

FOIA Requester Survey Results - No Quotes

Background Info:

Date of Launch: 5/5/2019

Date closed: 9/15/2019

Number of respondents: 81

Question 1. What research do you perform before submitting an FOIA request (e.g. checking FOIA logs or agency website, calling FOIA Officer, Google search, etc).

Number of responses: 79

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
Google/Internet	75.95%	60
Ag. web./materials	50.63%	40
Checking FOIA logs	20.25%	16
FOIA Officer	13.92%	11
asking outside experts	13.92%	11
legal research	10.13%	8
n/a	8.86%	7
internal expertise	5.06%	4
FOIA Reading Rooms	3.80%	3

Word cloud

Q1 What research do you perform before submitting an FOIA request (e.g. checking FOIA logs or agency website, calling FOIA Officer, Google search, etc).



Question 2. How receptive are you to narrowing your FOIA request to get a faster response?

Number of responses: 81

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
Very	49.38%	40
depends	19.75%	16
somewhat	18.52%	15
no	4.94%	4
n/a	3.70%	3
adverse	3.70%	3

Word cloud

Q2 How receptive are you to narrowing your FOIA request to get a faster response?

want Often documents help Depends request try will specific documents
 always response usually us agency Sometimes
 requests know receptive depends
 narrowing ask narrow request work records specific
 generally Somewhat time Yes makes good

Question 3. What are your strategies for encouraging an agency response without appeal or litigation?

Number of responses: 80

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
be communicative	43.75%	35
n/a	21.25%	17
be collaborative	17.50%	14
be direct/clear	18.75%	15
be stern	12.50%	10
move up the chain	7.50%	6
go public w concerns	5%	4
be persistent	3.75%	3
document process	2.50%	2

Word cloud

Q3 What are your strategies for encouraging an agency response without appeal or litigation?

litigation first possible phone calls information OGIS Calling process
response info email sometimes know law appeal search
agency follow request lawyer will narrow
FOIA officer phone FOIA agency contact ask Work strategies
specific contacting conversation try see given

Question 4. What are your biggest questions about the FOIA process?

Number of responses: 74

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
process	31.08%	23
accountabil./transp.	27.03%	20
timeline	14.86%	11
staffing / training	13.51%	10
communication methods	8.11%	6
n/a	8.11%	6
responsiveness	6.76%	5
the law	4.05%	3
cost	2.70%	2
efficiency	2.70%	2
more help from agency	1.35%	1
proactivity	1.35%	1

Word cloud

Q4 What are your biggest questions about the FOIA process?

review responsive even responses even released information redaction cases
process uses records provide FOIA response
agency take requests different time consequences
documents None law litigation many often take long

Question 5. What are your primary motivations for litigating a FOIA request?

Number of responses: 79

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
inadequate results	51.90%	41
transparency	16.46%	13
delay	15.19%	12
n/a	13.92%	11
Unhelpful agency	8.86%	7
deterrence	7.59%	6
money	5.06%	4
outside pressure	2.53%	2
last resort	1.27%	1
not following protocol	1.27%	1

n/a	2.50%	2
clarity of response	2.50%	2

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Q6 In what ways do you think the agencies you generally work with could improve their FOIA process?

phone every use deadlines FOIA request actually response search needs
 FOIA officers information online agency Train process
 requesters requests better FOIA communication requesters time
 slow staff receive records make documents cases resources communication Hire
 waiting

Question 7. In what ways do you think requesters could improve their approach to the FOIA process?

Some respondents misunderstood this question and thought it meant what could the FOIA processors do to improve.

Number of responses: 75

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
narrowing request	41.33%	31
patience/ collab	21.33%	16
advanced research	18.67%	14
n/a	14.67%	11
training	4%	3

litigate	4%	3
acting in good faith	2.67%	2
providing more info	1.33%	1
building relationships	1.33%	1

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Q7 In what ways do you think requesters could improve their approach to the FOIA process?



Question 8. If you had a magic wand to “fix FOIA” what would you do with it?

Answers were challenging to categorize

Number of responses: 78

Key findings:

	% of answers	Total Number of responses
increased rec. access	28.21%	22
more staff/capac.	26.92%	21
accountability	24.36%	19
more timely	16.67%	13

better interfaces w ag.	10.26%	8
more transparency	5.13%	4
better doc form	3.85%	3
uniformity	3.85%	3
no cost	3.85%	3
decentralization	1.28%	1
n/a	1.28%	1
repeal	1.28%	1
increase fees	1.28%	1

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Q8 If you had a magic wand to “fix FOIA” what would you do with it?

available state exemptions trained information Also law previous requesters
office documents free staff increase FOIA resources Make
required requests eliminate agency many records fee
government produced FOIA officers worked FOIA offices
limit processing public every require agencies

Question 9. What rate of processing (number of records or pages per month) do you consider reasonable?

Could not tag. A lot of people did not have answers, some people gave rates per hour, and some people just gave random number (presumably per month because of the question).

Q9 What rate of processing (number of records or pages per month) do you consider reasonable?

pages month varies answer per month processing say know Per
 agency sure depends redactions request idea
 records FOIA pages month question nature request think entire
 reasonable

Question 10. Would information regarding an office’s available resources/FOIA queues encourage you to either forego appeals/litigation in favor of narrowing a request?

Number of responses: 75

Key findings:

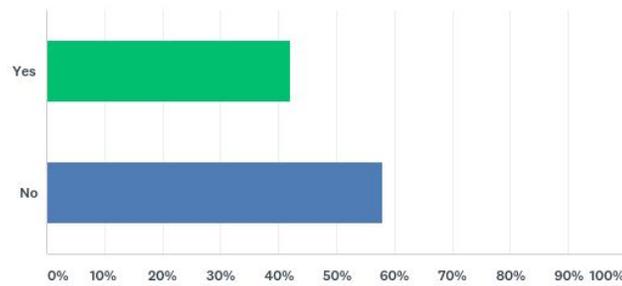
	% of answers	Total Number of responses
no	33.33%	25
yes	32%	24
depends	17.33%	13
n/a	5.33%	4
yes but	5.33%	4
should do it either way	4%	3
probably	1.33%	1

Word cloud

Q10 Would information regarding an office's available resources/FOIA queues encourage you to either forego appeals/litigation in favor of narrowing a request?

say available requesters litigation sure resources FOIA always litigate
information records narrow request queues Yes
good agencies narrowing need helpful requests appeals litigation
resources maybe FOIA time still

Q11 Are you a member of the media?



Q12 On average, what number of requests do you file per month?

