

31 C.F.R. § 1.4

Responses to requests.

- (a) *In general.* Components ordinarily will respond to requests according to their order of receipt. The Appendices to this subpart contain the list of the Departmental components that are designated to accept requests. In instances involving misdirected requests, *i.e.*, where a request is sent to one of the components designated in the Appendices but is actually seeking records maintained by another component, the response time will commence on the date that the request is received by the appropriate component, but in any event not later than ten working days after the request is first received.
- (b) *Multitrack processing.* All components must designate a specific track for requests that are granted expedited processing, in accordance with the standards set forth in paragraph (e) of this section. A component may also designate additional processing tracks that distinguish between simple and more complex requests based on the estimated amount of work or time needed to process the request. A component can consider factors such as the number of pages involved in processing the request or the need for consultations or referrals. Components shall advise requesters of the track into which their request falls and, when appropriate, shall offer the requesters an opportunity to narrow their request so that it can be placed in a different processing track.
- (c) *Unusual circumstances.* Whenever the statutory time limits for processing a request cannot be met because of “unusual circumstances,” as defined in the FOIA, and the component extends the time limits on that basis, the component shall, before expiration of the twenty-day period to respond, notify the requester in writing of the unusual circumstances involved and of the date by which processing of the request can be expected to be completed. Where the extension exceeds ten working days, the component shall, as described by the FOIA, provide the requester with an opportunity to modify the request or agree to an alternative time period for processing. The component shall make available its designated FOIA contact or its FOIA Public Liaison for this purpose. The component must also alert requesters to the availability of the Office of Government Information Services to provide dispute resolution services.

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