



October 17, 2023

MEMORANDUM FOR COMPONENT HEADS

FROM: Mason C. Clutter 
Chief Privacy Officer and Chief Freedom of Information Act Officer

SUBJECT: **Fiscal Year 2024 Reminder of Responsibilities and Obligations under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)**

As we carry out our critical homeland security missions, we also must uphold the core values of transparency and accountability to the public. These fundamental principles help build trust with the communities we serve.

Enhancing transparency and accountability are key Department priorities. The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is an essential element of advancing these objectives because it facilitates access to information, subject to applicable exemptions for statutorily protected information, which enables the public to better understand DHS activities.

In March 2022, Attorney General (AG) Merrick Garland issued FOIA guidelines¹ emphasizing the need to provide the public with maximum transparency into Department operations. The AG's guidelines also include the important reminder that FOIA is everyone's responsibility. All personnel are required to conduct a reasonable search for requested records and provide all responsive records to the FOIA office for review, irrespective of sensitives or classification. Likewise, Department and Component leadership should provide appropriate resources to support FOIA compliance across the Department. DHS PRIV is available to provide support to FOIA programs across the Homeland Security Enterprise.

Please share this message with your teams. Thank you for all you do to safeguard privacy and enhance transparency while accomplishing your missions. The DHS Privacy Office is a partner as we safeguard the American people, our homeland, and our values together. If you have any questions regarding FOIA operations at DHS, please review the Privacy Office's [FOIA page](#) on DHS Connect.

¹ <https://www.justice.gov/ag/page/file/1483516/download>