

Federal Election Commission

§ 4.9

(ii) With respect to a request made by a person primarily engaged in disseminating information, urgency to inform the public concerning actual or alleged Federal government activity.

(2) Requesters for expedited processing must include in their requests a statement setting forth the basis for the claim that a “compelling need” exists for the requested information, certified by the requester to be true and correct to the best of his or her knowledge and belief.

(3) The Commission shall determine whether to grant a request for expedited processing and notify the requester of such determination within ten days of receipt of the request. Denials of requests for expedited processing may be appealed as set forth in § 4.8. The Commission shall expeditiously determine any such appeal. As soon as practicable, the Commission shall process the documents responsive to a request for which expedited processing is granted.

(h) Any person denied access to records by the Commission shall be notified immediately giving reasons therefore, and notified of the right of such person to appeal such adverse determination to the Commission.

(i) The date of receipt of a request under this part shall be the date on which the FOIA Officer actually receives the request.

[44 FR 33368, June 8, 1979, as amended at 45 FR 31292, May 13, 1980; 50 FR 50778, Dec. 12, 1985; 52 FR 39213, Oct. 21, 1987; 65 FR 9206, Feb. 24, 2000; 75 FR 31, Jan. 4, 2010]

§ 4.8 Appeal of denial.

(a) Any person who has been notified pursuant to § 4.6(d) of this part that his/her request for inspection of a record or for a copy has been denied, or who has received no response within ten working days (or within such extended period as is permitted under § 4.7(c) of this part) after the request has been received by the Commission, may appeal the adverse determination or the failure to respond by requesting the Commission to direct that the record be made available.

(b) The appeal request shall be in writing, shall clearly and prominently state on the envelope or other cover and at the top of the first page “FOIA

Appeal”, and shall identify the record in the form in which it was originally requested.

(c) The appeal request should be delivered or addressed to the Chief FOIA Officer, Federal Election Commission, 999 E Street, NW., Washington, DC 20463.

(d) The requestor may state facts and cite legal or other authorities as he/she deems appropriate in support of the appeal request.

(e) For good cause shown, the Commission may disclose a record which is subject to one of the exemptions listed in § 4.5 of this part.

(f) The Commission will make a determination with respect to any appeal within twenty days (excluding Saturdays, Sundays and legal holidays) after receipt of the appeal (or within such extended period as is permitted under § 4.7(c) of this part). If on appeal, the denial of the request for a record or a copy is in whole or in part upheld, the Commission shall advise the requestor of the denial and shall notify him/her of the provisions for judicial review of that determination as set forth in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(4).

(g) Because of the risk of misunderstanding inherent in oral communications, the Commission will not entertain any appeal from an alleged denial or failure to comply with an oral request. Any person who has orally requested a copy of a record that he/she believes to have been improperly denied should resubmit the request in writing as set forth in § 4.7.

[44 FR 33368, June 8, 1979, as amended at 50 FR 50778, Dec. 12, 1985; 75 FR 31, Jan. 4, 2010]

§ 4.9 Fees.

(a) *Exceptions to fee charges*—(1) *General*. Except for a commercial use requester, the Commission will not charge a fee to any requester for the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication in response to any FOIA request.

(2) *Free computer search time*. For purposes of this paragraph, the term *search time* is based on the concept of a manual search. To apply this to a search conducted by a computer, the Commission will provide the equivalent dollar value of two hours of professional staff time, calculated according

§4.9

11 CFR Ch. I (1-1-10 Edition)

to paragraph (c)(4) of this section, in computer search time. Computer search time is determined by adding the cost of the computer connect time actually used for the search, calculated at the rate of \$25.00 per hour, to the cost of the operator's salary for the time spent conducting the computer search, calculated at the professional staff time rate set forth at paragraph (c)(4) of this section.

(3) *Definition of pages.* For purposes of this paragraph, the word *pages* refers to paper copies of a standard agency size which will normally be 8½" × 11" or 8½" × 14". Thus, while a requester would not be entitled to 100 free computer disks, for example, a requester would be entitled to 100 free pages of a computer printout.

(4) *Minimum charge.* The Commission will not charge a fee to any requester when the allowable direct cost of that FOIA request is equal to or less than the Commission's cost of routinely collecting and processing a FOIA request fee.

(b) *Fee reduction or waiver*—(1) The Commission will consider requests for the reduction or waiver of any fees assessed pursuant to paragraph (c)(1) of this section if it determines, either as a result of its own motion or in response to a written submission by the requester, that disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and that disclosure of the information is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(2) A request for a reduction or waiver of fees shall be made in writing by the FOIA requester; shall accompany the relevant FOIA request so as to be considered timely; and shall include a specific explanation as to why the fee for that FOIA request should be reduced or waived, applying the standard stated in paragraph (b)(1) of this section to the facts of that particular request. In addition, the explanation shall include: the requester's (and user's, if the requester and the user are different persons or entities) identity, qualifications and expertise in the subject area, and ability and intention to disseminate the information to the

public; and a discussion of any commercial or personal benefit that the requester (and user, if the requester and user are different persons or entities) expects as a result of disclosure, including whether the information disclosed would be resold in any form at a fee above actual cost.

(c) *Fees to be charged.* (1) The FOIA services provided by the Commission in response to a FOIA request for which the requester will be charged will depend upon the category of the requester. The categories of FOIA requestors are as follows:

(i) *Commercial use requestors.* A requester of documents for commercial use will be assessed reasonable standard charges for the full allowable direct costs of searching for, reviewing for release and duplicating the records sought, according to the Commission's schedule of fees for those services as set forth at paragraph (c)(4) of this section. A commercial use requester is not entitled to two hours of free search time nor 100 free pages of duplication of documents.

(ii) *Educational and non-commercial scientific institution requestors.* The Commission will provide documents to requestors in this category for the cost of duplication of the records provided by the Commission in response to the request, according to the Commission's schedule of fees as set forth at paragraph (c)(4) of this section, excluding charges for the first 100 pages of duplication. Requestors in this category will not be charged for search time. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, requestors must show that the request is being made as authorized by and under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are not sought for a commercial use, but are sought in furtherance of scholarly (if the request is from an educational institution) or scientific (if the request is from a non-commercial scientific institution) research.

(iii) *Requestors who are representatives of the news media.* The Commission will provide documents to requestors in this category for the cost of duplication of the records provided by the Commission in response to the request, according to the Commission's schedule of fees as set forth at paragraph

Federal Election Commission

§ 4.9

(c)(4) of this section, excluding charges for the first 100 pages of duplication. Requestors in this category will not be charged for search time. To be eligible for inclusion in this category, the requestor must meet the criteria listed at 11 CFR 4.1(n) and his or her request must not be made for a commercial use. A request for records supporting the news dissemination function of the requestor shall not be considered to be a request that is for a commercial use.

(iv) *All other requestors.* The Commission will charge requestors who do not fit into any of the categories listed in paragraph (c)(1)(i), (ii) or (iii) of this section the full direct costs of searching for and duplicating records in response to the request, according to the Commission's schedule of fees as set forth at paragraph (c)(4) of this section, excluding charges for the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages of duplication. Requests from persons for records about themselves will continue to be treated under the fee provisions of the Privacy Act of 1974, which permit fees only for duplication.

(2) The Commission may assess fees for the full allowable direct costs of searching for documents in response to a request even if the Commission fails to locate any documents which are responsive to that request and, in the case of commercial use requestors, of reviewing documents located in response to a request which the Commission determines are exempt from disclosure.

(3) If the Commission estimates that search or duplication charges are likely to exceed \$25.00, it will notify the requestor of the estimated amount of the fee unless the requestor has indicated in advance a willingness to pay a fee as high as that estimated by the Commission. Through this notification, the Commission will offer the requestor the opportunity to confer with Commission staff to reformulate the original request in order to meet the requestor's needs at a lower cost.

(4) The following is the schedule of the Commission's standard fees. The cost of staff time will be added to all of the following fees, generally at the *Professional* rate listed below, except for the cost of *Photocopying from*

photocopying machines which has been calculated to include staff time.

PHOTOCOPYING

Photocopying from photocopying machines—
\$.07 per page
Photocopying from microfilm reader-printer—\$.15 per page
Paper copies from microfilm-paper print machine—\$.05 per frame page

REELS OF MICROFILM

Daily film (partial or complete roll)—\$2.85 per roll
Other film (partial or complete roll)—\$5.00 per roll

PUBLICATIONS: (NEW OR NOT FROM AVAILABLE STOCKS)

Cost of photocopying document—\$.07 per page
Cost of binding document—\$.30 per inch

PUBLICATIONS: (AVAILABLE STOCK)

If available from stock on hand, cost is based on previously calculated cost as stated in the publication (based on actual cost per copy, including reproduction and binding). Commission publications for which fees will be charged include, but are not limited to, the following: Advisory Opinion Index, Report on Financial Activity, Financial Control and Compliance Manual, MUR Index, and Guideline for Presentation in Good Order.

COMPUTER TAPES

Cost to process the request at the rate of \$25.00 per hour connect time plus the cost of the computer tape (\$25.00) and professional staff time (see Staff Time).

COMPUTER INDEXES (INCLUDING NAME SEARCHES)

Cost to process the request at the rate of \$25.00 per hour connect time plus the cost of professional staff time (see Staff Time).

STAFF TIME

Clerical: \$4.50 per each half hour (agency average of staff below a GS-11) for each request.

Professional: \$12.40 per each half hour (agency average of staff at GS-11 and above) for each request.

OTHER CHARGES

Certification of a Document: \$7.35 per quarter hour.

Transcripts of Commission meetings not previously transcribed: \$7.50 per half hour (equivalent of a GS-11 executive secretary).

The Commission will not charge a fee for ordinary packaging and mailing of records

requested. When a request for special mailing or delivery services is received the Commission will package the records requested. The requestor will make all arrangements for pick-up and delivery of the requested materials. The requestor shall pay all costs associated with special mailing or delivery services directly to the courier or mail service.

(5) Upon receipt of any request for the production of computer tape or microfilm, the Commission will advise the requestor of the identity of the private contractor who will perform the duplication services. If fees are charged for the production of computer tape or microfilm, they shall be made payable to that private contractor and shall be forwarded to the Commission.

(d) *Interest charges.* FOIA requestors should pay fees within 30 days following the day on which the invoice for that request was sent to the requestor. If the invoice is unpaid on the 31st day following the day on which the invoice was sent, the Commission will begin assessing interest charges, which will accrue from the date the invoice was mailed. Interest will be charged at a rate that is equal to the average investment rate for the Treasury tax and loan accounts for the 12-month period ending on September 30 of each year, rounded to the nearest whole percentage point, pursuant to 31 U.S.C. 3717. The accrual of interest will be stayed by the Commission's receipt of the fee, even if the fee has not yet been processed.

(e) *Aggregating requests.* A requestor may not file multiple requests, each seeking portions of a document or documents, in order to avoid payment of fees. When the Commission reasonably believes that a FOIA requestor or group of requestors acting in concert is attempting to break a request down into a series of requests for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, the Commission will aggregate any such requests and charge the appropriate fees. In making this determination, the Commission will consider the time period in which the requests have occurred, the relationship of the requestors, and the subject matter of the requests.

(f) *Advance payments.* The Commission will require a requestor to make an advance payment, i.e., a payment

before work is commenced or continued on a request, when:

(1) The Commission estimates or determines that allowable charges that a requestor may be required to pay are likely to exceed \$250. In such a case, the Commission will notify the requestor of the likely cost and, where the requestor has a history of prompt payment of FOIA fees, obtain satisfactory assurance of full payment, or in the case of a requestor with no FOIA fee payment history, the Commission will require an advance payment of an amount up to the full estimated charges; or

(2) A requestor has previously failed to pay a fee in a timely fashion (i.e., within 30 days of the date of the billing). In such a case, the Commission may require that the requestor pay the full amount owed plus any applicable interest or demonstrate that the fee has been paid and make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before the Commission begins to process a new request or a pending request from that requestor.

(3) If the provisions of paragraph (f) (1) or (2) of this section apply, the administrative time limits prescribed in 11 CFR 4.7(c) will begin only after the Commission has received the payments or the requestor has made acceptable arrangements to make the payments required by paragraph (f) (1) or (2) of this section.

[52 FR 39213, Oct. 21, 1987, as amended at 75 FR 31, Jan. 4, 2010]

PART 5—ACCESS TO PUBLIC DISCLOSURE DIVISION DOCUMENTS

Sec.

- 5.1 Definitions.
- 5.2 Policy on disclosure of records.
- 5.3 Scope.
- 5.4 Availability of records.
- 5.5 Request for records.
- 5.6 Fees.

AUTHORITY: 2 U.S.C. 437f(d), 437g(a)(4)(B)(ii), 438(a), and 31 U.S.C. 9701.

SOURCE: 45 FR 31293, May 13, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

§5.1 Definitions.

(a) *Commission* means the Federal Election Commission established by