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FOIA Requests for the U.S. Copyright Office

What is FOIA?

The U.S. Copyright Office is subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 USC § 552 (<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title5-section552&num=0&edition=prelim>), which requires agencies to make their records available to the public either proactively or in response to a request, subject to certain conditions and exceptions. FOIA also has nine exemptions and three exclusions that permit agencies, including the Office, to withhold a record in part or in full in limited circumstances.

Another law, the Privacy Act, 5 USC § 552a (<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?req=granuleid:USC-prelim-title5-section552a&num=0&edition=prelim>), contains similar provisions with respect to records relating to information about an individual requester. For more information, see FOIA Frequently Asked Questions (</foia/foia-faq.html>) or the Office's regulations related to FOIA (37 CFR §§ 203.1-203.11 (</title37/203/>)) and the Privacy Act (37 CFR §§ 204.1-204.9 (</title37/204/>)).

What records can I request through FOIA?

In general, the public may request any record that the Office creates and obtains that is under Office control at the time of the request and has not been proactively disclosed on copyright.gov. For example, certain public comments on studies and rulemakings, communications with members of the public, and archived publications are all records available through a FOIA request.

What kinds of records does FOIA not cover?

There are certain types of records that the Office cannot provide in response to a FOIA request.

- 1. Registration and recordation records available for a fee are not subject to FOIA.** The Copyright Office makes its registration and recordation records available to the public through the Office's statutory authority under the Copyright Act rather than FOIA. Thus, if you need the Office to search and provide copies of those types of records, **do not submit a FOIA request**. Instead, contact our Records Research and Certification Division (</rrc/>), which administers requests for registration and recordation records, for assistance in submitting a request of accessing records on-site at the Copyright Office.
- 2. The Copyright Office is part of the Library of Congress but cannot produce Library records under FOIA or the Privacy Act.** Examples of Library records related to the Copyright Office include employment records, financial records, and Library collection records. If you are not sure whether a record is a Library or Office record, please reach out to copfoia@copyright.gov (<mailto:copfoia@copyright.gov>) before submitting

your request. Unlike the Office, the Library of Congress is not subject to FOIA, and the Privacy Act and has a separate process for responding to requests for public records.

3. **Records and information subject to one of FOIA's exceptions cannot be requested.** FOIA includes a number of exceptions, including privileged interagency memoranda or letters, and information specifically exempted by other statutes. For more information, see our FAQ on FOIA's exceptions.

1. **Note:** An example of this is all information relating to proceedings of the Copyright Claims Board (CCB), aside from certain records, as provided below.

Which records can I access without a FOIA request?

You do not need to make a FOIA request to access many of the Copyright Office's records. Many Office records are available in person or on the Office's websites, copyright.gov (/) and [ccb.gov](https://www.ccb.gov) (<https://www.ccb.gov>). These include

- The Copyright Act, Title 17 ([/title17/](#)), and Copyright Office regulations ([/title37/](#)).
- Registration and recordation records. The indexes of registration and recordation records from 1978 to present (<http://cocatalog.loc.gov/cgi-bin/Pwebrecon.cgi?DB=local&PAGE=First>) and 1870 to 1977 ([/vcc/](#)) are available online. All registration and recordation records are also available for public inspection and searching. For more information visit copyright.gov/rrc ([/rrc](#)).
- Applications and other forms ([/forms/](#)).
- *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices* ([/comp3/](#)), Third Edition, as well as previous editions and public drafts, a comprehensive guide detailing many of the Office's administrative practices and interpretations of copyright law.
- Regulatory rulemakings ([/rulemaking/](#)), including public comments.
- Policy studies ([/policy/](#)), including hearing transcripts and public comments.
- Statutory licensing records ([/licensing/](#)), which are also available for public inspection and searching.
- Circulars ([/circls/](#)) and other educational information.
- Amicus briefs, federal court filings, Copyright Royalty Board questions and review, and Review Board decisions ([/rulings-filings/](#)).
- Copyright Claims Board final determinations and other records and information published on eCCB (<https://dockets.ccb.gov/>), the electronic filing and case management system for the Copyright Claims Board.
- Public notices, including Federal Register notices ([/fedreg/](#)) and News Net announcements ([/newsnet/](#)).

You may also conduct an on-site inspection and search of records. To do so, please visit the Copyright Office at 101 Independence Ave. SE, Washington DC, 20559, during normal operating hours, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except federal holidays.

If you are having trouble finding a record, please contact the Public Information Office (PIO) by email ([/help/](#)) or by calling 1-877-476-0778 (toll free) or (202) 707-3000, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. eastern time, Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. PIO can answer questions from members of the public regarding the Office's procedures and copyright law in general. PIO cannot, however, give legal advice. For questions about statutory licensing records contact licensing@loc.gov (<mailto:licensing@loc.gov>) or (202) 707-8150.

How do I submit a FOIA request?

The Copyright Office's FOIA Requester Service Center processes all initial FOIA requests and appeals. Submit your requests at [foia.gov](https://www.foia.gov) ([https://www.foia.gov/](https://www.foia.gov)) or by email, to copfoia@copyright.gov (<mailto:copfoia@copyright.gov>).

While email is preferred, you can also submit your request to

FOIA Requester Service Center

PIE

PO Box 70400

Washington, DC 20024

Please mark on the envelope "Freedom of Information Act Request."

A complete FOIA request contains:

- Name of the requester
- Contact information, such as an email address, daytime telephone number, or fax number, in case the FOIA Requester Service Center needs additional information to process the request
- A well-described request for records, meaning that the Copyright Office can identify the records requested by any process that is not unreasonably burdensome or disruptive to Office operations. If the request is not well-described, the Office may contact you to clarify, which will delay processing.

What happens after you submit a FOIA request?

By law, the Copyright Office must respond to your request within twenty working days of receipt. Saturdays, Sundays, and legal holidays are not counted as work days. In certain circumstances, the Office can take an additional ten working days. If the Office is unable to respond within a total of thirty working days, it will notify you with an estimated timeframe and an opportunity to amend your request. To check the status of your FOIA request, please email copfoia@copyright.gov (<mailto:copfoia@copyright.gov>).

If you believe that the Office improperly denied a valid FOIA request, you may file a written appeal postmarked within ninety days of the denial. Information regarding the appeals process is included in your decision letter and is in the FAQs ([/foia/foia-faq.html](#)).

At any time, you can seek dispute resolution services from the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) within the National Archives and Records Administration. You can email them at ogis@nara.gov or contact them by regular mail at the following address:

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)
National Archives and Records
Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

Designated FOIA Officers:

Chief FOIA Officer:

George Thuronyi, Deputy Director, Office of Public Information and Education

FOIA Public Liaison:

Alexis Graham, Program Specialist, Office of Public Information and Education

U.S. Copyright Office Freedom of Information Act Reports

Annual Reports

2024 PDF (/foia/reports/foia_report2024.pdf) | XML (/foia/reports/foia_report2024.xml) | XLSX (</foia/reports/foia-2024.xlsx>)
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Chief FOIA Officer Reports

2024 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2024.pdf) | 2023 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2023.pdf) | 2019 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2019.pdf) | 2018 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2018.pdf) | 2017 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2017.pdf) | 2016 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2016.pdf) | 2015 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2015.pdf) | 2014 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2014.pdf) | 2013 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2013.pdf) | 2012 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2012.pdf) | 2011 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2011.pdf) | 2010 (/foia/reports/foia-officer-report-2010.pdf)

Related Information

Executive Order 13392 (<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2006-title3-vol1/pdf/CFR-2006-title3-vol1-eo13392.pdf>)

Report Implementing Presidential Executive Order 13392: Improving Agency Disclosure of Information (/foia/foia_exec_13392.html)

Updated Status Report on Deficiencies Under E.O. 13392 (August 1, 2008) (/foia/foia-status-aug-08.pdf)