

## 2015 Chief FOIA Officer Report

Name and Title of Chief FOIA Officer: Maurice Swinton, Chief Information Officer, Armed Forces Retirement Home (AFRH).

### Section I:

#### FOIA Training:

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

*Answer: Our FOIA professional obtained training from the IIWG, Andrews AFB, FOIA office. Additional training was informal and provided as needed.*

2. Provide an estimate of the percentage of your FOIA professionals and staff with FOIA responsibilities who attended substantive FOIA training during this reporting period.

*Answer: 100%*

3. In the 2014 Chief FOIA Officer Report Guidelines, OIP asked agencies to provide a plan for ensuring that core, substantive FOIA training is offered to all agency FOIA professionals at least once each year. Please provide the status of your agency's implementation of this plan.

*Answer: AFRH's FOIA officer coordinates with DoD regarding policy changes and methods for implementing the FOIA program. FOIA professional have received training as per described above.*

#### Discretionary Releases:

4. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to review records for discretionary release?

*Answer: Yes. The Agency has directives (AFRH Directive 1-4 "AFRH Freedom of Information Act Program" and AFRH Directive 1-5 "AFRH Privacy Act Program") that provide details on the agency's process to review records for discretionary release. All releasable records must be reviewed through the formal process which include the AFRH FOIA Officer; Privacy Officer and AFRH Legal Counsel prior to release their release to the public.*

5. During the reporting period, did your agency make any discretionary releases of information?

*Answer: AFRH did not have any discretionary releases during the reporting period.*

6. What exemption(s) would have covered the material released as a matter of discretion?

*Answer: N/A*

7. Provide a narrative description, as well as some specific examples, of the types of information that your agency released as a matter of discretion during the reporting year.

*Answer: N/A*

8. If your agency was not able to make any discretionary releases of information, please explain why.

*Answer: AFRH only had 1 FOIA request which was partially exempted using Exemption 6 and does not afford agency discretion.*

#### **Other Initiatives:**

9. If there are any other initiatives undertaken by your agency to ensure that the presumption of openness is being applied, please describe them here. If any of these initiatives are online, please provide links in your description.

*Answer: AFRH has a web link dedicated specifically to FOIA on its website. Memoranda emphasizing openness and a person's right to information are posted on this web link. [https://www.afrh.gov/afrh/foia\\_reference.htm](https://www.afrh.gov/afrh/foia_reference.htm)*

#### **Section II:**

##### **Processing Procedures:**

1. For Fiscal Year 2014, what was the average number of days your agency reported for adjudicating requests for expedited processing?

*Answer: AFRH did not adjudicate any requests for expedited processing during Fiscal Year 2014.*

2. If your agency's average number of days to adjudicate requests for expedited processing was above ten calendar days, please describe the steps your agency will take to ensure that requests for expedited processing are adjudicated within ten calendar days or less.

*Answer: N/A*

##### **Requester Services:**

3. Does your agency notify requesters of the mediation services offered by the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration? See OIP Guidance, "Notifying Requesters of the Mediation Services Offered by OGIS." (July 9, 2010)

*Answer: AFRH did not notify any requesters of the mediation services offered by the Office of Government Information Services, however, should the agency need the services to resolve any disputes between a requester and the agency, AFRH will contact OGIS.*

4. When assessing fees, does your agency provide a breakdown of how FOIA fees were calculated and assessed to the FOIA requester? For example, does your agency explain the amount of fees attributable to search, review, and duplication?

*Answer: AFRH did not receive any requests which required fee assertion. AFRH will provide an explanation of how FOIA fees are calculated to the requester when applicable.*

5. If estimated fees estimates are particularly high, does your agency provide an explanation for the estimate to the requester?

*Answer: N/A.*

### **Other Initiatives:**

6. If there are any other steps your agency has undertaken to ensure that your FOIA system operates efficiently and effectively, such as conducting self-assessments to find greater efficiencies, improving search processes, eliminating redundancy, etc., please describe them here.

*Answer: AFRH has streamlined some FOIA processes by establishing better relationships with other servicing agencies to determine who should be lead agency when handling certain requests.*

### **Section III:**

#### **Posting Material:**

1. Does your agency have a distinct process or system in place to identify records for proactive disclosure?

*Answer: Yes. The AFRH utilizes its Public Affairs, Legal and FOIA offices to assist in identifying records for proactive disclosures. Each of these offices vet all publicly shared information that appear on the AFRH website.*

2. Does your process or system involve any collaboration with agency staff outside the FOIA office?

*Answer: Yes. AFRH FOIA process includes collaboration with other offices at AFRH.*

3. Describe your agency's process or system for identifying "frequently requested" records that should be posted online.

*Answer: AFRH does not have any frequently requested records. The agency has very few FOIA requests.*

4. Provide examples of material that your agency has proactively disclosed during the past reporting year, including links to the posted material.

*Answer: No*

5. *If there are any other steps your agency has taken to increase proactive disclosures, please describe them here.*

*Answer: N/A*

#### **Section IV:**

##### **Making Material Posted Online More Useful:**

1. *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?*

*Answer: Yes.*

2. *If yes, please provide examples of such improvements.*

*Answer: AFRH created a Facebook page and can use this avenue to post useful information to the public if needed.*

3. *Has your agency encountered challenges that make it difficult to post records you otherwise would like to post?*

*Answer: No*

4. *If so, please briefly explain what those challenges are.*

*Answer: N/A*

5. *Did your agency successfully post all four quarterly reports for Fiscal Year 2014?*

*Answer: No.*

6. *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 2015.*

*Answer: AFRH was under the impression that the reports were posted on FOIA.gov by DOJ and not by the agency. AFRH will ensure that proper posting of the reports are posted.*

7. *Do your agency's FOIA professionals use e-mail or other electronic means to communicate with requesters whenever feasible? If yes, what are the different types of electronic means are utilized by your agency to communicate with requesters?*

*Answer: Yes. Email is the preferred method of communication.*

8. *If your agency does not communicate electronically with requesters as a default, are there any limitations or restrictions for the use of such means? If yes, does your agency inform requesters about such limitations?*

*Answer: N/A*

## **Section V:**

### **Reducing Backlogs:**

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

*Answer: Yes*

2. *If so, for your agency overall in Fiscal Year 2014, was the average number of days to process simple requests twenty working days or fewer?*

*Answer: Yes.*

3. *Please provide the percentage of requests processed by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014 that were placed in your simple track.*

*Answer: 100%*

4. *If your agency does not track simple requests separately, was the average number of days to process all non-expedited requests twenty working days or fewer?*

*Answer: N/A*

### **Backlogged Requests:**

5. *If your agency had a backlog of requests at the close of Fiscal Year 2014, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2013?*

*Answer: N/A*

6. *If you had a request backlog please report the percentage of requests that make up the backlog out of the total number of requests received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014. If your agency did not receive any requests in Fiscal Year 2014 and/or has no request backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

*Answer: N/A*

### **BACKLOGGED APPEALS**

7. *If your agency had a backlog of appeals at the close of Fiscal Year 2014, did that backlog decrease as compared with the backlog reported at the end of Fiscal Year 2013?*

*Answer: N/A*

8. *If you had an appeal backlog please report the percentage of appeals that make up the backlog out of the total number of appeals received by your agency in Fiscal Year 2014. If your agency did not receive any appeals in Fiscal Year 2014 and/or has no appeal backlog, please answer with "N/A."*

*Answer: N/A*

### **Ten Oldest Requests:**

9. *In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest requests that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?*

*Answer: N/A*

10. *If no, please provide the number of these requests your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.E of your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest requests to close, please indicate that.*

*Answer: N/A*

11. *Of the requests your agency was able to close from your ten oldest, please indicate how many of these were closed because the request was withdrawn by the requester. If any were closed because the request was withdrawn, did you provide any interim responses prior to the withdrawal?*

*Answer: N/A*

### **TEN OLDEST APPEALS**

12. *In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest appeals that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?*

*Answer: N/A*

13. *If no, please provide the number of these appeals your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section VII.C.(5) of your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest appeals to close, please indicate that.*

*Answer: N/A*

### **TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS**

14. *In Fiscal Year 2014, did your agency close the ten oldest consultations that were reported pending in your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report?*

*Answer: N/A*

15. *If no, please provide the number of these consultations your agency was able to close by the end of the fiscal year, as listed in Section XII.C. of your Fiscal Year 2013 Annual FOIA Report. If you had less than ten total oldest consultations to close, please indicate that.*

*Answer: N/A*

16. *Briefly explain any obstacles your agency faced in closing its ten oldest requests, appeals, and consultations from Fiscal Year 2013.*

*Answer: N/A*

17. *If your agency was unable to close any of its ten oldest requests because you were waiting to hear back from other agencies on consultations you sent, please provide the date the request was initially received by your agency, the date when your agency sent the consultation, and the date when you last contacted the agency where the consultation was pending.*

*Answer: N/A*

18. *If your agency did not close its ten oldest pending requests, appeals, or consultations, please provide a plan describing how your agency intends to close those “ten oldest” requests, appeals, and consultations during Fiscal Year 2015.*

*Answer: N/A*

### **Use of FOIA’s Law Enforcement Exclusions:**

*Did your agency invoke a statutory exclusion, 5 U.S.C. § 552(c)(1), (2), (3), during Fiscal Year 2014?*

*Answer: No.*