

in writing to pay the actual or estimated total fee, or designate some amount of fees you are willing to pay.

(a) *Search for records.* ONDCP will charge \$77.00 per hour, which is a blended hourly rate for all personnel that respond to FOIA requests plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits.

(b) *Review of records.* ONDCP will charge \$77.00 per hour, which is a blended hourly rate for all personnel that responded to FOIA requests plus 16 percent of that rate to cover benefits. Records or portions of records withheld under an exemption subsequently determined not to apply may be reviewed to determine the applicability of exemptions not considered. The cost for a subsequent review is assessable.

(c) *Duplication of records.* We will charge duplication fees to all requesters. We will honor your preference for receiving a record in a particular format if we can readily reproduce it in the form or format requested. If we provide photocopies, we will make one copy per request at the cost of \$.10 per page. For copies of records produced on tapes, disks or other media, we will charge the direct costs of producing the copy, including operator time. Where we must scan paper documents in order to comply with your preference to receive the records in an electronic format, we will charge you the direct costs associated with scanning those materials. For other forms of duplication, we will charge the direct costs. We will provide the first 100 pages of duplication (or the cost equivalent for other media) without charge except for requesters seeking records for a commercial use.

(d) *Other charges.* ONDCP will recover the costs of providing other services such as certifying records or sending records by special methods.

§ 1401.12 Fees to be charged—miscellaneous provisions.

(a) Payment for FOIA services may be made by check or money order made payable to the Treasury of the United States.

(b) ONDCP may require advance payment where the estimated fee exceeds \$250, or a requester previously failed to pay within 30 days of the billing date.

(c) ONDCP may assess interest charges beginning the 31st day of billing. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in section 3717 of title 31 of the United States Code and will accrue from the date of the billing.

(d) ONDCP may assess search charges where records are not located or where records are exempt from disclosure.

(e) ONDCP may aggregate individual requests for fee purposes in accordance with 1401.16.

§ 1401.13 Fees to be charged—categories of requesters.

(a) There are three categories of FOIA requesters: Commercial use requests; educational, non-commercial scientific institutions or representatives of the news media; and all other requesters.

(b) The specific levels of fees for each of these categories are:

(1) *Commercial use request.* ONDCP will recover the full direct cost of providing search, review and duplication services. Commercial use requests will not receive free search-time or free reproduction of documents.

(2) *Educational and non-commercial scientific institution request.* ONDCP will charge the cost of reproduction, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. Requesters must demonstrate the request is authorized by and under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are sought for scholarly or scientific research not a commercial use.

(3) *Request from representative of the news media.* ONDCP will charge the cost of reproduction, excluding charges for the first 100 pages. Requesters must meet the criteria in § 1401.3, and the request must not be made for a commercial use. A request that supports the news dissemination function of the requester shall not be considered a commercial use.

(4) *All other requesters.* ONDCP will recover the full direct cost of the search and the reproduction of records, excluding the first 100 pages of reproduction and the first two hours of search time.

§ 1401.14 Restrictions on charging fees.

(a) No search fees will be charged for requests by educational institutions

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(unless the records are sought for a commercial use), noncommercial scientific institutions, or representatives of the news media.

(b) If ONDCP fails to comply with the FOIA's time limits in which to respond to a request, it may not charge search fees, or, in the instances of requests from requesters described in §1401.13(b)(2), may not charge duplication fees, except as described in paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of this section.

(c) If ONDCP determines that unusual circumstances as defined by the FOIA apply and the agency provided 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 days.

(d) If ONDCP determines that unusual circumstances as defined by the FOIA apply, and more than 5,000 pages are necessary to respond to the request, the agency may charge search fees, or, in the case of requesters described in §1401.13(b)(2) of this section, may charge duplication fees if the following steps are taken. ONDCP must have provided timely written notice of unusual circumstances to the requester in accordance with the FOIA and the agency must have discussed with the requester via written mail, email, 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, ONDCP may charge all applicable fees incurred in the processing of the request.

(e) 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.

(f) No search or review fees will be charged for a quarter-hour period unless more than half of that period is required for search or review.

(g) When, after first deducting the 100 free pages (or its cost equivalent) and the first two hours of search, a total fee calculated under paragraph (c) of this section is \$25.00 or less for any request, no fee will be charged.

§ 1401.15 Waiver or reduction of fees.

Requirements for waiver or reduction of fees:

(a) Requesters may seek a waiver of fees by submitting a written application demonstrating how disclosure of the requested 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 is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

(b) ONDCP must furnish records responsive to a request without charge or at a reduced rate when it determines, based on all available information, that disclosure of the requested 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 is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. In deciding whether this standard is satisfied the agency must consider the factors described in paragraphs (b)(1) through (3) of this section:

(1) Disclosure of the requested information would shed light on the operations or activities of the government. The subject of the request must concern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal Government with a connection that is direct and clear, not remote or attenuated.

(2) Disclosure of the requested information would be likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of those operations or activities. This factor is satisfied when the following criteria are met:

(i) Disclosure of the requested records must be meaningfully informative about government operations or activities. The disclosure of information that already is in the public domain, in either the same or a substantially identical form, would not be meaningfully informative if nothing new would be added to the public's understanding.

(ii) The disclosure must contribute to the understanding of a reasonably broad audience of persons interested in the subject, as opposed to the individual understanding of the requester. A requester's expertise in the subject area as well as the requester's ability