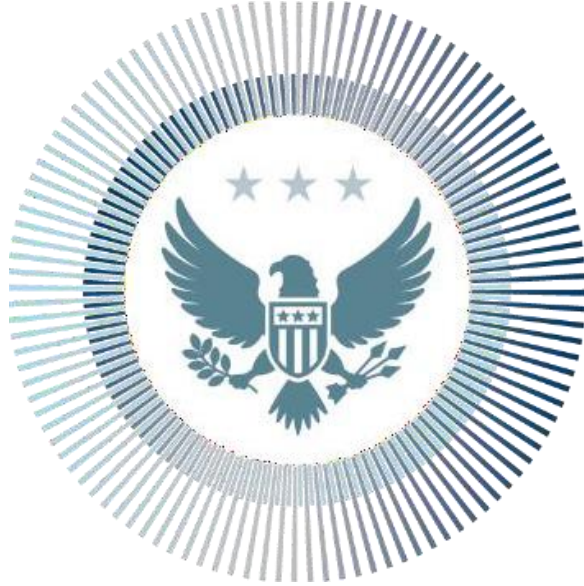
**THE  
PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES  
OVERSIGHT BOARD**



**2026 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT**

**MARCH 16, 2026**

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THE  
PRIVACY AND CIVIL LIBERTIES  
OVERSIGHT BOARD

2026 CHIEF FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT (FOIA)  
OFFICER REPORT

MARCH 16, 2026



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## Introduction

The Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board (“PCLOB”) is pleased to submit its 2026 Chief FOIA Officer Report (“Report”), the agency’s very first High-Volume Report for agencies receiving 100 or more FOIA requests. Consistent with the Department of Justice (“DOJ”) Guidelines for 2026 Chief FOIA Officer Reports, this Report addresses agency activities that have occurred since March 17, 2025, until March 16, 2026,<sup>1</sup> and relies on fiscal year (“FY”) data to review PCLOB FOIA administration.

The agency experienced significant changes and transitions during this reporting period. In the last two years, the federal government, including the PCLOB, received a surge in the number of FOIA requests. Additionally, the nature of the work at the PCLOB as an advice and oversight body of counter-terrorism programs, as well as its very small staff size, complicated the agency’s ability to process FOIA requests.

Recognizing a significant backlog, agency leadership in 2025 reemphasized the importance of compliance with the FOIA and committed additional resources to the agency’s internal FOIA Working Group. That resource decision directly facilitated reduction in the agency’s FOIA backlog, the first reduction in four years. Of the remaining open cases at the end of calendar year 2025, 75% of the requests were from one requester. Overall, the agency increased its cases closed from the previous fiscal year from 69 to 143.

Agency leadership is committed to reducing the backlog further, including through future resource decisions. Over the next reporting period the agency will continue to assess: 1) how technology can be leveraged to process FOIA requests; 2) how the agency can proactively disclose records to achieve greater transparency with the public; and, 3) additional steps to further remove barriers to access to records.

The PCLOB remains dedicated to meeting all obligations under the Freedom of Information Act, ensuring lawful transparency and timely access to records.

Kevin M. Jinks  
General Counsel  
March 16, 2026

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. DEP’T OF JUST., GUIDELINES FOR 2026 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORTS (Dec. 1, 2025), <https://www.justice.gov/oip/guidelines-2026-chief-foia-officer-reports>.



## Section I: FOIA Leadership and Applying the Presumption of Openness

### 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 this level?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.

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

**PCLOB Response:** Kevin M. Jinks, General Counsel.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** The PCLOB incorporates FOIA into its core mission. Strategic Goal 5 of the PCLOB's Agency Financial Report for FY25 incorporates Metric/Performance Indicator 5.3.12, "Response to Freedom of Information Requests," as follows: (1) respond initially to FOIA requests within 20 business days from receipt; and (2) reduce the year-on-year total number of outstanding FOIA requests from unique FOIA requesters. While the agency was off-track in meeting this metric for Fiscal Year 2024 ("FY24") due to an unanticipated 260% increase in requests, the agency was on-track for FY25 and reduced the year-on-year total from 89 to 71.<sup>2</sup>

4. The DOJ's 2022 FOIA Guidelines provides 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?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.

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<sup>2</sup> See Priv. & C.L. Oversight Bd., AGENCY FINANCIAL REPORT FISCAL YEAR 2025 38 (Nov. 14, 2025), <https://documents.pclob.gov/prod/Documents/FinancialReport/1077/PCLOB%20FY2025%20AFR-11.14.25-FINAL.pdf>.



## Presumption of Openness

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 interest 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 *Glomar* responses 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).

**PCLOB Response:** The agency did not issue any *Glomar* responses in FY25.



## Section II: Fair and Effective FOIA Administration

### 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.

**PCLOB Response:** The Chief FOIA Officer directed FOIA staff to attend the Department of Justice’s Office of Information Policy’s FOIA trainings by circulating training dates. In addition, the FOIA team conducted internal FOIA training for staff new to processing FOIA requests.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.

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

**PCLOB Response:** DOJ FOIA training attended or conducted in this reporting period included: Introduction to the Freedom of Information Act; Processing a Request from Start to Finish; Annual FOIA Report and Quarterly Report Training; Chief FOIA Officer Report Agency Training; Exemption 1 and Exemption 7 Training; Litigation Seminar; Privacy Considerations Training; Administrative Appeals; FOIA Compliance & Customer Service; Exemption 4 and Exemption 5 Training.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** 100%.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** 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.

**PCLOB Response:**

In 2025, agency leadership reemphasized compliance with the FOIA to all agency employees.

The PCLOB employs a FOIA Working Group, led by the Office of the General Counsel ("OGC"), to process FOIA requests. The FOIA Working Group comprises representatives from key staff sections such as information technology, security, human capital, and records, as needed.

Beginning in May 2025, the Head of Agency and its Executive Director detailed four additional non-FOIA staff (attorneys not assigned to OGC) to the FOIA Working Group in order to process the agency's FOIA backlog from prior fiscal years. Following onboarding and training of these additional employees into the FOIA Working Group, in the last three months of FY25 the agency processed to completion roughly a 150% increase in FOIA requests and appeals as it did in the first nine months of FY25, almost doubling the total number of FOIA responses on the year and reducing the FOIA backlog for the first time since Fiscal Year 2021 ("FY21").

Additionally, the Chief FOIA Officer held meetings with non-FOIA professionals on an as-needed basis to ensure adequate search of agency spaces and information technology systems, continued safeguarding of classified information, and appropriate engagement with external stakeholders.

During staff meetings throughout the reporting period, the Chief FOIA Officer and FOIA Working Group kept non-FOIA professionals regularly informed of employees' obligations under the FOIA, the Privacy Act, and the Federal Records Act, and the importance of timely action and response to queries concerning record searches and application of FOIA exemptions relevant to their operations.

Finally, the General Counsel/Chief FOIA Officer kept agency leadership informed about the FOIA Working Group's progress in processing the backlog. At the agency's December 2025 holiday party, the Head of Agency publicly recognized a few FOIA and non-FOIA employees, by name and by their contributions, for their dedicated work.



## 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.

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. The FOIA team contacted requesters to narrow or clarify the scope of requests. A few examples include: 1) emailing one requester to clarify and/or narrow an overbroad or vague request; 2) calling the requester, a member of the media, for one of the agency's 10 oldest FOIA requests to see if she was still interested in the results and to personally apologize for the delay in responding; 3) in one instance, just before sending correspondence to a requester seeking to clarify and/or narrow the scope of a request, the requester preemptively narrowed his request in a follow-on email; and 4) reaching out to a requester from academia by phone and email, ultimately closing the request in the absence of a response.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** The agency proactively reached out to three requesters that are members of the media during this reporting period, one of whom is a frequent requester.

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).

**PCLOB Response:** None.



## 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.

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. As explained above in response to Question 6 in Section II, this reporting period featured significant agency change and transition. Beginning in May 2025, the Head of Agency and its Executive Director detailed four additional non-FOIA staff (attorneys not assigned to OGC) to the FOIA Working Group in order to process the agency’s FOIA backlog from prior fiscal years. Following on-boarding and training of these additional employees into the FOIA Working Group, in the last three months of FY25 the agency processed to completion roughly a 150% increase in FOIA requests and appeals as it did in the first nine months of FY25, almost doubling the total number of FOIA responses on the year and reducing the FOIA backlog for the first time since FY21.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** The PCLOB tracks FOIA request processing in a “current” tracker and, at the end of each FY, a tracker depicting all closed FOIA requests received that year. Starting in July 2025, to manage workload, ensure the agency makes steady progress against the 10 oldest FOIA requests, answer new requests more timely, treat all requesters equitably regardless of the number of requests from one individual, and more easily compile quarterly and annual reports, the agency has tracked cases processed to completion by the individual who closed it and by month.



## Section III: Proactive Disclosures

### Posting Material

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

**PCLOB Response:** The FOIA team regularly reviews its trackers to identify, track, and release proactive disclosures. In September 2025, the PCLOB made its first proactive disclosure of a record that had been requested three times or more. See [PCLOB Organizational Chart](#). In January 2025, the PCLOB posted its FOIA logs for Fiscal Year 2023 (“FY23”), FY24, and FY25, and its current tracker as of December 18, 2025. See [PCLOB’s FOIA Library](#). During the next reporting period, once the PCLOB has made better progress processing its FOIA backlog, it plans to identify and proactively disclose additional (a)(2) records.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. The logs contain columns for information such as: (1) date of the request; (2) individualized tracking number (*i.e.*, “ID”); (3) last name; (4) category/type of requester; (5) records requested; (6) initial response date; (7) the number of days for the initial response; (8) status (*i.e.*, whether the case is closed) and, if closed, date; (9) notes; (10) fee waiver decisions; (11) expedited processing decisions; (12) whether the case was appealed; (13) appeal disposition; and, (14) disposition of the request, including any exemptions. The logs are posted in PDF format with appropriate redactions at [PCLOB’s FOIA Library](#).



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).

**PCLOB Response:**

- [FY24 organizational chart](#);
- [FOIA logs for FY23](#) (current as of December 18, 2025);
- [FOIA logs for FY24](#) (current as of December 18, 2025);
- [FOIA logs for FY25](#) (current as of December 18, 2025);
- [FOIA open cases log](#) (current as of December 18, 2025);
- [Internal policies](#) linked elsewhere on the website as operational records.

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

**PCLOB Response:** [PCLOB's FOIA Library](#).

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.

**PCLOB Response:** In January 2026, the PCLOB reorganized its FOIA Library to track more closely with the FOIA and to make it more user friendly. Examples of changes to the FOIA Library include revising the categories of proactively released information on the basis for its disclosure and briefly identifying what the record is in narrative form.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. The FOIA Team involves all agency employees with equities in the proactive disclosures in the process. The FOIA team gives proactive disclosures to its Public Affairs Office as it oversees the agency's website contractor which posts the material.



## Other Initiatives

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

**PCLOB Response:** In FY25, the agency committed to the FOIA by posting its first proactive disclosure since at least 2016. The FOIA team informs agency leadership about its proactive disclosures and the Board’s Executive Director approves all changes to the Board’s website. During much of this reporting period the Board has lacked a quorum and thus could not adopt and approve official policies. When the Board regains a quorum, the FOIA team will reassess proactive disclosures.



## Section IV: Steps Taken to Make Better Use of Technology

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

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.

2. Please briefly describe any new types of technology your agency uses to support your FOIA program.

**PCLOB Response:** During this reporting period, the agency sought and obtained NARA approval to use General Records Schedule 6.1 for applying a Capstone approach to management and disposition of all electronic communications (e.g., emails; MS Teams messaging; text messages on government systems). Additionally, agency leadership directed the agency IT team to modify an existing contract for wireless service to ensure proper retention, management, and disposition of text messages on government cell phones.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. The PCLOB uses an e-Discovery tool to search its systems for responsive records. In the next reporting period, the agency plans to assess use of AI or other tools to search its systems and to make redactions. However, the volume of FOIA requests at this agency may not justify the cost of such tools.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.

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

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.



## SECTION IV: STEPS TAKEN TO MAKE BETTER USE OF TECHNOLOGY

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

**PCLOB Response:** 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.

**PCLOB Response:**

- [FY24 Annual FOIA Report](#);
- [FY25 Annual FOIA Report](#).

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?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes.



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

### Section V: Steps Taken to Remove Barriers to Access, Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests, and Reduce Backlogs

#### 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?

**PCLOB Response:** No.

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

**PCLOB Response:** The PCLOB receives FOIA requests via email and mail, the National FOIA Portal, and fax. The PCLOB posts any proactive disclosures in its FOIA Library on the Board's website. Certain first-party requesters post *some* of the agency's FOIA-processed records in their on-line repositories. Because of the very small size of the agency, the nature of its work, and the average number of requests the agency has received over the past few years, at this time the agency does not anticipate establishing alternative means of access.

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

**PCLOB Response:** No additional steps at this time.

#### 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.

**PCLOB Response:** 5.8 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.

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.



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

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

**PCLOB Response:** No.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.

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

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** No.

### Backlogs – 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?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. The FOIA Working Group reduced the agency's backlog at the close of FY25, the first year-over-year reduction since FY21.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** Yes. The FOIA Working Group processed more requests in FY25 than it did during FY24.



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

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 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.

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.

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."

**PCLOB Response:** 58%. Of the remaining open cases at the end of FY25, 75% came from one requester.

### Backlogs – 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?

**PCLOB Response:** The agency did not have a backlog of appeals during the reporting period.

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?

**PCLOB Response:** The agency processed three appeals in both FY24 and FY25.



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

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 requests.
  - A loss of staff
  - An increase in the complexity of the requests received (if possible, please provide examples or briefly describe the types of complex requests contributing to your backlog increase)
  - Litigation
  - Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible.

**PCLOB Response:** The agency's appeal backlog did not increase during FY25.

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

**PCLOB Response:** The agency did not have an appeals backlog.



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

### 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 was asked to provide a plan for achieving backlog reduction in the year ahead. Did your agency implement a backlog reduction plan last year? If so, describe your agency's efforts in implementing this plan and note if your agency was able to achieve backlog reduction in Fiscal Year 2025?

**PCLOB Response:** Although the agency did not have a backlog of over 1000 requests in FY24, leadership implemented a backlog reduction plan in FY25 because the agency had not decreased its backlog in four years. Agency leadership committed additional resources to the FOIA Working Group. The FOIA Working Group employed three core principles to reduce the backlog: 1) research and process the 10 oldest; 2) process requests equitably (*i.e.*, not focusing exclusively on processing requests from the most frequent requester(s)); and 3) timely respond to newer and simpler requests received. Due to the very small size of the agency, the FOIA Working Group ensures a “whole-of-agency” approach to FOIA processes, involving all staff regardless of their regular duties. Based on the volume of requests received so far in Fiscal Year 2026 (“FY26”), the agency anticipates continuing to make progress on the backlog. However, other variables may impact processing times.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** See response to Question 19 above; the agency did not have a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in FY25.

### 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?

**PCLOB Response:** No.

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.

**PCLOB Response:** One. The agency has since cleared two of its ten oldest requests in the current fiscal year. See also the response to Question 30 below regarding one of the ten oldest that is subject to litigation.



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

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

**PCLOB Response:** See response to Question 19 above.

### 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?

**PCLOB Response:** There were no backlogged appeals.

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

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.

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

**PCLOB Response:** N/A.

### 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?

**PCLOB Response:** There were no pending consultations to close.

28. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.

**PCLOB Response:** There were no pending consultations to close.



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

### Additional Information on 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.

**PCLOB Response:** The PCLOB did not close its ten oldest pending requests due to a number of factors, including a significant increase in the number of incoming requests over the past two years and a high staff turnover rate (including the agency’s Chief FOIA Officer) with knowledge of the oldest pending requests. The PCLOB believes it is on track to close more of the ten oldest requests during FY26 with the increased focus on these older cases.

### 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:

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

**PCLOB Response:** The PCLOB had one request during the reporting period that is the subject of FOIA litigation. The case is also one of the agency’s ten oldest pending requests and involved consultations with other agencies.