

working days from receipt of appeals from initial denial plus permissible time extensions) will begin only after GSA has received the fee payments described in § 105-60.305-8.

§ 105-60.305-13 Waiver of fee.

(a) Any request for waiver or reduction of a fee should be included in the initial letter requesting access to GSA records under § 105-60.402-1. The waiver request should explain how disclosure of the information would contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the Government and would not be primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. In responding to a request, GSA will consider the following factors:

(1) Whether the subject of the requested records concerns “the operations or activities of the Government.” The subject matter of the requested records must specifically concern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal Government. The connection between the records and the operations or activities must be direct and clear, not remote or attenuated.

(2) Whether the disclosure is “likely to contribute” to an understanding of Government operations or activities. In this connection, GSA will consider whether the requested information is already in the public domain. If it is, then disclosure of the information would not be likely to contribute to an understanding of Government operations or activities, as nothing new would be added to the public record.

(3) Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to “public understanding.” The focus here must be on the contribution to public understanding rather than personal benefit to be derived by the requester. For purposes of this analysis, the identity and qualifications of the requester should be considered, to determine whether the requester is in a position to contribute to public understanding through the requested disclosure.

(4) Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and if so: whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in com-

parison with the public interest in disclosure, that disclosure is “primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.”

(b) GSA will ask the requester to furnish additional information if the initial request is insufficient to evaluate the merits of the request. GSA will not start processing a request until the fee waiver issue has been resolved unless the requester has provided written assurance of payment in full if the fee waiver is denied by the agency.

Subpart 105-60.4—Described Records

§ 105-60.401 General.

(a) Except for records made available in accordance with subparts 105-60.2 and 105-60.3 of this part, GSA will make records available to a requester promptly when the request reasonably describes the records unless GSA invokes an exemption in accordance with Subpart 105-60.5 of this part. Although the burden of reasonable description of the records rests with the requester, whenever practical GSA will assist requesters to describe records more specifically.

(b) Whenever a request does not reasonably describe the records requested, GSA may contact the requester to seek a more specific description. The 10-workday time limit set forth in § 105-60.402-2 will not start until the official identified in § 105-60.402-1 or other responding official receives a request reasonably describing the records.

§ 105-60.402 Procedures for making records available.

Sections 105-60.402-1 and 105-60.402-2 set forth initial procedures for making records available when they are requested, including administrative procedures to be exhausted prior to seeking judicial review by an appropriate United States District Court.

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§ 105-60.402-1 Submission of requests.

For records located in the GSA Central Office, the requester must submit a request in writing to the GSA FOIA

Officer, General Services Administration (CAI), 1800 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20405. Requesters may FAX requests to (202) 501-2727, or submit a request by e-mail to gsa.foi@gsa.gov. For records located in the Office of Inspector General, the requester must submit a request to the FOIA Officer, Office of Inspector General, General Services Administration, 1800 F Street NW., Room 5324, Washington, DC 20405. For records located in the GSA regional offices, the requester must submit a request to the FOIA Officer for the relevant region, at the address listed in § 105-60.303(a). Requests should include the words "Freedom of Information Act Request" prominently marked on both the face of the request letter and the envelope. The 20-workday time limit for agency decisions set forth in § 105-60.402-2 begins with receipt of a request in the office of the official identified in this section, unless the provisions under §§ 105-60.305-8 and 105-60.305-12(d) apply. Failure to include the words "Freedom of Information Act Request" or to submit a request to the official identified in this section will result in processing delays. A requester with questions concerning a FOIA request should contact the GSA FOIA Office, General Services Administration (CAI), 1800 F Street, NW., Washington, DC 20405, (202) 501-2691.

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§ 105-60.402-2 Response to initial requests.

GSA will respond to an initial FOIA request that reasonably describes requested records, including a fee waiver request, within 20 workdays (that is, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays) after receipt of a request by the office of the appropriate official specified in § 105-60.402-1. This letter will provide the agency's decision with respect to disclosure or non-disclosure of the requested records, or, if appropriate, a decision on a request for a fee waiver. If the records to be disclosed are not provided with the initial letter, the records will be sent as soon as possible thereafter. In unusual circumstances, as described in § 105-60.404, GSA will inform the requester of the agency's need to take an extension

of time, not to exceed an additional 10 workdays.

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§ 105-60.403 Appeal within GSA.

(a) A requester who receives a denial of a request, in whole or in part, or a denial of a fee waiver request, may appeal that decision within GSA. A requester may also appeal the adequacy of the search if GSA determines that it has searched for but has no requested records. The requester must send the appeal to the GSA FOIA Officer, General Services Administration (CAI), 1800 F Street NW., Washington, DC 20405, regardless of whether the denial being appealed was made in the Central Office or in a regional office. For denials that originate in the Office of Inspector General, the requester must send the appeal to the Inspector General, General Services Administration, 1800 F Street NW., Washington, DC 20405.

(b) The GSA FOIA Officer must receive an appeal no later than 120 calendar days after receipt by the requester of the initial denial of access or fee waiver.

(c) An appeal must be in writing, include a brief statement of the reasons the requester thinks GSA should release the records, and enclose copies of the initial request and denial.

The appeal letter must include the words "Freedom of Information Act Appeal" on both the face of the appeal letter and on the envelope. Failure to follow these procedures will delay processing of the appeal. GSA has 20 workdays after receipt of a proper appeal to issue a determination of the appeal. The 20-workday time limit shall not begin until the GSA FOIA Officer receives the appeal. As noted in § 105-60.404, the GSA FOIA Officer may extend this time limit in unusual circumstances.

(d) A requester who receives a denial of an appeal, or who has not received a response to an appeal or initial request within the statutory timeframe may seek judicial review in the United States District Court in the district in which the requester resides or has a principal place of business, or where the records are situated, or in the