



Agencies that Received 50 Requests or Less in FY2018 Content of 2019 Chief FOIA Officer Report

National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service Chief FOIA Officer: Rachel Rikleem, Deputy General Counsel

The National Commission on Military, National, and Public Service (“Commission”) was established by Congress on September 19, 2017, to conduct a review of the military selective service process and consider methods to increase participation in military, national, and public service in order to address national security and other public service needs of the Nation. It is comprised of eleven commissioners who toured the country in 2018 for a series of public meetings to explore their mandate and released an Interim Report on January 23, 2019. The Commission’s work will conclude in 2020.

The Commission’s Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) program was formally implemented in the past year with the goals of openness, efficiency, and access to information in accordance with the Department of Justice’s 2009 FOIA Guidelines. For the current reporting period (March 2018-March 2019), the Commission’s fulfillment of the Attorney General’s guidance included establishing its program, proactive disclosures, and use of technology. These measures, highlighted below, are consistent with agency’s small size (~30 FTEs), the small number of requests received per year, and the types of requests received (a significant number of requests are for military service records for which there are no responsive documents).

Establishment and Training

- The Commission published FOIA regulations on May 2, 2018, in the Federal Register and posted them on the Commission website.
- The Chief FOIA Officer and Public Liaison were identified within the Commission and received substantive training from the Department of Justice. The Appeals Officer was also identified within the Commission and received specific training by the Chief FOIA Officer.
- The Chief FOIA Officer developed internal policies for processing FOIA requests and a FOIA reference guide.
- The Chief FOIA Officer provided training on FOIA processing that was open to all staff and required for all employees who have FOIA responsibilities. The Commissioners have also been directly briefed on the FOIA program.
- An internal database was created to help track requests as they are processed.

Proactive Disclosures

- The Commission created a public facing website and established within it a document library where any member of the public may download records of interest.

- The Commission staff regularly meet to discuss which records may be of interest to the public, including those related to upcoming and recently completed Commission meetings and hearings. Over twenty items have been proactively disclosed during the reporting period.

Use of Technology

- The Commission was added to the DOJ FOIA portal, www.foia.gov, so members of the public could more easily find and contact the agency.
- The Commission used social media, such as YouTube and Facebook, to permit individuals to more easily access video and audio files of Commission events.
- The Commission uses e-mail to communicate with requesters whenever feasible.
- In responding to requests, the Commission has always provided releasable records in an electronic format.
- An internal record management system established so that searches for documents could be more easily completed.
- The Chief FOIA Officer created an internal site for employees to track the time they spend completing FOIA tasks. The system is intended to improve processing in the future, by identifying when additional personnel or time is needed to appropriately respond to a request.

Conclusions

As the Commission moves forward to achieve its congressional mandate, FOIA remains at the forefront of its priorities. The Commission has a statutory mandate and a practical interest to keep the public informed of its activities. The disclosure of information pursuant to FOIA requests and through proactive disclosures is one of the primary ways in which the Commission satisfies its obligation to inform the public.