

Overview

On January 1, 2024, all 12 Federal Reserve Banks [adopted](#) a new, uniform policy that seeks to simplify and standardize the Federal Reserve Banks' public information request process. The new policy, the Transparency and Accountability Policy, supersedes the New York Fed's Freedom of Information Policy. A description of what has changed with the adoption of the new policy and the full text of the prior policy is available below and on the following pages.

Background and Changes

The New York Fed is not an agency and is therefore not subject to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, the New York Fed has had a Freedom of Information Policy or related practice for decades. Over the years, the New York Fed has responded to numerous requests from academics, news media, and other members of the public and provided Bank records in a manner consistent with that policy.

The development of a new common policy across the 12 Reserve Banks was [announced](#) in March 2023. Once finalized and released in December 2023, the Transparency and Accountability Policy represented an updated and simplified version of the New York Fed's former Freedom of Information Policy.

Beyond the change of policy title and a general modernization – moving beyond the world of handwritten notes and microfiche to reflect the working world in 2023 – there are a couple of substantive changes, as follows:

- **Requests must now be submitted in writing** – In the prior policy, requests were also accepted over the phone.
- **There are fewer exemptions** – The Transparency and Accountability Policy allows for eight exemptions to be applied to records found in a search, while the prior Freedom of Information Policy allowed for 11 different exemptions. Some of the eight remaining exemptions were revised for clarity, including the incorporation of specific examples that had been separate exemptions in the Freedom of Information Policy.
- **Additional time is available to request reconsideration** – While the Freedom of Information Policy allowed a requestor 10 days to seek reconsideration when a request has been denied, the Transparency and Accountability Policy grants 30 days for the same reconsideration.

There are some components of the New York Fed's Freedom of Information Policy that were not carried over to the new policy. Those components include disclosure of contract information, which is accounted for in the New York Fed's [Acquisition Policy](#), and processes for service of a subpoena on the New York Fed and the Board of Governors, which is unrelated to a request for information. Finally, a section regarding employees disclosing records outside of a request for information was also not carried over to the Transparency and Accountability Policy as it is an internal policy.

Importantly, some things have not changed with the adoption of the new policy, including:

- **The New York Fed remains committed to complying with the spirit of FOIA.**
- **Given our long-standing policy and practices related to requests for information, the New York Fed will continue to respond to requests for information related to records from prior to the adoption of the Transparency and Accountability Policy in January 2024.**

More information on the Transparency and Accountability Policy, including how to submit a request, is available on our [website](#).

Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Freedom of Information Policy

The Freedom of Information Act (5 U.S.C. § 552) (“FOIA”) requires that agencies of the Federal government make their records available to the public, unless the records are specifically exempted by one or more provisions in FOIA.

The Federal Reserve Bank of New York is not an “agency” as that term is defined in FOIA and is, therefore, not subject to its provisions. However, the Bank has committed to comply with the spirit of FOIA. Accordingly, this Policy provides for disclosure of Bank records, unless such records fall within one of several exemptions set forth below.

Nothing contained in this Policy is intended to affect the informational services that are routinely provided by the Bank, nor any other obligations to disclose information pursuant to law (e.g., Section 1103 of the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act) or other legal process.

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1. Applicability & Scope

This Policy applies to requests for Bank records from the public and news media.

Roles & Responsibilities

This Policy is administered by the Freedom of Information Office.

2. Definitions

2.1. “Bank” means the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

2.2. “Board” means the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System.

- 2.3. “Day” means a business day for the Bank.
- 2.4. “FOMC” means the Federal Open Market Committee of the Board.
- 2.5. “Records of the Bank” means rules, written opinions, memoranda, letters, reports, accounts, and other papers or documents, including any such materials stored digitally, that are (a) created or obtained by the Bank and (b) under the Bank’s control.

“Records of the Bank” does not include: handwritten notes, personal files of employees, daily calendars and telephone logs not incorporated into a system of records, intellectual property, documents not in existence, documents which have been disposed of in accordance with law or established Bank procedure.

In addition, “records of the Bank” does not include records that, while maintained by the Bank, are not in the control of the Bank, including records of the Board,¹ records of the FOMC,² records of the U.S. Department of Treasury,³ and records of other Federal or state agencies. Such records include, but are not limited to, records pertaining to supervisory matters wherein the Bank acts pursuant to authority delegated from the Board, records pertaining to the execution of monetary policy on behalf of the FOMC and, in some instances, records pertaining to the Bank’s activities as fiscal agent for the Treasury. The Bank will not release information/documents of any party for which it serves as agent unless the principal has expressly authorized the disclosure.

- 2.6. “Search” means a search of the Bank’s official files which are reasonably likely to contain documents of the kind requested.
- 2.7. “Search” does not include research or any other activity which creates rather than retrieves existing documents.
- 2.8. “Senior officer” means the President, First Vice President, and any Executive Vice President or any Senior Vice President.

3. Policy Requirements

Procedure For Request For Records of the Bank

- 3.1. Request Must be in Writing. Any request for Records of the Bank shall be submitted in writing to the Bank’s Freedom of Information Officer. The Bank may, in its discretion, honor an oral or telephone request, but if the requester is dissatisfied with

¹ Requests for records of the Board generally must comply with the Board’s Rules Regarding Availability of Information. 12 C.F.R. § 261.1 et seq.

² Requests for records of the FOMC generally must comply with the FOMC’s Rules Regarding Availability of Information. 12 C.F.R. § 271.1 et seq.

³ Requests for records of the Treasury generally must comply with the Treasury’s FOIA regulations. 31 C.F.R. § 1.1 et seq.

the Bank's response and wishes to appeal, the requester must submit a written request which shall be treated as an initial request.

3.2. Form of Request. Each request must contain the following:

- 3.2.1. The name and address of the person filing the request, and a telephone number at which the requester can be reached during business hours;
- 3.2.2. A sufficient description of the records requested so that Bank staff can identify and locate the records without undue difficulty;
- 3.2.3. The name of any pending litigation to which the request relates, and the court and its location; and
- 3.2.4. The agreement of the requester to pay the Bank for any fees owed in accordance with the Fee Schedule contained in Appendix A, or a request for waiver of such fees (see Section 3.9).

3.3. Advance Payment of Fees. The Bank may request that any fees be paid in advance as a condition to further processing of the request.

3.4. Improper Request. Any request which does not comply with the requirements of Section 3.2 need not be processed by the Bank. The Bank will advise the requester if the Bank determines that the request is improper.

3.5. Determination. Within twenty (20) business days after receiving a request, the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer, after consulting with other appropriate persons, shall determine whether the information requested will be disclosed. The requester will be promptly notified in writing of the decision. If the request is denied, in whole or in part, the requester shall be advised of the Bank's request for reconsideration procedure.

3.6. Time extension. The Bank's Freedom of Information Officer may extend the time for responding to any request, but the requester shall be notified in writing of any extension and the reason for the same.

3.7. Media Inquiries. In responding to any media inquiry for information or records, Bank employees should adhere to the Bank's current media contact policy, as contained in the Bank's [Policy on Communicating with the Public](#).

3.8. Request for Reconsideration. Any person whose request for information is denied, in whole or in part, may file a request for reconsideration with the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer. Any request for reconsideration must be in writing and must be sent by the requester within ten (10) business days after receipt of notification by the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer of the denial. In considering a request for

reconsideration, the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer shall consult with the President of the Bank, or such senior officer as the President may designate, and shall make a determination with respect to the request within twenty (20) business days after the request is received. The requesting party shall be notified of the Bank's decision.

3.9. Fee Waiver. The Bank, in its discretion, may grant a fee waiver if it determines that the disclosure of the requested information is in the public interest because it contributes significantly to the public understanding of the operations or activities of the Bank, and the disclosure is not in the commercial interest of the requester.

3.10. Form of Request for Fee Waiver. A request for a fee waiver must include the following:

3.10.1. A clear statement of the requester's interest in the requested document and the basis for the requester's claim that a waiver of the fee is appropriate;

3.10.2. The use proposed for the document(s) and whether the requester will derive a benefit, monetary or otherwise, from such use;

3.10.3. A statement of how the public will benefit from the information; and

3.10.4. If specialized use of the information requested is contemplated, a statement of the requester's relevant qualifications which would justify specialized use.

3.11. Minimum Fees Waived. Fees that total less than five dollars (\$5.00) will automatically be waived.

Disclosure of Records

3.12. Records Subject To Disclosure. Unless otherwise exempt, information which falls into one of the following classifications will be disclosed upon request:

3.12.1. Information which describes the Bank's organization and the manner in which the public can obtain information, make submittals or requests, and obtain decisions including:

3.12.1.1. Descriptions of the Bank's operations;

3.12.1.2. Procedures and any forms generally available to the public or depository institutions; and

3.12.1.3. Substantive rules and policy statements adopted by the Bank including any amendments or revisions thereto.

- 3.12.2. Opinions and orders published by the Bank, policy statements adopted by the Bank, and administrative staff manuals and instructions that affect members of the public in dealing with the Bank.
- 3.12.3. Pursuant to the Board's Rules Regarding Availability of Information (12 C.F.R. Part 261), the public portion of applications filed under the Bank Holding Company Act, of notices filed under the Change in Bank Control Act, and of other reports filed in connection with the Bank's supervision of depository institutions.
- 3.13. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary, the Bank may, consistent with applicable law, decline to make information available if disclosure would materially interfere with the Bank's performance of its responsibilities as mandated by statute or regulation.
- 3.14. Records Not Subject to Disclosure. The Bank may, in its sole discretion, decline to make available certain records in accordance with the exemptions set forth in Section 3.15.
- 3.15. The following categories of records are exempt from disclosure under this Policy:
- 3.15.1. Exemption 1: Those records specifically authorized by an Executive Order to be kept secret in the interest of national defense or foreign policy;
 - 3.15.2. Exemption 2: Those records related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of the Bank⁴;
 - 3.15.3. Exemption 3: Those records specifically exempted from disclosure by statute or regulation of the Board;
 - 3.15.4. Exemption 4: Those records containing trade secrets and privileged or confidential commercial or financial information obtained from a person or organization;
 - 3.15.5. Exemption 5: Inter-department or intra-department memoranda, notes or letters consisting of analysis, minutes, opinions or recommendations and including those records that are privileged and confidential attorney work product, attorney-client communications, pre-decisional, or otherwise privileged and confidential;

⁴ In addition, note that the Privacy Act (5 U.S.C. § 552a) generally prohibits Government agencies from disclosing information about individuals contained in systems of records absent permission of those individuals. It is the Bank's policy to withhold information of the kind that Government agencies may not disclose under the Privacy Act.

- 3.15.6. Exemption 6: Personnel and medical files and similar files or information the disclosure of which could constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
- 3.15.7. Exemption 7: Those records that are related to the security procedures of this Bank or are investigatory records compiled for law enforcement or security purposes;
- 3.15.8. Exemption 8: Those records contained in or related to examination, operating, or condition reports related to the regulation or supervision of financial institutions (to the extent such records are deemed to be records of the Bank);
- 3.15.9. Exemption 9: Those records related to specific extensions of credit made by the Bank⁵;
- 3.15.10. Exemption 10: Those records contained in statements of account or which reflect entries made to any account maintained at the Bank; and
- 3.15.11. Exemption 11: Those records containing data, formulas or other information used by the Bank in determining the prices to be charged for Federal Reserve services.
- 3.16. Reasonably Segregable Portions Of A Record. Any reasonably segregable portion of a record or item of information not otherwise exempt under Section 3.14 shall be provided to any person after deletion of portions which are not meant to be disclosed. The term “reasonably segregable portion” means any portion of the records which is not exempt from disclosure and which after deletion of the exempt material still conveys meaningful information which is not misleading.
- 3.17. Bank’s Discretion To Disclose Exempt Records. If the disclosure of the record is not prohibited by law, certain information which is exempt from disclosure may nonetheless be disclosed if the Bank’s Freedom of Information Officer concludes that such action is consistent with the effective performance by the Bank of its statutory responsibilities, and if disclosure will not cause injury to a public or private interest intended to be protected by the exemption.
- 3.18. The fact that the Bank discloses otherwise exempt information in a specific instance shall not be construed as a waiver of the right to refuse to disclose similar information under the same or substantially similar circumstances in the future.
- 3.19. Employee Disclosure Of Records. Except as provided in Section 3.12 or in any other Policy regarding disclosure of Records of the Bank, no employee of the Bank shall

⁵ This Policy shall not abrogate or otherwise override the disclosure requirements related to the Bank’s lending activities set forth in the Dodd-Frank Wall Street Reform & Consumer Protection Act.

disclose or permit Records of the Bank to be disclosed to any person other than a Bank employee entitled to the information in the performance of his or her duties. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to: giving out or furnishing records or copies of records or allowing any non-Bank employee to copy or inspect Bank records without appropriate authorization from Bank management.

Disclosure of Contract Information

3.20. Upon the awarding of a contract, the Bank will disclose the following information to competing, but unsuccessful, offerors, and to other persons upon request:

3.20.1. The name, address and bottom line offer amount of the successful offeror, the number of participants in the procurement, and in general terms, the reason for rejection of the unsuccessful offer.

3.21. In certain instances, subject to the Bank's discretion, information (other than information exempt from disclosure for which the offeror has requested confidentiality) contained in the proposal of the successful offeror may be disclosed to unsuccessful offerors and others.

Service Of Subpoena On Bank

3.22. Service During Business Hours. Any process server who attempts to serve a subpoena on Bank premises must contact the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer. If the subpoena involves a suit or action being brought against the Bank, or against any Bank employee arising from performance of his or her work, or if the subpoena requires the production of Bank records or other Bank information, including testimony by a Bank employee, the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer may accept service of the subpoena. The Legal Function should be notified immediately thereafter. If the subpoena involves a Bank employee in an individual capacity, in a matter not connected with his or her work, the Bank's Freedom of Information Officer, subject to the approval of the Legal Function, may notify and make available the employee to receive process, but in a private area away from the employee's department in order to effectuate service, provided that such would not be disruptive to the business of the Bank.

3.23. Service After Hours. Any process server who attempts to serve process on Bank premises after customary business hours shall be asked to return to the Bank during customary business hours.

3.24. Service Through the Mail. Any service of process received through the mail should promptly be referred to the Legal Department.

Service on Board

3.25. Records of Board. A subpoena for Records of the Board must be served on the Board and should not be served on the Bank. Any attempt to subpoena Records of the Board by serving the Bank is ineffective.

Effective Date:

June 1, 2021

4. Appendix A

7.1. FEE SCHEDULE

Duplication:

Photocopy, per standard page..... \$0.10

Paper copies of microfiche, per frame..... \$0.10

Duplicate microfiche, per microfiche..... \$0.30

Search and Review:

Clerical/ Technical, hourly rate..... \$17.00

Professional/Supervisory, hourly rate..... \$32.00

Manager/Senior Professional, hourly rate \$53.00

Computer Search and Production:

Operator search time, hourly rate..... \$25.00

Compact disc..... \$5.00

PC or mainframe computer output Actual Cost