

# **UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE** **CHIEF FOIA OFFICER'S REPORT FOR 2020**

The United States Postal Service (USPS or Postal Service), which is “an independent establishment of the executive branch of Government of the United States,” 39 U.S.C. § 201, submits this report, through the Postal Service’s Chief FOIA Officer, Natalie Bonanno, in response to the Attorney General’s directive to Chief FOIA Officers to review and to report each year to the Department of Justice on their progress in improving transparency through implementation of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

The basic functions of the Postal Service were established in 39 U.S.C. § 101(a) and include, binding “the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people.” This mission, to provide the nation with reliable, affordable, universal mail service, is to be done in accordance with sound business principles.

## **Organizational Structure and Other Background Information:**

The USPS Deputy Chief FOIA Officer, within the Privacy and Records Management Office, reports to the Chief FOIA Officer through the Chief Privacy and Records Management Officer. The Deputy Chief FOIA Officer is responsible for the overall administration of the Postal Service’s FOIA Program and its compliance with the FOIA, except for records independently maintained by the Postal Inspection Service and the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG). The Privacy and Records Management Office is a part of the Ethics and Compliance Group. The Ethics and Compliance group’s Federal Compliance team drafts FOIA appeal decisions and answers complex legal FOIA questions.

This report represents responses from the following FOIA program offices:

- USPS FOIA Program
- USPS General Counsel (appeals for USPS and Postal Inspection Service)
- USPS OIG FOIA Program (initial requests and appeals)
- U.S. Postal Inspection Service FOIA Program (initial requests)

The USPS FOIA program is decentralized. The Office of Inspector General’s (OIG) FOIA program and Postal Inspection Service’s FOIA programs are centralized. USPS has two FOIA Requester Service Centers (RSCs) to track and coordinate all FOIA requests received. FOIA requests for Postal Service Headquarters controlled records; Supply Management or Facilities controlled records including contracts, building leases, and other real estate transactions; and employee listings are tracked and coordinated by the FOIA RSC-Headquarters. The FOIA RSC-Field supports the tracking and processing of FOIA requests for Postal Service records maintained at area offices, district offices, post offices, or other field operations facilities (FOIA RSC-Field). The Postal Service has over 31,000 facilities throughout the country at which records are maintained. FOIA Coordinators have been designated to assist records custodians in each of the USPS Headquarters departments and each of the Area and District offices across the country. The FOIA Coordinator, an ad-hoc position, provides procedural guidance on the FOIA to records custodians regarding requests that fall within their areas of responsibility.

The Privacy and Records Management Office is responsible for developing a program and framework to assist records custodians in processing FOIA requests. As such, it issues detailed instructions to records custodians on the FOIA (see 39 C.F.R. § 265 and USPS Handbook AS-353, *Guide to Privacy, the FOIA, and Records Management*). The internal Privacy and FOIA website contains a boilerplate library of template language with embedded templates covering almost every subject under the Privacy Act and the FOIA. The FOIA RSC staff is available to assist FOIA Coordinators and records custodians or their designees throughout the organization with record release determinations and other FOIA matters. The Federal Compliance team and the Law Department's Area Law Offices provide legal advice to records custodians regarding the FOIA, including the applicability of exemptions.

It is USPS policy to make its official records available to the public, consistent with the public interest. In its commitment to the "Presumption of Openness" concept as it carries out its FOIA responsibilities, Postal Service policy requires a practice of full disclosure of those records that are covered by the requirements of the FOIA, subject only to the specific exemptions required or authorized by law. It is Postal Service policy to promote transparency and accountability by adopting a presumption in favor of disclosure in all decisions involving the FOIA.

## **Section I: Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness**

### **A. FOIA Leadership**

1. The FOIA requires each agency to designate a Chief FOIA Officer who is a senior official at least at the Assistant Secretary or equivalent level. Is your agency's Chief FOIA Officer at or above this level?

Yes

2. Please provide the name and title of your agency's Chief FOIA Officer.

Natalie Bonanno, acting Associate General Counsel and Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer

### **B. FOIA Training**

3. Did your FOIA professionals or the personnel at your agency who have FOIA responsibilities attend any substantive FOIA training or conference during the reporting period such as that provided by the Department of Justice.

Yes

4. If yes, please provide a brief description of the type of training attended and the topics covered.

American Society of Access Professionals (ASAP) training:

- ASAP Annual National Training Conference

Department of Justice training:

- Freedom of Information Act for Attorneys and Access Professionals
- Advanced Freedom of Information Act Seminar
- FOIA for Attorneys and Access Professionals
- Advanced FOIA Seminar
- Chief FOIA Officer Report Refresher Training
- Continuing Freedom of Information Act Education
- Privacy and Technology Training
- FOIA Best Practices Workshop
- Attended Supreme Court hearing on a FOIA Case regarding Exemption 4

User Conference and Technology Summit (a vendor sponsored workshop) – topics included:

- FOIA Tracking System EDR Workshop
- FOIA Search Issues
- Recent Significant FOIA Decisions

## Postal Service In-House Training:

In order to promote continued learning, the Federal Compliance team and the Privacy and Records Management Office developed extensive training materials and held monthly internal training on a variety of FOIA-related topics. Field and Headquarters FOIA Coordinators were invited to attend and participate in these training sessions. Copies of the training presentations were provided to all FOIA Coordinators. The training sessions presented are as follows:

- Overview of the FOIA
  - Features of the new internal FOIA/PA website and Exemption 7(F)
  - Overview of FOIA exemptions
  - Adequate search and issues pertaining to email records
  - FOIA time limits
  - FOIA fees and fee waivers
  - Interplay between the Privacy Act and Exemption 6
  - Conducting a search for records
  - Exemption 6 and 39 U.S.C. § 410(c)(1)
  - Reviewing and preparing responsive records for release
  - How to read a FOIA request and identify responsive records
  - Fees and fee waivers.
- Privacy and Records Management Office team members hosted quarterly conference calls with FOIA Coordinators to answer FOIA questions. Federal Compliance team members participated in the conference calls for the purpose of answering any FOIA or Privacy Act legal questions that arose.
  - Federal Compliance continued hosting bi-monthly FOIA roundtable teleconferences with area law offices in the field in order to coordinate efforts, train, and ensure a consistent approach to FOIA and Privacy Act matters. Training topics included: a debrief from the Office of Civil Liberties, Department of Justice, on privacy; features of the new internal FOIA website; requests for records from Federal entities and state and local governments; Vaughn indices and declarations; the Glomar response; and Exemption 7(D). Field postal attorneys provided non-complex legal advice to FOIA Coordinators and records custodians located in the field. The Federal Compliance team provided complex legal advice to postal attorneys, FOIA Coordinators, and records custodians throughout the Postal Service.
  - Privacy and Records Management Office and the Federal Compliance teams worked regularly with records custodians throughout the Postal Service to help them better understand their responsibilities under the FOIA and to ensure compliance with its requirements.
5. Provide an estimate of the percentage of your FOIA professionals and staff with FOIA responsibilities who attended substantive FOIA training during this reporting period.

Ninety percent of FOIA professionals and staff attended substantive FOIA training. During the past year, the FOIA program had a number of vacancies to fill. The time necessary to fill vacancies and the timing of incoming staff accounts for the fact that 100% of personnel were not able to attend substantive training. Once fully staffed, all team members will attend at least one substantive training session during the fiscal year.

6. If less than 80% of your FOIA professionals attended training, please explain your agency's plan to ensure that all FOIA professionals receive or attend substantive FOIA training during the next reporting year.

N/A

## C. Outreach

7. Did your FOIA professionals engage in any outreach or dialogue with the requester community or open government groups regarding your administration of the FOIA? Please describe any such outreach or dialogue, and, if applicable, any specific examples of how this dialogue has led to improvements in your agency's FOIA administration.

Yes, we hosted two public teleconferences that were advertised online, including on the public FOIA website. These teleconferences included a summary of the Postal Service's FOIA process and allowed the public an opportunity to ask questions.

## D. Other Initiatives

8. Describe any efforts your agency has undertaken to inform non-FOIA professionals of their obligations under the FOIA.
  - USPS Publication 550, *For the Record*, is a pamphlet that is made available online to all postal employees. The pamphlet describes the Freedom of Information Act and the Privacy Act, and includes employees' rights and responsibilities under the Acts. The pamphlet was updated in 2018 and was published on the Postal Service's website and distributed to new employees in 2019.
  - To promote compliance with the FOIA, the Postal Service continued its internal process whereby FOIA requests that are close to overdue are escalated to senior management to ensure that records custodians timely respond to FOIA requests within the statutory deadline. This strategy is intended to promote the importance of the FOIA throughout the organization and has helped to reduce the backlog.
  - USPS continued the Chief FOIA Officer's Awards program to recognize the contributions and efforts of FOIA Coordinators and records custodians. FOIA professionals nominate FOIA Coordinators and records custodians for a Chief FOIA Officer's Award. Recipients are individually recognized in the *USPS News LINK*, an internal, online publication that is distributed daily throughout the organization, and a copy of the letter and certificate is included in the employee's official personnel file.
  - The Postal Inspection Service Chief Counsel discusses the FOIA with newly appointed Postal Inspector recruits. The Chief Counsel encourages cooperation from the Inspection Service's National Leadership Team regarding their FOIA obligations
  - OIG holds periodic meetings to educate staff participating in the OIG New Leadership Development Program regarding FOIA best practices, processing, and records production.
9. Optional – If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied, please describe them here.

The initiatives described above are all in furtherance of greater compliance with the FOIA and to ensure that the information that is releasable under FOIA is available to the public.

## **Section II: Effective System in Place for Responding to Requests**

### **A. Processing Procedures**

1. For Fiscal Year 2019, what was the average number of days your agency reported for adjudicating requests for expedited processing?

4.16

2. If your average was above 10 days, describe your plan to ensure that requests for expedited processing are adjudicated within 10 calendar days or less.

N/A

3. During the reporting period, did your agency conduct a self-assessment of its FOIA program? If so, please describe the methods used, such as reviewing Annual Report data, using active workflows and track management, reviewing and updating processing procedures, etc.

- The Privacy and Records Management Office conducts weekly assessments by providing status reports on FOIA request activity to upper management and FOIA staff. The report contains the number of requests received, closed, pending and overdue for the relevant week. This report enabled managers to monitor FOIA Program performance and progress and to take proactive action throughout the year as necessary.
- Each year, software upgrades are made to the FOIA Tracking System, a comprehensive web-based commercial-off-the-shelf application for electronically processing requests. The system features real-time, role-based dashboards and analytics and permitted users to compare metrics and gain actionable insights into the FOIA Program.

### **B. Requester Services**

4. Please provide an estimate of the number of times requesters sought assistance from your agency's FOIA Public Liaison during FY 2019. Please provide a total number or an estimate of the number.

Requesters sought assistance from FOIA Public Liaisons approximately 104 times this past year. Ordinarily, USPS FOIA Coordinators respond to inquiries from FOIA requesters without the need for them to contact the FOIA RSC or a FOIA Public Liaison for assistance.

### **C. Optional**

5. Please describe the best practices used to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively and any challenges your agency faces in this area.
- The Privacy and Records Management Office and the Federal Compliance team made updates to the internal FOIA/Privacy Act website throughout the year. The internal FOIA/Privacy Act website contains a variety of resources to assist records custodians in responding to FOIA requests, including contact information, links to internal policy documents and external resources, an extensive boilerplate library with embedded templates, training presentations, and instructional videos on how to make various redactions.

- The Privacy and Records Management Office and the Federal Compliance team regularly communicated with program offices by providing procedural guidance and interpretation of the statute on a case-by-case basis to ensure agency compliance. The Privacy and Records Management Office hosted quarterly conference calls with Headquarters and field FOIA Coordinators providing them with a forum in which to ask questions or discuss areas of concern or interest. The Federal Compliance team participated in the conference calls for the purpose of answering FOIA and Privacy Act legal questions.
- The Privacy and Records Management Office and the Federal Compliance team delivered training on a variety of FOIA-related topics to FOIA Coordinators and records custodians on a monthly basis. The Federal Compliance team delivered training to field attorneys on a variety of FOIA-related topics on a bi-monthly basis.
- The FOIA tracking system provided managers with the ability to track the flow of FOIA requests from start to finish in real-time. This enabled managers to assess progress and accordingly allocate resources. The FOIA tracking system has advanced redaction and document review tools, which helped to reduce the amount of time needed to process voluminous requests.
- The Postal Service used multi-track processing to improve customer service. By utilizing multi-track processing, simple requests are placed in a separate track from complex requests allowing for quick processing.
- The Postal Service focused on and was successful in closing the 10 oldest FOIA requests.
- FOIA professional escalated overdue requests to senior management to ensure record custodians issued responses to overdue requests.
- FOIA RSC personnel are assigned to monitor the receipt of FOIA requests and appeals through all channels and to answer telephone and email inquiries from requesters. Assigning specific personnel to the FOIA intake process ensures that requests are logged in and expeditiously handled.
- Letter templates were updated and added to the FOIA Tracking System to enable prompt, accurate responses to FOIA requests.
- There were two primary challenges faced by the Headquarters (HQ) and field FOIA RSCs this past year. First, three experienced FOIA professionals retired from postal employment or accepted other positions within the Postal Service. Considerable time was consumed in filling vacant positions and training new employees. In addition to being understaffed, the HQ FOIA RSC assumed responsibility for processing Privacy Act requests for Official Personnel Folders.

## **Section III: Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures**

### **A. Posting Material**

1. Provide examples of material that your agency has proactively disclosed during the reporting year, including records that have been requested and released three or more times in accordance with 5 U.S.C. 552(a)(2)(D). Please include links to these materials as well.

The Postal Service plays a vital role in American commerce and binds the nation together through secure, reliable, affordable and universal mail delivery. In fiscal year 2019 (FY19), the Postal Service enabled America's continuing e-commerce growth by giving customers unprecedented visibility and competitive shipping solutions that reach every door in America every delivery day.

The Postal Service continued its focus on delivering excellent customer service and strong community outreach. For example, in FY19, the organization rolled out Customer 360, a tool that helps employees resolve consumer inquiries faster, and it opened the Mailing and Shipping Solutions Center to better serve commercial mailing and shipping customers.

Gallup released a poll in which respondents named USPS their favorite federal agency, with 74 percent saying the organization does an "excellent" or "good" job. USPS manages more than 31,000 Post Offices in the United States. This means the organization has the nation's largest retail network.

On the community service front, Postal Service employees participated in several annual activities, including National Dog Bite Prevention Week, National Small Business Week, Public Service Recognition Week and the National Association of Letter Carriers' annual Stamp Out Hunger drive, which collected 75.7 million pounds of food for people in need. USPS participated in the National Postal Forum, the mailing industry's largest annual meeting, as well as the National Postal Customer Council Week, an annual event that brings together USPS and industry leaders at meetings across the nation.

The USPS website, found at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com), is one of the most frequently visited government sites. It provides customers quick and easy access to Postal Service information, products, and services, as well as links to both OIG and Postal Inspection Service websites. The Postal Service is multi-lingual and offers usps.com in Spanish and simplified Chinese. The website is an online post office at your fingertips, and is open for business 24/7. The Postal Service's smart phone applications make it even quicker to use the most popular functions on usps.com, anytime and anywhere. Facts and figures about the Postal Service are updated each year at <https://facts.usps.com>

The FOIA Reading Room, <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/foia/readroom/welcome.htm> includes links to records previously released that have been or are likely to become the subject of multiple requests. It contains links to Purchasing Protest Decisions, Judicial Officer Administrative Decisions, Board of Contract Appeal Decisions, and Business Disagreement Decisions, all of which are popularly requested records. There is also a link to the Postal Regulatory Commission's (PRC) website ([www.prc.gov](http://www.prc.gov)). The PRC is an independent establishment of the Executive Branch that exercises regulatory oversight over the Postal Service. The PRC proactively publishes information of interest to the mailing community and



general public. For example, the PRC's Reports/Data page, <http://www.prc.gov/reports>, includes dockets, PRC reports and studies, and USPS periodic reports.

Our [about.usps.com](http://about.usps.com) website provides corporate information, such as USPS history and the latest news and information on the Postal Service. [About.usps.com](http://about.usps.com) helps keep the public and the news media informed about what the Postal Service is doing with regard to mail service, sustainability, corporate structure, and how we impact the world around us.

Legislation and regulation require the Postal Service to disclose operational and financial information beyond that demanded of federal government agencies and private sector companies. The financial reports are available at <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/> and include:

- Form 10-Q showing financial conditions and results.
- Quarterly Statistics Reports (QSR) presenting statistics on mail activity and focusing on estimates of postal revenue, volume, and weight by mail category and transit time estimates for selected items.
- Annual reports and Form 10-K Annual Reports, and Integrated Financial Plans.
- Cost and Revenue Analysis Report showing revenue, cost and contribution by mail class, subclasses, and key special services.
- The Cost Segments and Components Report shows U.S. Postal Service estimates of costs attributable to mail classes, subclasses, and key special services, summarized by cost segment and by major cost components. The report is generated annually.
- Revenue, Pieces, and Weight Reports (RPW) presenting official estimates of revenue, volume and weight by class, subclass, and major special service.
- Combined Postal Comprehensive Statements and Annual Performance Plans drawing on the work of the entire organization.

Highlights of some of the other updated or new information posted this past reporting period, including links to where this material can be found online, are summarized below.

**Corporate Communications** - <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm> - proactively and routinely makes a wide variety of documents available for public viewing based on the public's and media's interest in Postal Service issues. The Postal Service Newsroom provides national and local news releases, statements, fact sheets, electronic news kits, videos, leadership bios, written congressional testimony and other information to the news media and the general public.

In 2019, USPS Corporate Communications received recognition for its use of social media and its 2018 *Annual Sustainability Report*. It was honored twice during the Platinum PR Awards competition. The 2018 *Annual Sustainability Report* was the winner in the annual report category, while the department's Social Business Intelligence program won the social listening award, which honors excellence in the use of social media. Additionally, Corporate Communications received honorable mentions in the crisis management category (for the department's work during natural disasters); the public affairs category (for a dog bite prevention awareness campaign); and the social good category (for the Annual Sustainability Report). The annual competition is organized by PR News, a trade publication for public relations professionals.

Included in the Newsroom are:

2019 Postal Facts: <https://facts.usps.com>

Earlier this year, USPS updated the popular website with even more impressive data about operations, stamps and other topics. New features include "Postal Is..." a section that

emphasizes the organization's values, including its focus on employees, customers and providing trusted, affordable service. Other additions include a section on USPS innovations, such as Automated Package Verification, a program that automates postage collection. The information can be downloaded as a PDF and individual facts can be shared on social media.

Operation Santa: [USPSOperationSanta.com](http://USPSOperationSanta.com)

Operation Santa is the annual USPS program that allows employees and customers to aid families in need by "adopting" letters to St. Nick and granting their holiday wishes. Operation Santa traces its roots to 1912, when postal workers and customers began adopting children's letters to Santa. In 2019, USPS offered several versions of Operation Santa, including a digital program where letters are posted online for adoption and a legacy program in Chicago and New York City where letters can be adopted in person. More than 12,760 letters were adopted in 2019, the highest number in the program's long history and an increase of more than 240 percent from the year before. Postal Service leaders attribute the participation spike to these changes, including a modification that allowed individuals nationwide to adopt letters.

Service Alerts: <http://about.usps.com/news/service-alerts/welcome.htm>

This page provides information to consumers, small businesses and other business mailers about postal facility service disruptions due to weather-related and other natural disasters or events.

2019 Annual Report to Congress:

<https://about.usps.com/what/financials/annual-reports/fy2019.pdf>

2018 Annual Sustainability Report:

<https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/sustainability/report/2018/usps-annual-sustainability-report.pdf>

Judicial decisions: <https://about.usps.com/who/judicial/admin-decisions/>

Financial reports: <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/>

Financial Call audio and slides: <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/financials/briefings/welcome.htm>

Statements: <http://about.usps.com/news/statements/welcome.htm>

Provides the Postal Service's position on controversial issues and other subjects of public interest.

Postal Service Newsroom: <http://about.usps.com/news/welcome.htm>

Provides national and local news releases, statements, fact sheets, electronic news kits, videos, leadership bios, written congressional testimony and other information to the news media and the general public.

Digital Media: <https://media.usps.com/>

A sub-site of the Postal Service Newsroom. Provides the public access to photo galleries, and videos about postal operations and events.

Holiday Newsroom: <http://about.usps.com/holidaynews/>

A sub-site of the Postal Service newsroom. Provides a single location to locate all information regarding the Postal Service's holiday efforts, including Operation Santa, news releases, mail-by dates, and other customer resources.

Postal Bulletin: <http://about.usps.com/postal-bulletin/welcome.htm>

The Postal Bulletin, one of the oldest federal publications still in print, is posted to the About pages of usps.com every two weeks. It provides information on USPS operations, policies, procedures and forms, as well as postal product information and stamp news.

Postal Service Social Media:

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/uspstv>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/USPS>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/usps>

Pinterest: <http://www.pinterest.com/uspsstamps/>

## Government Relations

Congressional Hearing Testimony <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/testimony-speeches/welcome.htm>

## Judicial Office

Decisions issued by the U.S. Postal Service Board of Contract Appeals, Office of the Administrative Law Judges, and Judicial Officer are added to the Decisions page (as part of the U.S. Postal Service website). Further, a report of pending Board of Contract Appeals cases is available on the electronic filing website. The report is accessible from the start page and does not require an electronic filing account.

<https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/judicial/welcome.htm>

<https://uspsjoe.justware.com/JusticeWeb/Reports>

## Historian's Office

- First U.S. Post Offices by State; First U.S. Post Offices: Research Challenges and Sources of Information (new documents added to website in September 2019) <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/post-offices-facilities.htm>
- Postmaster Finder -- <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postmasterfinder/welcome.htm> (updated weekly)
- Postal Facilities Dedicated by Congress -- <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/dedicated-facilities.pdf> (updated monthly or bi-monthly)
- Number of Stamped Cards since 1926; Rates for Domestic Letters since 1863; Number of Postal Employees since 1926; Delivery Points Since 1905; Pieces of Mail Handled since 1789; First-Class Mail Volume Since 1926 (update annually with most recent data) -- <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/rates-historical-statistics.htm>
- African American Subjects on Stamps; American Indian Subjects on Stamps; Hispanic Subjects on Stamps; Women Subjects on Stamps; Christmas Holiday Stamps. (updated in March 2019) -- <https://about.usps.com/who-we-are/postal-history/stamps-postcards.htm>

## Supply Management

- Highway Contract Routes -- <https://about.usps.com/who/legal/foia/documents/hcr-listing-fy2020-q1.xlsx>
- Purchase Cardholder Listing -- <https://about.usps.com/who/legal/foia/documents/purchase-cardholder-list-jan-june-2019.xlsx>
- Updates to the Supplying Principles and Practices <http://about.usps.com/manuals/pm/welcome.htm>
- New issues to the Supplier Newsletter: usps|re:supply <http://about.usps.com/suppliers/forms-publications.htm>
- Updates to the Handbook AS-805 -- <http://about.usps.com/handbooks/as805.pdf>
- Fiscal Year 2019 Goals for the Supplier Diversity Program - <https://about.usps.com/suppliers/diversity-program.htm>

## Facilities

- National listing of both leased and owned postal facilities along with land for all fifty States and U.S. Territories – <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/foia/readroom/welcome.htm>
- Listing of postal properties for sale - <https://powersearch.jll.com/usps/>

## Sustainability

- Annual Sustainability Report 2018: <https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/sustainability/report/2018/usps-annual-sustainability-report.pdf>
- FY 2018 OMB Scorecard: <https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/sustainability/pdf/fy2018-omb-scorecard.pdf>
- 2018 Sustainability Implementation Plan: <https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/sustainability/pdf/usps-2018-sustainability-plan.pdf>
- FY18 USPS Annual EPA Fleet Compliance Report: <https://about.usps.com/what-we-are-doing/green/pdf/USPS-AFV-Annual-Fleet-Compliance-Report.pdf>
- BlueEarth Services and Initiatives: <https://about.usps.com/what/corporate-social-responsibility/sustainability/greening-business/>

## Postal Inspection Service

[www.uspis.gov](http://www.uspis.gov)

As one of our country's oldest federal law enforcement agencies, the Inspection Service has a proud history of fighting criminals who attack the postal system and misuse it to defraud, endanger, or otherwise threaten the American public. The Postal Inspection Service redesigned its website to make it easier for consumers to find crime prevention tips and to learn about the agency. The site offers information on avoiding common types of crime—including mail and identity theft, lottery scams and phishing—as well as guidelines on reporting suspicious activity. The redesigned site also offers a behind-the-scenes look into the types of cases the Inspection Service investigates, the state-of-the-art tools used to solve crimes, and how to join the law enforcement organization.

- Inspection Service Annual Report FY2018: <https://www.uspis.gov/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/2018-AR.pdf>

## Controller

- FY 2019 USPS Annual Report to Congress - <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/annual-reports/fy2019.pdf>

## Finance and Planning

- FY 2019 Integrated Financial Plan - <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/integrated-financial-plans/fy2019.pdf>
- The FY2019 Annual Report to Congress - <https://about.usps.com/strategic-planning/future-postal-service/publications.htm>
- Links for Financials - <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/> Includes 10K/10Q, 8Ks, RPW Statistics
- 2019 10K - <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/10k-reports/fy2019.pdf>
- 2019 Q3-10Q - <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/financial-conditions-results-reports/fy2019-q3.pdf>
- 2019 Q2-10Q – <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/financial-conditions-results-reports/fy2019-q2.pdf>
- 2019 Q1-10Q - <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/financial-conditions-results-reports/fy2019-q1.pdf>
- A link to the quarterly financial media call and presentation is provided for the public to access – <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/briefings/welcome.htm?video=cfo190809>

## Board of Governors

- Announcements of all Board of Governors (BOG) meeting days, times, locations are posted on usps.com: <https://about.usps.com/>

- Live audio webcasts and the presentations of the Open session meetings of the Board of Governors are available online. Three hours after the conclusion of the meeting, a recorded audio file and the presentation slides are available. In compliance with Section 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, the audio webcasts are open-captioned. These are available at <http://about.usps.com/who/leadership/board-governors/briefings/welcome.htm>.
- USPS News Release with the agenda of every Open Session meeting of the BOG/Temporary Emergency Committee (TEC) are available online prior to each meeting. The PDF of the meeting agenda and the link to the Postmaster General & CEO and Chief Financial Officer's media call to discuss USPS financials are posted online at <https://about.usps.com/what/financials/briefings/welcome.htm>

## Delivery and Retail Operations

- Informed Delivery – Informed Delivery is a free and optional notification service that gives eligible residential consumers the ability to see a preview of their letter mail, wherever they are, before it arrives. It is available to eligible residential consumers in the majority of ZIP Codes nationwide and was on track to reach 20 million users by the end of fiscal year 2019. Informed Delivery was named one of the top public sector innovations during this year's Government Innovation Awards.
- Builders & Developers Website - [https://about.usps.com/what-we-are-doing/current-initiatives/delivery-growth-management/welcome.htm?\\_gl=1\\*yIqzIf\\*\\_gcl\\_aw\\*R0NMLjE1Njc2Mjg3NzUuRUFJYUIRb2JDaE1JcGNfS29JQzQ1QUIWZXIDdEJoMFNUUUVdyRUFBUFTQUFFZ0paVV9EX0J3RQ..](https://about.usps.com/what-we-are-doing/current-initiatives/delivery-growth-management/welcome.htm?_gl=1*yIqzIf*_gcl_aw*R0NMLjE1Njc2Mjg3NzUuRUFJYUIRb2JDaE1JcGNfS29JQzQ1QUIWZXIDdEJoMFNUUUVdyRUFBUFTQUFFZ0paVV9EX0J3RQ..)
  - Builders & Developers Guide
  - Residential & Commercial publications
  - POM references
  - Current Postal Bulletin
  - Approved Manufacturers
  - Growth email link – [Delivery.Growth@usps.gov](mailto:Delivery.Growth@usps.gov)
- FOIA Library Link – (Delivery Operations) - <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/foia/readroom/welcome.htm>
  - Administrative Manuals that affect the Public
  - Frequently Requested Records
  - City Delivery --- Headquarters Holiday Operations
- Collection Box – <https://tools.usps.com/find-location.htm>
  - collection times

## Sales

- Global Direct Entry publishes updates online to the GDE Wholesaler list. This list is updated as each new wholesaler is approved, or as a wholesaler is removed. This information may be found at: <https://www.usps.com/business/international-shipping.htm>. Section 620 of the International Mail Manual is also updated to reflect new requirements for the GDE program. This information may be found at: [https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc6\\_006.htm](https://pe.usps.gov/text/imm/immc6_006.htm).

## Global Business

- U.S. customers who are registered usps.com users may now file an international inquiry regarding their lost or damaged packages. Additionally, USPS updated its international inquiries online application to better serve customers. This update simplifies the process for international inquiries and claims for customers. Customers may now check the status of their inquiries and claims online 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- January 2020 Price Change Documents: <https://pe.usps.com/PriceChange/Index>
- International Mailing Services: Proposed Product and Price changes – CPI:  
<https://pe.usps.com/FederalRegisterNotice/Index>
  - <https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immsoc.htm>
- What is M-bag Service (FAQ)?: <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/What-is-M-bag-Service>
  - [https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc2\\_026.htm](https://pe.usps.com/text/imm/immc2_026.htm)
- First-Class Mail International (FAQ): <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/First-Class-Mail-International>
- International Priority Airmail/ International Surface Airlift (FAQ):  
<https://faq.usps.com/s/article/International-Priority-Airmail-International-Surface-Airlift>
- 2019 Holiday Mailing Deadlines: <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/2019-Holiday-Mailing-Deadlines>
- International Service Disruptions: <https://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/weather-updates-international.htm>
- International Price list: <https://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/Notice123.htm>
- International Addressing Requirements: <https://faq.usps.com/s/article/International-addressing-requirements>
- Preparing International Shipments:  
<https://faq.usps.com/s/topic/0TOt00000004HGeGAM/preparing-international-shipments?tabset-44809=2>
- Small Business Solutions: Growing a Small Business: <https://uspsblog.com/growing-small-business/>

## Marketing

- Maintain the Industry portion of PostalPro, i.e., PCC/MTAC/AIM. This site contains presentations, meeting notes, webinars, and schedules for meetings that USPS holds regularly with customers and industry partners. It can be accessed at <https://postalpro.usps.com/>. The Postal Customer Council (PCC) is a postal-sponsored organization which provides local support to business mailers large and small through education and networking events. The PCC website located at [www.usps.com/pcc](http://www.usps.com/pcc) is designed to allow interactive communication to facilitate this.

- USPS informs its mailing and shipping partners of disruptions in service via “Industry Alerts.” The formats and timing of these alerts has been streamlined to better meet industry needs. The alerts can be found at <http://about.usps.com/newsroom/service-alerts/>. These alerts are for residential, business, and international customers. The Marketing group is also responsible for coordination with the Department of Homeland Security concerning information displayed on [www.ready.gov](http://www.ready.gov) or [www.listo.gov](http://www.listo.gov); these websites provide information to the public on how to prepare for hurricanes and severe weather.”

### Office of Inspector General

- OIG posted audit reports, white papers, semi-annual reports to Congress, and Congressional testimony in full or with modest redactions: [www.uspsoig.gov/document-library](http://www.uspsoig.gov/document-library)

### Human Resources

- The Postal Service is actively working to enhance its employment branding efforts and to share developmental opportunities that are available with potential employees. Existing information is on the careers webpage and in 2020 enhancements will be completed there as well.

<https://about.usps.com/careers/working-usps/>

2. Beyond posting new material, is your agency taking steps to make the posted information more useful to the public, especially to the community of individuals who regularly access your agency’s website?

Yes

3. If yes, please provide examples of such improvements.

The Postal Service develops its strategic plan, and the associated goals, objectives, performance indicators, and targets, in a process that relies heavily on participation by postal stakeholders. The methods employed include: surveys, focus groups, market research studies, complaint analysis, consultant studies, media tracking and analysis, working groups and industry task forces, oversight hearings and testimony, participation in public policy and industry conferences, and meetings with customers and the public.

For example:

- The Postal Service introduced USPS Mail Journey, an interactive website that aims to help employees, customers and others understand how mail bridges digital and physical communications. The site consists of several lessons that showcase the evolving role of mail. The USPS Mail Journey site’s first lesson covers the changing marketing landscape, new innovations in mail, and other topics. More lessons will be added to the site in the future. See <http://uspsmailjourney.com/#/>
- USPS offers callers self-service options -- Customers who use the USPS help line can now choose to receive text-based assistance, among other new options. Callers to the 800-ASK-USPS help line are being offered more ways to receive assistance, part of the organization’s efforts to improve customers’ experiences. All calls go to one of four



Customer Care Centers that the Postal Service operates nationwide. Under changes that took effect recently, a caller can now choose to receive text-based assistance through an interactive voice response feature. Text-based assistance is available for customer inquiries about case creation, passport services, change of address requests, mail holds and package tracking. USPS offers additional text-based assistance for postage pricing and service commitments, ZIP Code information, Click-N-Ship claims and refunds, and buying stamps. Customers are able to receive additional assistance via text, including Post Office hours and location information and redelivery requests.

- Small-business customers can use a new USPS site to create a direct mail campaign in about 15 minutes. USPS has introduced a website that features one-stop shopping for small businesses that want to send direct mailings. Users can access the Every Door Direct Mail platform and choose the type of recipients they wish to target, selecting filters such as age, income and home ownership. Users can then choose the geographic area for their campaign. The next step is to choose a template for a mailpiece as well as a campaign option that integrates physical mail with digital marketing. A designer then contacts the customer within 24 hours to develop the mailpiece, which is then printed by a Postal Service affiliate and mailed out according to the campaign's schedule. The site is available at [usps.com/directmail](https://usps.com/directmail).

## **B. Other Initiatives**

4. Please describe the best practices used to improve proactive disclosures and any challenges your agency faces in this area.

Records custodians are responsible for informing the Privacy and Records Management Office when three or more requests are received for the same records. Training provided to Headquarters and field FOIA Coordinators reminds them about the proactive disclosure requirement, and Vice Presidents at National Headquarters are notified annually by formal memorandum.

## **Section IV: Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology**

### **A. Making Material Posted Online More Usable**

1. Is your agency leveraging or exploring any new technology to facilitate efficiency in its FOIA administration that you have not previously reported? If so, please describe the type of technology.
  - USPS Information Catalog Program Office (ICP) and IT professionals provide required support and assistance in conducting electronic records searches. ICP sorts and de-duplicates email records and may provide data transfer services for the exchange of electronic files.
  - The Postal Service has one of the world's largest computer networks. The services provided daily by the Postal Service depends on an astonishing network of people and technologies that collect, transport, process and deliver the nation's mail. As such, records custodians at the over 31,000 facilities throughout the country at which records are maintained may utilize available technology which supports the programs they manage to help create efficiencies in processing FOIA requests.

### **B. Other Initiatives**

2. Has your agency reviewed its FOIA website(s) during the reporting period to ensure it addresses the elements noted in OIP's guidance on FOIA websites?

Yes. The Postal Service routinely revises the material on its FOIA websites. This year, our website revisions entailed both organizational changes, to make the website more user-friendly, and substantive changes, to ensure that the website contained the most up-to-date and useful resources. Organizationally, we made the navigation more intuitive by utilizing collapsible sections and inserting a navigation menu on each page. Substantively, we ensured that all hyperlinks and citations were correct in light of recent changes to our regulations, we reviewed all of the website text, and we revised the FOIA Library to ensure that all of the necessary records were available and easy to find.

3. Did your agency successfully post all four quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2019?

Yes

4. If your agency did not successfully post all quarterly reports, with information appearing on FOIA.gov, please explain why and provide your agency's plan for ensuring that such reporting is successful in Fiscal Year 2020.

N/A

5. Please provide the link to the posting of raw data for your agency's Fiscal Year 2018 Annual FOIA Report and, if available, for your agency's Fiscal Year 2019 Annual FOIA Report.

Fiscal Year 2018 – <https://about.usps.com/who/legal/foia/annual-foia-reports/fy2018-rawdata.csv>

### **C. Optional**

6. Please describe the best practices used in greater utilizing technology and any challenges your agency faces in this area.

The Privacy and Records Management Office works with an IT portfolio manager to identify technology tools that it may need to provide for efficient FOIA processing. IT requirements are reviewed and considered each year during the budget planning process.

## Section V: Steps Taken to Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests and Reducing Backlogs

### A. Simple Track

1. Does your agency utilize a separate track for simple requests?

Yes

2. If so, was your Fiscal Year 2019, average time for simple requests 20 working days or fewer?

Yes

3. Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2019 that were placed in your simple track.

81.9%

4. If your agency does not track simple requests separately, was your average for all non-expedited requests 20 working days or fewer?

N/A

### B. Backlogs -- Requests

5. If you had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2019, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2018?

Yes, the backlog decreased as compared to the backlog reported at the end of FY2018.

6. If not, did your agency process more requests during Fiscal Year 2019 than it did during Fiscal Year 2018?

N/A

7. If your agency's backlog increased, explain why.

Indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:

- Increase in number of requests
- Loss of staff
- Increase in complexity of requests

Any other reasons – please briefly describe or provide examples when possible.

N/A

8. If you had a request backlog, report the percentage of requests that make up the backlog out of the total number of requests received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2019. If your agency has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."

1.1%

### **C. Backlogs -- Appeals**

9. If you had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2019, did that backlog decrease as compared to the end of Fiscal Year 2018?

Yes.

10. If not, did your agency process more appeals during Fiscal Year 2019 than it did during Fiscal Year 2018?

N/A

11. If your agency's appeal backlog increased, explain why. Indicate if any of the following were contributing factors:

- Increase in the number of appeals
- Loss of staff
- Increase in the complexity of the appeals

Any other reasons -- please briefly describe or provide examples

N/A

12. If you had an appeal backlog, report the percentage of appeals that make up the backlog out of the total number of appeals received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2019.

0.9%

### **D. Backlog Reduction Plans**

13. Last year, any agency with a backlog of over 1,000 requests in FY2018 was asked to provide a backlog reduction plan.

Did your agency implement its backlog reduction plan last year? If so, describe your agency's efforts in implementing this plan and note if you were able to achieve backlog reduction in FY2019.

N/A

14. If your agency had a backlog of more than 1,000 requests in Fiscal Year 2019, what is your backlog reduction plan for Fiscal Year 2020?

N/A

### **E. Ten Oldest Requests**

15. In Fiscal Year 2019, did your agency close its 10 oldest pending requests from Fiscal Year 2018?

Yes

16. If no, please provide the number of these requests you were able to close by the end of the fiscal year. If you had less than 10 total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.

N/A.

17. Beyond working on the ten oldest requests, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending requests.

The Postal Service allocated additional resources to process complex, voluminous requests. Throughout the year, Privacy and Records Management Office team members monitored assigned requests and sent reminders to FOIA Coordinators and records custodians for those requests that were pending or overdue. The Privacy and Records Management Office escalated overdue requests to senior management for attention when warranted.

## **F. Ten Oldest Appeals**

18. In Fiscal Year 2019, did your agency close its 10 oldest pending appeals from Fiscal Year 2018?

Yes

19. If no, please provide the number of these appeals you were able to close by the end of the fiscal year. If you had less than 10 total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.

N/A

20. Beyond working on the ten oldest appeals, please describe any steps your agency took to reduce the overall age of your pending appeals.

N/A

## **G. Ten Oldest Consultations**

21. In Fiscal Year 2019, did your agency close its 10 oldest pending consultations from Fiscal Year 2018?

Yes

22. If no, provide the number of these consultations you were able to close by the end of the fiscal year. If you had less than 10 oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.

N/A

## **H. Additional Information on Ten Oldest**

23. Explain any obstacles in closing your 10 oldest requests, appeals, and consultations.

N/A.

24. If unable to close any of your 10 oldest requests because you were waiting to hear back on consultations, provide the:

- Date the request was initially received,
- Date you sent the consultation, and
- Date you last contacted the agency where the consultation was pending.

N/A

25. If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those “ten oldest” requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2020.

N/A

## **I. Success Story**

Out of all the activities undertaken by your agency since March 2019, briefly describe at least one success story that you would like to highlight as emblematic of your agency’s efforts in FOIA.

These success stories will be highlighted during Sunshine Week 2020.

- The Postal Service provides end-to-end item tracking service to its customers for most domestic mail products. Whether sender or recipient, items can be tracked online, by text, by smartphone, and by phone. Customers who need to obtain proof of delivery beyond prescribed data retention periods have resorted to the FOIA process to obtain archived tracking history records. In January 2020, the Postal Service will offer a new online, self-service option that will allow customers to request a longer retention period for the tracking history of a mail piece. In March 2020, customers will also have the ability to purchase online a statement containing scan event information from Postal archives. Both of these new service options will increase the availability of tracking records to the public without the need to submit a FOIA request.
- For the first time in nearly a decade, the Privacy and Records Management Office closed the ten oldest FOIA requests. This required substantial effort, coordination, and tenacity as many of these requests involved voluminous records.