

For: FSA FOIA and PA Processors

**Training for Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) and Privacy Act (PA) Processors**

Approved by: Administrator



**1 Overview**

**A Background**

FOIA and PA law and policy are well covered by live and online training options. Employees processing FOIA requests are encouraged to participate in FOIA and PA training at least annually.

**B Purpose**

This notice announces opportunities for FOIA and PA training through the rest of the fiscal year.

**C Contacts**

If there are questions about FOIA training contact Philip Buchan, FOIA Lead, Intergovernmental and Private Partnerships, External Affairs Division, Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) Business Center by either of the following:

- telephone at 301-504-1701
- email to **Philip.Buchan@usda.gov**.

You may also contact either of the following:

- Patrick McLoughlin by either of the following:
  - telephone at 202-590-6168
  - email to **Patrick.McLoughlin@usda.gov**
- Amber Ross by either of the following:
  - telephone at 816-926-6371
  - email to **Amber.Ross@usda.gov**.

<b>Disposal Date</b>	<b>Distribution</b>
February 1, 2020	FSA FOIA and PA Processors; State Offices relay to County Offices

## 2 Training Opportunities

### A Types of Training

There are two main types of training:

- FOIA and PA law and policy
- FOIAXpress.

FOIAXpress (FX) is the standard FOIA processing platform used by USDA. **Beginning in August, a FOIA POC in each FSA State Office will be licensed for FOIAXpress. Training on the system will be arranged in advance to train those staff (as well as current users).** FX is powerful software, but it is complex and sometimes not intuitive. FOIA processors are encouraged to use the system from end-to-end, including redaction and document processing.

### B In-Person Training

The following are opportunities for in-person training.

- **Employee Development Section (EDS), Human Resources Division (HRD).** This is the former NRCS National Employee Development Center. EDS provides the class tuition and the classroom; the employees (and their agencies) are responsible for their travel costs. **An SF-182, Request, Authorization, Agreement and Certification of Training, does not have to be completed to participate in this training.** With your supervisor's permission (and approved travel funding), employees can register for these classes in AgLearn. If you have any problems or questions, contact your training officer. The EDS has arranged for two trainings:
  - **FOIAXpress training:** October 29-30 in Fort Worth, Texas
  - **FOIA and Privacy Act:** September 17-19 in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Employees interested in either or both of these courses should register in AgLearn as soon as possible. At least 10 participants must be registered for each course for it to go forward.

- **The Freedom of Information Act for Attorneys and Access Professionals.** This is a 2-day (July 23-24, 2019) in-depth training held at the Department of Justice in Washington, D.C. The training is free for Federal employees but travel costs must be covered by the employee's agency. See the DOJ website at <https://www.justice.gov/oip/training> for details.
- **American Society of Access Professionals (ASAP) Training Conference.** ASAP provides training at their annual training conference July 22-24, 2019, in Arlington, VA. The Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) national FOIA/PA staff will attend. Registration and tuition information is available on the ASAP website at <https://www.accesspro.org/training-education-programs/national-training-conference/>. ASAP also has a FOIA-PA training workshop scheduled for Sept 4-6, 2019, in Chicago, IL.

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### 2 Training Opportunities (Continued)

#### B In-Person Training (Continued)

- **The FX vendor AINS** conducts trainings regularly at their Reston, VA headquarters. The following dates are currently listed on their website at <https://www.ains.com/training/>.
  - July 24, 25
  - August 28, 29
  - September 25, 26
  - October 30, 31
  - November 18, 27
  - January 22, 23 (2020).

#### C On-line Training

The following FOIA/PA law and FX courses are available in AgLearn.

- **FOIA Lite:** A good basic course, developed by USDA.
- **FOIA for FOIA Professionals Lessons 1-6:** This more comprehensive course was developed by USDA for our own professionals. This course is recommended for anyone who processes FOIA requests, but cannot attend one of the in-person courses.
- **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Training for FOIA Professionals:** This is a course developed by DOJ, so it's a little more generic, but still a good option among online courses.

#### D Reasonable Accommodations

Persons who require special accommodations to complete training should contact their supervisor or local help desk. AgLearn training lessons have been certified as 508-compliant.