

Sample Freedom of Information Request Letter

Agency Head or FOIA Officer
Name of Agency
Subject: FOIA Request

Dear _____:

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. 552) I am requesting access to _____ (specifically identify with as much precision as possible, the records you seek). (Be sure to check to see whether the agency has promulgated regulations that may provide better access to information than FOIA. You also may want to consider filing an expedited request pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(E)(i) and the agency's own regulations)

I am a reporter, editor, etc. for (name of newspaper) and am preparing a report for which the requested information is an important element. The information concerns government operations and activities, namely _____, and the records will contribute to my understanding of those operations and activities. My report will thereby significantly contribute to public understanding of the subject because _____.

For these reasons, as provided in 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii), I ask that fees be waived. If fees are not waived, I agree to pay reasonable duplication fees in an amount not to exceed \$_____, but I request to be notified before processing incurs expenses in excess of that amount.

If a portion of the information I have requested is exempt from disclosure by express provisions of law, 5 U.S.C. 552(b) additionally requires segregation and deletion of that material in order that the remainder of the information may be released. If you determine that an express provision of law exists to exempt from disclosure all or a portion of the material I have requested, 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i) requires notification to me of the reasons for the determination not later than 20 days from your receipt of this request.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request, and I look forward to a response within the statutory 20-day period.

Sincerely,

S/ _____

newsletters and websites]. In addition, the release of this information will have a significant impact on public understanding because [Explain where you think there is a lack of knowledge on the part of the public and how this information will make the public better informed about this particular government activity].

I look forward to your response within the 20 working days. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(5)(A)(i). Moreover, if you find that any documents may be withheld pursuant to the exceptions in FOIA, we ask that you exercise your discretion to release the documents in full because, as stated above, the dissemination of the information is in the public interest. If you withhold documents, you are required to state the reason why and release any “reasonably segregable portion.” See 5 U.S.C. § 552(b).

Thank you in advance,

Your name

Your address

Daytime phone number

Fax number

E-mail address