

FOIA-dc.gov

For review and comment of DC Open Government  
Coalition

7/18/2019

Office Of Open Government

# Commission Testimony

## Key Points (current status)

- Incomplete agency coverage (issue much reduced)
- Software needlessly browser-specific (fixed)
- Major functions useless
  - request status (inherent to process/system)
  - reading room (we are considering turning off this feature)
- Session on portal ends without warning or save-your-work (timeout greatly extended)
- Text box limits without opportunity to add page (fixed)

# Commission Testimony

## Key Points (current status)

- Redaction assistance in the software appears unused by agencies (users trained and exemption codes updated)
- System requires more work than needed of users filing an appeal (not yet addressed)
- Site is not readable and fully usable on mobile (fixed)
- Message function not explained (It works as does email integration)
- “Help” tab has only technical material about software, nothing for requesters. (DC has two sites with FOIA help, what is appropriate role for EOM and OOG?)

# Internal Utilization Issues

FOIAXpress utilization measures by calendar year	Calendar year 2017	Calendar year 2018
# of requests and appeals tracked in FOIAXpress	7,346	8,120
# of agencies enrolled in FOIAXpress	53	55
# of agencies processing at least one request in system	51	52
# of current active DC government users	112	141

FOIA Requests	FY 2017	FY 2018	Increase
Total reported by EOM	8,274	10,450	26%
Tracked in FOIAXpress System	6,762	7,943	17%
% in FOIAXpress	82%	76%	

From: 2019 Chief Data Officers Annual Report

# How Requests Come In

Count of FISCAL Year	Column Labels	By Hand	E-mail	Fax	Mail	Other	PAL	Grand Total	
Row Labels	-								
<b>2017</b>		<b>1026</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>4778</b>	<b>6566</b>
Commercial Organization		542	10	137	61	50	9	2285	3094
Educational or Non-Commercial Scientific		73		66		4	3	279	425
News Media		66		86			4	417	573
Private Individual		345	33	211		53	35	1797	2474
<b>2018</b>		<b>1280</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>5828</b>	<b>7815</b>
Commercial Organization		583	9	169	8	42	6	2730	3547
Educational or Non-Commercial Scientific		93		57		12	5	322	489
News Media		179		73		2	4	795	1053
Private Individual		425	38	171	1	40	70	1981	2726
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>2306</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>970</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>10606</b>	<b>14381</b>

Only includes requests tracked in the FOIAXpress System

- Every agency has a FOIA Open Government webpage
- FOIAXpress now has an API!
- Instead of handling 55+ agencies in one portal we can handle each agency on its own page or send parameters to the central portal.
- This greatly reduces the number of questions that need to be presented at one time and possibility for data entry errors.

## ---- Questions -----

- What if accounts were not required?
- What if the FOIA Officers contact information was taken away or harder to find?
- What about having an agency FOIA Submittal but not each agency's Open Government and FOIA Page?