

Office of Independent Counsel

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The Office shall confirm this agreement in its letter of acknowledgement to the requester. When filing a request, a requester may specify a willingness to pay a greater amount, if applicable.

(2) If a waiver of fees up to \$25 is sought in the requester's request to the Office, the Office will make its determination on the fee waiver (and notify the requester as soon as possible) after receipt of the request. The submission of a request for fee waiver will not delay the Office's responsibility to search for responsive records.

(3) If the fee waiver is denied by the Office, and the fees involved total \$25 or less, the Office will send the responsive documents to the requester, along with a bill for fees. The collection of the unpaid bill shall follow the procedures found herein at § 701.18 (g)(2) and (h).

§ 701.12 Responses by the Office to requests.

(a) *Authority to grant or deny requests.* The head of the Office, or his designee, is authorized to grant or deny and request for a record of the Office.

(b) *Initial action by the Office.* When the Office receives a request for a record in its possession, the Office shall promptly determine whether another agency of the Government is better able to determine whether the record is exempt, to any extent, from mandatory disclosure under the FOIA; and whether the record, if exempt to any extent from mandatory disclosure under the FOIA, should nonetheless be released to the requester as a matter of discretion. If the Office determines that it is the agency best able to determine whether to disclose the record in response to the request, then the Office shall respond to the request. If the Office determines that it is not the agency best able to determine whether to disclose the record in response to the request, the Office shall either:

(1) Respond to the request, after consulting with the other agency best able to determine whether to disclose the record and with any other agency having a substantial interest in the requested record or the information contained therein; or

(2) Refer the responsibility for responding to the request to another

agency that generated or originated the record, but only if that other agency is subject to the provisions of the FOIA.

Under ordinary circumstances, the agency that generated or originated a requested record shall be presumed to be the agency best able to determine whether to disclose the record in response to the request.

(c) *Law-enforcement information.* Whenever a request is made for a record containing information that relates to an investigation of a possible violation of criminal law or to a criminal law-enforcement proceeding and that was generated or originated by another agency, the Office shall refer the responsibility for responding to the request to that other agency; however, such referral shall extend only to the information generated or originated by that other agency.

(d) *Classified information.* Whenever a request is made for a record containing information that has been classified, or that may be eligible for classification, by another agency under the provisions of Executive Order 12356 or any other Executive Order concerning the classification of records, the Office shall refer the responsibility for responding to the request to the agency that classified the information or should consider the information for classification. Whenever a record contains information that has been derivatively classified by the Office because it contains information classified by another agency, the Office shall refer the responsibility for responding to the request to the agency that classified the underlying information; however, such referral shall extend only to the information classified by the other agency.

(e) *Notice of referral.* Whenever the Office refers all or any part of the responsibility for responding to a request to another agency, the Office will consult with the other agency to obtain specific approval to notify the requester of the referral and inform the requester of the name and address of the agency to which the request has been referred and the portions of the request so referred.

(f) *Agreements regarding consultations and referrals.* No provision of this section shall preclude formal or informal

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agreements between the Office and another agency to eliminate the need for consultations or referrals of requests or classes of requests.

(g) *Separate referrals of portions of a request.* Portions of a request may be referred separately to one or more other agencies whenever necessary to process the request in accordance with the provisions of this section.

(h) *Date for determining responsive records.* In determining records responsive to a request, the Office ordinarily will include only those records within the Office's possession and control as of the date of its receipt of the request.

§ 701.13 Form and content of Office responses.

(a) *Form of notice granting a request.* After the Office has made a determination to grant a request in whole or in part, the Office shall so notify the requester in writing. The notice shall describe the manner in which the record will be disclosed, whether by providing a copy of the record to the requester or by making a copy of the record available to the requester for inspection at a reasonable time and place. The procedure for such an inspection shall not unreasonably disrupt the operations of the Office. The Office shall inform the requester in the notice of any fees to be charged in accordance with the provisions of § 701.18 of this part.

(b) *Form of notice denying a request.* The Office, when denying a request in whole or in part, shall so notify the requester in writing. The notice must be signed by the FOIA/PA Officer, or her designee, and shall include:

(1) The name and title or position of the person responsible for the denial;

(2) A brief statement of the reason or reasons for the denial, including the FOIA exemption or exemptions that the Office has relied upon in denying the request and a brief explanation of the manner in which the exemption or exemptions apply to each record withheld; and

(3) A statement that the denial may be appealed under § 701.16(a) and a description of the requirements of that subsection.

(c) *Record cannot be located or has been destroyed.* If a requested record cannot be located from the information

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supplied, or is known or believed to have been destroyed or otherwise disposed of, the Office shall so notify the requester in writing.

§ 701.14 Classified information.

In processing a request for information that is classified or classifiable under Executive Order 12356 or any other Executive Order concerning the classification of records, the Office shall review the information to determine whether it warrants classification. Information that does not warrant classification shall not be withheld from a requester on the basis of 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(1). The Office shall, upon receipt of any appeal involving classified or classifiable information, take appropriate action to ensure compliance with Executive Order 12356 or any other Executive Order concerning the classification of records.

§ 701.15 Business information.

(a) *In general.* Business information provided to the Office by a business submitter shall not be disclosed pursuant to a FOIA request except in accordance with this section.

(b) *Notice to business submitters.* The Office shall provide a business submitter with prompt written notice of a request encompassing its business information whenever required under paragraph (c) of this section, except as is provided in paragraph (g) of this section, and only to the extent permitted by law. Such written notice shall either describe the exact nature of the business information requested or provide copies of the records or portions thereof containing the business information.

(c) *When notice is required.* For business information submitted to the Office it shall provide a business submitter with notice of a request whenever the business submitter has in good faith designated the information as commercially or financially sensitive, or the Office has reason to believe that disclosure of the information may result in commercial or financial injury to the business submitter. Notice of a request for business information falling within the former category shall be required for a period of not more than ten years after the date of submission