

## Corporation for National and Community Service

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552, 42 U.S.C. 12501 *et seq.*

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## Subpart A—General Provisions

### § 2507.1 Scope.

This part contains the rules that the Corporation for National and Community Service, operating as AmeriCorps (“the Agency” or “AmeriCorps”), follows in processing requests for records under the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. 552. These rules should be read in conjunction with the text of the FOIA and the Uniform Freedom of Information Fee Schedule and Guidelines published by the Office of Management and Budget (“OMB Guidelines”). Requests made by individuals for records about themselves under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, are processed in accordance with AmeriCorps’ Privacy Act regulations, 45 CFR part 2508, as well as under this part.

### § 2507.2 Policy.

(a) AmeriCorps follows a balanced approach in administering the FOIA. The Agency recognizes the right of the public to seek access to information in its possession. It also recognizes the legitimate interests of organizations or persons who have submitted records to AmeriCorps or who would otherwise be affected by release of records. AmeriCorps has no discretion to release certain records, such as trade secrets and confidential commercial information, prohibited from release by law. The Agency provides the fullest responsible disclosure that is consistent with the requirements of the FOIA.

(b) When a FOIA exemption gives Federal agencies the discretion to either withhold or release records, AmeriCorps releases the records or information unless it reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest that the exemption protects.

### § 2507.3 Definitions.

As used in this part:

*Agency* is any executive agency, military agency, government corporation, government-controlled corporation, or other establishment in the Executive Branch of the Federal Government, or any independent regulatory agency. AmeriCorps is an agency.

*AmeriCorps* or *the Agency* means the Corporation for National and Community Service, which operates as AmeriCorps.

*Complex request* is a request that typically seeks a high volume of material or requires additional steps to process, such as the need to search for records in multiple locations.

*Consultation* is when AmeriCorps locates a record that contains information of interest to another agency, and, before any final determination is made, AmeriCorps asks that other agency for its views on whether or not the records can be released to the requester.

*Exemptions* are the nine categories of information that are not required to be released in response to a FOIA request because release would be harmful to a government or private interest. These categories are called “exemptions” from disclosure.

*Expedited processing* is the FOIA response track granted in certain limited situations to process FOIA requests ahead of other pending requests.

*FOIA request* is a written request for Agency records, made by any person, including a member of the public (U.S. or foreign citizen), an organization, or a business—but not including a Federal agency, an agent of a foreign government, an order from a court, or a fugitive from the law—that either explicitly or implicitly involves the FOIA, or this part.

*Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)* is a United States Federal law at 5 U.S.C. 552 that grants the public access to records possessed by government agencies. Upon written request, U.S. Government agencies are required to release reasonably described records, except to the extent the records fall under an exclusion or one of the nine exemptions listed in the Act.

*Frequently requested records* are records that have been released either in full or with the same information withheld and either:

- (1) Have been requested from AmeriCorps three or more times; or
- (2) Because of their subject matter, AmeriCorps determines have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for the same records.

*Multitrack processing* is a system that divides incoming FOIA requests into

processing tracks according to their complexity.

*Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)* is an office within the National Archives and Records Administration that offers mediation services to resolve disputes between FOIA requesters and agencies, as a non-exclusive alternative to litigation. OGIS also reviews agency FOIA compliance, policies, and procedures and makes recommendations for improvement.

*Proactive disclosures* are records that agencies make publicly available on their website without waiting for a specific FOIA request.

*Record* means information, regardless of the form in which it is stored or its characteristics, which is created or obtained by an agency and is under the control of the agency at the time of the request. It includes information maintained for the agency by an entity under government contract for records management purposes. It does not include records that do not already exist and that would have to be created specifically to respond to a request.

*Referral* occurs when an agency locates a record that originated with, or is of otherwise primary interest to, another agency. The receiving agency will forward that record to the other agency to process the record and to provide the final determination directly to the requester.

*Search* is the process of looking for and retrieving records or information responsive to a request.

*Simple request* is a FOIA request that an agency anticipates will involve a small volume of material or which the agency will be able to process relatively quickly.

*Tolling* means temporarily stopping the running of a time limit.

#### § 2507.4 Agency FOIA officials.

The following are AmeriCorps’ authorized FOIA officials, each of whom will be identified on *americorps.gov*, and their roles.

##### (a) The *Chief FOIA Officer*:

- (1) Has overall responsibility for AmeriCorps’ compliance with the FOIA;
- (2) Provides high-level oversight and support to AmeriCorps’ FOIA program;

(3) Recommends adjustments to AmeriCorps' practices, personnel, and funding, as needed, to improve FOIA administration, including through Chief FOIA Officer Reports submitted to the U.S. Department of Justice;

(4) Tells the Agency's FOIA Officers of all significant developments with respect to the FOIA;

(5) Is responsible for offering training to agency staff regarding their FOIA responsibilities;

(6) Serves as the primary liaison with the Office of Government Information Services and the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Information Policy; and

(7) Reviews, at least annually, all aspects of AmeriCorps' administration of the FOIA to ensure compliance with the FOIA's requirements.

(b) The *FOIA Officer* receives, tracks, and processes the Agency's FOIA requests, including making final release determinations. The FOIA Officer is responsible for program direction, original denials, and policy decisions required for effective implementation of the Agency's FOIA program.

(c) The *FOIA Appeals Officer* receives and act upon appeals from requesters whose initial requests for the Agency's records have been denied, in whole or in part.

(d) The *FOIA Public Liaison* serves as the official to whom a FOIA requester can raise concerns about the services received, following an initial response from the FOIA Officer. In addition, the FOIA Public Liaison assists, as appropriate, in reducing delays, increasing transparency, answering requesters' questions about the status of their requests, and resolving disputes.

### Subpart B—Proactive Disclosures of Agency Records

#### § 2507.5 Records available on agency website.

(a) AmeriCorps regularly updates and posts the following on its public website, *americorps.gov*:

(1) Information that is required to be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(1) and:

(2) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect any member of the public.

(3) Statements of policy and interpretation adopted by AmeriCorps and not published in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(4) Final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of administrative cases.

(5) Records that AmeriCorps determines are or will be the subject of widespread media, historical, or academic interest and that may properly be publicly posted.

(b) On the FOIA page of its public website, *americorps.gov*, the Agency posts records that are required by the FOIA to be made available for public inspection and copying under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), including, but not limited to, frequently requested records.

(c) For help from the FOIA Officer or the FOIA Public Liaison in finding proactively disclosed records, members of the public may contact AmeriCorps at *foia@cns.gov* or at: AmeriCorps, Office of the General Counsel, 250 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20525.

### Subpart C—Filing a FOIA Request

#### § 2507.6 Requirements for FOIA requests.

(a) *General information.* AmeriCorps has a centralized system for responding to FOIA requests. AmeriCorps headquarters is the central processing point for all requests for Agency records, regardless of where they are stored. State service commissions are not part of AmeriCorps and are not Federal agencies, and thus are not subject to the FOIA.

(b) *Directions for making requests.* All FOIA requests must be submitted in writing to the FOIA Officer at AmeriCorps headquarters in one of the following ways:

(1) *By email:* *foia@cns.gov*. Including a phone number with a request will help with processing.

(2) *By online submission:* via the National FOIA Portal at *www.FOIA.gov*.

(3) *By mail:* AmeriCorps, Attn.: FOIA Officer, Office of General Counsel, 250 E Street SW, Washington, DC 20525.

(4) *By fax:* (202) 606-3467.

(c) *Description of records sought.* Requesters must provide enough detail about the Agency's records they seek