

**Federal Election Commission
Freedom of Information Act Annual Report
Fiscal Year 2010**

I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT

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

**Lawrence L. Calvert, Jr., Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer
Nicole St. Louis Matthis, Freedom of Information Act Public Liaison
Candace J. Salley, 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 Web site.

<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 components that receive FOIA requests.

**Federal Election Commission
FOIA Requester Service Center, ATTN: Candace J. Salley
Room 408
999 E Street, NW
Washington, DC 20463
(202) 694-1650
(202) 219-1043 (fax number)
foia@fec.gov (email address)**

2. 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. Some FOIA requests are not granted because 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 elections to state and local office, registration and voting information, and information regarding the qualifications of candidates. Other documents are not released because the release of conciliation-related material and information concerning open enforcement cases is prohibited by the Federal Election Campaign Act. See 2 U.S.C. 437g(a)(4) (conciliation) and (12) (open enforcement matters). This material is exempt from disclosure under FOIA Exemption 3.

In general, FOIA exemptions apply to the following types of agency records (non-exhaustive list):

- Internal agency rules and practices and enforcement thresholds (Exemption 2)
- 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.

FEC – Federal Election Commission
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 agency overall 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 entireties 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 yet another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first in/first out basis.
 - i. **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.
- l. **Partial Grant/Partial Denial** – in response to a FOIA request, an agency decision to disclose portions of the records and to withhold other portions 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. **Perfect 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.
- o. **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
- c. **Exemption 3:** information that is prohibited from disclosure by another federal law
- d. **Exemption 4:** trade secrets and other 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 relating to the supervision of financial institutions
- i. **Exemption 9:** geological information on 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 |
|---|---|---------------|---|---|
| <p>2 U.S.C. § 437g(a)(12)(A) 2 U.S.C. § 437g(a)(4)(B)</p> | <p>Pursuant to the Agency’s implementing statute, the Commission is prohibited from disclosing “any notification or investigation made under this section” of “any person without the written consent of the person receiving such notification or the person with respect to whom such investigation is made.” In addition, “no action by the Commission or any person, and no information derived, in connection with any conciliation attempt made by the Commission” may be made public “without the written consent of” all parties.</p> | <p>N/A</p> | <p>AGENCY OVERALL¹</p> | <p>6</p> |

¹ The Federal Election Commission does not have any component offices, therefore all data reported is for the agency as a whole.

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 | 17 | 77 | 81 | 13 |

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 | | | | | | | | | TOTAL |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|---|--|---|---|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| | | | | 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 | |
| AGENCY OVERALL | 25 | 21 | 1 | 27 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 81 |

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 |
|-----------------------|---|--------------|
| AGENCY OVERALL | Description # N/A | 0 |

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

| | Ex. 1 | Ex. 2 | Ex. 3 | Ex. 4 | Ex. 5 | Ex. 6 | Ex. 7(A) | Ex. 7(B) | Ex. 7(C) | Ex. 7(D) | Ex. 7(E) | Ex. 7(F) | Ex. 8 | Ex. 9 |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| AGENCY OVERALL | 0 | 15 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 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 |
| 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 |

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 |
|----------------------------------|--|--|---|--------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| Ex. 1 | Ex. 2 | Ex. 3 | Ex. 4 | Ex. 5 | Ex. 6 | Ex. 7(A) | Ex. 7(B) | Ex. 7(C) | Ex. 7(D) | Ex. 7(E) | Ex. 7(F) | Ex. 8 | Ex. 9 |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 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 |
|------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|---|----------------------------------|
| 0 | 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 # N/A | 0 |

C. (4) Response Time for Administrative Appeals

| Median Number of Days | Average Number of Days | Lowest Number of Days | Highest Number of Days |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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 Oldest Appeals | Date | | | | | | | | | |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9/23/10 | 9/13/10 | 7/22/08 |
| Number of Days Pending | # | | | | | | | | | |
| | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 13 | 549 |

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

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

| | SIMPLE | | | | COMPLEX | | | | EXPEDITED 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 Days | Lowest Number of Days | Highest Number of Days |
| AGENCY OVERALL | 20 | 52.6 | 1 | 688 | 65 | 65 | 65 | 65 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

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

| | SIMPLE | | | | COMPLEX | | | | EXPEDITED 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 Days | Lowest Number of Days | Highest Number of Days |
| AGENCY OVERALL | 48 | 77.7 | 2 | 536 | 65 | 65 | 65 | 65 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |

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 | 43 | 16 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 79 |

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 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |

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 | | | COMPLEX | | | 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 | 8 | 58 | 115.7 | 5 | 131 | 288.8 | 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 Overall | Date 8/10/10 Number of Days 36 | 7/20/10 51 | 6/8/10 80 | 4/8/10 122 | 3/26/10 131 | 11/17/09 219 | 8/18/09 281 | 8/5/09 290 | 4/1/09 378 | 9/10/07 762 |

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 | 6 | 2 | 2 | 7 |

B. Requests for Fee Waiver

| | Number Granted | Number Denied | Median Number of Days to Adjudicate | Average Number of Days to Adjudicate |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--|---|
| AGENCY OVERALL | 0 | 0 | N/A | N/A |

IX. FOIA PERSONNEL AND COSTS

Column 1 Column 2

| | PERSONNEL | | | COSTS | | |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|---|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| | 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 | 1 | 1 | \$92,954.91 | 0 | \$92,954.91 |

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](#) Discretionary release of exempt records.

[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 | 10 | 1 |

3. Explanation of Backlog.

Due to the press of other business, limitations on resources, and a handful of particularly voluminous requests, the agency was not able to process as many FOIA requests as expected in FY 2010.

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 <u>Pending</u> at the FEC as of <u>Start</u> of the Fiscal Year | Number of Consultation <u>Received</u> from Other Agencies During the Fiscal Year | Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were <u>Processed</u> by the FEC During the Fiscal Year | Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that Were <u>Pending</u> at the FEC as of <u>End</u> of the Fiscal Year |
| AGENCY OVERALL | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

| | 10 th Oldest Consultation and Number of Days Pending | 9th | 8th | 7th | 6th | 5th | 4th | 3rd | 2nd | Oldest Consultation and Number of Days Pending |
|-----------------------|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|--|
| Agency Overall | Date | | | | | | | | | |
| | N/A | | | | | | | | | |
| | Number of Days N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |

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 | 76 | 77 | 67 | 81 |

| | 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 | 11 | 10 |

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 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 0 |

| | 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 | 1 | 1 |

F. Discussion of Other FOIA Activities (Optional)

N/A