

Manual searches by clerical staff: \$13 per hour or fraction of an hour.

Manual searches and reviews by professional staff in cases in which clerical staff would be unable to locate the requested records: \$29 per hour or fraction of an hour.

Computer searches: Direct cost to GSA.

Transportation or special handling of records: Direct cost to GSA.

(2) Reproduction fees.

Pages no larger than 8½ by 14 inches, when reproduced by routine electrostatic copying: 10¢ per page.

Pages over 8½ by 14 inches: Direct cost of reproduction to GSA.

Pages requiring reduction, enlargement, or other special services: Direct cost of reproduction to GSA.

Reproduction by other than routine electrostatic copying: Direct cost of reproduction to GSA.

(c) Any fees not provided for under paragraph (b) of this section, shall be calculated as direct costs, in accordance with §105-60.305-1(b).

(d) GSA will assess fees based on the category of the requester as defined in §105-60.305-1(f)-(1); i.e., commercial-use, educational and noncommercial scientific institutions, news media, and all other. The fees listed in paragraph (b) of this section apply with the following exceptions:

(1) GSA will not charge the requester if the fee is \$25 or less as the cost of collection is greater than the fee.

(2) Educational and noncommercial scientific institutions and the news media will be charged for the cost of reproduction alone. These requesters are entitled to the first 100 pages (paper copies) of duplication at no cost. The following are examples of how these fees are calculated:

(i) A request that results in 150 pages of material. No fee would be assessed for duplication of 150 pages. The reason is that these requesters are entitled to the first 100 pages at no charge. The charge for the remaining 50 pages would be \$5.00. This amount would not be billed under the preceding section.

(ii) A request that results in 450 pages of material. The requester in this case would be charged \$35.00. The reason is that the requester is entitled to the first 100 pages at no charge. The charge for the remaining 350 pages would be \$35.

(3) Noncommercial requesters who are not included under paragraph (d)(2) of this section will be entitled to the first 100 pages (page copies) of duplication at not cost and two hours of search without charge. The term *search time* generally refers to manual search. To apply this term to searches made by computer, GSA will determine the hourly cost of operating the central processing unit and the operator's hourly salary plus 16 percent. When the cost of search (including the operator time and the cost of operating the computer to process a request) reaches the equivalent dollar amount of two hours of the salary of the person performing a manual search, i.e., the operator, GSA will begin assessing charges for computer search.

(4) GSA will charge commercial-use requesters fees which recover the full direct costs of searching for, reviewing for release, and duplicating the records sought. Commercial-use requesters are not entitled to two hours of free search time.

(e) Determining category of requester. GSA may ask any requester to provide additional information at any time to determine what fee category he or she falls under.

§105-60.305-11 Fees for authenticated and attested copies.

The fees set forth in §105-60.305-10 apply to requests for authenticated and attested copies of GSA records.

§105-60.305-12 Administrative actions to improve assessment and collection of fees.

(a) *Charging interest.* GSA may charge requesters who fail to pay fees interest on the amount billed starting on the 31st day following the day on which the billing was sent. Interest will be at the rate prescribed in 31 U.S.C. 3717.

(b) *Effect of the Debt Collection Act of 1982.* GSA will take any action authorized by the Debt Collection Act of 1982 (Pub. L. 97-365, 96 Stat. 1749), including disclosure to consumer reporting agencies, use of collection agencies, and assessment of penalties and administrative costs, where appropriate, to encourage payment.

(c) *Aggregating requests.* When GSA reasonably believes that a requester, or

group of requesters acting in concert, is attempting to break down a request into a series of requests related to the same subject for the purpose of evading the assessment of fees, GSA will combine any such requests and charge accordingly, including fees for previous requests where charges were not assessed. GSA will presume that multiple requests of this type within a 30-day period are made to avoid fees.

(d) *Advanced payments.* Whenever a requester is delinquent in paying the fee for a previous request (i.e., within 30 days of the date of the billing), GSA will require the requester to pay the full amount owed plus any applicable interest penalties and administrative costs as provided in paragraph (a) of this section or to demonstrate that he or she has, in fact, paid the fee. In such cases, GSA will also require advance payment of the full amount of the estimated fee before the agency begins to process a new request or a pending request from that requester. When advance payment is required under this selection, the administrative time limits in subsection (a)(6) of the FOIA (i.e., 10 working days from receipt of appeals from initial denial plus permissible time extensions) will begin only after GSA has received the fee payments described in § 105-60.305-8.

§ 105-60.305-13 Waiver of fee.

(a) Any request for a waiver or the reduction of a fee should be included in the initial letter requesting access to GSA records under § 105-60.402-1. The waiver request should explain how disclosure of the information would contribute significantly to public's understanding of the operations or activities of the Government and would not be primarily in the commercial interest of the requester. In responding to a requester, GSA will consider the following factors:

(1) Whether the subject of the requested records concerns "the operations or activities of the Government." The subject matter of the requested records must specifically concern identifiable operations or activities of the Federal Government. The connection between the records and the operations or activities must be direct and clear, not remote or attenuated.

(2) Whether the disclosure is "likely to contribute" to an understanding of Government operations or activities. In this connection, GSA will consider whether the requested information is already in the public domain. If it is, then disclosure of the information would not be likely to contribute to an understanding of Government operations or activities, as nothing new would be added to the public record.

(3) Whether disclosure of the requested information will contribute to "public's understanding." The focus here must be on the contribution to public's understanding rather than personal benefit to be derived by the requester. For purposes of this analysis, the identity and qualifications of the requester should be considered to determine whether the requester is in a position to contribute to public's understanding through the requested disclosure.

(4) Whether the requester has a commercial interest that would be furthered by the requested disclosure; and if so: whether the magnitude of the identified commercial interest of the requester is sufficiently large, in comparison with the public's interest in disclosure, that disclosure is "primarily in the commercial interest of the requester."

(b) GSA will ask the requester to furnish additional information if the initial request is insufficient to evaluate the merits of the request. GSA will not start processing a request until the fee waiver issue has been resolved unless the requester has provided written assurance of payment in full if the fee waiver is denied by the agency.

Subpart 105-60.4—Described Records

§ 105-60.401 General.

(a) Except for records made available in accordance with subparts 105-60.2 and 105-60.3 of this part, GSA will make records available to a requester promptly when the request reasonably describes the records unless GSA invokes an exemption in accordance with subpart 105-60.5 of this part. Although the burden of reasonable description of the records rests with the requester,