



September 2, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL [gm@garenmlaw.com](mailto:gm@garenmlaw.com)

Garen Meguerian  
Attorney  
129 Magnolia Drive  
Phoenixville, PA 19460

RE: FOIA Case No. 2020-FPRO-01682

Dear Mr. Meguerian:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated August 16, 2020 requesting access to Postal Service records. Specifically, you requested the following:

1. Records from the office of the Postmaster General, the Executive Leadership Team, and the USPS Board of Governors, since May 6, 2020, concerning the following topics:
  - (a) The removal or decommissioning of sorting machines from any USPS facility; and
  - (b) The removal or decommissioning of USPS mailboxes from any location.
2. Records reflecting communications by and between the White House and the Office of the Postmaster General, since May 6, 2020, concerning the handling of ballots by mail.

Your request was referred to the Information Catalog Program (ICP) Office for a preliminary email records search pertaining to the Executive Leadership Team. This search identified 27,191 email records that are potentially responsive to your request based on key word searches; however, a manual search of the 27,191 email records located will be required to identify all responsive records.

The Postal Service may charge fees for costs associated in processing a FOIA request. A FOIA requester is responsible for the payment of all fees related to a request, even if no responsive records are located or if responsive records are exempt from disclosure. Postal Service regulations require that you be notified in advance of all costs expected to exceed \$25. The fees are calculated in accordance with regulations at Handbook AS-353, Section 4-4.13(a).

We consider that you are within the category of "other requesters" as defined by Postal Service FOIA fee regulations. This category applies to requesters who are not commercial use requesters, educational or scientific requesters, or news media requesters.

Regarding fees under the FOIA, fair and equitable fees are established to permit the furnishing of records to the public, while recovering costs incurred by the Postal Service. The cost is calculated in accordance with our fee regulations at section 265.9 of Title 39, Code of Federal Regulations, which permit us to charge requests of "other requesters" search time at the rate of \$42.00 per hour and 15 cents per page for duplication, after providing the first two hours of search time and the first 100 pages at no charge.

**The cost to process your request is estimated to be a *minimum* of \$57,179.06 for search time alone.** We estimate the manual search cost to be a minimum of \$57,017.10 (3 minutes per email = 81,573 minutes / 60 = 1,359.55 hours – 2 hours x \$42). The cost of the ICP audit/search is \$161.96 (ICP audit cost \$35.96 and search time 3 hrs. x \$42 = \$126). In addition to that cost, 15 cents per page will be assessed for duplication (the first 100 pages are provided at no charge. There may be additional charges depending on actual services provided in the processing of this request.

Because the cost of processing your request will exceed \$250.00, we will require at least 50 percent advance payment with your written agreement to accept any assessable costs incurred. **Please submit your check or money order in the amount of \$28,589.53 made payable to the "U. S. Postal Service."** We must caution you that you are liable for the fee even if certain portions of the requested records are withheld in accordance with our regulations.

Upon receipt of your deposit and written agreement to accept liability for any remaining costs, we will proceed with processing your request and provide an estimate of the time frame for our response. If we do not hear back from you within 20 days of this letter, we will assume you do not wish to incur costs to process your request, and we will close out this request.

If you are not satisfied with the response to this request, you may file an administrative appeal within 90 days of the date of this response letter by writing to the General Counsel Postal Service 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW Washington, DC 20260 or via email at [FOIAAppeal@usps.gov](mailto:FOIAAppeal@usps.gov). Your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted within 90 days of the date of the response to your request. The letter of appeal should include, as applicable:

1. A copy of the request, of any notification of denial or other action, and of any other related correspondence;
2. The FOIA tracking number assigned to the request;
3. A statement of the action, or failure to act, from which the appeal is taken;
4. A statement identifying the specific redactions to responsive records that the requester is challenging;
5. A statement of the relief sought; and
6. A statement of the reasons why the requester believes the action or failure to act is erroneous.

For further assistance and to discuss any aspect of your request, you may contact FOIA Public Liaison listed below:

PRIVACY & RECORDS OFFICE  
US POSTAL SERVICE  
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 1P830  
WASHINGTON DC 20260-1101  
Phone: (202) 268-2608  
Fax: (202) 268-5353  
FOIA Public Liaison: Nancy Chavannes-Battle

Additionally, you may contact the Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) at the National Archives and Records Administration to inquire about the FOIA mediation services they offer. The contact information for OGIS is as follows: Office of Government Information Services, National Archives and Records Administration, 8601 Adelphi Road-OGIS, College Park, Maryland 20740-6001, e-mail at [ogis@nara.gov](mailto:ogis@nara.gov); telephone at 202-741-5770; toll free at 1-877-684-6448; or facsimile at 202-741-5769.

Sincerely,



Brenda L. Rahe  
Sr. Government Information Specialist