
40 C.F.R. § 1601.40

Procedures for fees.

(a) *In general.* The CSB must charge for processing requests under the FOIA in accordance with the provisions of this section and with the OMB Guidelines. For purposes of assessing fees, the FOIA establishes three categories of requesters: Commercial use requesters, non-commercial scientific or educational institutions or news media requesters, and all other requesters. Different fees are assessed depending on the category. Requesters may seek a fee waiver. The CSB must consider requests for fee waivers in accordance with the requirements in paragraph (k) of this section. To resolve any fee issues that arise under this section, the CSB may contact a requester for additional information. The CSB must ensure that searches, review, and duplication are conducted in the most efficient and the least expensive manner. The CSB ordinarily will collect all applicable fees before sending copies of records to a requester. Requesters must pay fees by check or money order made payable to the Treasury of the United States, or by another method as determined by the CSB.

(b) *Definitions.*

(1) *Commercial use request* is a request that asks for information for a use or a purpose that furthers a commercial, trade, or profit interest, which can include furthering those interests through litigation. The CSB's decision to place a requester in the commercial use category will be made on a case-by-case basis based on the requester's intended use of the information. The CSB must notify requesters of their placement in this category.

(2) *Direct costs* are those expenses that the CSB incurs in searching for and duplicating (and, in the case of commercial use requests, reviewing) records in order to respond to a FOIA request. For example, direct costs include the salary of the employee performing the work (*i.e.*, the basic rate of pay for the employee, plus sixteen percent (16%) of that rate to cover benefits) and the cost of operating computers and other electronic equipment, such as photocopiers and scanners. Direct costs do not include overhead expenses such as the costs of space, and of heating or lighting a facility.

(3) *Duplication* is reproducing a copy of a record, or of the information contained in it, necessary to respond to a FOIA request. Copies can take the form of paper, audiovisual materials, or electronic records, among others. The copies provided must be in a form that is reasonably usable by requesters.

(4) *Educational institution* is any school that operates a program of scholarly research. A requester in this fee category must show that the request is made in connection with the requester's role at the educational institution. The CSB may seek verification from the requester that the request is in furtherance of scholarly research and the CSB must advise requesters of their placement in this category.

(i) *Example 1.* A request from a professor of geology at a university for records relating to soil erosion, written on letterhead of the Department of Geology, would be presumed to be from an educational institution.

(ii) *Example 2.* A request from the same professor of geology seeking drug information from the Food and Drug Administration in furtherance of a murder mystery he is writing would not be presumed to be an institutional request, regardless of whether it was written on institutional stationery.

(iii) *Example 3.* A student who makes a request in furtherance of the student's coursework or other school-sponsored activities and provides a copy of a course syllabus or other reasonable documentation to indicate the research purpose for the request, would qualify as part of this fee category.

(5) *Noncommercial scientific institution* is an institution that is not operated on a “commercial” basis, as defined in paragraph (b)(1) of this section and that is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry. A requester in this category must show that the request is authorized by and is made under the auspices of a qualifying institution and that the records are sought to further scientific research and are not for a commercial use. The CSB must advise requesters of their placement in this category.

(6) *Representative of the news media* is 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. Accordingly, the term includes any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. 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 include television or radio stations that broadcast news to the public at large, and publishers of periodicals that disseminate news and make their products available through a variety of means to the general public, including news organizations that make their products available for purchase by or subscription by or free distribution to the general public, including those solely on the Internet. 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 request for records supporting the news-dissemination function of the requester will not be considered to be for a commercial use. *Freelance* journalists who demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through a news media entity will be considered as a representative of the news media. A publishing contract would provide the clearest evidence that publication is expected; however, the CSB can also consider a requester's past publication record in making this determination. The CSB will advise requesters of their placement in this category.

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