RECEIVED

By Office of the Commission Secretary at 10:42 am, Nov 30, 2017

AGENDA DOCUMENT NO. 17-54-A



AGENDA ITEM
For meeting of December 7, 2017
TION COMMISSION

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION Washington, DC 20463

	November 30, 2017
MEMORAN	<u>IDUM</u>
TO:	THE COMMISSION
FROM:	Gregory R. Baker Chief FOIA Officer
	Deputy General Counsel – Administration
	Deputy General Counsel – Administration Robert M. Kahn W GW
	Robert M. Kahn Drug Gr
	Acting FOIA Public Liaison
	Acting Assistant General Counsel for Administrative Law
	2/3. 10/7
	Candace J. Salley \mathcal{C}^{5} \mathcal{M} \mathcal{C}^{5}
	FOIA Requester Service Center
SUBJECT:	FY 2017 Annual FOIA Report
XX/	
	rawing and resubmitting the Office of General Counsel's Fiscal Year 2017 Annual
*	, which circulated to the Commission on November 13, 2017. We are ly resubmitting the attached Report as a non-sensitive document, so that it may be
	Open Session. Thank you.
discussed iii v	open session. Thank you.
Attachment	
FY 20	017 Annual FOIA Report



November 13, 2017

MEMORANDUM

TO: THE COMMISSION

FROM: Gregory R. Baker CAS

Chief FOIA Officer

Deputy General Counsel - Administration

Robert M. Kahn RMK W GNJ

Acting FOIA Public Liaison

Acting Assistant General Counsel, Administrative Law

Candace J. Salley

Paralegal

FOIA Requester Service Center

SUBJECT: Fiscal Year 2017 Freedom of Information Act Annual Report

Circulated on a No-Objection Basis

Every year the Federal Election Commission ("Commission"), through the FOIA Requester Service Center ("FOIA Office"), submits a report to the Department of Justice Office of Information Policy ("OIP") that details the Commission's Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA") activities for the prior fiscal year. The report provides helpful statistics regarding the Commission's FOIA requests, consultations, and appeals. This year's report is due to OIP on November 20, 2017, and must be posted on the Commission's website by February 1, 2018.

Absent objection, the FOIA Office will submit the attached Report to OIP at the expiration of the no-objection period. Please let us know if you have any questions in the meantime.

Cc: Lisa Stevenson
Jacqueline Crawford

Attachment: Fiscal Year 2017 Freedom of Information Act Report

Federal Election Commission Freedom of Information Act Annual Report Fiscal Year 2017

I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT

1. Person(s) to be contacted with questions about the Report.

Gregory R. Baker, Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer
Robert M. Kahn, Acting Freedom of Information Act Public Liaison
Candace J. Salley, Paralegal, Freedom of Information Act Requester
Service Center

Federal Election Commission 999 E Street, NW Washington, DC 20463 (202) 694-1650

2. Electronic link for access to the Report on the agency website.

http://www.fec.gov/press/foia.shtml

3. How to obtain a copy of the Report in paper form.

Contact:

FOIA Requester Service Center, ATTN: Candace J. Salley Federal Election Commission 999 E Street, NW Washington, DC 20463 (202) 694-1650

II. MAKING A FOIA REQUEST

1. Agency components¹ that receive FOIA requests.

Federal Election Commission FOIA Requester Service Center 999 E Street, NW Washington, DC 20463

¹ Please note that because the Commission is a small agency, the entire agency is considered to be one component (as opposed to individual divisions).

(202) 694-1650 (202) 219-1043 (fax number) foia@fec.gov (email address)

Brief description of why some requests are not granted and an overview of certain general categories of the agency's records to which the FOIA exemptions apply.

The Federal Election Commission (FEC) is an independent regulatory agency with jurisdiction over the financing of campaigns in federal elections (that is, those for President and Vice President of the United States, United States Senator, and United States Representative). It also administers the public financing program for Presidential elections. The Commission enforces the limits on the sources and amounts of contributions to candidates for federal office, reviews the registration and periodic reports filed by political committees supporting federal candidates, and publicly discloses those reports.

By far, the most frequent reason requests are denied at the FEC is that the agency has no responsive records. Some FOIA requesters do not clearly understand the limits on the agency's jurisdiction and ask for documents that the Agency does not maintain, such as information pertaining to state or local elections, voter registration and voter turnout information, and information regarding the qualifications of candidates. Other documents are not released because the release of information concerning the Agency's open enforcement cases and conciliation efforts in enforcement matters is prohibited from disclosure by the Federal Election Campaign Act. See 52 U.S.C. §§ 30109(a)(4)(B) (conciliation), 30109(a)(12) (open enforcement matters). Consequently, this material is exempt from disclosure under FOIA Exemption 3.

Other FOIA exemptions that often apply to FEC records include, but are not limited to:

- a) Inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by the deliberative process, attorney-client, or attorney work-product privileges (Exemption 5); and
- b) Information involving matters of personal privacy (Exemptions 6 and 7(C)).

III. ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS

- 1. Agency-specific acronyms or terms used in this Report.
 - a. FEC Federal Election Commissionb. FECA Federal Election Campaign Act
- 2. Definitions of terms used in this Report:

- a. Administrative Appeal a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a FOIA determination made by the agency at the initial request level.
- b. **Average Number** the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.
- c. **Backlog** the number of requests or administrative appeals that are pending at an agency at the end of the fiscal year that are beyond the statutory time period for a response.
- d. Component for agencies that process requests on a decentralized basis, a "component" is an entity, also sometimes referred to as an Office, Division, Bureau, Center, or Directorate, within the agency that processes FOIA requests. The FOIA now requires that agencies include in their Annual FOIA Report data for both the overall agency and for each principal component of the agency.
- e. **Consultation** the procedure whereby the agency responding to a FOIA request first forwards a record to another agency for its review because that other agency has an interest in the document. Once the agency in receipt of the consultation finishes its review of the record, it responds back to the agency that forwarded it. That agency, in turn, will then respond to the FOIA requester.
- f. **Exemption 3 Statute** a federal statute that exempts information from disclosure and which the agency relies on to withhold information under subsection (b)(3) of the FOIA.
- g. **FOIA Request** a FOIA request is generally a request to a federal agency for access to records concerning another person (i.e., a "third-party" request), or concerning an organization, or a particular topic of interest. FOIA requests also include requests made by requesters seeking records concerning themselves (i.e., "first-party" requests) when those requesters are not subject to the Privacy Act, such as non-U.S. citizens. Moreover, because all first-party requesters should be afforded the benefit of both the access provisions of the FOIA as well as those of the Privacy Act, FOIA requests also include any first-party requests where an agency determines that it must search beyond its Privacy Act "systems of records" or where a Privacy Act exemption applies, and the agency looks to FOIA to afford the greatest possible access. All requests which require the agency to utilize the FOIA in responding to the requester are included in this Report.

Additionally, a FOIA request includes records referred to the agency for processing and direct response to the requester. It does not, however, include records for which the agency has received a

- consultation from another agency. (Consultations are reported separately in Section XII of this Report.)
- h. **Full Grant** an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.
- i. Full Denial an agency decision not to release any records in response to a FOIA request because the records are exempt in their entirety under one or more of the FOIA exemptions, or because of a procedural reason, such as when no records could be located.
- j. **Median Number** the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
- k. **Multi-Track Processing** a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests granted expedited processing are placed in another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.
 - Expedited Processing an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester satisfies the requirements for expedited processing as set forth in the statute and in agency regulations.
 - ii. **Simple Request** a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non-expedited) track based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.
 - iii. **Complex Request** a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the high volume and/or complexity of the records requested.
- I. Partial Grant/Partial Denial in response to a FOIA request, an agency decision to disclose some portions of the records and to withhold others that are exempt under the FOIA, or to otherwise deny a portion of the request for a procedural reason.
- m. Pending Request or Pending Administrative Appeal a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has not taken final action in all respects.
- n. Perfected Request a request for records which reasonably describes such records and is made in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any) and procedures to be followed.

- Processed Request or Processed Administrative Appeal a
 request or administrative appeal for which an agency has taken final
 action in all respects.
- p. Range in Number of Days the lowest and highest number of days to process requests or administrative appeals.
- q. Time Limits the time period in the statute for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily twenty working days from receipt of a perfected FOIA request).
- 3. Concise descriptions of the nine FOIA exemptions.
 - a. Exemption 1: classified national defense and foreign relations information.
 - b. Exemption 2: internal agency rules and practices related to personnel matters.
 - c. Exemption 3: information that is prohibited from disclosure by a federal statute other than the FOIA.
 - d. Exemption 4: trade secrets and privileged or confidential business information.
 - e. Exemption 5: inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges.
 - f. Exemption 6: information involving matters of personal privacy.
 - g. Exemption 7: records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent that the production of those records (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings; (B) would deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication; (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy; (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source; (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions; or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.
 - h. Exemption 8: information that is contained in or related to examination, operations, or condition reports prepared by, or on behalf of, an agency for the regulation or supervision of a financial institution.
 - i. Exemption 9: geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

IV. EXEMPTION 3 STATUTES

A. Exemption 3 Statutes Relied upon to Withhold Information

Statute	Type of Information Withheld	Case Citation	Number of Times Relied upon per Component	Total Number of Times Relied upon by Agency
5 U.S.C. app. § 107(a) (Ethics in Government Act of 1978)	Financial disclosure information pertaining to certain government employees and candidates for President and Vice-President.	Meyerhoff v. EPA, 958 F.2d 1498, 1500- 02 (9th Cir. 1992); Seife v. NIH, 874 F. Supp. 2d 248, 254 (S.D.N.Y. 2012); Concepcion v. FBI, 606 F. Supp. 2d 14, 33 (D.D.C. 2009); Glascoe v. DOJ, No. 04-0486, 2005 WL 1139269, at *1 (D.D.C. May 15, 2005).	AGENCY OVERALL	3
5 U.S.C. § 7 (Inspector General Act of 1978)	The FEC is prohibited from disclosing the identity of an employee without the consent of the employee, after receipt of a complaint.		AGENCY OVERALL	3
52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(4) (Federal Election Campaign Act)	No action by the Commission or any person, and no information derived, in connection with any conciliation attempt by the Commission under subparagraph (A) may be made public by the Commission without the written consent of the respondent and the Commission.		AGENCY OVERALL	5
52 U.S.C. § 30109(a)(12)(A) (Federal Election Campaign Act)	Information concerning a notification or investigation made under this section pertaining to enforcement of the Federal Election Campaign Act.	Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington v. FEC, No. 04-1672, slip op. at 5 (D.D.C. May 16, 2005).	AGENCY OVERALL	8

V. FOIA REQUESTS

A. Received, Processed and Pending FOIA Requests

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Number of Requests Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
AGENCY OVERALL	56	150	134	72

B. (1) Disposition of FOIA Requests – All Processed Requests

	Number of Full Grants	Number of Partial Grants/ Partial Denials	Number of Full Denials Based on Exemptions	Number of Full Denials Based on Reasons Other than Exemptions									
				No Records	All Records Referred to Another Component or Agency	Request Withdrawn	Fee- Related Reason	Records not Reasonably Described	Improper FOIA Request for Other Reason	Not Agency Record	Duplicate request	Other *Explain in chart below	TOTAL
AGENCY OVERALL	39	38	7	45	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	134

B. (2) Disposition of FOIA Requests – "Other" Reasons for "Full Denials

Component	Description of "Other" Reasons for Denials from Chart B (1) & Number of Times Those Reasons Were Relied upon	TOTAL
	Request was Administratively Terminated due to lack of response from the requester.	1
AGENCY OVERALL	1	

B. (3) Disposition of FOIA Requests – Number of Times Exemptions Applied

	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.	Ex.						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7(A)	7(B)	7(C)	7(D)	7(E)	7(F)	8	9
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	19	2	21	26	4	0	10	0	9	1	0	0

VI. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OF INITIAL DETERMINATIONS OF FOIA REQUESTS

A. Received, Processed and Pending Administrative Appeals

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Number of Appeals Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
6	8	9	5

B. Disposition of Administrative Appeals – All Processed Appeals

Number Affirmed on Appeal	Number Partially Affirmed & Partially Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number Completely Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Appeals Closed for Other Reasons	TOTAL
6	1	2	0	9

C. (1) Reasons for Denial on Appeal - Number of Times Exemptions Applied

Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4				Ex. 7(B)				Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
0	0	1	0	3	3	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	0

C. (2) Reasons for Denial on Appeal – Reasons Other than Exemptions

No Records	Records Referred at Initial Request Level	Request Withdrawn	Fee- Related Reason	Records not Reasonably Described	Improper Request for Other Reasons	Not Agency Record	Duplicate Request or Appeal	Request in Litigation	Appeal Based Solely on Denial of Request for Expedited Processing	Other *Explain in chart below
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

C. (3) Reasons for Denial on Appeal - "Other" Reasons from Section VI, C (2) Chart

Description of "Other" Reasons for Denial on Appeal from Chart C (2) & Number of Times Those Reasons Were Relied upon	TOTAL
Description #	
0	0

C. (4) Response Time for Administrative Appeals

Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
29	29	20	37

C. (5) Ten Oldest Pending Administrative Appeals

	10 th Oldest Appeal	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Appeal
Date of										
Receipt of										
Ten	Date									
Oldest										
Appeals	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	9/12/17	3/26/14	2/20/14	11/27/13	2/28/12
Number of										
Days	#									
Pending	0	0	0	0	0	13	882	906	962	1403

VII. FOIA REQUESTS: RESPONSE TIME FOR PROCESSED AND PENDING REQUESTS

A. Processed Requests – Response Time for All Processed Perfected Requests

	SIMPLE				COMPLEX				EXPEDITE:D PROCESSING				
!	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Day:s	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	
AGENCY OVERALL	12	14.5	3	79	50.5	97.2	11	448	20	20	20	20	

B. Processed Requests - Response Time for Perfected Requests in Which Information Was Granted

	SIMPLE			COMPLEX				EXPEDITE:D PROCESSING				
	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days	Median Number of Days	Averagle Number of Day:5	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
AGENCY OVERALL	11.5	13.6	3	37	50	103.6	11	448	0	0	0	0

C. Processed Requests – Response Time in Day Increments

Simple Requests

	1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401 + Days	TOTAL
AGENCY OVERALL	75	16	1	11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	93

Complex Requests

	1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401 + Days	TOTAL
AGENCY OVERALL	6	13	5	3	4	1	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	40

Requests Granted Expedited Processing

	1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101-120 Days	121-140 Days	141-160 Days	161-180 Days	181-200 Days	201-300 Days	301-400 Days	401 + Days	TOTAL
AGENCY OVERALL	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	. 0	0	1

D. Pending Requests – All Pending Perfected Requests

		SIMPLE			COMPLE	x	EXPEDITED PROCESSING			
	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	
AGENCY OVERALL	13	10	294.8	59	302	458.3	0	0	0	

E. Pending Requests – Ten Oldest Pending Perfected Requests

	10 th Oldest Request and Number of Days Pending	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Request and Number of Days Pending
Agency	8/7/13	8/7/13	8/28/13	8/23/13	8/7/13	8/7/13	8/7/13	7/25/13	10/18/12	6/9/11
Overall	1014	1014	1021	1024	1039	1039	1039	1048	1239	1583

VIII. REQUESTS FOR EXPEDITED PROCESSING AND REQUESTS FOR FEE WAIVER

A. Requests for Expedited Processing

	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate	Number Adjudicated Within Ten Calendar Days
AGENCY			_		
OVERALL	1	2	10	15	2

B. Requests for Fee Waiver

	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate
AGENCY OVERALL	2	0	46.5	46.5

IX. FOIA PERSONNEL AND COSTS

Column 1 Column 2

	Р	ERSONNEL		соѕтѕ				
	Number of "Full-Time FOIA Employees"	Number of "Equivalent Full-Time FOIA Employees"	Total Number of "Full- Time FOIA Staff" (The sum of Columns 1 & 2)	Processing Costs (At initial request and appeal levels)	Litigation- Related Costs	Total Costs		
AGENCY OVERALL	0	2.19	2.19	\$272,205.51	\$113,460.20	\$385,665.71		

X. FEES COLLECTED FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS

	Total Amount of Fees Collected	Percentage of Total Costs
AGENCY OVERALL	0	N/A

XI. FOIA REGULATIONS

PUBLIC RECORDS AND THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT

- 11 CFR 4.1 Definitions.
- 11 CFR 4.2 Policy on disclosure of records.
- 11 CFR 4.3 Scope.
- 11 CFR 4.4 Availability of records.
- 11 CFR 4.5 Categories of exemptions.
- 11 CFR 4.6 <u>Discretionary release of exempt records.</u>
- 11 CFR 4.7 Requests for records.
- 11 CFR 4.8 Appeal of denial.
- 11 CFR 4.9 Fees.

XII. BACKLOGS, CONSULTATIONS, AND COMPARISONS

A. Backlogs of FOIA Requests and Administrative Appeals

	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of Fiscal Year	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of Fiscal Year
AGENCY OVERALL	60	4

B. Consultations on FOIA Requests – Received, Processed, and Pending Consultations

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Pending at Your Agency as of Start of the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultation Received from Other Agencies During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Processed by Your Agency During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were Pending at Your Agency as of End of the Fiscal Year
AGENCY OVERALL	0	2	2	0

C. Consultations on FOIA Requests – Ten Oldest Consultations Received from Other Agencies and Pending at Your Agency

Pending	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	and Number of Days Pending
Date									
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of									
Days	•								0
	N/A Number of	Date N/A Number of Days	Date N/A N/A Number of Days	Date N/A N/A N/A Number of Days	Date N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A Number of Days	Date N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/	Date N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A Number of Days	Date N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/	Date N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/A N/

D. Comparison of Numbers of Requests from Previous and Current Annual Report – Requests Received, Processed, and Backlogged

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	NUMBER OF REQUESTS RECEIVED		NUMBER OF REQUESTS PROCESSED	
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
AGENCY OVERALL	129	150	116	134

	Column 1	Column 2
	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
AGENCY OVERALL	46	60

E. Comparison of Numbers of Administrative Appeals from Previous and Current Annual Report – Appeals Received, Processed, and Backlogged

	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
	NUMBER OF APPEALS RECEIVED		NUMBER OF APPEALS PROCESSED	
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
AGENCY OVERALL	5	8	3	9

	Column 1	Column 2
	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
AGENCY OVERALL	5	4

F. Discussion of Other FOIA Activities (Optional)

N/A