

§ 2502.12

The copy provided must be in a form that is reasonably usable by the requestors.

(f) The term *review* refers to the process of examining documents located in response to a request that is for a commercial use (see paragraph (g) of this section) to determine whether any portion of any document located is permitted to be withheld. It also includes processing any documents for disclosure, (e.g., doing all that is necessary to excise them and otherwise prepare them for release). Review does not include time spent resolving general legal or policy issues regarding the application of exemptions.

(g) The term '*commercial use*' request refers to a request from or on behalf of one who seeks information for a use or purpose that furthers the commercial, trade, or profit interests of the requestor or the person on whose behalf the request is made. In determining whether the requestor properly belongs in this category, OA must determine the use to which a requestor will put the documents requested. Moreover, where an OA employee has reasonable cause to doubt the use to which a requestor will put the records sought, or where that use is not clear from the request itself, the employee should seek additional clarification before assigning the request to a specific category.

(h) The term *educational institution* refers to a preschool, a public or private elementary or secondary school, an institution of graduate higher education, an institution of undergraduate higher education, an institution of professional education, or an institution of vocational education, that operates a program or programs of scholarly research.

(i) The term *non-commercial scientific institution* refers to an institution that is not operated on a *commercial* basis (as that term is referenced in paragraph (g) of this section) and that is operated solely for the purpose of conducting scientific research, the results of which are not intended to promote any particular product or industry.

(j) The term *representative of the news media* refers to any person actively gathering news for an entity that is organized and operated to publish or broadcast news to the public. The term

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news means information that is about current events or that would be of current interest to the public. Examples of news media entities include television or radio stations broadcasting to the public at large, and publishers of periodicals (but only in those instances when they can qualify as disseminators of *news*) who make their products available for purchase and subscription by the general public. These examples are not intended to be all-inclusive. Moreover, as traditional methods of news delivery evolve (e.g., electronic dissemination of newspapers through telecommunications services), such alternative media would be included in this category. In the case of *free lance* journalists, they may be regarded as working for a news organization, if they can demonstrate a solid basis for expecting publication through that organization, even though not actually employed by it. A publication contract would be the clearest proof, but OA may also look to the past publication record of a requestor in making this determination.

[56 FR 5742, Feb. 13, 1991]

§ 2502.12 Fees to be charged—general.

OA should charge fees that recoup the full allowable direct costs it incurs. Moreover, it shall use the most efficient and least costly methods to comply with requests for documents made under the FOIA. When documents that would be responsive to a request are maintained for distribution by agencies operating statutory-based fee schedule programs (see definition in §2502.11(b)), such as the NTIS, OA should inform requestors of the steps necessary to obtain records from those sources.

(a) *Manual searches for records.* OA will charge at the salary rate(s) (i.e., basic pay plus 16 percent) of the employee(s) making the search.

(b) *Computer searches for records.* OA will charge at the actual direct cost of providing this service. This will include the cost of operating the central processing unit for that portion of operating time that is directly attributable to searching for records responsive to a FOIA request and operator/programmer salary apportionable to the search.

(c) *Review of records.* Only requestors who are seeking documents for commercial use may be charged for time spent reviewing records to determine whether they are exempt from mandatory disclosure. Charges may be assessed only for the initial review; i.e., the review undertaken the first time OA analyzes the applicability of a specific exemption to a particular record or portion of a record. Records or portions of records withheld in full under an exemption that is subsequently determined not to apply may be reviewed again to determine the applicability of other exemptions not previously considered. The costs for such a subsequent review are assessable.

(d) *Duplication of records.* Records will be duplicated at a rate of \$.15 per page. For copies prepared by computer such as tapes or printouts, OA shall charge the actual cost, including operator time, of production of the tape or printout. For other methods of reproduction or duplication, OA will charge the actual direct costs of producing the document(s). If OA estimates that duplication charges are likely to exceed \$25.00, it shall notify the requestor of the estimated amount of fees, unless the requestor has indicated in advance his willingness to pay fees as high as those anticipated. Such a notice shall offer a requestor the opportunity to confer with agency personnel with the object of reformulating the request to meet his or her needs at a lower cost.

(e) *Other charges.* OA will recover the full costs of providing services such as those enumerated below when it elects to provide them:

(1) Certifying that records are true copies;

(2) Sending records by special methods such as express mail.

(f) Remittances shall be in the form of a personal check or bank draft drawn on a bank in the United States, or a postal money order. Remittances shall be made payable to the order of the Treasury of the United States and mailed or delivered to the FOIA Officer, Office of Administration, 725 17th Street, NW., Washington, DC 20503.

(g) A receipt for fees paid will be given upon request. Refund of fees paid for services actually rendered will not be made.

(h) *Restrictions on assessing fees.* With the exception of requestors seeking documents for a commercial use, OA will provide the first 100 pages of duplication and the first two hours of search time without charge. Moreover, OA will not charge fees to any requestor, including commercial use requestors, if the cost of collecting a fee would be equal to or greater than the fee itself.

(1) The elements to be considered in determining whether the "cost of collecting a fee" are the administrative costs of receiving and recording a requestor's remittance, and processing the fee for deposit in the Treasury Department's special account.

(2) For purposes of these restrictions on assessment of fees, the word "pages" refers to copies of "8½ × 11" or "11 × 14." Thus, requestors are not entitled to 100 microfiche or 100 computer disks, for example. A microfiche containing the equivalent of 100 pages or 100 pages of computer printout does meet the terms of the restriction.

(3) Similarly, the term "search time" in this context has as its basis, manual search. To apply this term to searches made by computer, OA will determine the hourly cost of operating the central processing unit and the operator's hourly salary plus 16 percent. When the cost of a search (including the operator time and the cost of operating the computer to process the request) equals the equivalent dollar amount of two hours of the salary of the person performing the search, i.e., the operator, OA will begin assessing charges for a computer search.

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§ 2502.13 Fees to be charged—categories of requestors.

There are four categories of FOIA requestors: commercial use requestors; educational and non-commercial scientific institutions; representatives of the news media; and all other requestors. The specific levels of fees for each of these categories are:

(a) *Commercial use requestors.* When OA receives a request for documents for commercial use, it will assess charges that recover the full direct costs of searching for, reviewing for release, and duplicating the record sought. Requestors must reasonably