

PART 1100 [RESERVED]

PART 1101—DESCRIPTION OF OFFICE, PROCEDURES, PUBLIC INFORMATION

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AUTHORITY: 5 U.S.C. 552; 12 U.S.C. 3307.

SOURCE: 45 FR 46794, July 11, 1980, unless otherwise noted.

§ 1101.1 Scope and purpose.

This part implements the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. 552, with respect to the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council (Council), and establishes related information disclosure procedures.

§ 1101.2 Authority and functions.

(a) The Council was established by the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council Act of 1978 (Act), 12 U.S.C. 3301–3308. It is composed of the Comptroller of the Currency; the Chairman of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation; a Governor of the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System; the Chairman of the Federal Home Loan Bank Board; and the Chairman of the National Credit Union Administration Board.

(b) The statutory functions of the Council are set out at 12 U.S.C. 3305. In summary, the mission of the Council is to promote consistency and progress in federal examination and supervision of financial institutions and their affiliates. The Council is empowered to prescribe uniform principles, standards, and reporting forms and systems; make recommendations in the interest of uniformity; and conduct examiner schools open to personnel of the agencies represented on the Council and employees of state financial institutions supervisory agencies.

§ 1101.3 Organization and methods of operation.

(a) Statutory requirements relating to the Council's organization are stated in 12 U.S.C. 3303.

(b) *Council staff.* Administrative support and substantive coordination for Council activities are provided by a small staff detailed on a full-time basis from the five member agencies. The Executive Secretary and Deputy Executive Secretary of the Council supervise this staff.

(c) *Agency Liaison Group, Task Forces and Legal Advisory Group.* Most staff support in the substantive areas of the Council's duties is provided by inter-agency task forces and the Council's Legal Advisory Group (LAG). These task forces and the LAG are responsible for securing the services, as needed, of staff experts from the five agencies; supervising research and other investigative work for the Council; and preparing reports and recommendations for the Council. The Agency Liaison Group (ALG) is responsible for the overall coordination of the respective agencies' staff contributions to Council business. The ALG, the task forces, and the LAG are each composed of Council member agency staff serving the Council on a part-time basis.

(d) *State Liaison Committee.* Under 12 U.S.C. 3306, the Council has established a State Liaison Committee, composed of five representatives of state financial institutions supervisory agencies.

(e) *Council address.* Council offices are located at 3501 Fairfax Drive, Room B-7081a, Arlington, VA, 22226-3550.

[45 FR 46794, July 11, 1980, as amended at 53 FR 7341, Mar. 8, 1988; 75 FR 71014, Nov. 22, 2010]

§ 1101.4 Disclosure of information, policies, and records.

(a) *Statements of policy published in the Federal Register or available for public inspection in an electronic format; indices.*

(1) Under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(1), the Council publishes general rules, policies and interpretations in the FEDERAL REGISTER.

(2) Under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2), policies and interpretations adopted by the Council, including instructions to Council staff affecting members of the

public are available for public inspection in an electronic format at the office of the Executive Secretary of the Council, 3501 Fairfax Drive, Room B-7081a, Arlington, VA, 22226-3550, during regular business hours. Policies and interpretations of the Council may be withheld from disclosure under the principles stated in paragraph (b)(1) of this section.

(3) Copies of all records, regardless of form or format, are available for public inspection in an electronic format if they:

(i) Have been released to any person under paragraph (b) of this section; and

(ii)(A) Because of the nature of their subject matter, the Council determines that they have become or are likely to become the subject of subsequent requests for substantially the same records; or

(B) They have been requested three or more times.

(4) An index of the records referred to in paragraphs (a)(1) through (3) of this section is available for public inspection in an electronic format.

(b) *Other records of the Council available to the public upon request; procedures—*(1) *General rule and exemptions.* Under 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(3), all other records of the Council are available to the public upon request, except to the extent exempted from disclosure as provided in 5 U.S.C. 552(b) and described in this paragraph (b)(1), or if disclosure is prohibited by law. Unless specifically authorized by the Council, or as set forth in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, the following records, and portions thereof, are not available to the public:

(i) A record, or portion thereof, which is specifically authorized under criteria established by an Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy and which is, in fact, properly classified pursuant to such Executive Order.

(ii) A record, or portion thereof, relating solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.

(iii) A record, or portion thereof, specifically exempted from disclosure by statute (other than 5 U.S.C. 552b), provided that such statute:

(A) Requires that the matters be withheld from the public in such a

manner as to leave no discretion on the issue; or

(B) Establishes particular criteria for withholding or refers to particular types of matters to be withheld.

(iv) A record, or portion thereof, containing trade secrets and commercial or financial information obtained from a person and privileged or confidential.

(v) An intra-agency or interagency memorandum or letter that would not be routinely available by law to a private party in litigation, including, but not limited to, memoranda, reports, and other documents prepared by the personnel of the Council or its constituent agencies, and records of deliberations of the Council and discussions of meetings of the Council, any Council Committee, or Council staff, that are not subject to 5 U.S.C. 552b (the Government in the Sunshine Act). In applying this exemption, the Council will not withhold records based on the deliberative process privilege if the records were created 25 years or more before the date on which the records were requested.

(vi) A personnel, medical, or similar record, including a financial record, or any portion thereof, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

(vii) Records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent permitted under 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(7), including records relating to a proceeding by a financial institution's State or Federal regulatory agency for the issuance of a cease-and-desist order, or order of suspension or removal, or assessment of a civil money penalty and the granting, withholding, or revocation of any approval, permission, or authority.

(viii) A record, or portion thereof, containing, relating to, or derived from an examination, operating, or condition report prepared by, or on behalf of, or for the use of any State or Federal agency directly or indirectly responsible for the regulation or supervision of financial institutions.

(ix) A record, or portion thereof, which contains or is related to geological and geophysical information and data, including maps, concerning wells.

(2) *Discretionary release of exempt information.* Notwithstanding the applicability of an exemption, the Council will only withhold records requested under this paragraph (b) if the Council reasonably foresees that disclosure would harm an interest protected by an exemption listed in 5 U.S.C. 552(b) and described in paragraph (b)(1) of this section. In addition, whenever the Council determines that full disclosure of a requested record is not possible, the Council will consider whether partial disclosure is possible and will take reasonable steps necessary to segregate and release the nonexempt portion of a record. The Council or the Council's designee may elect, under the circumstances of a particular request, to disclose all or a portion of any requested record where permitted by law. Such disclosure has no precedential significance.

(3) *Procedure for records request—(i) Initial request.* Requests for records shall be submitted in writing to the Executive Secretary of the Council:

(A) By sending a letter to: FFIEC, Attn: Executive Secretary, 3501 Fairfax Drive, Room B-7081a, Arlington, VA, 22226-3550. Both the mailing envelope and the request should be marked "Freedom of Information Request," "FOIA Request," or the like; or

(B) By facsimile clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Request," "FOIA Request," or the like to the Executive Secretary at (703) 562-6446; or

(C) By email to the address provided on the FFIEC's World Wide Web page, found at: <http://www.ffiec.gov>. Requests must reasonably describe the records sought.

(ii) *Contents of request.* All requests should contain the following information:

(A) The name and mailing address of the requester, an electronic mail address, if available, and the telephone number at which the requester may be reached during normal business hours;

(B) A statement as to whether the information is intended for commercial use, and whether the requester is an educational or noncommercial scientific institution, or news media representative; and

(C) A statement agreeing to pay all applicable fees, or a statement identifying any desired fee limitation, or a request for a waiver or reduction of fees that satisfies paragraph (b)(5)(ii)(H) of this section.

(iii) *Defective requests.* The Council need not accept or process a request that does not reasonably describe the records requested or that does not otherwise comply with the requirements of this section. The Executive Secretary may return a defective request specifying the deficiency. The requester may submit a corrected request, which will be treated as an initial request.

(iv) *Expedited processing.* (A) Where a person requesting expedited access to records has demonstrated a compelling need for the records, or where the Executive Secretary has determined to expedite the response, the Executive Secretary shall process the request as soon as practicable. To show a compelling need for expedited processing, the requester shall provide a statement demonstrating that:

(1) Failure to obtain the records on an expedited basis could reasonably be expected to pose an imminent threat to the life or physical safety of an individual; or

(2) The requester is primarily engaged in information dissemination as a main professional occupation or activity, and there is urgency to inform the public of the government activity involved in the request.

(B) The requester's statement must be certified to be true and correct to the best of the person's knowledge and belief and explain in detail the basis for requesting expedited processing.

(C) The formality of the certification required to obtain expedited treatment may be waived by the Executive Secretary as a matter of administrative discretion.

(v) *Response to initial requests.* (A) Except where the Executive Secretary has determined to expedite the processing of a request, the Executive Secretary will respond by mail or electronic mail to all properly submitted initial requests within 20 working days of receipt. The time for response may be extended up to 10 additional working

days in unusual circumstances, as defined in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B), where the Council has provided written notice to the requester setting forth the reasons for the extension and the date on which a determination is expected to be dispatched. In addition, where the extension of the 20-day time limit exceeds 10 working days, as described by the FOIA, the requester shall be provided with an opportunity to modify the scope of the FOIA request so that it can be processed within that time frame or provided an opportunity to arrange an alternative time frame for processing the request or a modified request. To aid the requester, the Council's FOIA Public Liaison is available to assist the requester for this purpose and in the resolution of any disputes between the requester and the Council. The Council's FOIA Public Liaison's contact information is available at <http://www.ffiec.gov/foia.htm>. The requester may also seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services.

(B) In response to a request that reasonably describes the records sought and otherwise satisfies the requirements of this section, a search shall be conducted of records in existence and maintained by the Council on the date of receipt of the request, and a review made of any responsive information located. The Executive Secretary shall notify the requester of:

(1) The Executive Secretary's determination of the response to the request;

(2) The reasons for the determination;

(3) The right of the requester to seek assistance from the Council's FOIA Public Liaison; and

(4) When an adverse determination is made (including a determination that the requested record is exempt, in whole or in part; the request does not reasonably describe the records sought; the information requested is not a record subject to the FOIA; the requested record does not exist, cannot be located, or has been destroyed; the requested record is not readily reproducible in the form or format sought by the requester; a fee waiver request or other fee categorization matter is denied; and a request for expedited

processing is denied), the Executive Secretary will advise the requester in writing of that determination and will further advise the requester:

(i) If the denial is in part or in whole;

(ii) The name and title of each person responsible for the denial (when other than the person signing the notification);

(iii) The exemptions relied on for the denial;

(iv) The right of the requester to appeal any adverse determination to the Chairman of the Council within 90 days following the date of issuance of the notification, as specified in paragraph (b)(3)(vi) of this section; and

(v) The right of the requester to seek dispute resolution services from the Council's FOIA Public Liaison or the Office of Government Information Services.

(vi) *Appeals of responses to initial requests.* A requester may appeal any adverse determination in writing, within 90 days of the date of issuance of the adverse determination. Appeals should refer to the date and tracking number of the original request and the date of the Council's initial ruling. Appeals should include an explanation of the basis for the appeal. Appeals shall be submitted to the Chairman of the Council:

(A) By sending a letter to: FFIEC, Attn: Executive Secretary, 3501 Fairfax Drive, Room B-7081a, Arlington, VA, 22226-3550. Both the mailing envelope and the request should be marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal," "FOIA Appeal," or the like; or

(B) By facsimile clearly marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal," "FOIA Appeal," or the like to the Executive Secretary at (703) 562-6446; or

(C) By email with the subject line marked "Freedom of Information Act Appeal," "FOIA Appeal," or the like to FOIA@ffiec.gov.

(vii) *Council response to appeals.* The Chairman of the Council, or another member designated by the Chairman, will respond to all properly submitted appeals within 20 working days of actual receipt of the appeal by the Executive Secretary. The time for response may be extended up to 10 additional working days, as provided in 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B), or for other periods by

agreement between the requester and the Chairman or the Chairman's designee.

(4) *Procedure for access to records if request is granted.* (i) When a request for access to records is granted, in whole or in part, a copy of the records to be disclosed will be promptly delivered to the requester or made available for inspection in an electronic format, whichever was requested. Inspection of records, or duplication and delivery of copies of records, will be arranged so as not to interfere with their use by the Council and other users of the records.

(ii) When delivery to the requester is to be made, copies of requested records shall be sent to the requester by regular U.S. mail to the address indicated in the request, unless the Executive Secretary deems it appropriate to send the documents by another means.

(iii) The Council shall provide a copy of the record in any form or format requested if the record is readily reproducible by the Council in that form or format, but the Council need not provide more than one copy of any record to a requester.

(iv) By arrangement with the requester, the Executive Secretary may elect to send the responsive records electronically if a substantial portion of the records is in electronic format. If the information requested is subject to disclosure under the Privacy Act of 1974, 5 U.S.C. 552a, it will not be sent by electronic means unless reasonable security measures can be established.

(5) *Fees for document search, review, and duplication; waiver and reduction of fee—*(i) *Definitions—*(A) *Direct costs* means those expenditures which the Council actually incurs in searching for, duplicating, and reviewing documents to respond to a FOIA request.

(B) *Search* means all time spent looking for material that is responsive to a request, including page-by-page or line-by-line identification of material within documents. Searches may be done manually or by computer using existing programming.

(C) *Duplication* means the process of making a copy of a document necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Such copies can take the form of paper copy, microfilm, audiovisual records,

or machine readable records (*e.g.*, magnetic tape or computer disk).

(D) *Review* means the process of examining documents located in response to a request that is for a commercial use (*see* paragraph (b)(5)(i)(E) of this section) to determine whether any portion of any document located is permitted to be withheld and processing such documents for disclosure.

(E) *Commercial use request* means a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requester or the person on whose behalf the request is made. In determining whether a request falls within this category, the Executive Secretary will determine the use to which a requester will put the records requested and seek additional information as the Executive Secretary deems necessary.

(F) *Educational institution* means a preschool, an elementary or secondary school, an institution of undergraduate higher education, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of professional education, and an institution of vocational education, which operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

(G) *Noncommercial scientific institution* means an institution that is not operated on a "commercial" basis as that term is referenced in paragraph (b)(5)(i)(E) of this section, and which is operated solely for the purposes of conducting scientific research, the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(H) *Representative of the news media* means any person or entity that gathers information of potential interest to a segment of the public, uses its editorial skills to turn the raw materials into a distinct work, and distributes that work to an audience. In this paragraph (b)(5)(i)(H), the term "news" means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news-media entities are television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large and publishers of periodicals (but only if such entities qualify as disseminators of "news") who make their products available for purchase

by or subscription by or free distribution to the general public. These examples are not all-inclusive. Moreover, as methods of news delivery evolve (for example, the adoption of the electronic dissemination of newspapers through telecommunications services), such alternative media shall be considered to be news-media entities. A freelance journalist shall be regarded as working for a news-media entity if the journalist can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that entity, whether or not the journalist is actually employed by the entity. A publication contract would present a solid basis for such an expectation; the Council may also consider the past publication record of the requester in making such a determination.

(ii) *Fees to be charged.* The Council will charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs it incurs, except that the charging of search and/or duplication fees is subject to the restrictions of paragraph (b)(5)(ii)(G) of this section. The Council may contract with the private sector to locate, reproduce, and/or disseminate records. Provided, however, that the Council has ensured that the ultimate cost to the requester is no greater than it would be if the Council performed these tasks. Fees are subject to change as costs change. In no case will the Council contract out responsibilities which the FOIA provides that it alone may discharge, such as determining the applicability of an exemption, or determining whether to waive or reduce fees.

(A) *Manual searches and review.* The Council will charge fees at the following rates for manual searches for and review of records:

(1) If search/review is done by clerical staff, the hourly rate for GS-7, step 5, plus 16 percent of the rate to cover benefits;

(2) If search/review is done by professional staff, the hourly rate for GS-13, step 5, plus 16 percent of the rate to cover benefits.

(B) *Computer searches.* The Council will charge fees at the hourly rate for GS-13, step 5, plus 16 percent of the rate to cover benefits, plus the hourly cost of operating the computer for computer searches for records.

(C) *Duplication of records.* (1) The per-page fee for paper copy reproduction of a document is \$.25;

(2) The fee for records generated by computer is the hourly rate for the computer operator (at GS-7, step 5, plus 16 percent for benefits if clerical staff, and GS-13, step 5, plus 16 percent for benefits if professional staff) plus the cost of materials (computer paper, tapes, disks, labels, etc.).

(3) If any other method of duplication is used, the Council will charge the actual direct cost of duplicating the records.

(D) *Hourly rates.* If search, duplication and/or review is provided by personnel of member agencies of the Council, fees will reflect their actual hourly rates, plus 16 percent for benefits.

(E) *Fees to exceed \$25.* If the Council estimates that duplication and/or search fees are likely to exceed \$25, it will notify the requester of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requester has indicated in advance his/her willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. In the case of such notification by the Council, the requester will then have the opportunity to confer with the Council's FOIA Public Liaison with the object of reformulating the request to meet his/her needs at a lower cost.

(F) *Other services.* Complying with requests for special services such as certifying records as true copies or mailing records by express mail is entirely at the discretion of the Council. The Council will recover the full costs of providing such services to the extent it elects to provide them.

(G) *Restriction on assessing fees.* (1) The Council will not charge fees to any requester, including commercial use requesters, if the cost of collecting a fee would be equal to or greater than the fee itself.

(2)(i) If the Council fails to comply with the time limits specified in the FOIA in which to respond to a request, the Council will not charge search fees, or, in the case of a requester described in paragraph (b)(5)(iii)(B) of this section, will not charge duplication fees, except as described in paragraphs (b)(5)(ii)(G)(2)(ii) through (iv) of this section.

(ii) If the Council has determined that unusual circumstances apply (as the term is defined in the FOIA) and the Council provided a timely written notice to the requester in accordance with the FOIA, a failure to comply with the time limit shall be excused for an additional 10 working days.

(iii) If the Council has determined that unusual circumstances apply (as the term is defined in the FOIA) and more than 5,000 pages are necessary to respond to the request, the Council may charge search fees, or, in the case of requesters described in paragraph (b)(5)(iii)(B) of this section, may charge duplication fees, if the following steps are taken: The Council provided timely written notice of unusual circumstances to the requester in accordance with the FOIA; and The Council discussed with the requester via written mail, email message, or telephone (or made not less than three good-faith attempts to do so) how the requester could effectively limit the scope of the request in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(6)(B)(ii). If this exception is satisfied, the Council may charge all applicable fees incurred in the processing of the request.

(iv) If a court has determined that exceptional circumstances exist, as defined by the FOIA, a failure to comply with the time limits shall be excused for the length of time provided by the court order.

(H) *Waiving or reducing fees.* As part of the initial request for records, a requester may ask that the Council waive or reduce fees if disclosure of the records is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the Council and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. The initial request for records must also state the justification for a waiver or reduction of fees. Determinations as to a waiver or reduction of fees will be made by the Executive Secretary of the Council and the requester will be notified in writing of his/her determination. A determination not to grant a request for a waiver or reduction of fees under this paragraph (b)(5)(ii)(H) may be appealed to the Chairman of the Council pursuant

to the procedure set forth in paragraph (b)(3)(vi) of this section.

(iii) *Categories of requesters—(A) Commercial use requesters.* The Council will assess fees for commercial use requesters sufficient to recover the full direct costs of searching for, reviewing for release, and duplicating the records sought. Commercial use requesters are not entitled to two hours of free search time nor 100 free pages of reproduction of documents.

(B) *News media, educational and non-commercial scientific institution requesters.* Requesters who are representatives of the news media, educational and noncommercial scientific institution requesters. The Council shall provide documents to requesters in these categories for the cost of reproduction alone, excluding fees for the first 100 pages.

(C) *All other requesters.* The Council shall charge requesters who do not fit into any of the categories in paragraphs (b)(5)(iii)(A) and (B) of this section fees which recover the full reasonable direct cost of searching for and reproducing records that are responsive to the request, except that the first 100 pages of reproduction and the first two hours of search time shall be furnished without a fee.

(D) *Description of records.* All requesters must specifically describe records sought.

(iv) *Interest on unpaid fees.* The Council may begin assessing interest charges on an unpaid bill starting on the 31st day following the day on which the bill was sent. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717 and will accrue from the date of the billing.

(v) *Fees for unsuccessful search and review.* The Council may assess fees for time spent searching and reviewing, even if it fails to locate the records or if records located are determined to be exempt from disclosure.

(vi) *Aggregating requests.* A requester(s) may not file multiple requests each seeking portions of a document or documents, solely in order to avoid payment of fees. If this is done, the Council may aggregate any such requests and charge accordingly. In no case will the Council aggregate multiple requests on unrelated subjects from the same requester.

§ 1101.5

12 CFR Ch. XI (1–1–23 Edition)

(vii) *Advance payment of fees.* The Council will not require a requester to make an assurance of payment or an advance payment unless:

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

(B) A requester has previously failed to pay a fee charged in a timely fashion. The Council may require the requester to pay the full amount owed plus any applicable interest as provided in paragraph (b)(5)(iv) of this section or demonstrate that he/she has, in fact, paid the fee, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before the Council begins to process a new request or a pending request from that requester.

(C) When the Council acts under paragraph (b)(5)(vii)(A) or (B) of this section, the administrative time limits prescribed in subsection (a)(6) of the FOIA (*i.e.*, 20 working days from receipt of initial requests, plus permissible extensions of these time limits) will begin only after the Council has received the fee payments described.

(6) *Records of another agency.* If a requested record originated with or incorporates the information of another State or Federal agency or department, upon receipt of a request for the record the Council will promptly inform the requester of this circumstance and immediately shall forward the request to the originating agency or department either for processing in accordance with the latter's regulations or for guidance with respect to disposition.

[82 FR 30726, July 3, 2017]

§ 1101.5 Testimony and production of documents in response to subpoena, order, etc.

No person shall testify, in court or otherwise, as a result of activities on behalf of the Council without prior written authorization from the Council. This section shall not restrict the

authority of a Council member to testify before Congress on matters within his or her official responsibilities as a Council member. No person shall furnish documents reflecting information of the Council in compliance with a subpoena, order, or otherwise, without prior written authorization from the Council. The Council may authorize testimony or production of documents after the litigant (or the litigant's attorney) submits an affidavit to the Council setting forth the interest of the litigant and the testimony or documents desired. Authorization to testify or produce documents is limited to authority expressly granted by the Council. When the Council has not authorized testimony or production of documents, the individual to whom the subpoena or order has been directed will appear in court and respectfully state that he or she is unable to comply further with the subpoena or order by reason of this section.

PART 1102—APPRAISER REGULATION

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