



Council of the
INSPECTORS GENERAL
on INTEGRITY and EFFICIENCY

Chief FOIA Officer's Report
March 7, 2011

The Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency (CIGIE) submits this report in accord with the Attorney General's FOIA guidelines issued on March 19, 2009, calling upon agencies to reaffirm the government's "commitment to accountability and transparency." Specifically, the provision directing agency Chief FOIA Officers to review "all aspects of their agencies' FOIA administration" and to report annually to the Department of Justice on the steps taken "to improve FOIA operations and facilitate information disclosure."

CIGIE is a new Federal entity created by the Inspector General Reform Act of 2008 (P.L. 110-409) which charged CIGIE with "address[ing] integrity, economy, and effectiveness issues that transcend individual Government agencies, and increase[ing] the professionalism and effectiveness of personnel by developing policies, standards and approaches to aid in the establishment of a well-trained and highly skilled workforce in the offices of the Inspectors General." CIGIE's membership consists of 73 Federal Inspectors General, the Deputy Director for Management, Office of Management and Budget (DDM/OMB), and 5 other integrity related Federal executives. CIGIE's Executive Chairperson is the DDM/OMB, and CIGIE is led by an elected Inspector General member who serves as Chairperson. CIGIE currently employs 4 employees who support the activities and mission of CIGIE.

I. Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness

1. During the previous fiscal year, CIGIE received two FOIA requests. During that same period CIGIE had no-one in direct employ. At that time CIGIE staff operations were being led by the Acting Executive Director, who was employed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Office of Inspector General (OIG). Thus, the processing of the two FOIA requests was handled through this OIG's Chief FOIA Officer using the USDA FOIA regulations. Additionally, during that period, we made efforts to continue to make discretionary releases when possible and have taken actions to make additional proactive disclosures through postings on CIGIE's website. Additionally, CIGIE is familiar with Attorney General Holder's Guidelines on FOIA and have a full understanding of the presumption of openness called for by the President, and are applying this in our FOIA processing. As we move forward we are looking to make discretionary releases when practicable.
 - a. Describe how the President's FOIA Memorandum and the Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines have been publicized throughout your agency.

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

b. What training has been attended and/or conducted on the FOIA Guidelines?
During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

c. How has CIGIE created or modified its internal guidance to reflect the presumption of openness.

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

d. To what extent has CIGIE made discretionary releases of otherwise exempt information?

Being that CIGIE was established in October 2008, there were no determinations during FY 2009 to establish a base of the type of information that would have been considered otherwise exempt information.

e. What exemptions would have covered the information that was released as a matter of discretion.

Not applicable.

f. How does your agency review records to determine whether discretionary releases are possible.

Not applicable.

g. Describe any other initiatives undertaken by CIGIE to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied.

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

2. Being that this was the first year for FOIA releases by CIGIE, we have no history to reflect an increase in the number of requests where records were released in full or part.

II. Steps Taken to Ensure that the CIGIE has an Effective System for Responding to Requests

CIGIE's system for responding to requests in fiscal year 2010 and the beginning of fiscal year 2011 is to forward the request to the USDA OIG's Chief FOIA Officer, along with CIGIE documents relating to the request. Using the USDA FOIA regulations, the USDA OIG's Chief FOIA Officer reviews the request and materials and determines whether any of the CIGIE documents are responsive to the request, and what if any FOIA or Privacy Act exemptions are applicable in the release of the responsive documents.

CIGIE is presently developing its own FOIA regulations to operate under. However, it will still employ the assistance of another organization to provide the expertise in FOIA and Privacy Act provisions to appropriately process FOIA requests. Although there is

limited resources and staff, CIGIE is making efforts to use its webpages to proactively release information.

- a. Do FOIA professionals within CIGIE have sufficient IT support?

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

- b. Describe how CIGIE's FOIA professionals interact with your Open Government Team.

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

- c. Describe the steps CIGIE has taken to assess whether adequate staffing is being devoted to responding to FOIA requests.

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, this is not applicable.

- d. Describe any other steps CIGIE has undertaken to ensure that its FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively.

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; however, we had the opportunity to identify and receive the expertise and support necessary to ensure timely and accurate processing of requests through another agency's fully functioning FOIA staff.

III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

CIGIE developed a FOIA webpage as part of its website in early FY 2011. This webpage provides requesters with information on how to make a FOIA request, if documents are not available through current postings on the CIGIE website. Over the next year, CIGIE will be looking towards using new media to further provide avenues for information to be obtained by the public.

- a. Has your CIGIE added new material to its website since last year?

Yes.

- b. What types of records have been posted?

Materials that CIGIE is posting on its website include, CIGIE's governing documents, several CIGIE issued reports and publications, and various other documents reflecting the work of CIGIE.

- c. Give example of the types of records CIGIE now posts that used to be available only by making a FOIA request for them?

Being that this was the first year for FOIA releases by CIGIE, we have no history to base a response to this question.

- d. What system does CIGIE have in place to routinely identify records that are appropriate for posting?

Although CIGIE had no employees in FY 2010, it primarily identified records for posting after reviewing and determining there were no Privacy Act violations if the information were released, and there would be no impairment to law enforcement activities.

- e. How do you utilize social media in disseminating information?

During FY 2010 CIGIE had no employees; therefore, the utilization of social media did not occur.

- f. Describe any other steps taken to increase proactive disclosures at CIGIE?

CIGIE took steps to publish works of the Council on our website, these included CIGIE's governing documents and several CIGIE reports.

IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

1. Electronic receipt of FOIA requests?

During FY 2010, the two FOIA requests received were both through non-electronic means; however, CIGIE has the capability to receive requests electronically via email at CIGIE.information@cigie.gov and facsimile at (202) 254-0162.

2. Electronic tracking of FOIA requests?

CIGIE does not electronically track FOIA requests. Due to the very small number of FOIA requests (two) during FY 2010 it was not necessary to track requests through a separate FOIA electronic system. However, if FOIA requests begin to increase, electronic tracking will be considered.

3. Electronic processing of FOIA requests.

CIGIE does not electronically process FOIA requests. Due to the very small number of CIGIE FOIA requests it is not necessary to use an electronic system to effectively process requests.

4. Electronic preparation of the Annual FOIA report.

CIGIE does not electronically prepare its Annual FOIA report. We do not currently see a need for the use of additional automated processing technologies due to the very small number of FOIA requests processed.

V. Steps Taken to Reduce Backlogs and Improve Timeliness of Responding to Requests

1. CIGIE does not have a backlog.

2. If there has not been a reduction in the backlog describe why that has occurred and what steps CIGIE is taking to bring about a reduction.

Not applicable.

3. Describe the steps CIGIE is taking to improve timeliness in responding to requests and to administrative appeals.

CIGIE is looking at ways to more efficiently obtain the needed expertise in the review of documents and processing of the requests. CIGIE is working towards a formal agreement with another office to provide this expertise, which should assist in more timely responses to requesters.

Spotlight on Success

Fiscal Year 2010 was the first year that CIGIE processed FOIA requests. During this period, we had the opportunity to identify and receive the expertise and support necessary to ensure timely and accurate processing of FOIA requests. Furthermore, we took steps to publish works of the Council on our website, which included CIGIE's governing documents and several CIGIE reports. As we move forward, we will look towards providing more and more valuable information through our website and assess various new media options to determine additional approaches to sharing information with interested parties and the public.



Mark D. Jones, Executive Director