

Freedom of Information Act Request Template

Below you will see a FOIA request template that we often modify and use at MCE. This is a pretty formal request template: you may choose to utilize an electronic FOIA request form or use a simpler template like the one provided in Part 2: Accessing Public Records and Public Meetings of MCE's Advocacy Guide. You may also view an example of a submitted FOIA request [here](#).

Bracketed sections should be filled out with your personal information and/or information about the group or organization that you represent. Sections in parenthesis may be included in the FOIA request if they are applicable to you/your group or organization. Sections in italics are meant to guide you and should not be included in the final FOIA request. Please contact Sophie Watterson at swatterson@moenviron.org if you have specific questions about completing this template or submitting a public records request.

If you belong to an organization or community group, you may include a header with your organization's logo and/or a footer with your organization's contact information (mailing address, email address, web address, fax and/or phone number).

[Date]

[Name of Agency Contact]

[Name of Department (if applicable)]

[Name of Agency]

[Agency Street Address]

[City, State ZIP Code]

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request for [Documents e.g. *Environmental Assessments for Missouri Recipients of Farm Service Agency Loans*]

Dear [Name of Agency Contact],

[I request/'your organization name' requests] copies of the documents described below (or documents containing the information described below) pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552.

Requested Records

[Identify the documents or information as specifically as possible].

Fee Waiver Request

[I request/'your organization name' requests] that the [Agency Name] waive all fees for this request. Under FOIA, information should be furnished free of charge if "disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester." 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii).

[Briefly introduce yourself/your organization, describe the purpose of your request, how and why it will serve the public interest]. This information is not being sought for commercial purposes.

If you determine not to accept this fee waiver, [I request/'your organization name' requests] that the [Agency Name] contact [me/'your organization name'] if you estimate that the fee for fulfilling this request will exceed [maximum dollar amount you/your organization is willing to pay].

This entire section is optional, but may help you obtain documents even if there are redactions and ensure that you receive as much information as possible:

(Exempt Records

FOIA provides that if portions of a document are exempt from release, the remainder of the document must be segregated and disclosed. 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). We ask that you provide all non-exempt portions of the requested documents, and that you justify any redactions or omissions by reference to specific exemptions allowed under FOIA.)

This request is being sent with the understanding that it will be forwarded to any other offices that may also have in their custody any requested records. We look forward to your reply within 20 working days. 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(6)(A)(i).

Thank you for your assistance in fulfilling this request. If you have any questions regarding the scope or fulfillment of this request, please contact [your name] at the phone number or email address below.

Sincerely,

[Your name]

[Your title]

[Your organization's or group's name (if applicable)]

[Phone number]

[Email address]