



OFFICE of GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES

March 17, 2016—sent via email

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and RECORDS  
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Special Agent In Charge  
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United States Secret Service  
Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act Program  
Communications Center  
245 Murray Lane, SW, Building T-5  
Washington, DC 20223

Dear Ms. Campbell:

This letter is in reference to your February 27, 2017 response to Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) recommendations for improving administration of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) at the United States Secret Service (USSS). We appreciate your thorough response to our July 2016 FOIA assessment and thank you for participating in OGIS's agency compliance assessment program.

We appreciate your attention to our recommendations and your thorough responses. USSS has taken a number of important steps to strengthen its FOIA program and improve compliance with the statute. We have reviewed your responses and, as indicated in the attached form, we consider all 12 of OGIS's recommendations for the USSS FOIA program to be closed.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Kirsten Mitchell at 202-741-5775 or at [kirsten.mitchell@nara.gov](mailto:kirsten.mitchell@nara.gov).



Sincerely,

ALINA M. SEMO  
Director

cc: Jonathan Cantor, Acting Chief FOIA Officer, Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
James Holzer, Deputy Chief FOIA Officer, DHS  
Latita Payne, Disclosure/Privacy Officer, USSS  
Emily Patten, Audit Liaison, Office of Professional Responsibility, USSS

**OFFICE OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES  
FREEDOM of INFORMATION ACT COMPLIANCE ASSESSMENTS**

<b>Department of Homeland Security, United States Secret Service: July 2016</b>		
<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Agency Response</b>	<b>Status</b>
Adopt management controls and continue working towards using metrics in employee performance goals.	Concur. Secret Service's FOIAXpress management system is used to track the number of pages processed, which will be used as a management and quality-control oversight tool. This data is currently reported to Secret Service leadership monthly to highlight the FOIA workload. The USSS's FOIA program is currently working with the Performance Management Team within the Office of Human Resources. New individual performance metrics are being established and will be put in place at the beginning of the next rating period.	Closed
Create a formal data-driven backlog reduction plan.	Concur. USSS is in the process of creating a formal data-driven backlog reduction plan to reduce the backlog of requests by 10 percent.	Closed
Direct appeals staff to include information about mediation services offered by the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) in its final appeal response letters.	Concur. The Office of Chief Counsel is going to include information about mediation services offered by OGIS in its final appeal response letters.	Closed
Continue to work with the Office of Chief Counsel (OCC) to improve the quality of initial searches.	Concur. The FOIA/PA program continues to work closely with the Office of Chief Counsel to improve the quality of initial searches. The Intake Section staff typically consults OCC on an informal basis to discuss multi-series and more complex requests to ensure adequate searches on a case-by-case basis.	Closed
Update USSS Standard of Operating Procedures to reflect process for responding to first-party requests with no responsive records.	Concur. USSS FOIA Standard of Operating Procedures has been updated to reflect the process for responding to first-party requests with no responsive records.	Closed

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<p>Ensure the FOIA branch has sufficient IT support.</p>	<p>Concur. Secret Service FOIA Program has recently procured on-site support from AINS and efforts are underway to update the existing software with the most recent update in an effort to ensure full functionality, system stabilization, increase productivity, improve efficiency, and improve the Program's efforts to reduce the backlog of FOIA/PA requests within this Agency. In addition, the Special Agent in Charge of the Information Resources Management Division (IRMD) has assigned an Information Technology Specialist to work closely with the on-site support from AINS to update and stabilize the FOIAXpress system.</p>	<p>Closed</p>
<p>Improve ability to check the status of requests by updating the FOIA web page to direct requesters to the Requester Service Center to track requests and discussing how to regularly and securely provide data about the status of USSS FOIA requests to the DHS Privacy Office.</p>	<p>Concur. The USSS FOIA Program has had discussions with Information Technology, Cyber Security and Web Content Professionals regarding the most secure way to provide status updates to requesters via Secret Service's FOIA Web page. Efforts are underway to provide status of requests to requesters via Secret Service's FOIA Web page.</p>	<p>Closed</p>
<p>Discuss improving the efficiency of referrals from U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services to USSS</p>	<p>Concur. U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has agreed to send referrals to Secret Service FOIA Program electronically.</p>	<p>Closed</p>
<p>Regularly communicate with requesters about the status of requests, particularly regarding the oldest cases.</p>	<p>Concur. USSS FOIA Program has created a template about the status of requests to send out to the requesters, particularly regarding the oldest cases, to provide a status update and an estimated date of completion. The Program plans to implement the use of the new templates immediately.</p>	<p>Closed</p>
<p>Limit the use of "still interested" letters in accordance with Office of Information Policy guidance.</p>	<p>Concur. The Program has been re-enforcing the appropriate use of "still interested" letters with the staff. The USSS FOIA Program plans to provide additional training to the staff on the proper use of "still interested" letters pursuant to current DOJ guidance.</p>	<p>Closed</p>
<p>Develop template letters that provide an explanation for why certain material is covered by an exemption.</p>	<p>Concur. The Secret Service FOIA Program has developed template letters that provide an explanation for why certain material is covered by an exemption. The Program plans to implement the use of the letters immediately.</p>	<p>Closed</p>

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Include the total number of pages released in final response once FOIA tracking and processing system if fully functional.	Concur. USSS FOIA Program currently includes the total number of pages released in final responses.	Closed
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