



Inter-American Foundation

An Independent Agency of the U.S. Government

2017 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT

Introduction

Based on the guidance issued August 29, 2016 by the Department of Justice, Office of Information Policy, the Inter-American Foundation (IAF) falls within the definition of a “Small Volume Agency” because it received fewer than 50 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests in FY 2015. Accordingly, it has prepared this narrative as its 2017 Chief FOIA Officer Report.

During FY 2016, the IAF fully implemented FOIA policy guidance, including the Department of Justice 2009 FOIA Guidelines, applying the presumption of openness, ensuring an effective system for timely and accurately responding to FOIA requests, increasing proactive disclosures, and using technology. These efforts are detailed below.

Presumption of Openness

In FY 2016, the IAF received ten FOIA requests. The IAF applied the presumption of openness to all of them by releasing in full all responsive agency records. The IAF invoked no exemptions or exclusions, nor redacted any part of any released document.

Ensuring an Effective System

The IAF posts information on how to submit a FOIA request on its public website, along with the names and contact information for both its Chief FOIA Officer and FOIA Public Liaison. (The contact information for both is also now listed on all IAF FOIA response letters as well.) The most common method of making a FOIA request is through an email inquiry to a FOIA e-mail address that is regularly checked by the Associate General Counsel, who also serves as the Assistant Chief FOIA Officer. All incoming FOIA requests are initially reviewed by the Associate General Counsel. These requests are all logged and assigned a tracking number. The Associate General Counsel usually replies to the FOIA requester within twenty-four hours, acknowledging receipt and providing the FOIA tracking number assigned to the request. The Associate General Counsel, acting under the supervision of the IAF Chief FOIA Officer, who also serves as the General Counsel, coordinates with relevant members of the IAF staff to conduct a search for responsive agency records. The Associate General Counsel then compiles the responsive documents, follows up as appropriate, and drafts a response letter that is reviewed and signed by the General Counsel.

The General Counsel is a member of the IAF senior staff and the principal legal advisor to the IAF’s President and Chief Executive Officer, who serves as the head of agency. The General Counsel also makes recommendations on proactive disclosure to the agency head, and ensures broader agency compliance with the FOIA.

One key indicator of the effectiveness of the IAF's system is the average number of days it takes to respond to a FOIA request. In FY 2016, the IAF's average was 6.8 days. It did not have a backlog at the end of FY 16 or any quarter thereof.

Proactive Disclosures

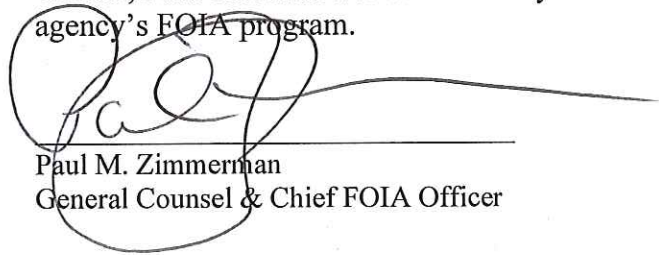
In FY 2016, the IAF implemented the principal of proactive disclosure by deciding to post the minutes of meetings of its Board of Directors on its public website. The decision was made on recommendation from the General Counsel to the IAF President and CEO and the Board of Directors, which ultimately took the decision to do so.

Technology

In FY 2016, the IAF received virtually all FOIA requests electronically, and it processed all FOIA responses electronically.

Conclusion

As is evident by this Report, the IAF takes its FOIA responsibilities seriously. As the Chief FOIA Officer, I am committed to continuously reviewing and improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency's FOIA program.



Paul M. Zimmerman
General Counsel & Chief FOIA Officer

Dated: March 1, 2017