



U. S. Department of Justice

Office of the Associate Attorney General

Washington, D.C. 20530

August 17, 2022

MEMORANDUM FOR AGENCY GENERAL COUNSELS AND CHIEF FOIA OFFICERS
OF EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

FROM: THE ASSOCIATE ATTORNEY GENERAL 

SUBJECT: Freedom of Information Act Training

Since 1967, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) has authorized the public to request access to records from federal agencies. A proper understanding of the FOIA and of the [Attorney General's FOIA Guidelines](#), which were issued in March 2022, is fundamental to any agency's successful FOIA operation.

As the Attorney General's Guidelines explain, "[s]uccessful FOIA administration . . . requires proper training and a commitment to FOIA compliance by agency personnel." The Guidelines therefore encourage agency heads to "provide regular and proper training to [their] workforce that explains the importance of FOIA and every individual's role in administering it."

To that end, and to ensure that FOIA training resources are available to all agency employees, the Department of Justice's Office of Information Policy (OIP) has released three new electronic FOIA training modules, designed to suit the needs of all federal agencies and personnel.

Embracing the principle from the Attorney General's Guidelines that "FOIA is everyone's responsibility," these training modules are tailored to various levels of the federal workforce, including senior executives, FOIA professionals who process requests, and all other agency employees.

These new modules include:

- **Freedom of Information Act Training for Executives** – a 15-minute, five-part course that provides a basic overview of the FOIA and its impact on agency leaders. Topics include an overview of the FOIA, proactive disclosures, reporting and accountability, and FOIA resources and support.
- **Freedom of Information Act Training for FOIA Professionals** – an in-depth, six-module course designed to reinforce FOIA professionals' understanding of the law's major procedural and substantive requirements, including changes resulting from 2016 legislative amendments. Topics include receiving and acknowledging FOIA requests, statutory protections for sensitive information, working in a spirit of cooperation, and providing good customer service.

- **Freedom of Information Act Training for Federal Employees** – a one-hour, six-module course that provides a FOIA primer for a general audience of federal employees, explaining how the law affects them and how they can assist in agency FOIA administration. Topics include who can make a request, how quickly an agency must respond, and how to search for responsive records.

Your agency's e-Learning staff may access a copy of each of these training modules on OIP's [Training](#) page.

I encourage you to use these very helpful new resources to ensure that all your employees understand the FOIA and their vital role in its implementation.

Thank you for your continued hard work to improve the government's FOIA administration. If you have questions or would like further assistance in conducting training, please contact OIP at DOJ.OIP.FOIA@usdoj.gov.