



THE UNITED STATES  
DEPARTMENT *of* JUSTICE

**Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act**

**October 9, 2019**



The United States Department of Justice Guide to the Freedom of Information Act is a comprehensive legal treatise on the FOIA. The Guide includes detailed discussions of the FOIA's procedural requirements, nine exemptions, and litigation considerations. Each section contains a detailed analysis of the key judicial opinions issued on the FOIA.

Each chapter of the Guide will be updated by OIP on a rolling basis as significant new developments in FOIA occur. OIP's Court Decisions page also provides a regularly updated review of significant FOIA decisions with detailed summaries searchable by key terms and topical categories.

On June 30, 2016, President Obama signed into law the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016 which contains several substantive and procedural amendments to the FOIA as well as new reporting requirements for agencies. Until all relevant Guide chapters have been updated to reflect these changes, you can read the text of the FOIA as amended and a summary of the recent amendments through the links below.

[Text of the FOIA \(showing changes made by the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016\)](#)

[OIP Summary of the FOIA Improvement Act of 2016](#)

All sections are available as Portable Document Format files, which may be viewed with a free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader.

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