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## Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Requests

This memorandum provides background information on the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#) and the process for handling a FOIA request.

### Background

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a law that gives the public the right to access information from the federal government. Federal agencies must disclose any information requested under FOIA unless it falls under an exemption or exclusion, such as personal privacy, national security, and law enforcement. The FOIA law also requires federal agencies to proactively post online certain categories of information, including frequently requested records. Under federal law, these requests must be acted upon in a timely manner. For more information, visit the [About FOIA](#) website. If the funding agency making the request is the NIH, you wish to visit the [NIH FOIA](#) website for more information.

### How This May Impact You

Generally when information is requested regarding a federal grant or contract, the federal agency will contact the Principal Investigator (PI) to give him or her opportunity to identify areas that might fall under an exemption or exclusion, but might not be immediately obvious to the federal agency representative.

### Process

If a PI receives a FOIA request directly, please do not respond to the request independently. Please notify the GCO immediately by sending an email to [grants@mssm.edu](mailto:grants@mssm.edu). Please copy Sally Strauss at [sally.strauss@mountsinai.org](mailto:sally.strauss@mountsinai.org) in the Legal Department, Sybil Lombillo at [sybil.lombillo@mssm.edu](mailto:sybil.lombillo@mssm.edu) and Tom Blankinship at [thomas.blankinship@mssm.edu](mailto:thomas.blankinship@mssm.edu) in the Office of Technology and Business Development.

Both the PI and the institution can determine if any information requested falls under an exemption or exclusion.

The requests are reviewed in the GCO by an [Authorized Organization Representative \(AOR\)](#). Please send any queries to [grants@mssm.edu](mailto:grants@mssm.edu).