

Google Groups

Public comment re: DRAFT May 19, 2020 'At-a-Glance Recommendations'

Winstead, Julie A. <Julie.Winstead@va.gov>

May 28, 2020 5:09 PM

Posted in group: **FOIA Advisory Committee**

I wish to add the following Public Comment regarding the DRAFT May 19, 2020 'At-a-Glance Recommendations' received and reviewed today.

I support and strongly endorse the following recommendations for the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Office of Government Information Services (OGIS), U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Information Policy (OIP), and federal agencies – as contained within this draft document:

#3 – encourage development, expansion, use of central repositories in standardized ways; combined with #12 - agency use of FOIA portals;

#5 – provision of mandatory annual training for all employees – with mandatory training of all new employees;

#6 – Mandate and improve training and mandatory briefings, updates for Senior and Mid-level leaders during times of leadership transition;

#7 – Inclusion of Performance Measure in Agency Performance Plans – specifically at facility leadership levels;

#14 – review of frequency of requests and alternative processes for individuals seeking records about themselves;

#16 – review and promotion of clear career trajectories for FOIA professionals;

#19 – that Congress engage in regular and robust oversight with public hearings and strengthen OGIS;

#20 – Congress to directly address sufficient, dedicated funding to meet legal obligations of the FOIA and Privacy Act;

#22 -promotion of research into using artificial intelligence to improve search and response capabilities.

The above support and endorsement is based upon my years of service in our Federal Government employment and the noticeable lack of training at all levels of our organization- as related to differences between private sector employment when compared to federal service employment regulations and requirements. At all levels of our organization, there is profound ignorance of basic organizational knowledge to include: record creation, maintenance, access, and retention – coupled with lack of knowledge regarding the Freedom of Information Act and its applicability to everyday communication and creation of federal records. The work of this Committee in formulating and drafting these recommendations addresses factual, essential needs - which promote the forward movement of the oversight agencies to promote, expand, and strongly support our obligation to the public we serve. These recommendations provide the prioritized framework with the positive, committed momentum to assure implementation of each and every one of these recommendations. The endorsement, support, and realization of these recommendations over a reasonable timeframe, are needed throughout the federal workforce.

Julie (Jill) Winstead, RHIA

Privacy/FOIA Officer

New Mexico VA Health Care System

505-265-1711, ext. 5723