


POLICY OF THE STATE OF DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE	POLICY # 6.16	PAGE NUMBER 1 of 5
SUBJECT: FOIA COMPLIANCE; FEES		
APPROVED BY: Chief of Staff Robert Coupe 		
EFFECTIVE DATE: June 1, 2019	Revised-November 18, 2021	

- I. **AUTHORITY:** 29 Del. C. §§ 2502, 2504, 10001, *et seq.* (hereafter the “Delaware Freedom of Information Act” or “FOIA”).
- II. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to set forth the rules and procedures for responding to requests from the public for public records pursuant to FOIA. Records in the possession of the Department shall be disclosed according to the requirements of FOIA unless such records are not public records as defined therein.
- III. **APPLICABILITY:** All employees of the Department.
- IV. **DEFINITIONS:**

The following words and terms, when used in this policy, shall have the following meaning unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

“Agency” means the State of Delaware Department of Justice or DDOJ.

“Attorney General” means the Attorney General of the State of Delaware or the Attorney General's designee.

“FOIA” means the Freedom of Information Act as established pursuant to Title 29, Chapter 100 of the Delaware Code.

“FOIA Coordinator” shall mean the person designated by the Attorney General to receive and process FOIA Requests.

“FOIA Request” or “Request” means a request to inspect or copy Public Records pursuant to Chapter 100, Section 10003 of the Delaware Code and in accordance with the policy hereunder.

“FOIA Request Form” means the form upon which requests for Public Records may be made.

“Non-Custodial Records” shall have the meaning set forth in Section V.F.

“Public Record” shall have the meaning set forth in 29 Del. C. §10002.

“Requesting Party” shall mean the party filing a FOIA Request.

- V. **POLICY**: The Department will receive, process, and respond to FOIA requests as set forth below.
- A. *Form of Request.* All FOIA Requests shall be made in writing to the Agency and submitted in person, by US mail, by fax, by email, or online in accordance with the provisions hereunder. FOIA Requests may be submitted using the FOIA Request Form promulgated by the Office of the Attorney General; provided, however, that any FOIA Request that otherwise conforms with the policy hereunder shall not be denied solely because the request is not on the proper form. Copies of the FOIA Request Form may be obtained from the Agency's website, or from the office or website of any state agency. All requests shall adequately describe the records sought in sufficient detail to enable the Agency to locate such records with reasonable effort. The Requesting Party shall be as specific as possible when requesting records. To assist the Agency in locating the requested records, the Agency may request that the Requesting Party provide additional information known to the Requesting Party, such as the types of records, dates, parties to correspondence, and subject matter of the requested records.
- B. *Method for filing.* FOIA Requests must be submitted in person, by US mail, by fax, by email, or online to the FOIA Coordinator using the office location, mailing address, and fax number on the website at <https://attorneygeneral.delaware.gov/executive/open-government/>; by email to: opengovernment@delaware.gov; or by online request at: <https://delaware.gov/foia/>.
- C. *FOIA Coordinator.* The Attorney General shall designate a FOIA Coordinator, who shall serve as the point of contact for FOIA Requests and coordinate the Agency's responses thereto. The FOIA Coordinator shall be identified on the Agency's website. The FOIA Coordinator may designate other Agency employees to perform specific duties and functions hereunder. The FOIA Coordinator and/or his or her designee, working in cooperation with other Agency employees and representatives, shall make every reasonable effort to assist the Requesting Party in identifying the records being sought, and to assist the Agency in locating and providing the requested records when appropriate. The FOIA Coordinator and/or his or her designee will also work to foster cooperation between the Agency and the Requesting Party. If a Requesting Party initiates a FOIA Request that the FOIA Coordinator believes would be more appropriately directed to another agency, the FOIA Coordinator shall promptly forward such request to the relevant agency and promptly notify the Requesting Party that the request has been forwarded. The Agency may close the initial request upon receipt of a written confirmation from the FOIA Coordinator of the relevant agency that the relevant agency has received such request. The Agency shall provide the Requesting Party with the name and contact information of the FOIA Coordinator of the relevant agency. The FOIA Coordinator shall maintain a document tracking all FOIA Requests for the then-current calendar year. For each FOIA Request, the document shall include, at a minimum: the Requesting Party's contact information; the date the Agency received the Request; the Agency's response deadline, the date of the

Agency's response including the reasons for any extension permitted by FOIA, the names, contact information and dates of correspondence with individuals contacted in connection with the Requests, the dates of review by the Agency, the names of individuals who conducted such reviews, whether documents were made available, and the amount of copying and/or administrative fees assessed; and the date of final disposition.

- D. *Response to Requests; Generally.* The Agency shall respond to a FOIA Request as soon as possible, but in any event within fifteen (15) business days after the receipt thereof, either by providing access to the requested records; denying access to the records or parts of them; or by advising that additional time is needed because the request is for voluminous records, requires legal advice, or a record is in storage or archived. If access cannot be provided within fifteen (15) business days, the Agency shall cite one of the reasons hereunder why more time is needed and provide a good faith estimate of how much additional time is required to fulfill the request. If the Agency denies a request in whole or in part, the Agency's response shall indicate the reasons for the denial. The Agency shall not be required to provide an index, or any other compilation, as to each record or part of a record denied.
- E. *Responses to Requests for Emails, Fees.* Requests for email records shall be fulfilled by the Agency from its own records, if doing so can be accomplished by the Agency with reasonable effort. If the Agency determines that it cannot fulfill all or any portion of such request, the Agency shall promptly request that the Department of Technology and Information ("DTI") provide any available email records within the scope of the request to the Agency. Upon receipt from DTI, the Agency may review the email records to assess whether any portion of the email is outside the definition of Public Record. Before requesting DTI to provide email records, the Agency shall provide a written cost estimate from DTI to the Requesting Party, listing all charges expected to be incurred by DTI in retrieving such records. Upon receipt of the estimate, the Requesting Party may decide whether to proceed with, cancel or modify the request.
- F. *Requests for Other Non-Custodial Records.* If all or any portion of a FOIA Request seeks records controlled by the Agency but that are either not within its possession or cannot otherwise be fulfilled by the Agency with reasonable effort from records it possesses (collectively, the "Non-Custodial Records"), then the Agency shall promptly request that the relevant public body, if known, provide the Non-Custodial Records to the Agency. Before requesting any Non-Custodial Records, the Agency shall provide a written cost estimate to the Requesting Party, listing all charges expected to be incurred in retrieving such records. Upon receipt of the estimate, the Requesting Party may decide whether to proceed with, cancel or modify the request.
- G. *Review by Agency and Hours of Review.* Prior to disclosure, records may be reviewed by the Agency to ensure that those records or portions of records deemed non-public may be removed pursuant to 29 Del. C. §10002 or any other applicable provision of law. In reviewing the records, all documents shall be considered Public Records unless subject to one of the exceptions set forth in 29 Del. C. §10002 (o) or any other applicable

provision of law. Nothing herein shall prohibit the Agency from disclosing or permitting access to Public Records if the Agency determines to disclose such records, except where such disclosure or access is otherwise prohibited by law or regulation. The Agency shall permit reasonable access for reviewing public records during regular business hours, as may be coordinated with the DDOJ FOIA Coordinator. Requesting Parties who do not attend a scheduled appointment to review public records may be subject to the charges incurred by the Agency in preparing the requested records if such Requesting Party does not provide prior notice of at least one business day. The Agency shall prepare an itemized invoice of these charges and provide the same to the Requesting Party for payment.

H. *Copying Fees.* In instances in which paper records are provided to the Requesting Party, photocopying fees shall be as follows:

1. **Standard Sized, Black and White Copies:** The first 20 pages of standard sized, black and white copied material shall be provided free of charge. The charge for copying standard sized, black and white Public Records for copies over and above 20 shall be \$0.10 per sheet (i.e., \$0.10 for a single-sided sheet, \$0.20 for a double-sided sheet). This charge applies to copies on the following standard paper sizes: 8.5" x 11"; 8.5" x 14"; and 11" x 17".

2. **Oversized Copies/Printouts:** The charge for copying oversized Public Records shall be as follows:

18" x 22":	\$2.00 per sheet
24" x 36":	\$3.00 per sheet
Documents larger than 24" x 36":	\$1.00 per square foot

3. **Color Copies/Printouts:** An additional charge of \$1.00 per sheet will be assessed for all color or printouts for standard sized copies (8.5" x 11"; 8.5" x 14"; and 11" x 17"), and \$1.50 per sheet for larger copies.

I. *Administrative Fees.* Administrative fees shall be imposed for requests requiring more than one hour of staff time to process. Charges for administrative fees may include staff time associated with processing FOIA Requests, including, without limitation, (a) identifying records; (b) monitoring file reviews; and (c) generating computer records (electronic or print-outs), or (d) the application of non-legal expert consultation or services to assist in gathering, identification, or categorization of records. Administrative fees shall not include any cost associated with the Agency's legal review of whether any portion of the requested records is exempt from FOIA. The Agency shall make every effort to ensure that administrative fees are minimized, and may only assess such charges as shall be reasonably required to process FOIA Requests. In connection therewith, the

Agency shall minimize the use of non-administrative personnel in processing FOIA Requests, to the extent possible. Prior to fulfilling any request that would require a Requesting Party to incur administrative fees, the Agency shall provide a written cost estimate of such fees to the Requesting Party, listing all charges expected to be incurred in retrieving such records. Upon receipt of the estimate, the Requesting Party may decide whether to proceed with, cancel or modify the request. Administrative fees will be billed to the Requesting Party per quarter hour. These charges will be billed at the current hourly pay grade (pro-rated for quarter hour increments) of the lowest-paid employee capable of performing the service. Administrative fees will be in addition to any other charges incurred under this Section, including copying fees. When multiple FOIA requests are submitted by or on behalf of a Requesting Party in an effort to avoid incurring administrative charges, the Agency may in its discretion aggregate staff time for all such requests when computing fees hereunder. Charges for copying records maintained in an electronic format will be calculated by the material costs involved in generating the copies (including but not limited to DVD, CD, or other electronic storage costs) and administrative costs. Payment of all fees shall be due no later than the time the records are released to the Requesting Party. The Agency may require pre-payment of all fees prior to performing any services hereunder. The Agency reserves the right to apply waivers of some or all of the administrative fees equally to a particular category of Requesting Parties in its discretion.