



Department of Defense

Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer Report to the Department of Justice

For 2023

***Preparation of this study/report cost the DoD approximately
\$45,000 for the 2023 Fiscal Year***

Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	I
SECTION I: FOIA LEADERSHIP AND APPLYING THE PRESUMPTION OF OPENNESS	1
A. LEADERSHIP SUPPORT FOR FOIA	1
B. PRESUMPTION OF OPENNESS.....	2
SECTION II: ENSURING FAIR AND EFFECTIVE FOIA ADMINISTRATION.....	3
A. FOIA TRAINING	3
B. OUTREACH	5
C. OTHER INITIATIVES.....	7
SECTION III: PROACTIVE DISCLOSURES.....	9
SECTION IV: STEPS TAKE TO GREATER UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY.....	13
SECTION V: STEPS TAKEN TO REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS, IMPROVE TIMELINESS IN RESPONDING TO REQUESTS, AND REDUCE BACKLOGS.....	14
A. REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS.....	14
B. TIMELINESS	15
C. BACKLOGS.....	16
D. BACKLOG REDUCTION PLANS.....	19
E. REDUCING THE AGE OF REQUESTS, APPEALS, AND CONSULTATIONS.....	20
F. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT FOIA PROCESSING	22
SECTION VI: SUCCESS STORIES	24



2023 Department of Defense Chief Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer Report to the Department of Justice

Executive Summary

The 2009 Department of Justice (DOJ) Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Guidelines require the Chief FOIA Officer for each federal agency to submit a report to the Attorney General (AG) containing a detailed description of the steps undertaken by the agency to improve FOIA compliance and transparency. This year's report covers the period from March 2022 to March 2023.

As the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency (ATSD(PCLT)), I also serve as the Department of Defense (DoD) Chief FOIA Officer. I am pleased to submit the 2023 DoD Chief FOIA Officer Report to DOJ. As the DoD Chief FOIA Officer, I am continuing the DoD tradition of leadership dedication to the success of the Department's FOIA program through the DoD FOIA Program Components located around the world.

On my behalf, the Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Freedom of Information Directorate (PCLFD), located within the Office of the ATSD(PCLT)(OATSD(PCLT)), oversees all FOIA policy matters within the DoD. Through the PCLFD, I ensured ongoing emphasis on FOIA, including the areas of particular interest to DOJ in this year's report: (1) applying the presumption of openness; (2) effective systems for responding to requests; (3) increasing proactive disclosures; (4) increasing greater utilization of technology; and (5) improving timeliness. This report encompasses the efforts and results of PCLFD and the 34 DoD FOIA Program Components.

The DoD has a decentralized FOIA program, with each of the 34 DoD FOIA Program Components implementing its own FOIA programs. The OATSD(PCLT) establishes policy and provides overall FOIA guidance to the DoD Components, ensuring its processes comply with the FOIA, relevant case law, and DoD policy. The DoD Components establish and maintain FOIA processes uniquely tailored to their organizations, while providing the best quality customer service possible.

During Fiscal Year (FY) 2022, DoD Components received 54,004 FOIA requests and processed 52,222 FOIA requests. In FY 2022, DoD Components processed almost 86% percent of *all* perfected requests in FY 2022 in fewer than 100 days. Although DoD Components remained attuned to public interest, they still faced some challenges. While only 13.7% of the components closed all ten oldest requests, DoD's overall request backlog only increased 5%. In addition, even though only one component closed all ten oldest appeals this fiscal year, DoD's overall appeals backlog decreased by 3%.

Significantly this year, the DoD worked to strengthen its FOIA program in response to the Attorney General's (AG) FOIA Guidelines memorandum, issued on March 15, 2022. In June 2022, I issued a memorandum directing all DoD Component FOIA Offices to take actions to address certain areas in the AG's FOIA Guidelines. As a result, and as detailed further below, DoD FOIA Program Components this year are reporting on enhanced efforts to improve the navigability and usability of

their FOIA websites, to increase proactive disclosures and improve internal processes to identify such disclosures on an ongoing basis, and methods outside of FOIA by which records are made available to individuals or the public.

This report also details other ways in which DoD continues to improve FOIA administration and further streamline FOIA processes. Highlights in this report include DoD Components' vigilance in attending, and hosting, FOIA training to ensure FOIA professionals are well versed in the nuances of FOIA requirements. Components included more agency non-FOIA professionals through creative outreach methods, improving overall program efficiencies and providing specific information of most interest to requester communities.

All DoD Components focused on enhancing customer service and communications with FOIA requesters. Many reported FOIA requesters using public facing electronic tools, assisting requesters with tracking requests, monitoring progress towards case fulfillment, and locating publicly available records with greater ease. Components also reported multiple initiatives and actions undertaken ensuring its FOIA processes operate efficiently and effectively.

I am proud of the Department's efforts to improve FOIA processes and look forward to the Department's continued work enhancing and promoting the principles of openness and transparency.

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Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency

DoD FOIA Program Components/34 FOIA Request Service Centers (RSC)

AIR FORCE	Department of the Air Force
AFRICOM	U.S. Africa Command
ASBCA	Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals
ARMY	Department of the Army
CENTCOM	U.S. Central Command
CYBERCOM	U.S. Cyber Command
DCAA	Defense Contract Audit Agency
DCMA	Defense Contract Management Agency
DCSA	Defense Counterintelligence and Security Agency
DeCA	Defense Commissary Agency
DFAS	Defense Finance and Accounting Service
DHA	Defense Health Agency
DIA	Defense Intelligence Agency
DISA	Defense Information Systems Agency
DLA	Defense Logistics Agency
DoDEA	Department of Defense Education Activity
DoD IG	Department of Defense Inspector General
DTIC	Defense Technical Information Center
DTRA	Defense Threat Reduction Agency
EUCOM	U.S. European Command
JPRA	Joint Personnel Recovery Agency
INDO-PACOM	U.S. Indo-Pacific Command

NAVY	Department of the Navy
NGA	National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency
NGB	National Guard Bureau
NORTHCOM	U.S. Northern Command
NRO	National Reconnaissance Office
NSA	National Security Agency
OSD/JS	Office of the Secretary of Defense/Joint Staff
SOCOM	U.S. Special Operations Command
SOUTHCOM	U.S. Southern Command
SPACECOM	U.S. Space Command
STRATCOM	U.S. Strategic Command
TRANSCOM	U.S. Transportation Command

SECTION I: FOIA LEADERSHIP AND APPLYING THE PRESUMPTION OF OPENNESS

A. Leadership Support for FOIA

FOIA requires each agency designate a senior official, at least at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level, as the Chief FOIA Officer. Ms. Joo Chung serves as the ATSD(PCLT) and is also appointed as the DoD Chief FOIA Officer.

DoD has made great strides in incorporating FOIA into its core mission and strengthening the DoD FOIA program. Within the OATSD(PCLT), the Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Freedom of Information Directorate (PCLFD) oversees all FOIA policy matters within the DoD. PCLFD ensures ongoing emphasis on FOIA, including the AG's particular interest areas: (1) applying the presumption of openness; (2) effective systems for responding to requests; (3) increasing proactive disclosures; (4) increasing greater utilization of technology; and (5) improving timeliness.

DoD also executed its mission in a manner fully respecting and protecting privacy and civil liberties, promoting Department transparency, and cooperating with external partners and stakeholders. Also integrating the OATSD(PCLT) capabilities crossing both intelligence and non-intelligence activities, and including appropriate independent oversight, assures the Department's success.

In addition, DoD FOIA Program Components incorporated FOIA into its core missions, milestones, and strategic plans. For example:

- DIA established a separate Information Management and Compliance Office (IMO) on October 1, 2022, consolidating the Office of Oversight and Compliance, Records Management, Declassification, and FOIA programs into one unified office under the DIA Chief of Staff. Consolidating these programs under the DIA Chief of Staff signaled DIA's commitment to modernizing and improving management of the full lifecycle of Agency data, ensuring DIA fulfills its public obligation to share eligible information.
- CENTCOM created two new FOIA teams to better serve the needs of FOIA requesters: Team One concentrates on litigation cases to decrease case processing time. Team Two focuses on backlog reduction and processing older complex cases.
- DHA's Administration and Management Strategic Plan incorporated FOIA into its mission to meet legislative and policy requirements and provide better customer service to external and internal stakeholders. In addition, DHA tracks key metrics weekly to keep leadership informed of program statistics.
- During new Action Officer training within OSD/JS, the OSD/JS Freedom of Information Division (FOID) conducts FOIA training. FOID provides a brief FOIA history, DoD and OSD/JS expectations, and a FOIA exemption overview.
- Within OATSD(PCLT), PCLFD evaluated its FOIA Program and initiated multiple FOIA specific initiatives, including an evaluation of current DoD FOIA Policies to identify needed updates; developing and implementing a DoD FOIA Virtual Training Program; improving

proactive component outreach and review initiatives; and developing a plan to improve FOIA directives, manuals, and guidance. In addition, PCLFD Appeals implemented a backlog reduction plan resulting in a 23% appeals backlog reduction, surpassing DOJ's annual 10% reduction goal. PCLFD Appeals also completed several internal open FOIA appeals audits and evaluated existing processes in order to reduce FOIA appeal processing time.

B. Presumption of Openness

The AG's FOIA Guidelines memorandum dated March 15, 2022, provides that "agencies should confirm in response letters to FOIA requesters that they have considered the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records and applying FOIA exemptions." In June 2022, the DoD Chief FOIA Officer sent a memo entitled "DoD Guidance on Attorney General (AG) FOIA Guidelines" (DoD Guidance Memo) to all DoD FOIA officers, attorneys, public liaisons, and appellate authorities requesting they take action in the next 30 days to ensure response letters to FOIA requesters include language addressing application of the foreseeable harm standard, as suggested in the AG's FOIA Guidelines. It also instructed DoD Components to adequately document foreseeable harm determinations in the FOIA case file, in addition to communicating compliance with the requirements to the requester.

In October 2022, PCLFD surveyed the DoD Components on their compliance with this new requirement. In response, 85% of DoD's Components reported their FOIA response letters now provide confirmation that the foreseeable harm was considered, and 88% of DoD's Components reported documenting the foreseeable harm determinations in their FOIA administrative case files.

Some DoD FOIA Program Components use other initiatives to ensure the presumption of openness is applied. For example:

- Each Navy FOIA Coordinator communicates the importance of openness in FOIA request record releases to leadership. They also communicate directly to technical and scientific field subject matter experts the importance of openness in FOIA, and in reviewing each FOIA request on a case-by-case basis, rendering decisions on whether to disclose or withhold information based upon FOIA exemption applicability, independent of markings.
- ASBCA's website provides FOIA guidance to assist potential requesters in submitting a request. Key FOIA personnel contact information is also provided to assist the requester with status inquiries or submitting a request. In addition, ASBCA's website includes over 6,000 published decisions going back to at least the year 2000.
- OSD/JS (FOID) posted 298 newly released documents to its reading room at https://www.esd.whs.mil/FOIA/Reading-Room/Reading-Room-List_2/.
- AIR FORCE FOIA offices routinely publish FOIA responses and frequently requested documents, except for privacy specific responses, to its FOIA Library. During the current reporting period, the AIR FORCE added 34,902 pages of documents to the AIR FORCE FOIA Library.

- DTIC publishes information on its website explaining, in detail, the FOIA process for the public at <https://discover.dtic.mil/foia>.

On rare occasions, DoD Components respond to a requester “it can neither confirm nor deny the existence of requested records,” if acknowledging the existence of records would harm an interest protected by a FOIA exemption. This is commonly referred to as a “Glomar” response. Although DoD does not currently require DoD Components track its use of Glomar responses, 64% of DoD’s Components did track whether a request involved a Glomar response, and twelve Glomar responses were reported by these Components. FOIA exemptions (b)(1), (b)(3), (b)(6), and (b)(7)(c) were used as the basis for these Glomar responses.

SECTION II: ENSURING FAIR AND EFFECTIVE FOIA ADMINISTRATION

The AG FOIA Guidelines provide that “ensuring fair and effective FOIA administration requires proper training, and a full understanding of FOIA obligations by the entire agency workforce.” The Guidelines reinforce longstanding guidance to “work with FOIA requesters in the spirit of cooperation.” The AG also “urges agency Chief FOIA Officers to undertake a comprehensive review of all aspects of its agency’s FOIA administration” as part of ensuring fair and effective FOIA administration.

A. FOIA Training

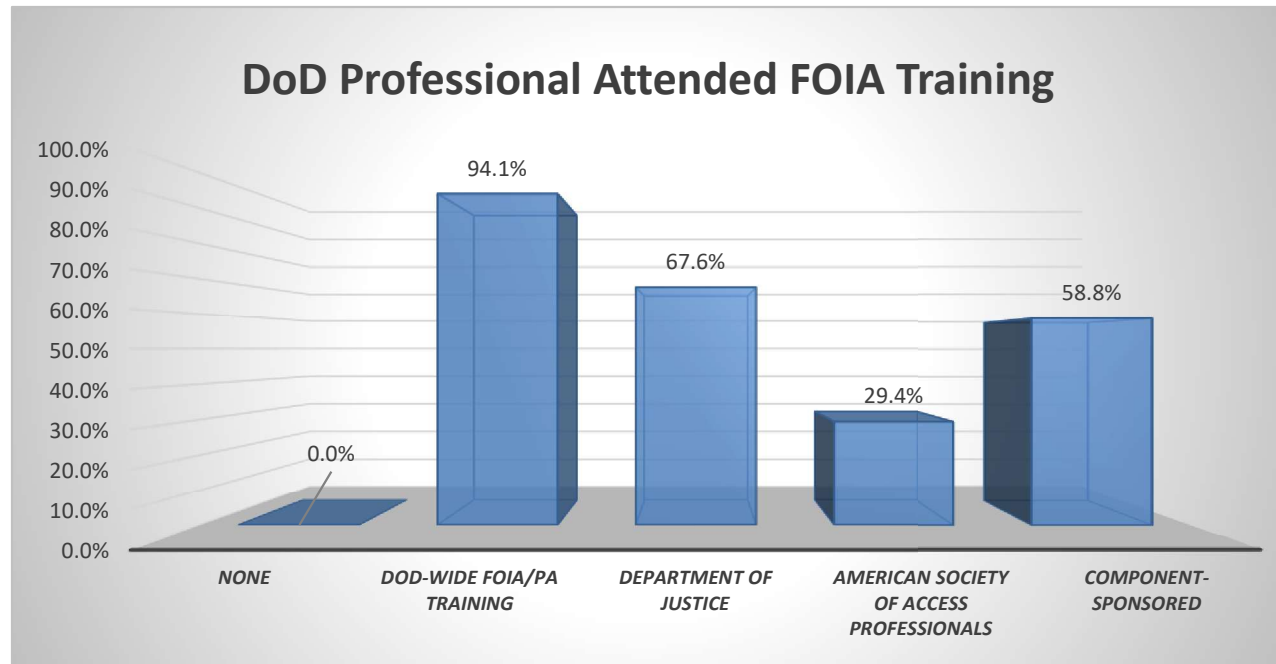
The FOIA directs agency Chief FOIA Officers to ensure that FOIA training is offered to agency personnel. The PCLFD is responsible for encouraging and promoting FOIA and Privacy Act (PA) training across the Department. In this capacity, the PCLFD conducts in-person and virtual FOIA/PA presentations and training.

During this reporting period, the PCLFD conducted one in-person training session. The PCLFD led a DoD Breakout session during the American Society of Access Professionals (ASAP) 15th Annual National Training Conference held July 19-21, 2022. Approximately 30 DoD FOIA professionals attended this Breakout session. The topics included: (1) OATSD(PCLT) structure and responsibilities, (2) The State of DoD FOIA, and (3) The State of DoD Privacy

In 2022, DoD continued its Virtual FOIA Training Program for the DoD FOIA Community. The program delivered initial, refresher, and advanced training courses for DoD FOIA professionals. The training topics included Basic Introduction to FOIA, FOIA Appeal Best Practices, FOIA and Privacy Act Interface, FOIA Exemption 5 and the Foreseeable Harm Standard, DoD Annual FOIA Report, Chief FOIA Officer Report and Quarterly Report preparation, and various other FOIA-related topics.

During this reporting period, 91% of DoD FOIA professionals received some type of formal FOIA training and over 94% of the DoD Components received DoD-wide FOIA/PA Training. Additionally, more than 67% of DoD FOIA personnel attended DOJ’s OIP training, and 58% participated in component sponsored FOIA training. Approximately 29% of DoD FOIA personnel

attended ASAP training. During this reporting period, 100% of DoD FOIA personnel were able to attend some form of formal or informal FOIA training. DoD intends to provide additional DoD-wide FOIA/PA training or workshops and strongly encourages Components to conduct internal trainings to increase the overall percentage of training.



The DoD Components that reported hosting their own internal training for FOIA professionals indicated a variety of venues and substantive teaching methods in applying and implementing the FOIA. For example:

- NGB conducted a “FOIA Roadshow” briefing agency subcomponents during its staff meetings on FOIA/PA laws, process, and procedures.
- NGA included a FOIA training objective in its FOIA analyst’s performance plan. The training objective is discussed with the analyst at least quarterly to ensure analysts are meeting or exceeding its objective. A list of available DoD and DOJ FOIA training, as well as FOIA training opportunities, is provided to the analysts. Analysts are also given an opportunity to attend ASAP training annually.
- STRATCOM, AFRICOM, and SOUTHCOM conducted on-the-job training, often utilizing the DOJ website, <https://www.justice.gov/oip>. The DOJ website also provides Best Practices and FOIA Resources to assist FOIA Professionals.
- TRANSCOM and OSD/JS provided FOIA/PA overview training during newcomers/Action Officer training, and specialized training to directorate liaisons. TRANSCOM also provides one-on-one training to its FOIA requesters and submitters, upon request.

- The SPACECOM FOIA Manager drafted instructions outlining the FOIA process, along with directorate responsibilities outlined for each stage of the FOIA process. Additionally, the FOIA Manager prepared a talking point paper for the primary Initial Denial Authority (IDA) (Chief of Staff) detailing IDA responsibilities.
- ARMY provided a three-day virtual training symposium to all FOIA officers covering FOIA administrative and procedural guidance, as well as providing a question-and-answer session. ARMY is also revising its online training modules to provide general FOIA education to the work force, as well as specialized training for ARMY FOIA professionals.

Again this year, the most employed methods for informing non-FOIA professionals of its FOIA obligations were general FOIA training for all personnel, and detailed FOIA training for SMEs. General training is intentionally broad and introductory in nature, while SME training featured detailed guidance on proper FOIA exemption application, ensuring the SME understands both the FOIA and agency policies. For instance:

- ASBCA, ARMY, DCSA, DIA, NAVY, NGA, NORTHCOM, and NRO provided FOIA training to senior leaders and SMEs. DIA trained 91 non-FOIA professionals during this reporting period.
- SOCOM performed in-person training sessions outlining FOIA guidelines and obligations using PowerPoint presentations. Senior-level leaders received briefs on, and notice of, Department Level Interest and FOIA Litigation Coordination (DLI/FLC) topics, and SOCOM's responses to those requests.
- OSD/JS (FOID) hosted a Senior Administrative Officers' Forum providing the current state of FOIA; the number of requests pending within its organizations; FOIA expectations under the law; and what is needed to assist in answering FOIA requests.
- NGB provided its leadership with bi-weekly updates on the state of its FOIA program and all its personnel, equipment, and logistics challenges.

B. Outreach

During this reporting period, 76% of DoD Components reported no engagement in formal outreach activities with the requester community. However, throughout the year, these Components proactively contacted individual requesters, engaging in substantive exchanges designed to more fully educate, explain, and provide specifically detailed information. Some of the smaller Components with low requester volume indicated the request types they received lend themselves to more personalized interactions with requesters from the beginning of the FOIA process. Smaller staffs also resulted in requesters working with the same FOIA professional, facilitating better anticipation of high-demand materials.

A few of the DoD Components participated in formal outreach activity. For example:

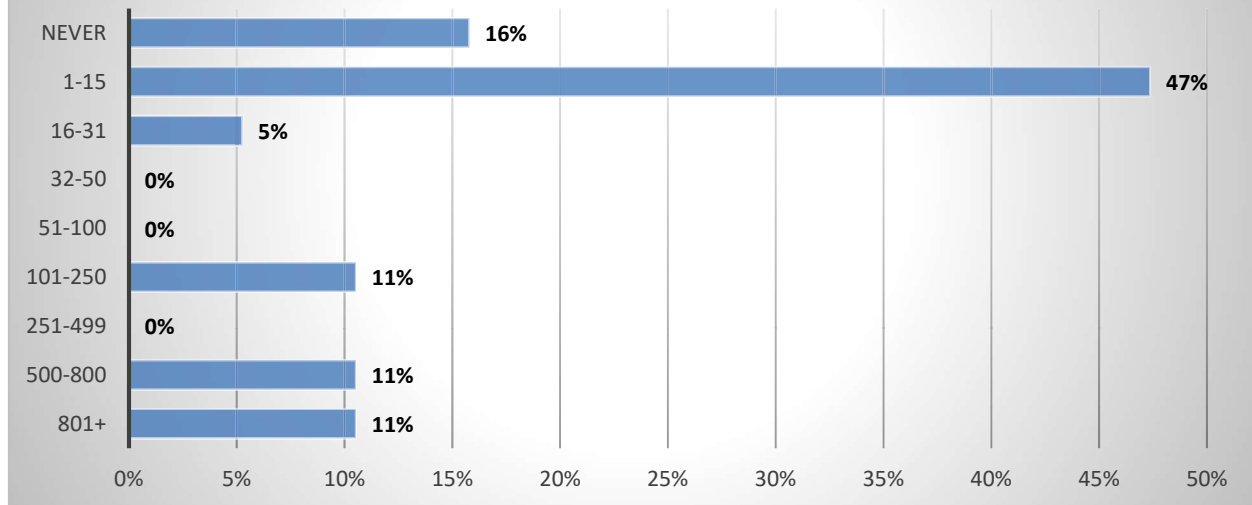
- The Acting Archivist of the United States selected the CYBERCOM FOIA Program Manager to represent the Department of Defense for the 2022-2024 term on the National Archives and Records Administration FOIA Advisory Committee.
- DIA engaged with the requester community during the ASAP conference and as a result, DIA modified practices and began posting case statuses to the DIA FOIA website monthly.
- INDO-PACOM proactively initiated discussions with its local community on a high visibility FOIA request providing individuals with guidance on how to submit FOIA requests and links to its website for the request.
- NAVY's FOIA program achievements were highlighted in the Department of Navy's "CHIPS" information technology magazine, <https://www.doncio.navy.mil/chips/ArticleDetails.aspx?id=15614>
- NGA is developing a customer satisfaction survey designed to give requesters the opportunity to provide feedback on NGA FOIA services.

As part of the standard request process, 97% of DoD's FOIA components reported proactively contacting requesters concerning complex or voluminous requests to clarify or narrow the scope of the request so requesters will receive more-timely responses.

All DoD FOIA Program Components have FOIA Public Liaisons assigned to receive and respond to public feedback, questions, and concerns. Contact information is posted on www.foia.gov as well as Component websites. Requester response letters also include the FOIA Public Liaison's contact information.

The chart below indicates the frequency of FOIA requesters contacting FOIA Public Liaisons for assistance throughout FY 2022.

Estimate of Times Requesters Contacted Component FOIA Public Liaisons



The DoD assigned 19 FOIA Public Liaisons to cover the 34 DoD Components. Eighteen Components have a dedicated FOIA Public Liaison. One individual is designated as the OSD/JS FOIA Public Liaison and also serves as the FOIA Public Liaison for 16 additional DoD Components. During this reporting period, the DoD estimates well over 2,000 interactions with requesters, including the shared FOIA Public Liaison.

C. Other Initiatives

As stated earlier, DoD has a decentralized FOIA program with each component responsible for its own staff and resources. In FY 2022, several DoD components evaluated personnel resources required to adequately respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands. For instance:

- DCSA holds resource planning meetings to identify, forecast, and allocate resource requirements to effectively meet mission priorities.
- ASBCA's IDA adjusts FOIA staffing on an annual basis based on the number of requests received and the time required for the ASBCA to respond.
- CYBERCOM initiated procurement of additional personnel in response to a 30% increase of FOIA requests, consultations and referrals. This initiative will allow CYBERCOM to be adequately staffed and better prepared to accommodate future FOIA-related demands.
- DFAS and DHA evaluated their programs and identified a need to increase personnel to meet the workload demand. DHA has successfully increased staff by 50%.
- SPACECOM is currently staffed with one Action Officer but anticipates a higher request volume which will require additional staff. Additionally, they have included non-FOIA

personnel as part of the FOIA program to assist with processing requests, providing timely responses, and reduce the inherited FOIA request backlog.

- DoDIG's FOIA Office evaluated personnel and resources, and determined it currently has an appropriate number of specialists to accomplish its current mission.
- INDO-PACOM is working with leadership to hire contractor staff.
- NAVY's subcomponent leadership regularly evaluates and allocates personnel based on need. One subcomponent regularly utilizes Reservists to assist with FOIA processing.

DoD Components use data or processing metrics to ensure efficient FOIA workload management. These metrics come from case management reports, staff processing statistics and spreadsheets created by the Components. For instance:

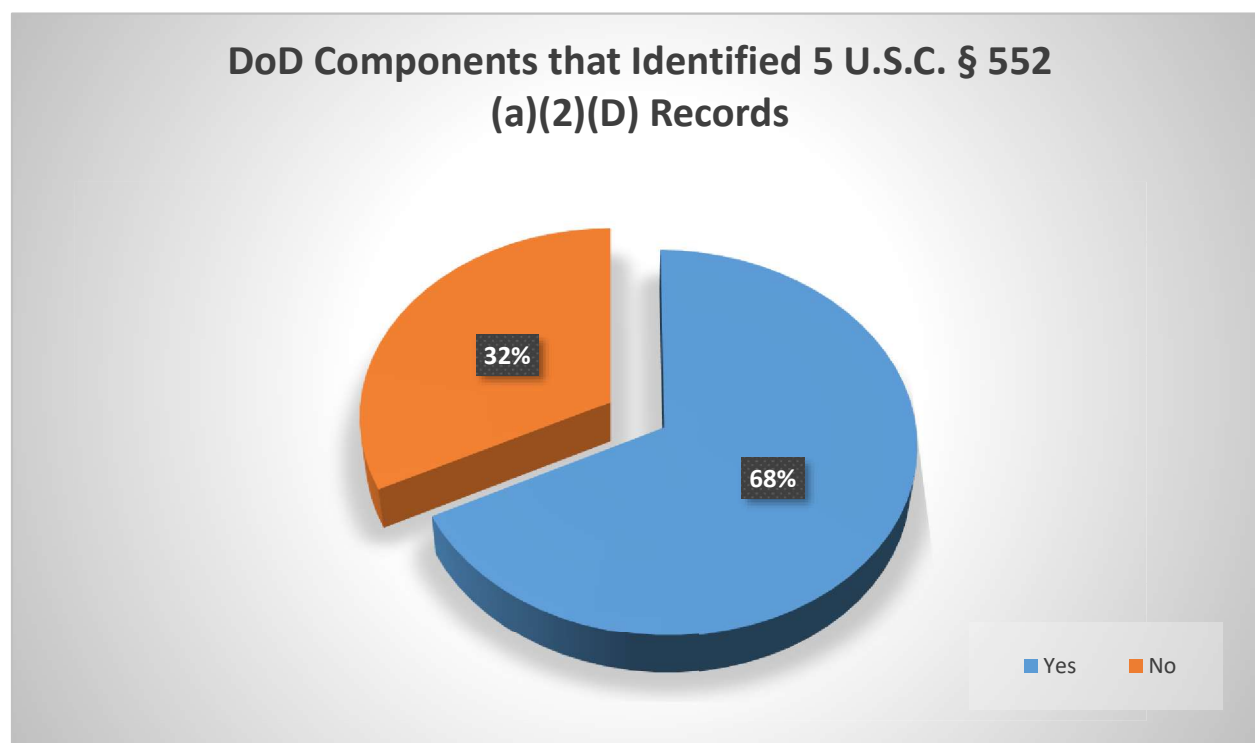
- DLA uses its current case management system reporting capabilities to generate weekly progress, performance reports and graphs to show the number of requests received, processed, and the current backlog. DLA also tracks how its agency is doing towards achieving its past baseline of performance for requests completed in "x" number of days.
- OSD/JS (FOID) tracks metrics to ensure requests that do not require a search outside of the OSD/JS FOIA Office are answered within 20 working days. FOID also tracks these requests, along with the percentage of those requests that get answered within 30 working days. FOID provides reports to management monthly. Also, additional metrics tracked are (1) the number of requests processed by FOIA Action Officer; (2) number of requests acknowledged within 5 days; (3) number of requests tasked to the appropriate component within 5 days of receipt; and (4) number of requests with completed actions which are ready for closure or require further tasking. The PCLFD Appeals Program utilizes technology to track trends, backlog status, adjudication, and assignments. This information is instrumental in developing monthly updates, processing statistics analysis and presentation, assignment reallocation, and communication to leadership regarding the PCLFD Appeals program.
- DoDIG updates multiple tracking spreadsheets throughout the FOIA processing life cycle to manage key FOIA milestones to include search status, consultation response status, backlog case status, appeal status, litigation status, and specialist case queues bi-weekly. Additionally, DoDIG tracks the number of requests received, the percentage of simple requests closed within 20 days and the number of backlog cases closed quarterly.
- STRATCOM and SPACECOM use Excel spreadsheets to track request status and update the Staff Judge Advocate during weekly/bi-weekly meetings.
- NAVY regularly compiles users' performance metrics on a weekly and monthly basis, cross-compares that data with historical data, and then evaluates this data to designate case assignments based on incoming case complexity.
- DIA uses case management report data/metrics to designate case assignment, establish caseloads, and realign cases. DIA also uses staff processing statistics to determine future

case processing expectations. By utilizing these reports, DIA Action Officers closed an average of six cases per month.

SECTION III: PROACTIVE DISCLOSURES

The AG FOIA Guidelines emphasize “proactive disclosure of information is . . . fundamental to the faithful application of the FOIA.” The Guidelines direct agencies to post “records online quickly and systematically in advance of any public request” and reiterates agencies should post records “in the most useful, searchable, and open formats possible.” DoD’s Guidelines Memo requested Components review and identify any potential processes to increase the release of proactive disclosures to make more non-exempt information available to the public on a timely basis.

In FY 2022, 68% of DoD Components identified and proactively disclosed records pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(2)(D), which are records requested under the FOIA three or more times. These records were identified through various methods throughout the Department, such as: reviewing case logs; conducting searches for similar requests in the case management system; and FOIA Action Officer personal knowledge of previous requests.



DoD FOIA Professionals often coordinate with non-FOIA staff or SMEs to enhance the FOIA program. DoD professionals provided various training to SMEs and leadership. Finally, DoD FOIA Program Components took steps to improve proactive record disclosures and many FOIA offices collaborated with non-FOIA professionals, to include Public Affairs Officers, SMEs, General Counsel, and IT Specialists, to ensure records are properly released.

- ASBCA proactively posted opinions and significant orders.

- <http://www.asbca.mil/FOIA/foia.html>
- <https://www.asbca.mil/Decisions/decisions2021.html>
- <http://www.asbca.mil/Reports/reports.html>
- <http://www.asbca.mil/Charter/charter.html>
- <http://www.asbca.mil/Rules/rules.html>
- <http://www.asbca.mil/ADR/adr.html>
- <http://www.asbca.mil/Bios/biographies.html>
- EUCOM proactively disclosed photos and articles related to EUCOM's support for Ukraine. Also, in celebration of its 70th Anniversary, EUCOM posted photos, videos, maps, and articles on EUCOM history.
 - <https://www.eucom.mil/spotlight/eucoms-support-for-ukraine>
 - <https://www.eucom.mil/organization/history-of-useucom>
- TRANSCOM offers a FOIA Request Status link to requesters. They proactively update request status in real time and provide a link in its acknowledgement letter/email to the requester so the requester can follow the progress of its request. TRANSCOM also proactively posts its FOIA log annually.
 - <https://www.ustranscom.mil/foia/>
- CYBERCOM posted publicly available records and reports to its reading room.
 - <https://www.cybercom.mil/FOIA-Privacy-Act/Reading-Room/>
- DIA proactively disclosed news articles about DIA sponsored and attended events, historical articles and Congressional speeches and testimonies.
 - <https://www.dia.mil/News-Features/Articles/>
 - <https://www.dia.mil/News-Features/DIA-in-the-News>
 - <https://www.dia.mil/News-Features/Speeches-and-Testimonies/>
- DoDIG routinely posts audit reports, evaluations, semi-annual reports, and project announcements. DoDIG also posts records that have been requested three or more times to its reading room.

- <https://www.dodig.mil/reports.html/>
- <https://www.dodig.mil/FOIA/FOIA-Reading-Room/>
- NRO posted documents of interest which included the 1971 NRO Archive Release Program.
 - <https://www.nro.gov/Freedom-of-Information-Act-FOIA/Declassified-Records/Frequently-Requested-Records/>

During the reporting period, many DoD Components publicized and highlighted these important disclosures for public awareness. In addition, most components also maintain a social media presence and reported making announcements through a variety of platforms including Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr, RSS feeds, LinkedIn, and blog posts.

The DoD Guidance Memo directed components to conduct a review of their public-facing FOIA websites and FOIA libraries to identify improvements that could enhance the public's ability to navigate and identify records of interest. Examples of components efforts in this area include:

- DoDIG, ASBCA, and DCSA proactively posted documents to their websites so they are regularly available to the public and in machine readable format.
- CYBERCOM and DTRA proactively posted documents to FOIA reading rooms and public facing websites via their Public Affairs Office.
- DeCA continued to proactively post contracts in its FOIA reading room which are now searchable by contract type and contract number.
- NSA updated the “NSA.gov” website with an updated design and a more robust search feature.
- DHA collaborated with its communications division to make the FOIA website more user friendly for both external and internal customers.
- NRO worked with its Chief Historian to incorporate historically significant releases into more useful context for the public and routinely engaged the Public Affairs office to update its FOIA public website.
- EUCOM reviewed and updated its FOIA webpage making it more useful to the public. A German-language notice about the purpose of the FOIA program was posted to help clear up confusion within in the local German community.
- NGA implemented a new case management system resulting in a more efficient Reading Room and easier access for the public.

- OSD/JS and TRANSCOM applied optical character recognition (OCR) to PDF documents posted in its reading rooms. OSD/JS also posted raw data spreadsheets, when feasible.

The DoD Guidance Memo also directed components to identify and report on mechanisms outside of FOIA by which records may be accessed by the public. DFAS, JPRA, NAVY, and ASBCA identified categories of records that can be made readily accessible for private use without the requirement to file a FOIA or Privacy Act request.

- DFAS offers several systems to assist individuals in accessing their own records. For instance:
 - The online MyPay system allows authorized individuals the ability to retrieve, review, and update payroll information from its specific payroll system(s).
 - The MyInvoiceSystem enables contractors/vendors access to view invoice payment status; and to extract and compile data and reports required for DoD or other government agency internal and external management studies and statistical analyses.
 - The Out-of-Service Debt Payment Status Tool is an online tool which is available on the pay.gov website. This site is accessible to current and former military and civilian employees who have out-of-service debt.
 - The Check Voucher Status System provides civilian relocation travel payment status.
- JPRA allows returned Prisoners of War (POW) and missing persons a one-time security clearance and provides them review access in a controlled environment to its respective debriefing files (transcripts, interrogations, and intelligence files).
- NAVY and ASBCA allow electronic access to posted court-martial summaries, command investigations, and contracts. ASBCA also proactively publishes judge biographies.

DoD's Components also developed "best practices" to improve proactive disclosures. Some examples of best practices include:

- JPRA, NAVY, ASBCA, NGB, DIA, and AIR FORCE FOIA programs encourage internal offices to proactively post materials they determine releasable to the public.
- DoDIG posts a majority of audit reports and evaluations due to the likelihood of significant public interest.
- DoDEA FOIA program collaborates with DoDEA's procurement division to proactively post contracts to its website.
- DTRA FOIA program engaged with other DTRA program offices to improve proactive disclosure practices by making online information usable, not just accessible, utilizing available expertise outside of the FOIA office, and collaborating with stakeholders outside of DTRA.

SECTION IV: BETTER UTILIZE TECHNOLOGY

A key component of FOIA administration is technology. Technology assists in making information publicly available and FOIA processing more efficient. The AG FOIA Guidelines emphasized the importance of making FOIA websites easily navigable and complying with requirements for each DoD FOIA Program to become interoperable with the FOIA.gov website.

In FY 2022, approximately 41% of DoD Components reported they were continuing to identify technology best practices to improve overall FOIA efficiencies. Several components reported working with their case management systems to automate internal steps and processes, improve case visibility, and implement document release automation. Components also reported using e-Discovery tools to search for, and deduplicate emails. This feature is particularly useful with multiple email strings where unmodified original messages are repeated as the electronic conversation continued. Some DoD Components also engaged in document sharing platforms to expedite record processing and increase efficiency.

Per the 2022 DoD Guidance Memo, DoD tasked Components to review their FOIA-related technology capabilities and identify resources needed to respond to current and anticipated FOIA demands. Seventy-nine percent completed this review. Components also regularly reviewed their FOIA websites ensuring sites contain essential resources and are informative and user-friendly. In addition, during the last reporting period, PCLFD reviewed all DoD Component's FOIA websites and notified them of any discrepancies identified.

DoD posted all FY 2022 quarterly reports on time. The reports consist of FY 2022 information from all 34 FOIA Program Components, and the data is available at <https://www.foia.gov/data.html>.

DoD also posted the Annual FOIA Report data used for compiling the current Annual FOIA Report. Current and previous report files are available at <http://open.defense.gov/Transparency/FOIA/DoD-Annual-Reports-to-AG/>.

DoD continues to explore an enterprise wide FOIA case management system. This system would provide consistency in how DoD FOIA offices track cases, maintain records, conduct internal consultations and referrals, and produce reports. The objective is to provide DOD FOIA Offices with more consistent technical support and improved efficiency in FOIA processing.

In February 2019, DOJ and OMB issued joint Guidance establishing interoperability standards to receive requests from the National FOIA Portal on FOIA.gov. To date, 97% of DoD's components are compliant with this guidance.

Some Components identified technology best practices to facilitate overall FOIA efficiency and appropriate security levels. For example:

- DIA's Records Lifecycle Division developed a "Finding Aid Tool" providing FOIA analysts an additional search capability for records not located by the Action Office.
- CENTCOM uses software to identify and remove duplicative records.
- DLA is implementing technology to facilitate email message deduplication.

- ARMY’s case management system is used to coordinate electronic Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) records and voluminous file reviews.
- DCSA deployed an IT solution to support handling requests with responsive documents from various program offices. This IT solution provides a unified approach to request accountability and streamlines data collection for required annual and ad hoc reporting.

Unfortunately, DoD Components experienced some technology challenges. For example:

- AIR FORCE’s FOIA case management system’s unavailability to its internal and external users, and Action Officers researching and troubleshooting these problems, prolonged request processing times.
- ARMY lacks training for FOIA officer case management tracking system and administrative processes.
- CENTCOM lacks the ability to adequately conduct searches and remove non-responsive documents.
- DCAA and CYBERCOM lack resources to obtain technology.
- DCMA’s current case management system is inadequate for its volume of FOIA requests.
- DLA, NAVY, and DoDIG’s case management system (FOIA Online) is decommissioning at the end of FY 2023, and a replacement system has not been procured.

SECTION V: REMOVE BARRIERS TO ACCESS, IMPROVE TIMELINESS IN RESPONDING TO REQUESTS, AND REDUCE BACKLOGS

The AG FOIA Guidelines instruct agencies “to remove barriers to requesting and accessing government records and to reduce FOIA processing backlogs.”

A. Remove Barriers to Access

- DoD requested Components identify record categories that are readily accessible for private use without filing a FOIA or Privacy Act request. Some Components established alternative access means to first party requested records outside of the FOIA process. For instance: DFAS established several systems to serve as an alternative first party request means. One of these systems is AskDFAS. DFAS developed AskDFAS in-house to meet customer inquiries by providing access to timely and useful information regarding professional finance and accounting services. This directional approach portal gives customers the ability to locate answers to frequently asked questions, submit first-party requests, track financial inquiries, reduce call/email traffic, and communicate outside the network using secure methodology. AskDFAS is publicly available to identify and reach the necessary business

line from any computer worldwide. This program also eliminates the need for unnecessary access to ePortal or other CAC-enabled systems and tracks the customer inquiry from submission to closure. More information regarding AskDFAS is located at <https://www.dfas.mil/dfas/AskDFAS/>.

- ARMY uses the Interactive Personnel Electronic Records Management System (iPERMS), an online request portal for first-person access. iPERMS is an authorized personnel records repository for ARMY's Military Human Resource Records.

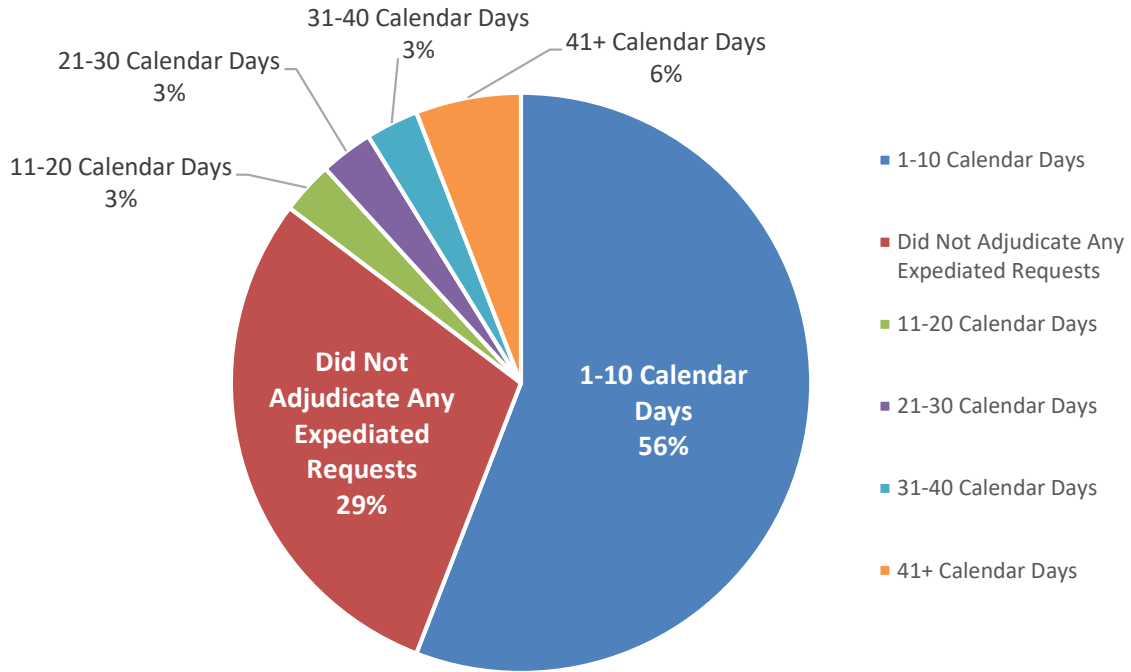
B. Timeliness

In FY 2022, DoD received 54,004 requests and processed 52,222 requests for records under the FOIA. In FY 2021, DoD received 52,805 requests and processed 50,703 requests. Fifty-seven percent of all processed perfected requests were closed within 20 days.

All DoD Components use a separate track for simple, complex, and expedited requests. Of the 52,222 cases processed, 22,192 (42%) were processed under the simple track. In FY 2021, DoD received 52,805 requests and processed 50,703 requests. Of the 50,703 cases processed, 20,821 were processed under the simple track, which is an increase of 6% for FY 2022.

The DoD simple request processing day average in FY 2021 was 32 days and increased in FY 2022 to 40 days. Also, DoD closed 20,010 perfected cases (90%) that were placed in the simple track within 20 days. Considering that 45% of all FY 2022 perfected requests processed by DoD Components were in the simple track, most requesters had its FOIA cases resolved in fewer than 20 days.

DoD Components Average Number of Days for Expedited Requests in FY 2022



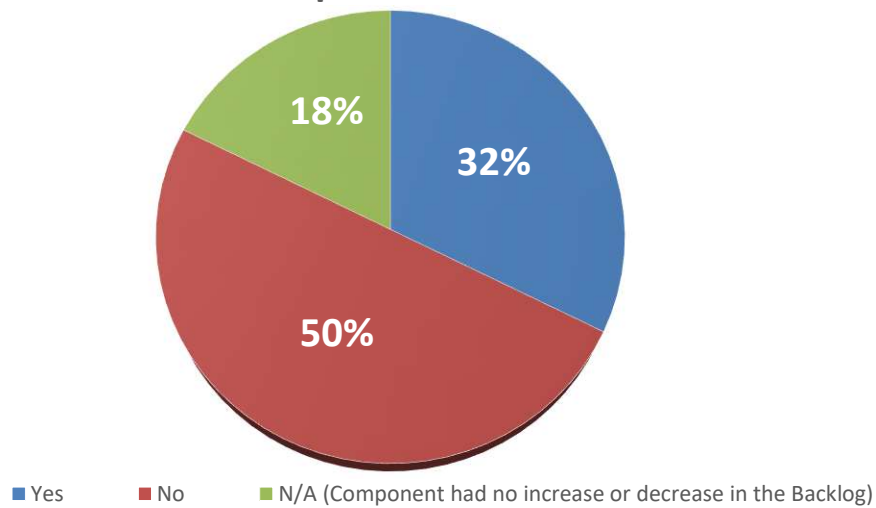
In FY 2022, the average number of days reported for adjudicating requests for expedited processing in DoD was 118 days. Of the 34 Component FOIA Programs, 30% reported not adjudicating any requests for expedited processing, and 56% reported adjudicating requests within an average of ten calendar days, an improvement from the previous year's 50%. Five components did not adjudicate these requests within a ten-calendar day average and attributed this delay to human error and lack of appropriate queue management.

C. Backlogs

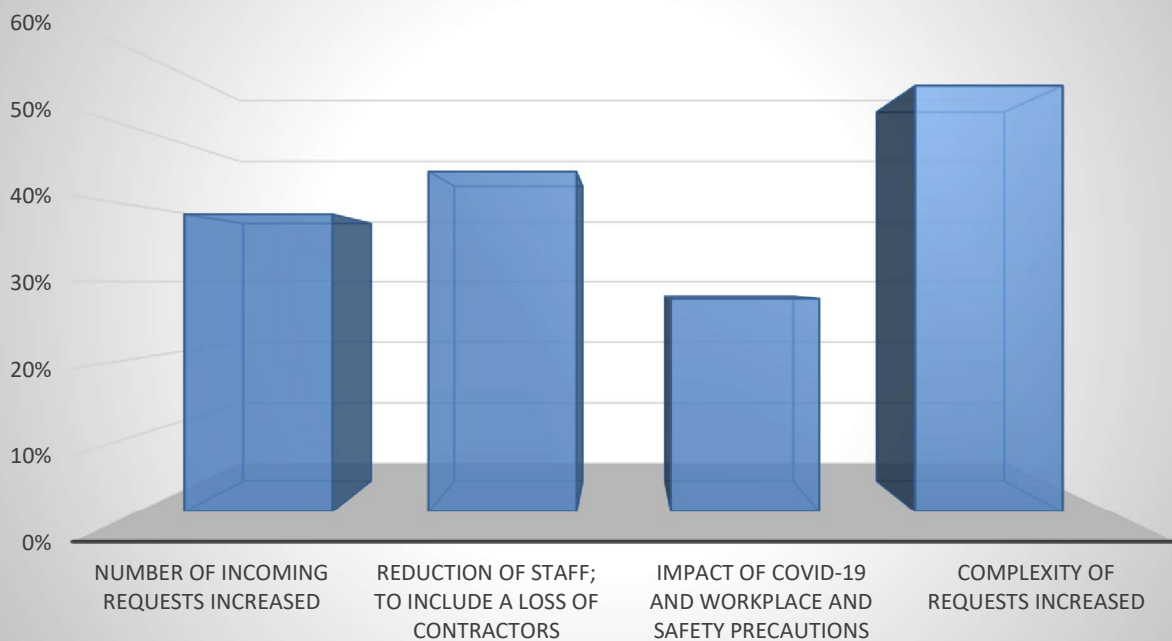
Backlogged Requests

Overall, the backlog increased 6% in FY 2022. During this reporting period, DoD recorded a FOIA request backlog of 18,567, which is an increase from 17,597 reported in FY 2021. DoD's overall percentage of requests that make up the backlog is 34%. Compared to their FY 2021 backlog, 32% of components reported a decrease in backlog in FY 2022, 50% reported an increase, and 18% had no increase or decrease. Of the 34 DoD FOIA Program Components, 15% had no request backlog at the end of FY 2022, while 30% had fewer than 10 requests backlogged at the end of FY 2022.

Did the FY 2022 Backlog Decrease as Compared to FY 2021



Request Backlog - Reduction Challenges



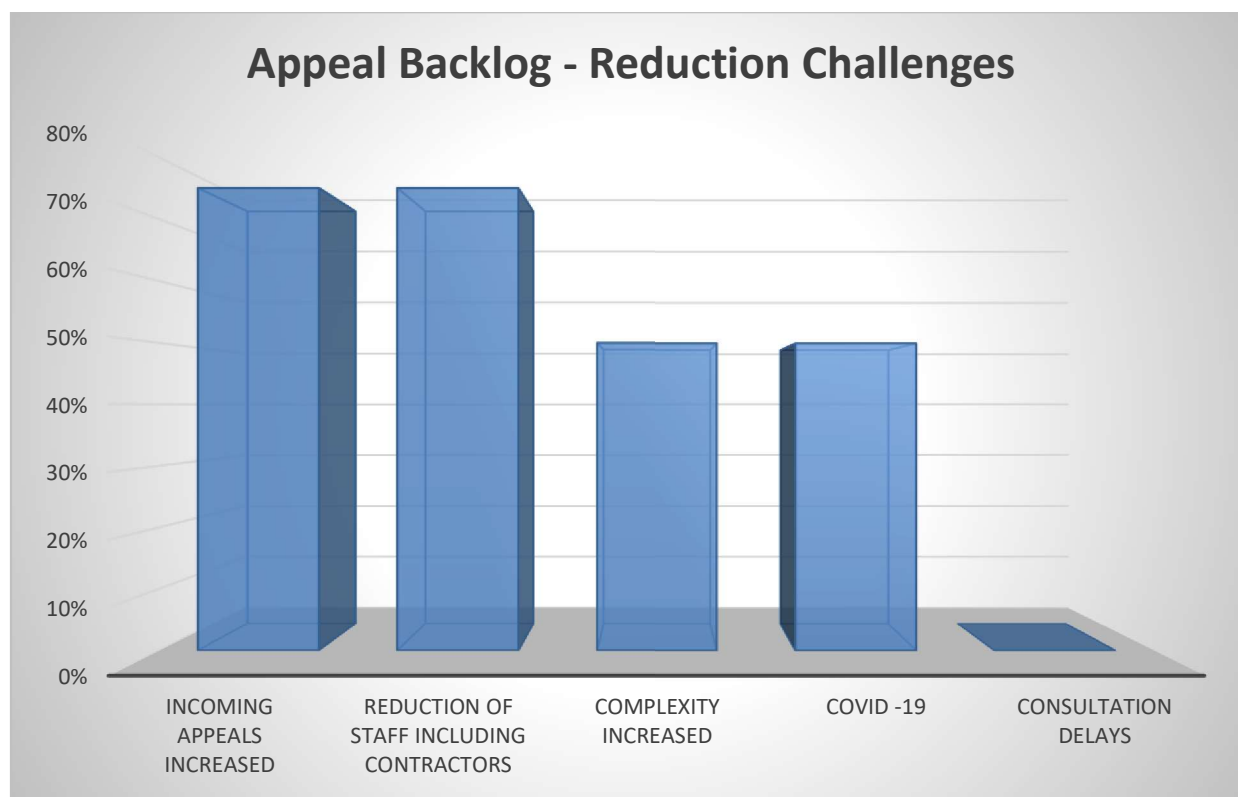
DoD FOIA professionals maintain a strong desire to assist the public in its efforts to find records of interest. Technology remains a driving force behind improving FOIA efficiencies; however, temporary setbacks with case processing, case management system failures and litigation support efforts diverted resources from backlog reduction efforts. More specifically, DoD Components increased their support for litigation by performing additional duties such as executing additional searches, processing, and creating Vaughn indices, declarations, and other required documents in

response to litigation driven deadlines. These additional duties subjected DoD Components to stringent court-ordered timelines and directly impacted resources available to FOIA processing. For Components that do not have dedicated FOIA litigation support teams, these litigation support activities have a critical effect on regular FOIA processing.

Backlogged Appeals

Overall, DoD received 1,252 appeals during the fiscal year. Of the 1,252 appeals received, 69% are identified as backlogged appeals. The number of backlogged appeals decreased from 891 in FY 2021 to 862 in FY 2022, which is almost a 3% decrease.

Of the 34 DoD FOIA Program Components, 15 do not adjudicate appeals because the ATSD(PCLT) serves as their appellate authority. Of the remaining 19 Components, 79% reported decreases or no appeal backlogs in comparison to 78% reported in FY 2021, which is a 1% improvement. DoD processed 1095 appeals in FY 2021 and 1257 in FY 2022, leading to a 15% increase in total appeals processed for the year and an overall 3% decrease in the appeal backlog. The DoD Components experiencing an increase in appeals backlog (AIR FORCE, ARMY, DIA, and NSA) report similar reasons for the backlog as they did for FOIA backlogs at the initial request stage, namely increase of complexity and volume, decrease in personnel and COVID-19 restrictions, as depicted in the chart below.



D. Backlog Reduction Plans

At the end of FY 2022, DoD had eight components with backlogs of more than 1,000 FOIA requests: AIR FORCE, ARMY, CENTCOM, DHA, DIA, NAVY, NSA, and OSD/JS. These eight components initiated plans to reduce its respective backlogs in FY 2022. While DIA, NAVY, and OSD/JS experienced a slight reduction in backlogs in FY 2022, AIR FORCE, ARMY, CENTCOM, DHA, and NSA backlogs increased. Eight DoD Components reported that the execution of their backlog reduction plans was complicated by staffing losses, the inability to locate and hire qualified personnel, and difficulties with FOIA case management systems. Five components reported COVID-19 protocols impaired efforts to decrease backlogs. Seven Components determined the increased number of requests received played a factor in the increase of their backlog. Finally, 56% of the components experiencing an increased backlog stated case complexity was a factor. Additionally, Components reported the following specific initiatives related to backlog reduction efforts:

- DIA now performs monthly case reviews with case analysts, setting closure expectations, and monitoring error rates to further develop the professional skills of FOIA personnel. In addition, DIA closely monitors case management processes and makes improvements as needed.
- ARMY FOIA Office's backlog reduction plan reflects ARMY's strategy of "Readiness, Modernization, and Reform." Readiness starts by ensuring the ARMY develops and retains skilled FOIA personnel through general and specialized training events, professional development, and outreach to its commands with backlogs to identify the cause. ARMY identifies new FOIA Officers to ensure they receive standardized training for foundational case processing, as well as managing complex FOIA cases. Since designated FOIA Officers often manage multiple responsibilities at once, with FOIA being just one duty, standardized training ensures time dedicated to FOIA matters is more efficient and effective. The backlog reduction plan utilizes the ARMY's Modernization strategy by assessing its current case management system's capabilities and comparing it with eFOIA program needs to ensure a timely and efficient workflow from start to finish. The ARMY FOIA Office focuses on increasing proactive disclosures from its FOIA offices and immediately uploads records to its online library. Its reform strategy is a bottom-to-top approach by encouraging a culture of customer service and communication with the requester, to include the need to rescope a request, ensuring FOIA officers accurately review records in a timely manner to reduce appeal and litigation risk, and working with leadership to adopt and implement effective solutions to overcome the FOIA backlog. Finally, ARMY continues to focus on its top ten oldest requests and appeals.
- OSD/JS engaged a Business Process Improvement Tiger Team beginning January 2023 to look at processes, work with senior leadership for an opportunity to meet directly with subject matter experts for faster returns, and acquisition of software that will assist with searches and evaluate records for responsiveness. This Tiger Team includes FOIA, Records Management, Mandatory Declassification, and Security Review personnel.

- AIR FORCE senior leaders and commanders regularly remind and reaffirm offices of primary responsibility (OPRs) the AIR FORCE's commitment to full compliance with the FOIA to mitigate litigation penalties; support its FOIA professionals; ensure FOIA programs are adequately resourced, and processes are continually analyzed for improvements. With the continued increase of AIR FORCE's FOIA backlog, senior leadership continually addresses the historically high AIR FORCE FOIA backlog with its OPRs to highlight the importance of providing responsive records in a timely manner to remain compliant with the law. In addition, AIR FORCE provides its senior leadership monthly FOIA program updates and reiterates its obligations under the FOIA. Finally, the AIR FORCE FOIA Office conducted site assisted visits and provided process improvement recommendations to assist with backlog reduction. Such recommendations included, but were not limited to, encouraging rolling/interim releases, and continuing to review and release complex classified consultations within 30 days instead of 90 days.
- CENTCOM restructured the FOIA Program into two separate sections and hired additional staff to focus on backlogs, processing of the most complex requests, and assisting with FOIA litigation. In addition, the Command researched and reviewed various tools/applications to leverage artificial intelligence and machine learning capabilities in the search and review processes.
- DHA developed and implemented a backlog reduction plan to process straightforward complex cases, as well as utilizing automated case processing to process cases more efficiently.

E. Reducing the Age of Requests, Appeals, and Consultations

TEN OLDEST REQUESTS

In FY 2022, DoD closed six of its overall ten oldest FOIA requests and several DoD FOIA Program Components successfully closed all or some of their ten oldest requests:

- DCMA, DoDEA, and INDO-PACOM closed all ten oldest requests.
- DISA closed eight of eight oldest requests.
- AFRICOM and DCSA closed nine out of ten oldest requests.
- DIA and DTRA closed eight out of ten oldest requests.
- CYBERCOM and TRANSCOM closed seven out of ten oldest requests.
- OSD/JS and SOCOM closed six out of ten oldest requests.
- AIR FORCE, ARMY, CENTCOM, and STRATCOM closed five out of ten oldest requests.

- NGA closed four out of ten oldest requests.
- Navy and DLA closed three out of ten oldest requests.
- SPACECOM closed two out of eight oldest requests.
- EUCOM closed four out of five oldest requests.
- DoDIG and NORTHCOM closed two out of ten oldest requests.
- NGB closed one out of ten oldest requests.

In FY 2022, DoD closed all ten of its ten oldest appeals. Of the 19 DoD Components that process appeals, 11 reported backlogged appeals at the end of FY 2022 but several Components successfully closed many of their ten oldest appeals.

- OSD/JS closed all ten of its oldest appeals.
- Navy closed nine out of ten oldest appeals.
- DCSA closed eight out of ten oldest appeals.
- NSA closed five out of ten oldest appeals.
- ARMY and DIA closed three out of ten oldest appeals.
- AIR FORCE closed two out of ten oldest appeals.
- DHA closed one out of ten oldest appeals.
- DoDIG closed five out of seven oldest appeals.
- DTRA closed one out of seven oldest appeals.

In FY 2022, DoD closed five of the Department's ten oldest consultations. Of the 34 DoD Components, 17 reported no outstanding consultations at the end of FY 2022. Several Components succeeded in closing some of its ten oldest consultations:

- CENTCOM and DIA closed nine out of ten oldest consultations.
- AIR FORCE and ARMY closed seven out of ten oldest consultations.
- NSA closed five out of ten oldest consultations.
- NGB closed four out of ten oldest consultations.
- DTRA closed three out of ten oldest consultations.

- NGA closed two out of ten oldest consultations.
- NAVY closed one out of ten oldest consultations.
- AFRICOM closed four out of five oldest consultations.
- NRO closed four out of four oldest consultations.
- INDO-PACOM closed two out of two oldest consultations.

During FY 2022, DoD focused on reducing the overall age of the backlog by concentrating on closing the ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations. Some offices instituted bi-weekly meetings with appellate authorities to discuss processing efficiencies and applied additional resources to close more than the ten oldest, if possible. Components also actively followed up with status inquiries to sub-components for estimated dates of completion.

The DoD Components that did not close the ten oldest pending requests or consultations comprising the overall DoD oldest cases, described a variety of methods for improved efforts. The methods identified include restructuring the responsibilities of FOIA personnel, closely monitoring metrics, increasing the frequency of status checks, continued focus on prioritizing the oldest requests for processing and closure and augmentation of personnel to support FOIA. The remaining components with ten oldest pending requests, appeals and consultations described similar strategies for regularly contacting agencies holding these older consultations.

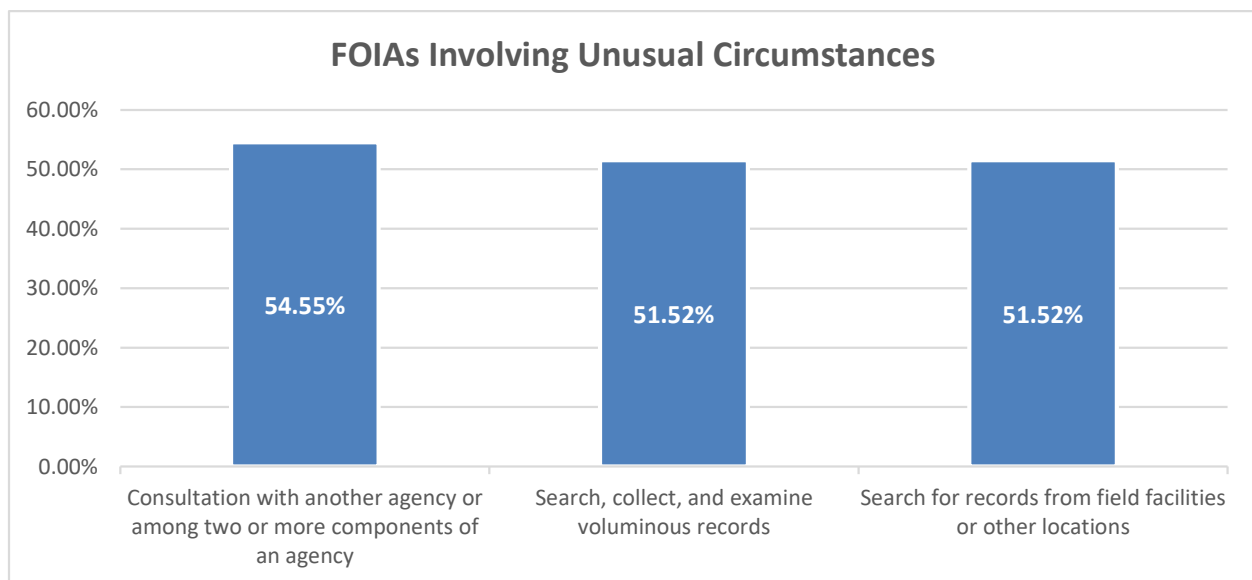
F. Additional Information about FOIA Processing

Forty-four percent of DoD's Components stated they had requests that were the subject of FOIA litigation during the reporting period. Most Components state the most common reason for litigations is processing time.

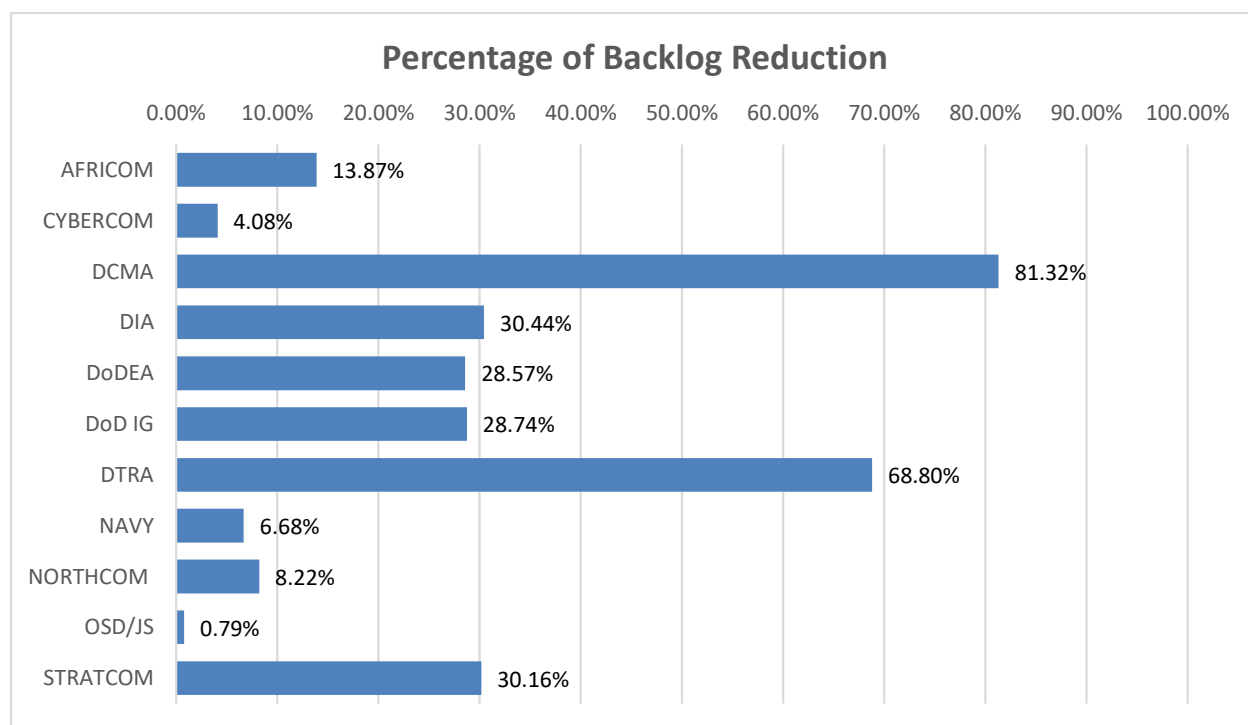
- CENTCOM reported 20 open FOIA litigations. Some of these litigations require multiple searches and resulted in voluminous responsive records. Several times, these records required multiple reviews by SMEs. Also, some of CENTCOM's litigation cases have court orders requiring CENTCOM to produce rolling releases to the requesters.
- ARMY and DIA reported 54 and 5 open FOIA litigations, respectively. ARMY and DIA have divisions dedicated solely to litigation support.
- DCSA reported two open FOIA litigations.
- SOCOM, DTRA, NGA, DHA and DLA each reported one open FOIA litigation.
- DoDIG reported nine open FOIA litigations challenging adequacy of search and application of exemptions/redactions. Litigation impacts DoDIG's overall FOIA administration by consuming FOIA specialist and attorney manpower to effectively address the complaints.

- NAVY reported six open FOIA litigations challenging application of redactions, processing delays, and adequacy of search. FOIA litigation demands negatively impacted the processing of other pending requests and caused delays in responding to requesters.
- NGB reported 13 open FOIA litigations and consulted on 28 FOIA litigations throughout DoD.
- SOUTHCOM reported three open FOIA litigations.
- OSD/JS (FOID) reported 35 open FOIA litigations, based on a failure to respond in a timely manner. PCLFD also provided support for multiple litigations which significantly impacted manpower and the ability to adjudicate appeals.

During FY 2022, several DoD Components had requests involving unusual circumstances as defined by the FOIA. Fifty-two percent of DoD Components reported having cases requiring searches for records from field facilities or other locations. Fifty-two percent of DoD's Components needed to search, collect, and examine voluminous records. Fifty-four percent of DoD's Components consulted with another Federal agency, or among two or more components of an agency. Finally, 39% reported not having any cases involving unusual circumstances.



In FY 2022, 35% of DoD's Components decreased their FOIA backlogs. In FY 2021, 36% of DoD's Components decreased their backlogs.



Last year, 18 components reported having no decrease in their backlog. Components reported a backlog increase for various reasons. The primary reason reported for inability to reduce the backlog was the complexity of incoming requests. Other reasons included continued impact of COVID-19, workplace and safety precautions, and an increase in overall FOIA-related work volume. Some of the challenges noted included intake processes; responsive records searches; exemption application; and the lack of experienced personnel.

SECTION VI: SUCCESS STORIES

Since March 2022, DoD and the DoD FOIA Program Components undertook numerous activities to increase transparency. DoD remains steadfast in its administration of the FOIA, commitment to sustainable training, and outstanding customer service. Achieving these important goals across all DoD Components are furthered by purposeful action at all levels. For example:

- DoD Components closed 51% (273) of the FY 2022 ten oldest cases and 55% (104) of its ten oldest appeals.
- ARMY developed and hosted the virtual “2022 Army Records Management Directorate Symposium.” The three-day event was presented to an Army-wide audience of FOIA and legal professionals. FOIA topics included the AG FOIA Guidelines, FOIA policy and procedures, case processing guidance, and question-and-answer sessions.
- DCSA plans to update its FOIA website content in the second quarter of FY 2023 and improve the overall ability for requesters to locate records and information.

- CENTCOM hired additional contractors to provide targeted operational and intelligence support for the FOIA Office to address its sizable backlog and support FOIA litigation.
- OSD/JS (FOID) strengthened relations with the 40+ components and defense agencies it services by hosting a symposium in which it provided training, discussed the previous year and planning for the year ahead, and addressed possible roadblocks hindering FOIA processing. FOID is also conducting one-on-one meetings with components and defense agencies it supports to learn of ways to tailor FOIA processing support for specific offices. FOID also increased the number of templates within the FOIA tracking system to simplify responses to the customers. In August of 2022, FOID hired contractors for a Tiger Team to assist with case closures. At that time FOID was registering a 10% backlog increase but by the end of the fiscal year, FOID achieved a backlog reduction.
- The PCLFD Appeals Team focused efforts on a full and complete appeal program audit, evaluated and improved current processing procedures and developed a backlog reduction plan that resulted in an appeal backlog reduction of 23%.
- ASBCA's proactive engagement with potential FOIA requesters helped requesters narrow search parameters before submitting a FOIA request, reduced ASBCA's response time, and lowered anticipated fees.
- DTIC engaged other Fourth Estate FOIA offices sharing best practices for comparable requests which resulted in faster response times. DTIC also improved the accuracy of responses to requesters by engaging with them to clarify requests as needed.
- Navy had FOIA personnel recognized for various FOIA awards.
- EUCOM's FOIA Office implemented a policy of proactively providing periodic estimated dates of completion (EDCs) to requesters with pending requests.
- DoDEA upgraded its FOIA case management system to include the "Advanced Document Review" extension. With the upgrade of its system, DoDEA was also able to attend a comprehensive training class with the developer, increasing DoDEA's proficient use of the system.
- CYBERCOM's rigorous effort this past year to meticulously review its backlog and develop a backlog reduction plan enabled it to close 7 of its 10 oldest cases and decrease its overall backlog. CYBERCOM prioritized regularly updating and uploading documents to its FOIA Reading Room, releasing a large volume of records which aligns CYBERCOM with the federal government's commitment to government operations transparency and the fair and effective administration of the FOIA. Finally, CYBERCOM personnel were recognized for several FOIA awards and appointed to Federal FOIA advisory committee that works with, and directly impacts, the requester community.
- DCMA hired one additional full-time employee, significantly reducing its backlogged cases.

- DHA implemented its new Administrative Instruction “Freedom of Information Act.”
- DCAA has had 13 consecutive years with no backlog.
- In the interest of fostering greater public understanding and trust, NSA’s intake team facilitated the publication of several high interest documents to its public website including FOIA logs from 2000-2018, a list of oral histories from 1971 to early 2010, documents related to the Cicada 3301 puzzle, and, in conjunction with mandatory declassification, a 1972-1974 newsletter called Dragon Seeds. NSA’s intake team also assisted a requester from the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute (PARI), a non-profit largely dedicated to STEM education currently occupying the site of the former NSA Rosman Research Station (RRS) in an underserved area of rural North Carolina. The team worked with the requester and provided eight historical documents, totaling 231 pages, in time for the 40th anniversary of the RRS facility event.
- DIA updated its frequently used templates improving consistency, improved public outreach with the requester community, and provided FOIA 101 training to its personnel via an innovative comic strip.
- DTRA closed 8 of its 10 oldest requests and decreased its backlog from 125 requests in FY 2021 to 39 requests in FY 2022. DTRA also processed 160 requests in FY 2022 compared to 112 requests FY 2021.
- NGA increased documents publicly posted in its Reading Room by 200%.
- DoDIG’s FOIA Office, the FOIA Public Liaison, and individual specialists answered phone calls and voicemails to the FOIA Requester Service Center on average within three business days. DoDIG’s FOIA Office reduced its backlog by 29% through a tremendous amount of coordination and collaboration with internal FOIA Office staff, DoDIG Components, DoD Components, and other Federal agencies. In addition, the FOIA Office provided annual internal training to DoDIG Component FOIA Points of Contact in January and internal training for the FOIA Office staff in February. This training helped its office respond to complex requests for emails, classified report records, and other complex requests. Thanks to the effort and communications by its appeals team, the appeal backlog is down to two requests for the end of the FY 2022.
- NRO proactively released documents of historical value on its public website outside of the automatic declassification process.
- Overall, the DoD FOIA Program Components continue to showcase a commitment to the principles of openness through the processing of 52,222 FOIA requests during FY 2022. Given the often-complex nature of requests submitted to DoD, and the extraordinary mission of protecting American assets at home and abroad, it is truly remarkable that over 86% of all received requests were processed in fewer than 100 days.