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Description of document:	Veterans Health Administration (VHA) FOIAExpress Overview Guide 2020
Requested date:	07-August-2021
Release date:	26-August-2021
Posted date:	22-November-2021
Source of document:	Freedom of Information Act Request Department of Veterans Affairs 810 Vermont Ave NW (10P2C1) VACO Washington, DC 20420 Fax: (202) 273-9387 Email: vhafoia2@va.gov

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In Reply Refer To: **FOIA Request 21-08257-F**

August 26, 2021

This letter is the initial agency decision to your August 7, 2021, request under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, submitted to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Central Office FOIA Office requesting "a copy of the FOIAXpress Overview guide, which was developed by the VHA FOIA Office and is VHA specific." Your FOIA request was received in my office on August 9, 2021.

Based on the information provided in your request, I have classified you as an "all other" FOIA requester. As an all other requester, VA FOIA implementing regulations found at 38 C.F.R. § 1.555 state that the first 100 pages of duplication and first two hours of search time will be furnished without charge. In addition, 38 C.F.R. § 1.561(e)(5) states whenever a total fee calculated under (d) of this section is less than \$25, no fee will be charged. Your request took less than two hours of search time and there is no charge for duplication. Therefore, no fees are assessed. However, please be advised that we reserve the right to assess fees as appropriate under the FOIA on any and all future FOIA requests.

A search for documents responsive to your request was conducted by utilizing the VHA FOIA Office SharePoint site, searching for "FOIAXpress Overview Guide". At the conclusion of the search, one (1) document, totaling ninety-one (91) pages, was determined to be responsive to your request. All information is provided in its entirety. No portions of the requested records have been withheld either in whole or in part. This concludes VHA's response to your FOIA request.

Please be advised you may appeal this full grant response to:

Office of the General Counsel (024)
Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20420
Email: ogcfoiaappeals@va.gov

If you should choose to file an appeal, your appeal must be postmarked or electronically transmitted no later than ninety (90) calendar days from the date of this letter. Please include a copy of this letter with your written appeal and clearly state why


you disagree with the determinations set forth in this response.

You may also seek assistance and/or dispute resolution services for any other aspect of your FOIA request from VHA's FOIA Public Liaison and/or Office of Government Information Services (OGIS) as provided below:

VHA FOIA Public Liaison:
Email Address: vhafioa2@va.gov
Phone Number: (877) 461-5038

Office of Government Information Services (OGIS)
Email: ogis@nara.gov
Fax: (202) 741-5769
Mailing address:
Office of Government Information Services
National Archives and Records Administration
8601 Adelphi Road
College Park, MD 20740-6001

If you need any further assistance or would like to discuss any aspect of your request, please do not hesitate to contact me at (319) 530-7694 or via email at Amber.Heim@va.gov.

Sincerely,

Amber Heim
VHA FOIA Officer

Enclosure: 91 pages - FOIAXpress Overview January 2020



FOIAXPRESS OVERVIEW

VHA FOIA Officers Guide to FOIAXpress

Soup to nuts instructions on how to navigate FOIAXpress from entry to closure.

VHA Central Office FOIA Office
January 2020

FOIAXpress Overview

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FOIAXpress History

The Openness Promotes Effectiveness in our National Government Act of 2007, referred to as OPEN Government Act of 2007, amended several procedural aspects of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), establishing new agency requirements and statutorily mandating existing practices that assist requesters and facilitate the processing of FOIA requests. Section 7 of the OPEN Government Act requires federal agencies to assign a tracking number to each FOIA requests that will require more than ten days to process. Section 8 of the OPEN Government Act requires new statistics and data be included in the FOIA annual report, e.g. the average number of days for the agency to respond to a request beginning on the date on which the request was received by the agency, the median number of days for the agency to respond to such requests, the range in number of days for the agency to respond to such requests, the number of requests for records to which the agency has responded with a determination within a period up to and including 20 days, and in 20-day increments up to and including 200 days, the average number of days for the agency to provide the granted information beginning on the date on which the request was originally filed, the median number of days for the agency to provide the granted information, and the range in number of days for the agency to provide the granted information, report on the agency's 10 oldest pending requests, etc.

To comply with the requirements of the OPEN Government Act, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) awarded a contract to AINS Inc. for the license use of FOIAXpress. FOIAXpress is a web-based Commercial-Off-The-Shelf (COTS) application designed to assist agencies in complying with the tracking and reporting requirements of the FOIA statute and the OPEN Government Act.

All VA administrations and program FOIA offices were mandated to begin using FOIAXpress for any FOIA request received by the VA on or after June 1, 2009.

Access to FOIAXpress:

1. Each VHA field FOIA component, e.g. VA Medical Center or VISN Office, is afforded two FOIAXpress Read/Write licenses. One of the FOIAXpress Read/Write licenses must be assigned to the primary FOIA Officer for the VHA component. The facility has discretion on the assignment of the second Read/Write license e.g. assign to the alternate FOIA Officer or an individual within the Release of Information (ROI) unit. The expectation is that all individuals assigned a FOIAXpress license will be able to navigate FOIAXpress.
2. VHA has a limited number of FOIAXpress licenses to assign. Requests for additional licenses will be heavily scrutinized.
3. VHA FOIA Officers requesting a FOIAXpress account must complete the *FOIA Officer Contact Sheet* in its entirety and submit the form to the VHA FOIA Office via the *VHA FOIA Issues* mail group in Outlook. The *FOIA Officer Contact Sheet* is available on the VHA FOIA Office SharePoint, <https://vaww.vets.vaco.portal.va.gov/sites/privacy/foia/>. Once the form is received,

the VHA FOIA Office will create the FOIAXpress account, provide the user name, temporary password, and FOIAXpress URL to the individual.


4. Once access is provided, the user must log into FOIAXpress as soon as possible as the temporary password will expire.
5. If the user experiences any problems logging into FOIAXpress, the user should send an email to the VHA FOIA Office via the *VHA FOIA Issues* mail group in Outlook.
6. All users should routinely log into FOIAXpress. **At a minimum**, users should log into FOIAXpress weekly.

Logging-In

1. Enter the FOIAXpress URL.
2. The FOIAXpress Login screen will be displayed. Enter your user name and password and click “Log In”.

You are about to access a U.S. Government information system; system usage may be monitored, recorded, and subject to audit. Unauthorized use of the system is prohibited and subject to criminal and civil penalties; and use of the system indicates consent to monitoring and recording.

Welcome, Please log in



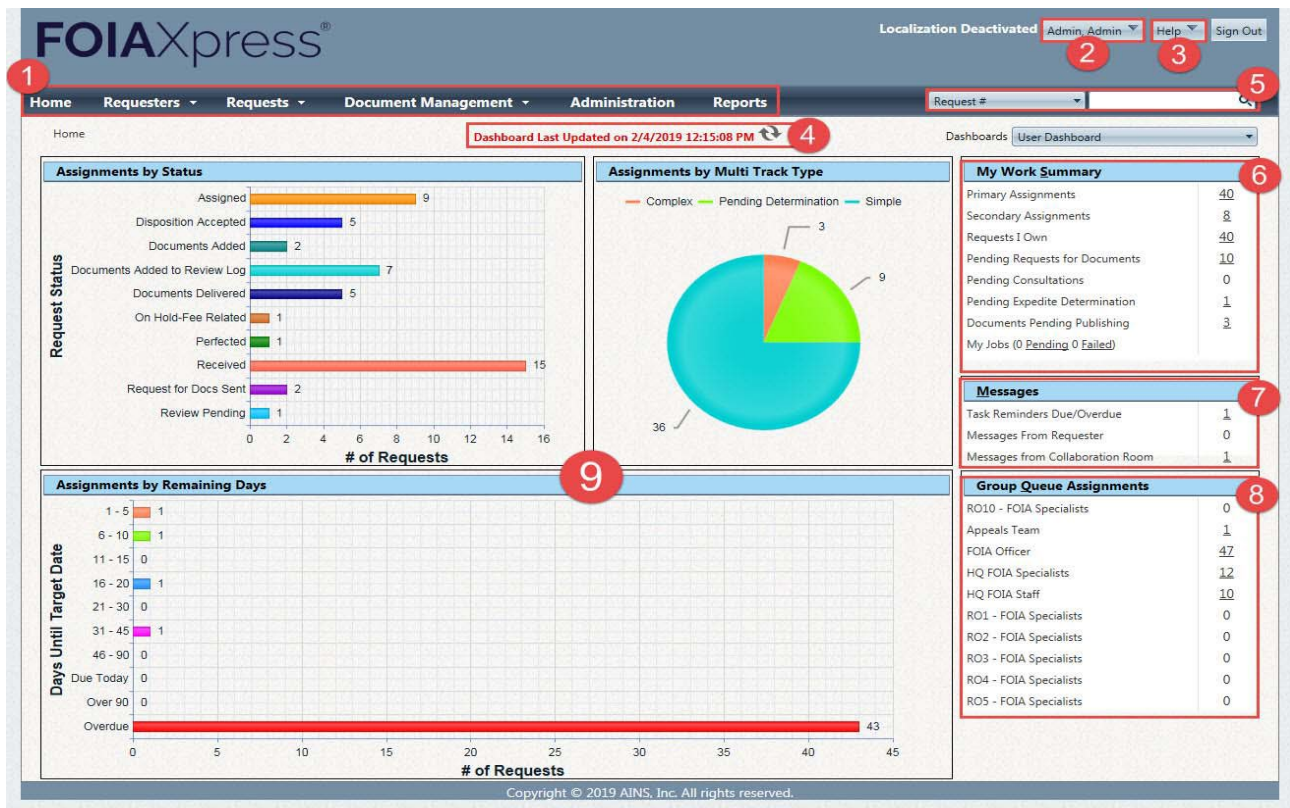
User Name :

Password :

[Forgot Password](#)

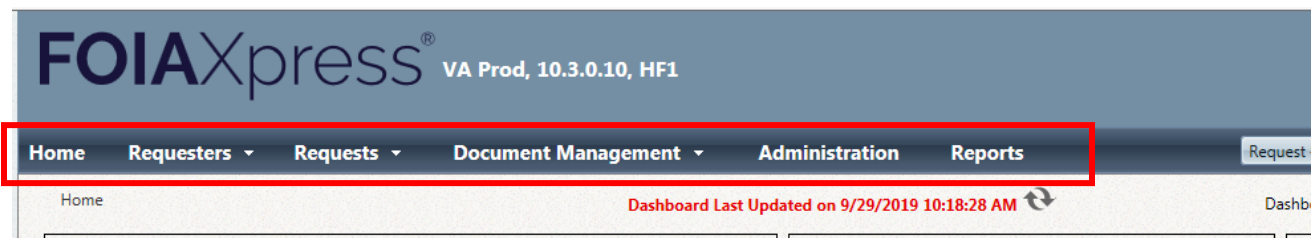
Log In

Home Page Overview:



1. The **Navigation Bar** allows you to navigate to different parts of FOIAExpress.
2. **User Name** opens options that allows you to set your preferences and view your user profile.
3. The **Help** button provides you with access to FOIAExpress on-line manuals, Frequently Asked Questions, and version information.
4. The **Refresh** icon retrieves the most recent data within FOIAExpress.
5. The **Search** field allows you to search FOIAExpress quickly and easily from any page.
6. The links in **My Work Summary** provide easy access to all your work items.
7. The links in **Messages** provide access to items in your FX Inbox.
8. The links in **Group Queue Assignments** provide a view of group queue assignments. **VHA does not use group queue assignments** and therefore you should not see any data displayed.
9. Clicking on the different **Graphs** takes you to that subset of requests.

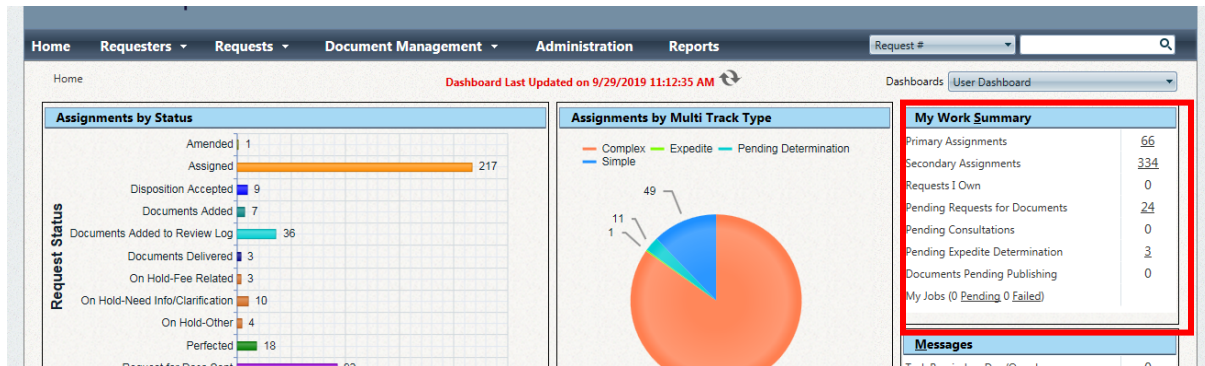
Navigation Bar Overview:



1. **Home** – the **Home** link re-directs user back to the home page
2. **Requesters** – The **Requesters** drop-down menu displays the following links: *Search Requesters* and *Create Requester*. Click these links to search for or create a Requester.
3. **Requests** - The **Requests** drop-down menu displays the following links: *Search Requests*, *Create Request*, and *Create Appeal*. Once you create a Request, you can perform numerous actions from the Request screen, such as: create/edit Requests, assign and perfect Requests, add documents, perform final actions, deliver documents, send correspondence to the Requester, and close the request. Only the Office of General Counsel (OGC) will create appeals in FOIAExpress. Please **do not create appeals** as this will cause an inaccurate VA FOIA Annual report.
4. **Document Management** – The **Document Management** drop-down menu displays the following links: *Search Folders*, *Create New Folder*, *Search/Publish-Reading Room*, *Consultation Review Log*, and *Import ADX*. From these links you can perform actions such as: import pages into documents, scan pages, add documents to a Request, email documents to the Requester, and view the Consultation Review Log. Starting Fiscal Year 2020, VHA will roll this application out to VHA field FOIA Offices.
5. **Administration** - Links to the **Administration** screen where users with administrator access (rights) have options to configure FOIAExpress. Only the VHA FOIA Office has administrator rights for VHA.
6. **Reports** - Links to the **Reports** section, where users can create and save report criteria, as well as generate, print, and export the reports.

My Work Summary

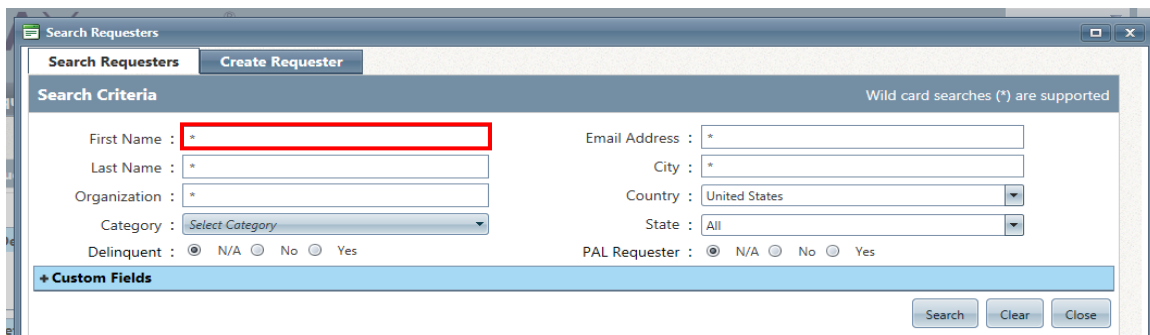
1. The Home Page provides a Dashboard for your assigned open requests. As a best practice, every time you log into FOIAXpress you should review the displayed information for accuracy to ensure all requests have an assigned multi-track type and no request was transferred/assigned to you without your knowledge.



2. **My Work Summary** – My work summary, outlined in red, is a shortcut to your assigned requests. If you click on the number, FOIAXpress will take you to a listing of open requests in which you are the assigned Primary FOIA Officer. You can also click on any aspect of the displayed information to “drill down” to your open requests.
3. You can select/change the information displayed under **My Work Summary** under **Preferences** and then select **Request**. As a best practice is it recommend that **Action Office** be one of the selected fields displayed as this will help minimize any data clean-up for the annual FOIA report. For VHA, the Action Office should be listed as **Veterans Health Administration**. If the action office is not listed as **Veterans Health Administration**, it will need to be corrected in FOIAXpress.

General Information

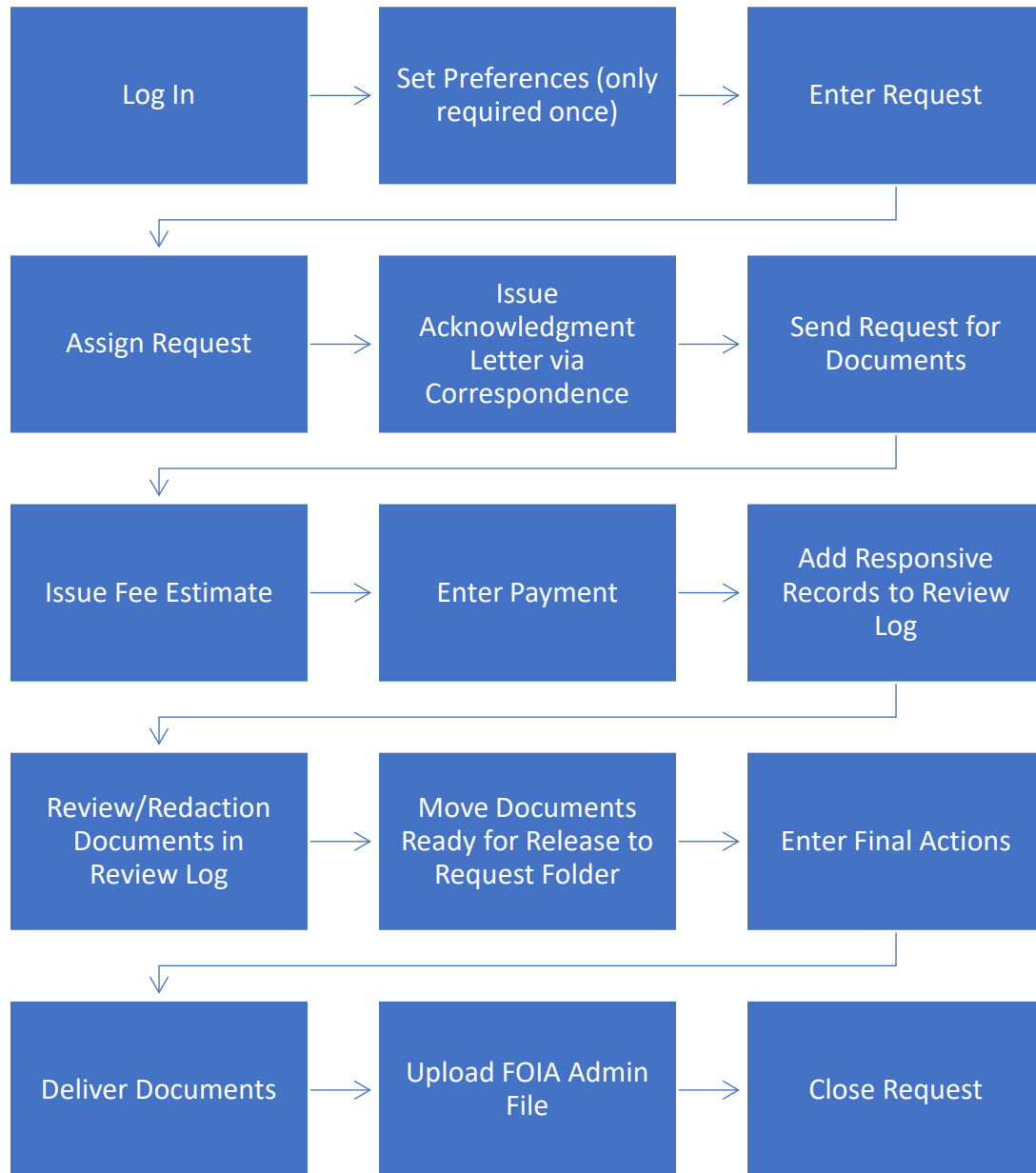
1. Throughout FOIAXpress, any field that is mandatory is displayed with a **red asterisk (*)** next to the field name.
2. Throughout FX, an asterisk (*) in a field will serve as a wild card character when conducting a search.



The screenshot shows a web application window titled "Search Requesters". It has two tabs: "Search Requesters" (active) and "Create Requester". Below the tabs is a section titled "Search Criteria" with a note "Wild card searches (*) are supported". The form contains several input fields: "First Name" (with a red asterisk and a red box around the input field), "Last Name" (with a red asterisk), "Organization" (with a red asterisk), "Email Address" (with a red asterisk), "City" (with a red asterisk), "Country" (a dropdown menu set to "United States"), "State" (a dropdown menu set to "All"), "Delinquent" (radio buttons for N/A, No, Yes), and "PAL Requester" (radio buttons for N/A, No, Yes). At the bottom, there is a "Custom Fields" section with a plus icon, and three buttons: "Search", "Clear", and "Close".

- a. The examples below illustrate this feature when searching for a requester.
 - i. If the field = *, then the query will result in all entries for that field.
 - ii. If the "First Name" field = jon*, then the query will return requesters with the first name beginning "jon".
 1. Jon
 2. Jonh
 3. Jonny
 4. Jonathan
 5. Jone
 - iii. If the "Last Name" field = *son, then the query will return requesters last name ending "son".
 1. Johnson
 2. Williamson
 3. Richardson
 - iv. If the "Organization" field = xyz*, then the query will return requesters with organization names that contain "xyz".
 1. XYZ
 2. The XYZ
 3. XYZ Inc."
 4. The XYZ Inc."

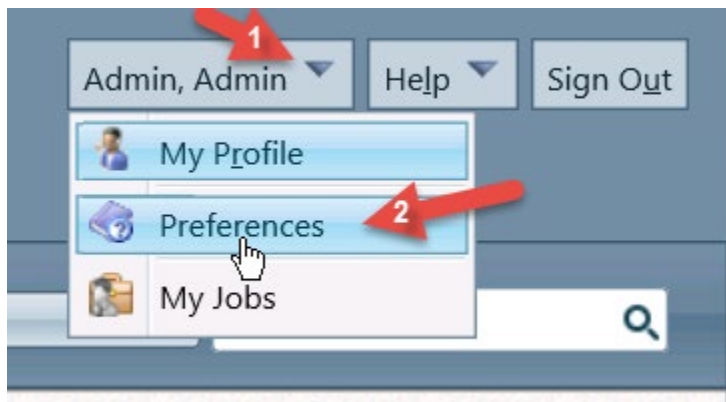
Basic Steps in Processing a FOIA Request in FOIAXpress



Setting Preferences

User Preferences are user-specific interface settings. After logging into FOIAXpress for the first time, you should set your user preferences to the following recommended settings as noted below. You only need to set preferences once unless VHA FOIA Office guidance changes on the recommended settings.

To locate the **User Preference** screen, click on arrow next to your name to display a drop-down menu as shown below. **Select Preferences.**



General Preferences Screen

A screenshot of the 'General Preferences' screen. The title 'General Preferences' is at the top. Below it, there are three settings: 'Records per Page*' with a text input field containing '100'; 'Application Theme' with a dropdown menu showing 'Web Blue'; and 'Time Zone*' with a dropdown menu showing '(UTC-05:00) Eastern Time (US & Canada)'. Below these are two checkboxes: 'Show Inactive Custom Fields in Search' and 'Receive Job Email Notifications', both of which are unchecked. A blue note states: 'Note: Maximum number of Records per Page is 100.' Another blue note states: 'Changes made to Language will take affect after the user logs out and logs back into the application.' At the bottom, there are two buttons: 'Save' and 'Refresh'.

1. **Records per Page:** The number of records you want to view per page. The maximum number of records that can be displayed per page is 100.
Recommendation is to set to 100.
2. **Application Theme:** The visual design of the application, which can be customized based on user preference.
3. **Time Zone:** Selected date/time values will be displayed throughout the application.
Recommendation is Eastern Time.

4. **Show Inactive Custom Fields in Search:** The Custom Tab will be visible on the *Search Requests* screen, even if it is inactive on the *Request Custom tab* screen. **Recommendation is to uncheck box.**
5. **Receive Job Email Notifications:** Job Email Notifications will be sent to specified users when a job status has been changed. **Recommendation is to uncheck box as notifications can slow down your system if checked.**

After making any changes on the **General Preferences** screen select **Save**.

Request Preferences

Request Preferences

Send Correspondence Default Email Address* : Other Email

Search Option* : My Assignments

Request Type :

Appeal Type :

Requester Search by Created Date* : Descending

Request Search by Created Date* : Descending

☐ Enable Auto Save for Correspondence Customize & Save

☐ Receive Email Notifications on PAL Assignments

Customize Search Results View for Requests

Select Request Fields

- Assigned Date
- Description
- Estimate Delivery Date
- Expedite Status
- Fee Waiver Status
- On Behalf Of
- Organization
- Priority
- Request Age

Selected Request Fields

- Request #
- Action Office
- Request Type
- Requester
- Primary User
- Received Date
- Target Date
- Remaining Days
- Request Status

Note:

The Request Types on which the User has create permission will be listed in Default Request Type.

Save Refresh

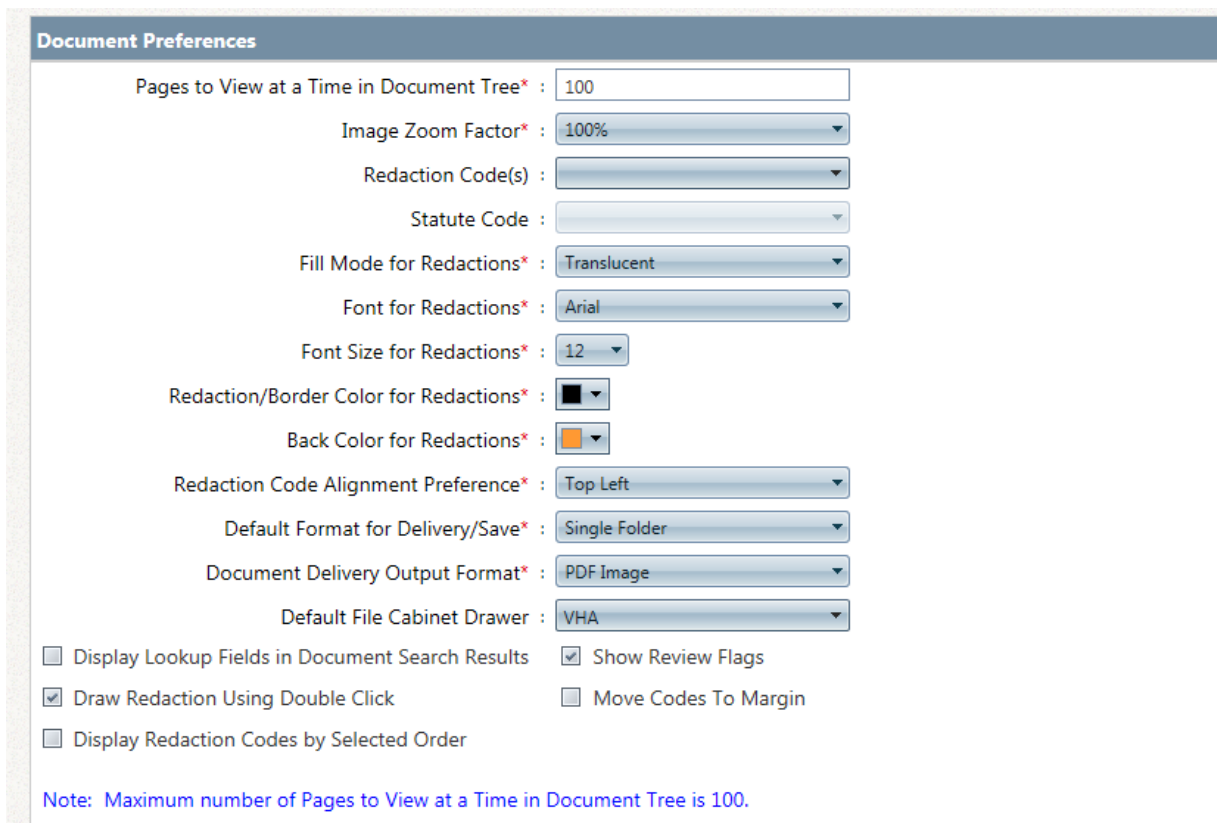
1. **Send Correspondence Default Email Address:** The default email address for sending correspondence. Choices include either **Other Email** or **Requester Email**. **Recommendation is to set at Other Email.**
2. **Search Option:** Default Request **Search Option**, as selected from the drop-down menu. The selected search option will be selected by default in the search field on the *Search Requests* screen. **Recommendation is My Assignments.**
3. **Request Type:** Default **Request Type**, as selected from the drop-down menu. The Request Types that you have Permissions to access will be listed. The

selected Request Type will appear by default when creating a new Request.
Recommendation is to leave blank.

4. **Appeal Type:** Default **Appeal Type**, as selected from the drop-down menu. The Appeal Type that you have Permissions to access will be listed. The selected Appeal Type will appear by default when creating a new Appeal.
Recommendation is to leave blank.
5. **Requester Search by Created Date:** View the search results for Requesters in an **Ascending** or **Descending** order of their created dates.
6. **Request Search by Created Date:** View the search results for Requests in an **Ascending** or **Descending** order of their created dates.
7. **Enable Auto Save for Correspondence Customize & Save:** Automatically save correspondence text to be re-used for future correspondence.
Recommendation is to leave unchecked.
8. **Receive Email Notifications on PAL Assignments:** When PAL assignments are made, email notifications can be sent to the user. Currently VA is not using PAL. **Recommendation is to leave unchecked.**
9. **Customize Search Results View for Requests:** Customize your *Search Results View* by selecting fields from the **Select Request Fields** box, and then moving them to the **Selected Request Fields** box. **It is recommended that one of the fields is Action Office. The Action Office should always be VHA for any request you are processing as a VHA FOIA Officer.**

After making any changes on the **Request Preferences** screen select **Save**.

Document Preferences



Document Preferences

Pages to View at a Time in Document Tree* : 100

Image Zoom Factor* : 100%

Redaction Code(s) :

Statute Code :

Fill Mode for Redactions* : Translucent

Font for Redactions* : Arial

Font Size for Redactions* : 12

Redaction/Border Color for Redactions* :

Back Color for Redactions* :

Redaction Code Alignment Preference* : Top Left

Default Format for Delivery/Save* : Single Folder

Document Delivery Output Format* : PDF Image

Default File Cabinet Drawer : VHA

☐ Display Lookup Fields in Document Search Results ☒ Show Review Flags

☒ Draw Redaction Using Double Click ☐ Move Codes To Margin

☐ Display Redaction Codes by Selected Order

Note: Maximum number of Pages to View at a Time in Document Tree is 100.

1. **Pages to View at a Time in Document Tree:** The default number of pages you want to view at a time in the document tree. By default, this value is set at 10. This number cannot exceed 100. **Recommendation is to set to 100.**
2. **Image Zoom Factor:** Default Image Zoom Factor. **Recommendation is to set to 100%.**
3. **Redaction Code(s):** Default Redaction Code you want to enable. **Recommendation is to leave blank.**
4. **Statute Code:** Default corresponding Statute Code (if you selected code b(3) under Redaction Code(s). **Recommendation is to leave blank.**
5. **Fill Mode for Redactions:** Default Fill Mode for Redactions. **Recommendation is Translucent.** (To note, once documents are delivered outside FOIAXpress, fill mode will change to opaque.)
6. **Font for Redactions:** Default Font for Redactions, both redaction codes and comments. **Recommendation is Arial.**
7. **Font Size for Redactions:** Default Font for Redactions, both redaction codes and comments. **Recommendation is 10 or 12.**

8. **Redaction/Border Color for Redactions:** Default Redaction/Border Color, selected from the Select Color box. **Recommendation is Black.**
9. **Back Color for Redactions:** Default Back Color for Redactions, selected from the Select Color box. **Recommendation is a color that allows user to easily see text under the redaction code.**
10. **Redaction Code Alignment Preference:** Where in each redaction the redaction code appears. **Recommendation is Top Left.**
11. **Default Format for Delivery/Save:** Default delivery/save format. **Single Folder** will save/deliver document pages in a single folder, while **Separate Folders** will save/deliver document pages in separate folders. **Recommendation is Single Folder.**
12. **Document Delivery Output Format:** The selected option will appear by default in the Document Delivery Output Format field when delivering documents to the Requester. **Recommendation is PDF Image.**
13. **Default File Cabinet Drawer:** Select a specific file cabinet that will automatically open when accessing Document Management. If no drawer is selected, users will be prompted to select a drawer each time they access Document Management. **Recommendation is to select VHA.**
14. **Display Lookup Fields in Document Search Results:** Display a lookup column listing the index field entries in the document search results. **Recommendation is to leave the box unchecked.**
15. **Show Review Flags:** Display Review Flags in Document Management. **Recommendation is to check the box.**
16. **Draw Redaction Using Double Click:** Enable the option to draw Review Objects by double clicking. **Recommendation is to check the box.**
17. **Move Codes to Margin:** Move Redaction Codes to the margin when viewing a document in Document Management. **Recommendation is to leave the box unchecked.**
18. **Display Redaction Codes by Selected Order:** Display the Redaction Codes in the order in which they were selected, rather than alphabetical order, when multiple Redaction Codes are applied. **Recommendation is to leave the box unchecked.**

Review Object Preferences

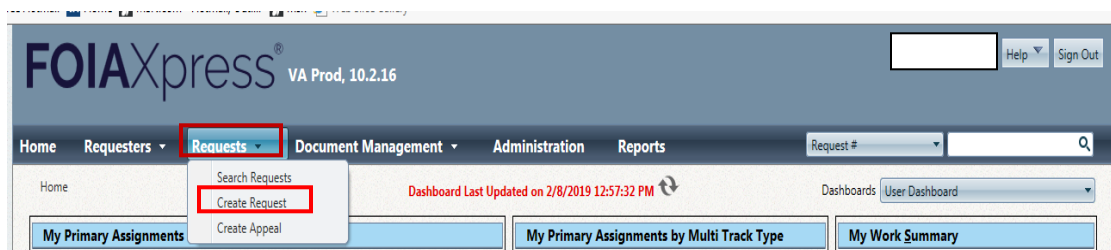
Settings under Review Object preferences are for internal comments/internal review only. **Recommendation is to make no changes to settings.**

Entering a New Request

There are two ways to enter a new request, under **Requesters** or under **Requests**. Best practice is to enter a new request under **Requests**. The VHA FOIA Office is requesting all VHA FOIA Officers enter a new request under **Requests** and as described below:


Requests


1. From the *Navigation Bar*, select **Requests** and then **Create Request**.

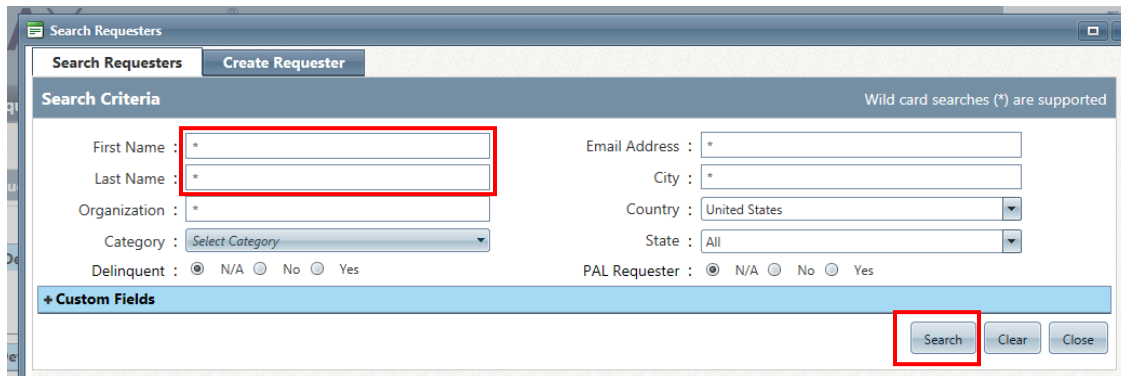


2. The **Create Request** screen is displayed.

A screenshot of the 'Create Request' screen in the FOIAxpress VA Prod, 10.2.16 web application. The page title is 'Create Request'. The 'Requester Details' section includes a 'Requester' field (highlighted with a red box) and an ellipsis button (also highlighted with a red box) next to it. Other fields include 'Organization', 'Category', and 'On Behalf Of'. The 'Request Details' section includes 'Action Office' (set to VHA), 'Request Type', 'Received Mode', 'Multi-Track Type', 'Requested Date', 'Received Date' (set to 2/5/2019), 'Primary Assigned' (set to Swales, Barbara), 'Priority', 'Delivery Mode', and 'Method of Payment'. The 'Description' section includes a 'Restricted' checkbox, a 'Date Range for Record Search' field, and a 'Drag and Drop Zone' for 'Incoming Request Letter(s)' with 'Scan File' and 'Attach File' buttons. A note at the bottom states: 'Notes: Only Incoming Request Letters are Searchable Attachments'.

3. You cannot type in the **Requester** field. Use the ellipsis button ( button), outlined in red above, next to "Requester" to search for a requester. **DO NOT** re-

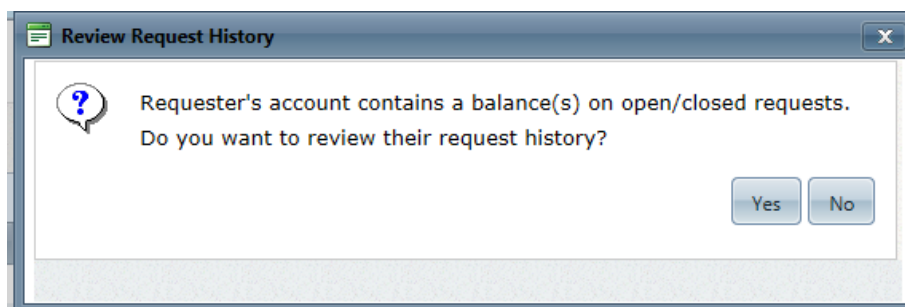
enter a requester that is already in FOIAXpress. After clicking the  button, the search requester screen will appear. Enter the requester's first and/or last name and then click on "Search".



A list of requesters with the same entered first and last name will appear. If the requester appears on the list, highlight the entry by selecting row outside the hyperlink and click "select". Selecting the hyperlink under last name will open the full requester detail screen.

If creating a test entry, a test requester that can be selected is "Test Requester"; first name "Test", last name "Requester".

- a. If the requester has a fee balance due, a "Review Request History" pop-up box will appear stating "Requester's account contains a balance(s) on open/closed requests".



- b. Select "yes" in order to determine the FOIA request(s) with fee balance.

Request History												
Request #	Description	Type	Requester Category	Requester	On Behalf Of	Organization	Primary User	Requested Date	Fee Waiver Requested	Expedite Requested	Status	Balance Due
19-00006-TEST	test	TEST	Comme...	Reques...	-	Consultin...	Swalles...	01/01/2...	No	No	Closed	322.17

Total Pending Amount : \$322.17

- c. If FOIAXpress shows delinquent fees, contact the FOIA Officer that processed the request(s) to confirm the delinquent fees are indeed outstanding. An outstanding fee balance may appear on requests that have been administratively closed for non-payment and therefore the FOIA requester does not owe that amount. For this reason, it is a best practice to contact the assigned FOIA Officer on any request that is showing an outstanding fee balance to confirm the fee is actually delinquent.
 - d. For FOIA requests in which the fee was less the \$250 and the FOIA Officer received written assurance of payment from the requester, the request will be processed, and a response issued. If the requester has not pay the outstanding FOIA fee to any VA component within 30 days of the date of billing (usually the date of the initial agency decision (IAD) letter), a FOIA Officer may require the requester to pay the full amount due, plus any interest, and to make an advance payment of the full amount of any anticipate fees before the FOIA Officer begins to process a new request or continues to process a pending request. Until the amount owed on a closed request is paid in full, the requester will be listed as a delinquent requester.
4. If the requester is not entered in FOIAXpress, select **Create Requester**. Enter the requester's information. Currently, VA is not using the Public Access Link Login Information and therefore the section is to be left blank. Select "Save". Please see below screenshot.

The screenshot shows the 'Create Requester' form in the FOIAXpress system. The 'Create Requester' button is highlighted with a red box. The form is divided into several sections:

- Personal Information:** Fields for Prefix, First Name*, Middle Name, Last Name*, Suffix, and Job Title.
- Contact Information:** Fields for Home Phone, Work Phone1, Work Phone2, Mobile, Fax, and Email.
- General Information:** Fields for Organization and Category*.
- Address:** Fields for Address 1, Address 2, City, Country* (set to United States), State* (set to Select a State), and ZIP Code. A note indicates the ZIP Code format should be 12345 or 12345-6789 for US.
- Public Access Link Login Information:** Fields for Active (checkbox) and Login.
- (2) Address:** Fields for (2) Address Type, (2) Organization, (2) Street Address, and (2) City.

- a. **Personal information of the Requester** – First and last name of the requester.
- b. **Contact Information** – telephone, fax, and email address of requester.

- c. **Organization** - The Requester's organization, if applicable.
 - d. **Category** - The category the Requester belongs to. The following options are available from the drop-down menu: Commercial Use, Educational or Non-Commercial Scientific, News Media and Other.
 - e. **Address** – Address of the Requester.
 - f. **Public Access Link (PAL) Login Information** – Currently not in use.
 - g. **Address 2** – Secondary address of the Requester, if applicable.
5. Once you have either selected a Requester from the requester database or selected **save** after creating a new Requester, FOIAXpress will return you to the **Create Request** screen. Review the information pulled over for accuracy.
 6. If you selected the Requester from the requester database and the category is not correct for request, you can change the **Requester Category** from the **Category** drop down box as a requester's fee category can change overtime.
 7. Action Office. FOIAXpress should list "VHA" as it defaults based on your user profile. The "Receiving Office" must correspond to the VA component processing the request. If the request is processed by a VHA FOIA Office, e.g. medical center, VISN, VHA Central Office FOIA Office, VHA Office of Community Care, VHA Member Services, Veterans Crisis Line, or a Consolidated Patient Account Center (CPAC) FOIA Officer, the "Receiving Office" must be VHA.
 8. Request Type – select one of the following types based the below definitions. Requests processed solely under the Privacy Act are not entered in FOIAXpress.
 - a. **Consultations** – This request type is used when a FOIA Officer received records from another federal agency for which the other federal agency has determined that a portion of the responsive records located pertain to records created or maintained by VA. The other federal agency has requested to consult with the appropriate VHA FOIA Officer for a release determination concerning those records. Under a consultation, the other federal agency will require the VHA FOIA Officer to review the provided responsive records and provide the reviewed/redacted records back to the other agency FOIA Officer as the other agency FOIA Officer will include the reviewed/redacted VHA records in their response back to the requester. As a consultation, the VHA FOIA Officer will not be responding directly to the requester. This request type is counted in the annual FOIA report.
 - b. **FOIA** – This request type is used when the requested records do not reside in a Privacy Act System of Records. This request type is counted in the annual FOIA report.

- c. **FOIA/PA** – This request type is used when the requested records reside in a Privacy Act System of Records e.g. medical records processed under the FOIA and police investigative reports (UOR). This request type is counted in the annual FOIA report.
 - d. **Referral** – This request type is used when a VHA FOIA Officer receives a FOIA request from another federal agency in which the other agency located responsive records that are being referred to the VA for direct response to the FOIA requester. In this situation, the VHA FOIA Officer will review/redact the provided records and respond directly to the FOIA requester. This request type is counted in the annual FOIA report.
 - e. **Test** – This request type is used for training purposes and to test FOIAXpress features. This request type is not counted in the annual FOIA report. If creating a test entry, the user must select Test as the request type.
9. Received Mode – From the drop box, select how the request was received by the FOIA Officer.
 10. Multi-track type. Multi-track type is based upon the amount of work and/or time needed to process the request, including consideration of the number of pages involved. The multi-track types are:
 - a. Simple
 - b. Complex
 - c. Expedite – will default when “Expedite Requested” box is checked.
 11. Requested Date – Enter the date which the requester wrote his/her letter or email. If the requester did not date his/her request, use the “Received Date”.
 12. Received Date – Enter the date the VHA component FOIA Office received the request.
 1. The date stamp on the request must match the received date in FOIAXpress. **All** FOIA requests must be date stamped upon receipt.
 2. If your component’s FOIA electronic mailbox is a shared mailbox, best practice is to log into the mailbox several times each business day. If a FOIA Officer doesn’t log into the shared mailbox on a regular basis, the received date is the business date the request was received in the shared mailbox and not the date when the FOIA Officer checked the mailbox.
 13. Primary Assigned – Should default to the name of the user entering the request.
 14. Priority – Currently not used. No entry required.
 15. Delivery Mode – The requester’s preferred method for receiving the response. Unless specified differently in the request, the delivery mode should be the same as the “Received Mode”.

16. Method of Payment – leave blank

17. Description

- a. **DO NOT** select “Restricted” box.
- b. Enter an **exact duplication of the requested records** in the description box as provided by the requester. However, **DO NOT include individually identifiable information (III)** in the description box. III should be indicated as [omitted name], [omitted SSN], etc. **ONLY** enter the portion of the request that indicates the records sought as what is entered will be pulled over to FOIAXpress templates and emails containing the “description” data element. The information entered into description box will be imported to the letter template.
- c. **DO NOT** write “See attached” in the description.

18. Incoming Request Letter(s): Drag and Drop Zone

The screenshot shows a web interface for FOIAXpress. On the left, there is a 'Description' section with a 'Restricted' checkbox, a 'Date Range for Record Search' field with 'From' and 'To' date pickers, and a text area containing the text 'Requesting a copy of the current Policy A and a copy of Policy A dated 1995.' On the right, there is a 'Drag and Drop Zone' for 'Incoming Request Letter(s)'. This zone contains two buttons: 'Scan File' and 'Attach File'. The 'Drag and Drop Zone' is highlighted with a red dashed border.

- a. The user can use the “drag and drop”, the “scan file” or scan “attach file” to upload a copy of the date stamped request to the entry under the Drag and Drop Zone. The “scan file” will only work if the user has a scanner connected directly to their machine with the appropriate drivers. **This feature is only meant to upload the request as the document will be saved under the correspondence log with the subject heading of “Request Description”.** The request can also be uploaded using the correspondence tab. A date stamped copy of the request must be uploaded in FOIAXpress.
- b. VHA Directive 1935 requires a date stamped copy of the request be uploaded in FOIAXpress. As required by VHA Directive 1935, the date stamp must, at a minimum, contain the words “FOIA Office”, the received date in include month, day, and year for which the request was received by the FOIA Office, the initials of the FOIA Officer, and the FOIA electronic tracking system control number of the request. Most likely you will not an upload a copy of the request until after the creation of the request as the FOIA electronic tracking system control number (FOIAXpress request number) is not generated until the create request is “saved”.
- c. A date stamped copy of the unredacted request must be uploaded in FOIAXpress. If the request contains personal information of the requester that is

not relevant to the processing of a request, a second redacted copy can be uploaded in FOIAXpress for record search purposes.

Sub Requests

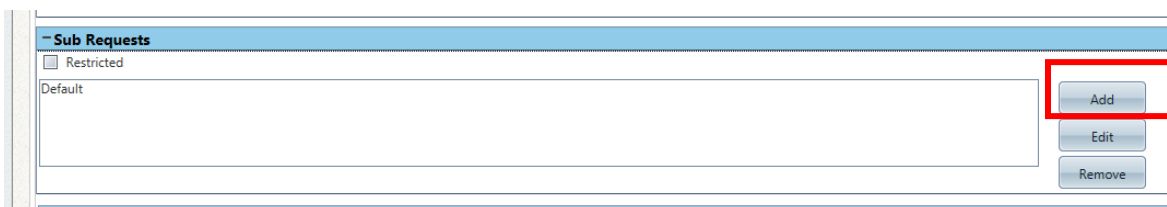
- a. Sub Requests allows the user to break a multi-item request into “sub requests” that have different final actions. For example, the request is for the following 2 items with the following final actions:

Item 1 – Request for a copy of the current Policy A – full grant

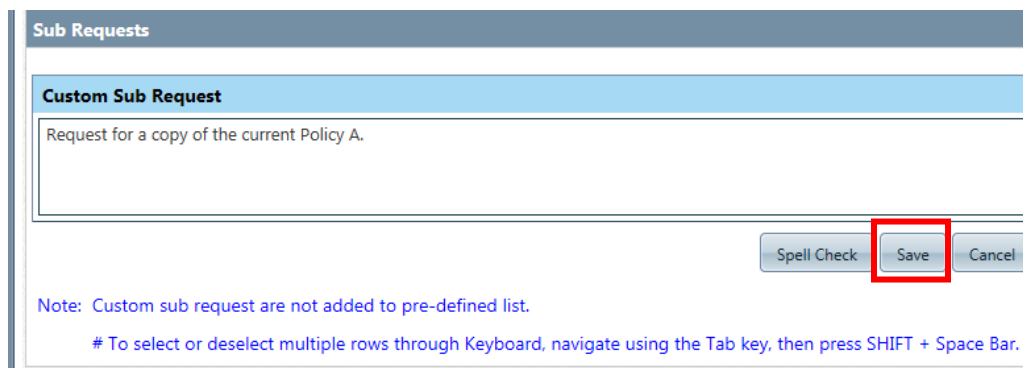
Item 2 – Request for a copy of Policy A dated 1995 – no records

Breaking the request into two sub-requests will allow the user to enter both types of final actions into the system. Breaking a request into sub-requests provides for an accurate annual FOIA report as the agency is capturing all the release determinations. Usually, the user will not create sub requests until the record search is completed and a release determination is made on the requested documents as the release determination is unknown when the request is first entered in FOIAXpress.

- b. The user will create sub requests by selecting add under sub requests.



- c. The use will enter the description of the sub request into the box and select “save”.



- d. The created sub request will be displayed in the sub request box.

The screenshot displays a web form for creating requests. The top section, titled "Description*", includes a "Restricted" checkbox, a "Date Range for Record Search" with "From" and "To" date pickers, and a large text area containing the text "Requesting a copy of the current Policy A and a copy of Policy A dated 1995." Below this text area is a "Request Description" button. To the right of the text area is a dashed box labeled "Drag and Drop" containing "Incoming Request" and "Attach File" buttons. Below the description section are two lines of notes: "Notes: Only Incoming Request Letters are Searchable Attachments" and "Selecting the 'Restricted' checkbox will replace the field content in all the reports with '<<Restricted>>'". The bottom section, titled "Sub Requests", also has a "Restricted" checkbox and a text area containing "Request for a copy of the current Policy A." To the right of this text area are "Add", "Edit", and "Remove" buttons.

- e. To enter additional sub requests, the user will repeat the above steps.
- f. Sub requests must be entered before documents before “final actions” are entered and saved.
- g. Please refer to the **Final Actions** section on how to close a request with sub requests.
20. Responsible Facility – Enter your station number from the drop-down box. Please take care to enter the correct station. All VHA components will start with “VHA”. The VHA FOIA Office is listed as VHA 101 – VA Central Office (VACO). VISNs are listed as VHA 10N[VISN number] – [VISN name], e.g. VISN 1 is VHA 10N1 – VA New England Healthcare System.
21. Request Category – Select all the appropriate category(ies) that captures the type of records/information requested from the drop-down box. The user can select multiple categories. Please note, the VHA FOIA Office has requested additional categories be added to the list and therefore the below list is subject to change.
1. Veterans’ Claims Files (VBA) – should only be used by VBA.
 2. Deceased Veterans’ Claims Files – should only be used by VBA.
 3. Civil War Pension Records – should only be used by VBA.
 4. Deceased Veterans’ Medical Records – Select for requests seeking medical records on deceased Veterans’ and the request was processed under the FOIA.
 5. Contracts or Business Information – Select for requests seeking any procurement information e.g. contracts, purchase information, etc.
 6. Personnel-Related Records – Select for requests seeking any Human Resource information e.g. organizational charts, job announcement information, etc.
 7. Police/Uniform Offense Reports (UORs) – Select for request seeking any Police record.
 8. Veterans’ Medical Records – Select for requests seeking medical records on living individuals and processed under the FOIA.

9. All Other – Select if requested item is not listed above.

22. Expedite Requested

- a. If the requester has asked for expedited processing, select “Yes” next to “Expedite Requested”, enter the expedite status.

The screenshot shows the 'Expedite Requested' section of a form. At the top, there are two radio buttons: 'Yes' (which is selected and highlighted with a red box) and 'No'. Below this, there are three input fields: 'Start Date' with the value '8/1/2019', 'End Date' (empty), and 'Determination' with a dropdown menu showing 'TBD'. To the right of these fields is a 'Drag and Drop Zone' containing two buttons: 'Scan File' and 'Attach File'. Below the input fields is a large text area for 'Expedite Description'.

- b. The start date is the date the request was received by the FOIA Officer.
- c. The end date is the date the FOIA Officer informed the requester if expedited processing was granted or denied.
- d. The user will select the FOIA Officer’s determination from the drop-down box. If the user selects “granted”, FOIAXpress will change the multi-track type to “Expedite”.
- e. The user will enter the reason the requester provided for his/her request for expedited processing in the expedite description box.
- f. The FOIA Officer has ten calendar days from receipt of request to determine if expedited processing will be denied or granted.
- g. The FOIA Officer must provide the requester written notice of the decision. The written notice can be combined with the acknowledgement letter and/or other correspondence.

23. Fee Waiver Requested

- a. If the requester has asked for a fee waiver, select “Yes” next to “Fee Waiver Requested”, enter the fee waiver status

The screenshot shows the 'Fee Waiver Requested' section of a form. At the top, there are two radio buttons: 'Yes' (which is selected and highlighted with a red box) and 'No'. Below this, there are three input fields: 'Start Date' (empty), 'End Date' (empty), and 'Determination' with a dropdown menu showing 'TBD'. To the right of these fields is a 'Drag and Drop Zone' containing two buttons: 'Scan File' and 'Attach File'. Below the input fields is a large text area for 'Fee Waiver Description'.

- b. The start date is the date the request was received by the FOIA Officer.

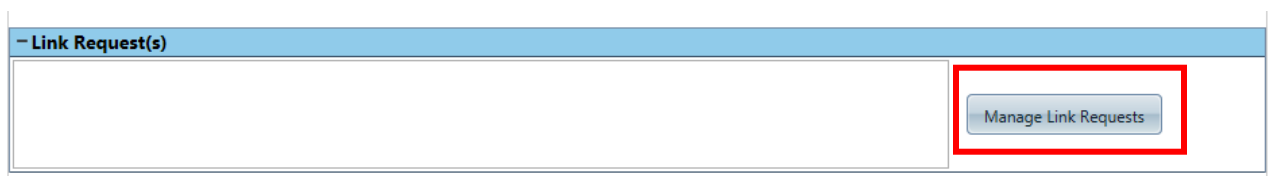
- c. The end date is the date the FOIA Officer informed the requester if the fee waiver was granted or denied.
- d. The user will enter the reason the requester provided for his/her request for the fee waiver in the fee waiver description box.
- e. The FOIA Officer must inform the requester in writing of the determination on a fee waiver request. The written notice can be combined with the acknowledgement letter and/or other correspondence. A determination of a fee waiver request is to be made within 10 business days of receipt of the request.

25. Fee Details

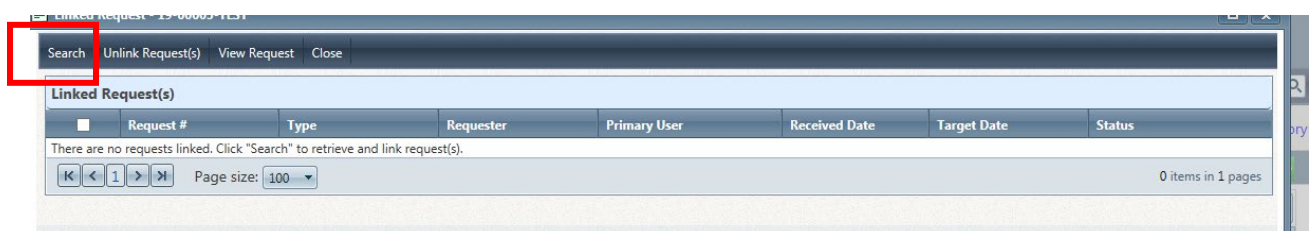
- a. “Willing Amount \$” – The user must enter the amount the requester stated in the request he or she is willing to pay. FOIAXpress defaults to \$25. If the requester states he or she is willing to pay all fees in the request, check the “willing to pay all fees box”.
- b. VA will not charge the requester if the fee is \$25 or less.

26. Link Request(s)

- a. The linked request function allows the user to manual two or more FOIAXpress entries. FOIAXpress will automatically link the request if the user uses the “copy this request” function under the “More Action” menu. The linked request function is helpful if multiple VA/VHA components are processing the same request as it provides a quick way to identify those FOIA tracking numbers.
- b. To manually link requests, select “manage link requests”.



- c. If the request has linked requests they will be listed. To manually, link requests, select “search”.



- d. In the search criteria box, change to search option to “all”, enter the request number and/or other search criteria and select “search”

Requests

Wild card searches (*) are supported

Search Criteria

Request # : 19-00008-Test

Request Type : All

Requester : [] [X] Include On Behalf Of

Description : *

Action Office : [] [X]

Request Status : 18 items checked

Search Option : All

Search in Request Attachment

Search in Sub Requests

Requests Assigned To

Action Office (User) : All

User Group : All

Assigned to User : [] [X] Include Inactive Users

User : [] [X]

+ Advanced

+ Custom Fields Custom Fields that are common across the selected Request Types are displayed

Search Clear Close

- e. Check the request(s) to link and select “link requests”.

Linked Request - 19-00005-TEST

Search Criteria

Request # : 19-00008-Test

Request Type : All

Requester : [] [X] Include On Behalf Of

Description : *

Action Office : [] [X]

Request Status : 18 items checked

Search Option : All

Search in Request Attachment

Search in Sub Requests

Requests Assigned To

Action Office (User) : All

User Group : All

Assigned to User : [] [X] Include Inactive Users

User : [] [X]

+ Advanced

+ Custom Fields Custom Fields that are common across the selected Request Types are displayed

Search Clear Close

Link Request(s)

Requests View [Search]

	Request #	Request Type	Requester	Organization	Primary User	Received Date	Target Date	Remaining Days	Request Status
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	19-00008-TEST	TEST	Requester, Test	Consulting Firm O...	Swaites, Barbara	05/30/2019	04/18/2019	-73	Amended

Page Size 100

1 items in 1 pages

Print Print All

Link Request(s)

- f. The linked request will appear under “link requests”.



– Link Request(s)

19-00008-TEST

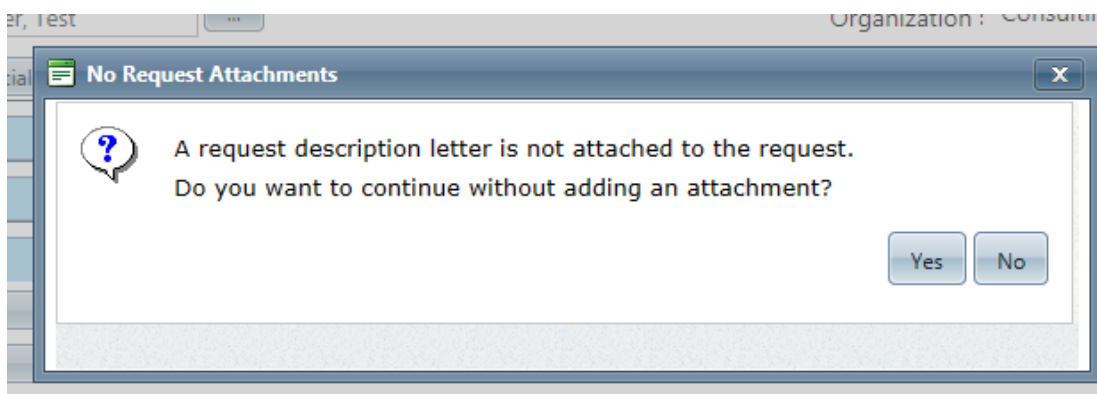
Manage Link Requests

Comments

27. Comments – no entry required. If comments or notes are made, please ensure they are appropriate as FOIAXpress is a Privacy Act System of Records and a federal record. Comments are to be limited to those regarding the processing of a request and are to be entered in a professional manner. Comments regarding equipment malfunctions, workload, personal opinions about the requester, personal information related to the processing FOIA Officer, etc. would be deemed inappropriate. Best practice is to enter a “note” rather than comment. Please refer to the “note” section of this document.

28. Select “**Save**”.

29. If you did not upload a copy of the request the following pop-up will appear.



a. Select “Yes”.

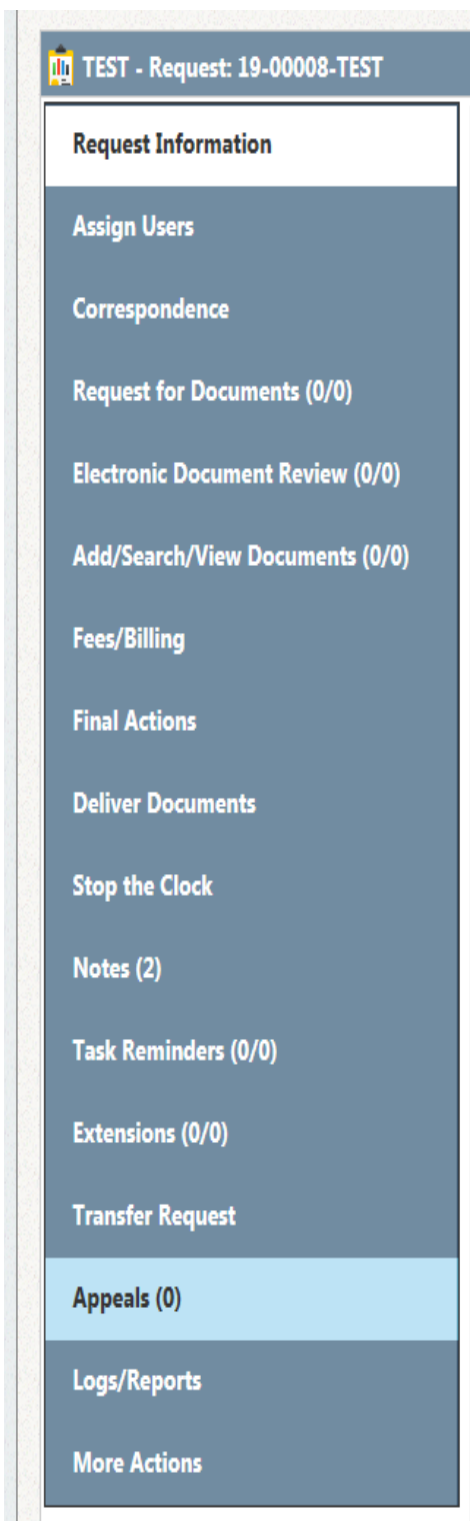
30. Another pop-up box will appear asking if you want to send correspondence to the Requester. Select “No”. Correspondence will be address under the **Correspondence** section.



31. The request should appear on your home page under “primary assignments” with a status of “Received”. FOIAXpress will automatically assign the request a tracking number and calculate the target date. The next step is to assign the request. Please refer to the **Assign Request** section of this document.

Request Screen Overview

The **Request Screen** is the central hub when processing a request. All processing activities can be accessed from the **Request Screen**.



Request Information: View and edit details about the request.

Assign Users: Assign this request to a specific user or group.

Correspondence: Send and receive communication regarding the request.

Request for Documents: Send a record search request.

Electronic Document Review: Load large volumes of data, such as emails, for searching and indexing.

Add/Search/View Documents: Perform reviews and redactions on single files or groups of files.

Fees/Billing: Create invoices and receive payments.

Final Actions: Create and accept final disposition on the request.

Deliver Documents: Process the final deliverable for the requester.

Stop the Clock: Pauses the timer that calculates the date the request is due.

Notes: Additional details on the request.

Task Reminders: Set and distribute reminders for tasks due on the request.

Extensions: Add processing time to the request, if needed.

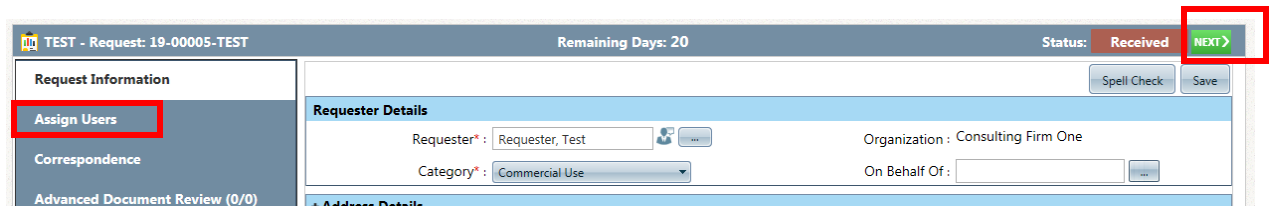
Transfer Request: Move the request to another Action Office in your organization.

Logs/Reports: View additional log and reporting info for this request.

More Actions: Additional miscellaneous actions you can take on the request.

Assign Request

1. After a request is created, it will need to be assigned. To assign a request, the user can either use the green “next” arrow or select “Assign Users”. It is recommended that the user use the “Assign Users” button.



TEST - Request: 19-00005-TEST Remaining Days: 20 Status: Received NEXT

Request Information

Assign Users

Correspondence

Advanced Document Review (0/0)

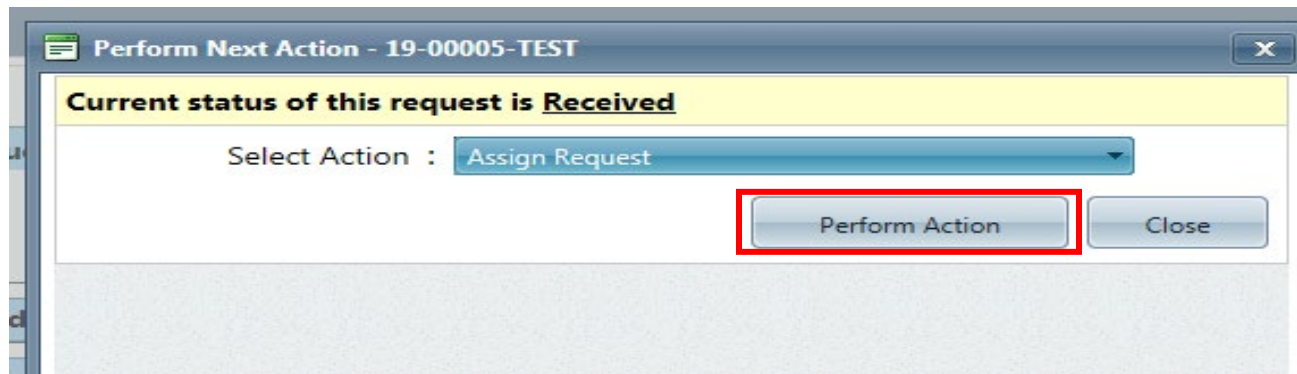
Requester Details

Requester*: Requester, Test Organization: Consulting Firm One

Category*: Commercial Use On Behalf Of:

Address Details

2. If the user selects the green “next arrow”, the below box will appear. Make sure the selected action says, “assign request” and then select “perform action”.



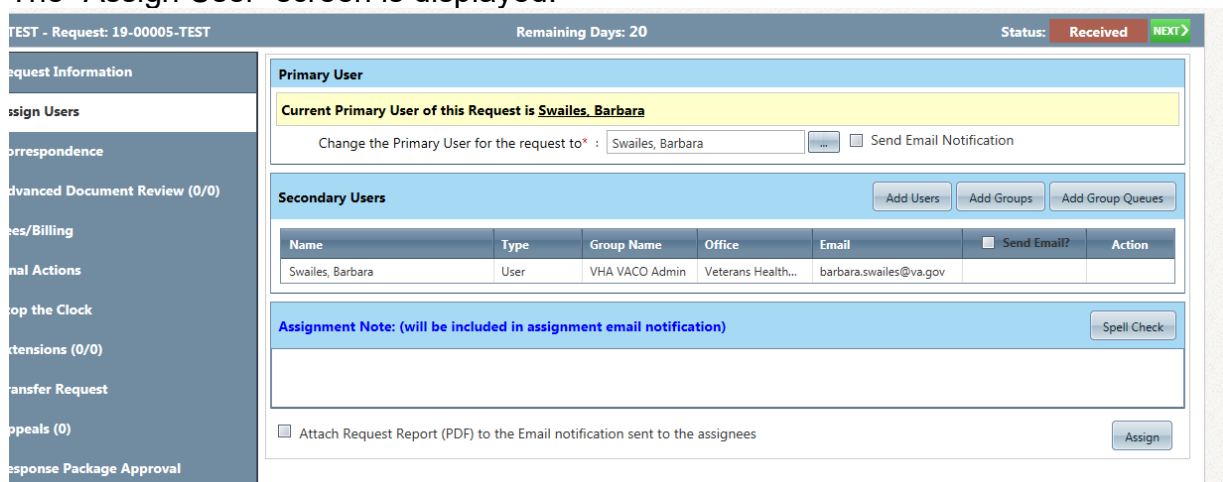
Perform Next Action - 19-00005-TEST

Current status of this request is **Received**

Select Action : Assign Request

Perform Action Close

3. The “Assign User” screen is displayed.



TEST - Request: 19-00005-TEST Remaining Days: 20 Status: Received NEXT

Request Information

Assign Users

Correspondence

Advanced Document Review (0/0)

Primary User

Current Primary User of this Request is **Swailes, Barbara**

Change the Primary User for the request to*: Swailes, Barbara Send Email Notification

Secondary Users

Add Users Add Groups Add Group Queues


Name	Type	Group Name	Office	Email	Send Email?	Action
Swailes, Barbara	User	VHA VACO Admin	Veterans Health...	barbara.swailes@va.gov		

Assignment Note: (will be included in assignment email notification)

Attach Request Report (PDF) to the Email notification sent to the assignees

Assign

4. FOIAXpress will default to the user entering the request as the primary user. If the user is the FOIA Officer processing the request, select “Assign”. **DO NOT** use the assign function to refer/transfer a request to another VA/VHA component. Please refer to the **Transfer** sections if transferring a request to another VA/VHA component’s FOIA Officer.

- If the user is not the correct FOIA Officer processing the request e.g. the alternate is entering the request on behalf of the primary FOIA Officer. Select the  icon.

Remaining Days: 20 Status: Received NEXT

Primary User

Current Primary User of this Request is Swailes, Barbara

Change the Primary User for the request to* : Swailes, Barbara  ☐ Send Email Notification

- Enter the FOIA Officer's name and select "search".

Search Criteria Wild card searches (*) are supported

Personal Information

First Name : *

Last Name : *

Email : *

User Information

Login : *




Action Office : VHA


Group : All

Advanced

AND	Field	Operator	Value
X AND	Include Queue Users	=	Both Queue Users and Users

[Add new filter](#)



- Highlight the FOIA Officer's name and click "select".
- The selected FOIA Officer's name should now be listed as primary.
- Secondary users e.g. the alternate FOIA Officer can be assigned to the request by selecting "Add Users".


TEST - Request: 19-00005-TEST Remaining Days: 20 Status: Received NEXT

Request Information

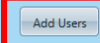

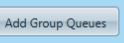
Assign Users

Primary User


Current Primary User of this Request is Swailes, Barbara


Change the Primary User for the request to* : Swailes, Barbara  ☐ Send Email Notification

Secondary Users

Name	Type	Group Name	Office	Email	<input type="checkbox"/> Send Email?	Action
Swailes, Barbara	User	VHA VACO Admin	Veterans Health...	barbara.swailes@va.gov		

Assignment Note: (will be included in assignment email notification) 

☐ Attach Request Report (PDF) to the Email notification sent to the assignees 

10. Enter the name of the secondary in the search criteria and select search, see step 6 of this section. Highlight the user's name and click "select".
11. The alternate should be listed under "secondary users" and the request will be displayed on the secondary assignments on their dashboard. Select the red X to remove a secondary user.
12. Select "Assign".

The screenshot shows a web interface for managing FOIA requests. The top bar indicates the request ID '19-00005-TEST', remaining days '20', and status 'Received'. A sidebar on the left contains navigation links like 'Request Information', 'Assign Users', 'Correspondence', etc. The main content area is divided into sections: 'Primary User' (showing 'Swailes, Barbara' as the current primary user), 'Secondary Users' (a table with one user listed), 'Assignment Note', and an 'Assign' button at the bottom right, which is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

Name	Type	Group Name	Office	Email	Send Email?	Action
Swailes, Barbara	User	VHA VACO Admin	Veterans Health...	barbara.swailes@va.gov	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Correspondence

1. All correspondence to and from the requester must be uploaded in FOIAXpress. Correspondence includes, but not limited to unredacted, date stamped, copies of FOIA requests, signed acknowledgment letters, expedited processing and fee waiver decision letters, fee estimates, clarification letters and responses, any and all letters and correspondence issued as part of the of the predisclosure notification process of exemption four, initial agency decision; and all incoming correspondence from the FOIA requester and the follow-up responses by the FOIA Officer, including emails. Official letter correspondence from the VHA FOIA Officer must be signed and on letterhead. The signature of the VHA FOIA Officer may be an image of the VHA FOIA Officer's handwritten signature, his/her handwritten signature, or an electronic signature via a PIV card.
2. All uploaded correspondence is stored in the **Correspondence Log**.
3. The **Correspondence Log** will serve as the FOIA Administrative Case File for the request. Responsive records will be stored in **Document Management**.
4. Emails send via FOIAXpress will automatically be stored under the Correspondence Log.

Receiving Correspondence

1. To upload correspondence, select **Correspondence** and then **Receive Correspondence**. The “Receive Correspondence” window is displayed.

The screenshot shows the FOIAExpress VA Prod, 10.2.16 interface. The top navigation bar includes links for Home, Requesters, Requests, Document Management, Administration, and Reports. The main content area is titled 'TEST - Request: 19-00006-TEST' and shows 'Remaining Days: 20' and 'Status: Assigned'. The 'Receive Correspondence' window is active, displaying a sidebar with navigation options: Request Information, Assign Users, Set Perfect Status, Correspondence (selected), Request for Documents (0/0), Add/Search/View Documents (0/0), Fees/Billing, Final Actions, Deliver Documents, and Stop the Clock. The main content area has tabs for Send Correspondence, Receive Correspondence (selected), and Correspondence Log. A warning message states: 'Attachments added from online request submission cannot be overridden.' The 'Receive Correspondence' section includes fields for Letter Template (set to 'Other'), Subject, and Received Mode. Below these fields is a 'Drag and Drop Zone' with buttons for 'Attach File' and 'Scan File'. A 'Save' button is located at the bottom right of the main content area.

2. Enter Letter Template from the drop-down box. “Other” will allow you to enter free text in “Subject” box.
3. It is recommended that you upload one document at a time so you can label each document individually.
4. Enter “Receive Mode” from the drop-down box. If the user is uploading a
5. Upload the file by one of the listed options:
 - a. Drag and Drop – you can drag the file over to the drag and drop zone for uploading.
 - b. Attach File - will select file on your desktop or network.
 1. After selecting the file, select “Open.”
 - c. Scan File will only work if the user has a scanner connected directly to their machine with the appropriate drivers.
6. Select “Save”. Respond “ok” to the pop-up box asking, “Are you sure you want to save this correspondence”.
7. You should receive a pop-up box stating, “Attachment successfully added to the correspondence log”.

8. The document is now stored under the **Correspondence Log**.
9. Responsive documents are uploaded and redacted under **Add/Search/View Documents**.

Send Correspondence to the Requester in FOIAXpress

Until further guidance from the VHA FOIA Office, please do not use the email functions in FOIAXpress as not all the emails are being delivered. The VHA FOIA Office is working on resolving this issue.

1. Select the **Correspondence** button.
2. Select **Send Correspondence** button.

TEST - Request: 19-00008-TEST Remaining Days: -105 Status: Perfected NEXT>

Request Information Assign Users **Correspondence** Request for Documents (0/0) Electronic Document Review (0/0) Add/Search/View Documents (0/0) Fees/Billing Final Actions Deliver Documents Stop the Clock Notes (2) Task Reminders (0/0) Extensions (0/0) Transfer Request Appeals (0)

Send Correspondence Receive Correspondence Correspondence Log

There are no attachments

Dispatch Mode: ☒ Email ☐ Print ☐ Save to Disk Delivery Mode: E-mail Dispatch Date: 09/29/2019

Email Options

From Email Type*: ☒ User Email ☐ User Action Office Email

From*: barbara.swailes@va.gov

Template: Select Email Template

Subject*:

☐ Read Receipt ☐ Delivery Receipt

☐ Requester ☒ Other

To*:

Add From

Letter Template

Pending Letter (0)

Disk

Scanner

Correspondence Log

Invoice Log

Print Requester Address

3. From the **Send Correspondence** screen you can add an attachment to an email that you will be sending to the requester by selecting any of the following from **Add From**:
 - a. Draft a document by selecting one of the letter templates uploaded to FOIAXpress under Letter Templates. **Letter templates can only be used with Internet Explorer. Letter templates will not work with Chrome.**
 - b. Select a document that has already been uploaded to the Correspondence Log or Invoice Log by selecting either option.

- c. Select a document from outside FOIAXpress by selecting Disk or Scanner.
4. You will also be able to draft and send an email to the requester in FOIAXpress, if his or her email address is known. There are also email templates available in FOIAXpress. **Please note**, you cannot send an encrypted email through FOIAXpress. All emails sent must be in accordance with VA Policy. Emails that need to be encrypted will need to be send via Outlook, if applicable.
5. Best practice is to carbon copy yourself on the email in case there are any issues with the delivery of the email to the requester/intended recipient as the email will appear in your Outlook to which you can then re-send it rather than recreating it.
6. If the requester wishes to receive communication via postal mail, you will still be able to draft your correspondence to the requester in FOIAXpress.
7. Any email and attached sent via **Send Correspondence** will be saved under the **Correspondence Log**.
8. **DO NOT** use **Send Correspondence** to send an email to request a record search. Record search requests will be issued under the **Request for Documents** button.

Letter Templates

1. Select **Letter Template** under the **Send Correspondence** button.

The screenshot shows the FOIAXpress interface for a request titled 'TEST - Request: 19-00008-TEST'. The status is 'Perfect' and there are '-105' remaining days. The 'Send Correspondence' button is highlighted in the 'Add From' dropdown menu. The interface includes a sidebar with 'Request Information', 'Assign Users', 'Correspondence', and 'Request for Documents (0/0)'. The main area shows a table with columns 'Name', 'Source', 'Size', and 'Delete', and a message 'There are no attachments'.

2. From the **Letter Template** screen, you can select any of the templates uploaded in FOIAXpress. Please note, the **Select Action Office** should be listed as **VHA** to gain access to VHA letter templates. **Letter templates can only be used with Internet Explorer. Letter templates will not work with Chrome.** Letter templates can be edited.

3. Please **do not** select any letters starting with VHA CO as they are only for use by the VHA FOIA Office. **Select the templates starting with VHA Field as outlined below.**

Select Action Office : VHA

Select Letter Template :

- VHA CO Acknowledgement - Referral from another VA Office
- VHA CO Acknowledgement - Referral to another VA Office
- VHA CO Acknowledgement Letter - Complex
- VHA CO Acknowledgement Letter - Simple
- VHA CO Administrative Closure
- VHA CO B4 Requester Notification
- VHA CO B4 Submitter Final Notification
- VHA CO B4 Submitter Notification
- VHA CO Clarification
- VHA CO Denial of Expedited Processing & Fee Waiver
- VHA CO Exemption 3_5705
- VHA CO Exemption 5 Deliberative Process
- VHA CO Exemption 6
- VHA CO Exemption 7C
- VHA CO Fee Estimate
- VHA CO Full Grant
- VHA CO Glomar
- VHA CO No Records
- VHA CO Withdrawal Acknowledgement
- VHA Field Acknowledgement Letter - Complex**
- VHA Field Acknowledgement Letter - Simple**
- VHA Field Administrative Closure**
- VHA Field Clarification Letter**
- VHA Field Denial of Expedited Processing & Fee Waiver**
- VHA Field Exemption 3 5705**
- VHA Field Exemption 5 Deliberative Process**
- VHA Field Exemption 6**
- VHA Field Exemption 7c**
- VHA Field Fee Estimate**
- VHA Field Full Grant**
- VHA Field Glomar Response**
- VHA Field No Records**
- VHA Field Withdrawal Acknowledgement**

4. After selecting the template, select **Customize**, **Customize for Pending**, **Customize for Final Response**.

Add Attachment from Letter Template - 19-00008-TEST

Select Action Office : VHA

Select Letter Template : VHA CO Full Grant

Customize Customize for Pending Customize for Final Response Close

Note: * fields are mandatory

5. **Customize** will allow you to edit a Word template letter and send the letter out as soon as you have finished drafting the letter. The template letters are already pre-populated using data fields entered in FOIAXpress. Please review and as appropriate edit the template letter in prior to signing and sending. Please note, if the request description contains III you will need to edit to template to replace the omitted III. Currently, it is against VA and VHA policy to add III to the description box. Formatting may also be required for better readability.
6. **Customize for Pending** will allow you to start a letter and save the draft for completion at a later date. The template letters are already pre-populated using data fields entered in FOIAXpress. Please review and as appropriate edit the template letter in prior to signing and sending. Please note, if the request description contains III you will need to edit to template to replace the omitted III. Currently, it is against VA and VHA policy to add III to the description box. Formatting may also be required for better readability.
7. **Customize for Final Response** will allow to draft a letter, but it will not be available until you send the response to the requester. The template letters are already pre-populated using data fields entered in FOIAXpress. Please review and as appropriate edit the template letter in prior to signing and sending. Please note, if the request description contains III you will need to edit to template to replace the omitted III. Currently, it is against VA and VHA policy to add III to the description box. Formatting may also be required for better readability.
8. Official letter correspondence from the VHA FOIA Officer **must** be signed and on letterhead. The signature of the VHA FOIA Officer may be an image of the VHA FOIA Officer's handwritten signature, his/her handwritten signature, or an electronic signature via a PIV card. Signature by editing the font within Word is not an acceptable signature.
9. The VHA Field templates have a letterhead logo to which the user will need to enter the facility's name and address. To add specific letterhead and the FOIA Officer signature the following options are also available after deleting the current letterhead:
 - a. If your facility has digital letterhead, you can copy and paste the letterhead into the template. The FOIA Officer can also copy and paste an image of the FOIA Officer's handwritten signature into the template. When editing has been completed and the letter is ready to be send, select **Add to List** and it will be available as an attachment under the **Send Correspondence** button.
 - b. You can copy and paste the template on your facility's digital letterhead outside of FOIAXpress. The letter can then be signed by the FOIA Officer outside of FOIAXpress and then uploaded to FOIAXpress by selecting "Disk" off the "Send Correspondence" button.

- c. You complete the letter outside FOIAXpress and then upload the letter to FOIAXpress by selecting “Disk” off the “Send Correspondence” button.

10. When you ready to send correspondence to the requester, select the **Send Correspondence button**.

Name	Source	Size	Delete
VHA Field Acknowledgement Letter - Simple.docx	Template	21.64 KB	

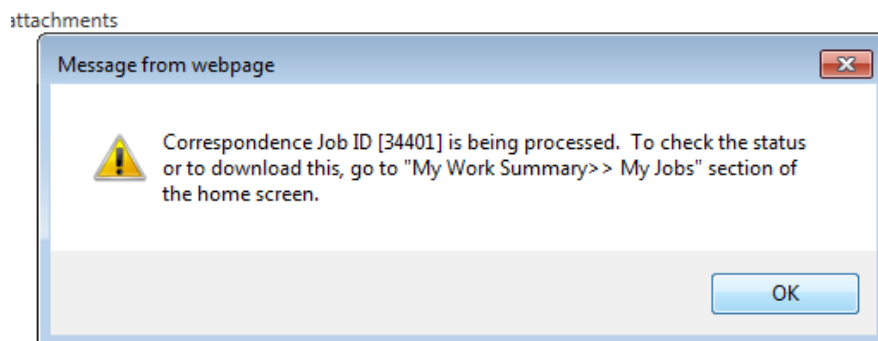
Dispatch Mode : ☐ Email ☒ Print ☐ Save to Disk Delivery Mode : Mail Dispatch Date : 11/02/2019

Subject *: Acknowledgement Letter Print

11. Your letter should appear as an attachment. In the above screenshot, the letter that is being sent is “VHA Field Acknowledgment Letter – Simple”.

12. The Dispatch Mode will allow to you indicate how you are sending the letter to the requester. Please note, if the letter or email contains sensitive information that is against VA policy to email, you cannot send the correspondence via email. In this example, the acknowledgement letter will be mailed to the requester. Select **Print**.

13. A pop-up will appear with the following message:



Indicating a copy of the letter will be available under **My Jobs** which is located under your name in the right-hand corner of the screen underneath Preferences.

14. FOIAXpress will also automatically add the letter under the **Correspondence Log** button. You can then download the letter to mail to the requester.

Send Correspondence Receive Correspondence **Correspondence Log**

Correspondence cannot be 'Edited' from this log. To edit correspondence go to Correspondence Log

Subject	File Name	User	Status	Mode	Email
Acknowledgement Let...	VHA Field Acknowledg...	Swales, Barb...	Printed	Mail	

K < 1 > X Page size 100

Download Resend Email Details Delete Change Dispatch Date Edit Subject Redact

Deleting Correspondence from the Correspondence Log

1. A FOIA Officer can delete correspondence from the **Correspondence Log**.
 - a. Highlight the document you wish to delete by selecting any field but the hyperlink.
 - b. Select “Delete”.
 - c. Select “OK” from the pop-up box asking, “Do you want to delete the selected correspondence file?”
 - d. Enter the reason for deleting the document and select “Save”.

Uploading Correspondence on a Closed Request

1. A FOIA Officer can upload correspondence to a “closed” FOIA request without re-opening (amending) the request by following the steps under **Receiving Correspondence**.

Request for Documents

Until further guidance from the VHA FOIA Office, please do not use the email functions in FOIAXpress as not all the emails are being delivered. The VHA FOIA Office is working on resolving this issue.

1. The Request for Documents (RFD) button is used to send an email to the individual or office that you are asking to conduct a record search for documents responsive to a request. **Please note** if the RFD needs to be encrypted, you will need to send it through Outlook.

FOIA - Request: 2019-FOI-00071 Remaining Days: 7 Status: Review Pending NEXT

Request Information

Assign Users

Correspondence

Request for Documents (0/1)

Electronic Document Review (2/2)

Add/Search/View Documents (1/0)

Fees/Billing

Request for Documents

Action ID	Location(s) Referred	Request Date	Sent Date	Due Date	Completed Date	Status
219	AINS (sgandham@sins.com)	02/05/2019	02/05/2019	02/13/2019		Request for Documents Sent

Page size: 100 1 items in 1 pages

New Take Action View Delete Messages (0/0) Send Email/Reminder Send Reminder by Print Action(s) Log

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1. **New:** Create a new RFD.
2. **Take Action:** Perform an action on the selected RFD. This involves changing the status to reflect a change that has taken place, and it is recorded in the *Status* column.
3. **View:** Open a screen featuring the details about the request.
4. **Delete:** Delete an RFD.
5. **Messages:** View *Messages* associated with this RFD.
6. **Send Email/Reminder:** Send a message or reminder email to the assignee.
7. **Send Reminder by Print:** Print a reminder to hard copy for distribution or record keeping.
8. **Action(s) Log:** View a history of actions taken on this request.

2. To send a new Request for Documents, select **New**. This will open the **New Request for Documents** screen.

Request for Documents Information

Request Date * : 9/29/2019

Comments :

Spell Check

Note: If including an **Empty ADX File** with the Request for Documents the Comments entered will be included in the file for the recipients review otherwise the comment is kept for internal purposes only.

Due Date * : 9/30/2019 ☐ Add Reminder

Priority :

Send To: Program Offices

Action Office	Program Office	Contact Name	Phone	Contact Address	Email	Has RX?	Actions
There are no offices selected.							

Dispatch Mode*

☒ Email ☐ Print ☐ Save to Disk

Delivery Mode:

Dispatch Date: 9/29/2019

☒ **Send To: Other Email Recipients**

Note: * fields are mandatory

3. The **Request Date** will default to today's date and is the date the request for documents is send to recipient.
4. Select a **Due Date**. The **Due Date** is the date the assigned action is to be completed by the recipient.
5. Do not select anything under **Send To: Program Office** as this section is only set up for the VHA Central Office FOIA Office.
6. Select **Dispatch Mode**. By default, the dispatch mode is set to E-mail.
7. Check the box next to **Send To: Other Email Recipient**. Then select **Add Email Manually** to add the email address(es) of the recipient(s).
8. Select **Next** which will open to Step 2.
9. Step 2 will allow you add a copy of the request from the **Correspondence Log** by selecting **Correspondence Log** and the selecting a copy of the request. After checking the box next to the document you wish to add, click on **Select** at the bottom of the **Correspondence Log** screen. The selected document should appear under the Attachments to RFD section.
9. Under **Email Options** you can select an email template which will pre-population the email. The email template includes search questions as well as a request for fee

estimate information based on the template selected. Best practice is to carbon copy yourself on the email in case there are any issues with the delivery of the email to the intended recipients as the email will appear in your Outlook to which you can then re-send it rather than recreating it.

10. Please review the email's content and make edits as appropriate before selecting **Email**.

11. The **Request for Documents** email will be displayed under the **Correspondence Log**.

Completing a Request for Documents

1. Once you have received a response from the recipient on a Request for **Documents** you will need to **Take Action** in order to close the request.

The screenshot shows a web application window titled "Request For Documents Action". Inside, there's a form titled "New Action - Request for Documents -1091". The form has several fields: "Location" with the value "Other(barbara.swailes@va.gov)", "Action Date*" with a date picker set to "9/29/2019", "Status" with a dropdown menu, "Comments" with a text area, "Due Date*" with a date picker set to "9/29/2019" and a "Completed" checkbox, and "Attachment" with a "Drag and Drop Zone" containing "Scan File", "Attach File", and "Print Barcode" buttons. The "Save" button at the bottom right is highlighted with a red box. The "Action Date" and "Due Date" fields are also highlighted with red boxes.

2. The **Action Date** is the date you received a response to the request for documents.
3. Select the appropriate response from the **Status** drop down box. Currently, there are multiple selections under the **Status**. The primary selections used should be:
 - a. No Documents Located
 - b. Referral
 - c. Search Complete

4. Check **Completed** and enter the **Completed Date**.
5. Select **Save**.

Documents Management

1. Documents Management is where responsive records, both redacted and unredacted versions, is stored in FOIAXpress.
2. Documents Management is basically a filing cabinet. As a filing cabinet, it is broken into drawers. For example, VHA, VBA, and NCA each has its own drawer in FOIAXpress. VHA's drawer is labeled as "VHA". All responsive documents for VHA requests are to be entered in VHA's file cabinet drawer.
3. Inside each drawer are folders, just like hanging file folders in a filing cabinet. The folders contain the actual documents. Each folder has a name. The folder's name is request's FOIAXpress number.
4. Documents Management is also where you will review and redact the responsive records.
5. Document Management will store an unredacted version of the document, the redactions not applied version, and the redacted version of the document.

Adding Responsive Records to a Request

1. From the **Request Folder**, select **Add/Search/View Documents**. The request must be assigned in order to add documents.
2. The below screen will appear:

FOIA - Request: 2019-FOI-00071 Remaining Days: 7 Status: Review Pending NEXT

1 Review Log Documents

Add Documents Add Documents From DM Add From Correspondence Log Refresh

3	4 File Cabinet	5 Document	Sections	Pages
<input type="checkbox"/>	Program A	Sample	0	1

Page size: 100 1 items in 1 pages

Open Documents

Note: To remove documents from the Review Log you must select and Open the document(s) in Document Management.

2 Request Folder Documents

	File Cabinet	Document	Sections	Pages	Redacted?
There are no request folders to display					

Page size: 100 0 items in 1 pages

Open Documents

Note: To remove documents from the Request Folder you must select and Open the document(s) in Document Management.

1. **Review Log Documents:** Documents requiring review/redaction are added to the *Review Log*. Any documents assigned for review under this request appear in the Review Log. Redactions are performed on in the **Review Log**. You can select documents from this list and click **Open Documents** to open the documents in DM for redaction.
2. **Request Folder Documents:** Any documents that have been reviewed and deemed relevant to the request can be added, as a sanitized copy, directly to the Request Folder. Documents added this way are included with the final delivery package. You can select documents from this list and click **Open Documents** to view them. All documents listed under the Request Folder have been reviewed and a release determination made. Documents in the Request Folder are ready to be delivered to the requester.
3. **Add Documents:** Click this to add new documents to the **Review Log** of a request, automatically associating these docs to the request.
4. **Add Documents from DM:** If you already have documents in Document Management (DM) that are relevant to this request, you can use this option to associate those documents with this request. It is extremely important, that users abide by the recommended naming conventions.
5. **Add Documents from Correspondence Log:** If you have need to review and redact correspondence for inclusion with the fulfilled request, you can use the **Add Documents from Correspondence Log** button to load letters into DM for further actions. It is unlikely that you would use this option.

3. Select **Add Documents** and the below screen will appear.

Document Management Options

File Cabinet Drawer* : VHA

Option for Adding Pages

☐ Add each file as a separate folder

☒ Add all files to a single folder:

☐ Add files directly to the folder

☒ Add each file as a separate section under the folder

Document Format (Image/Native)

☒ Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)

☐ Add files in Native format (Redaction Disabled)

Other Option

[Create Folder to Manually Create Sections and Add Files](#)

Add Documents

☒ Add to the Review Log Request #19-00008-TEST

☐ Open in Document Management upon Job Completion

Use one of the methods below to upload a file, then click the Add Button

Drag and Drop Zone

Scan File

Attach Files

Print Barcode

Files List

file cabinet

Document Details

Document Date :

Key Words :

4. The above screen will define how the responsive documents will be stored in DM.
- The **File Cabinet Drawer** must be listed as “VHA” for all VHA processed requests.
 - Option for Adding pages** will configure how the documents are imported in Documents Management. At the bottom of the page there is a Note section listing the allowed file types. Please review to ensure the document is one of these file types.
 - Add each File as a separate folder:** This option is **not recommended** as each document will be its own folder requiring its own review layer as shown below.

Each document/file is imported as a separate folder.

Document Management Options

File Cabinet Drawer* : VHA

Option for Adding Pages

- ☒ Add each file as a separate folder
- ☐ Add all files to a single folder :
 - ☐ Add files directly to the folder
 - ☐ Add each file as a separate section under the folder

Document Format (Image/Native)

- ☒ Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)
- ☐ Add files in Native format (Redaction Disabled)

Other Option

[Create Folder to Manually Create Sections and Add Files](#)

For example, two documents, each containing 1 page, are upload under this option; each document/file is treated as a separate document/file as shown below.

Review Log Documents

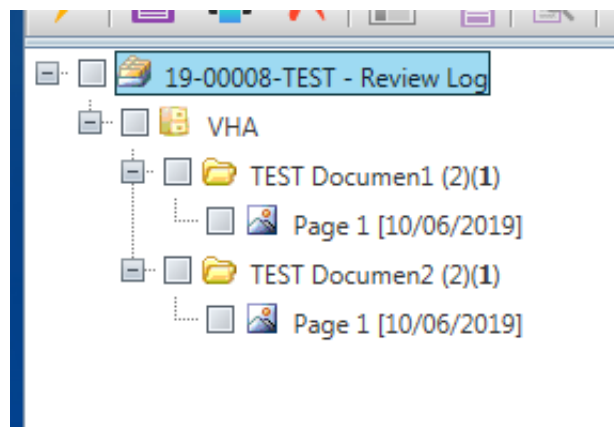
Add Documents Add Documents From DM Add From Correspondence Log Refresh

	File Cabinet	Document	Sections	Pages
<input type="checkbox"/>	VHA	TEST Document1	0	1
<input type="checkbox"/>	VHA	TEST Document2	0	1

Page size: 100

2 items in 1 pages

The documents will be displayed in the review folder as:



- ii. **Add all files to a single folder.** Only recommended if there is 1 responsive document.

The screenshot shows the 'Add Documents' window with the following options:

- File Cabinet Drawer***: VHA
- Option for Adding Pages**:
 - ☐ Add each file as a separate folder
 - ☒ Add all files to a single folder :
 - ☒ Add files directly to the folder
 - ☐ Add each file as a separate section under the folder
- Document Format (Image/Native)**:
 - ☒ Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)
 - ☐ Add files in Native format (Redaction Disabled)
- Other Option**: [Create Folder to Manually Create Sections and Add Files](#)

The folder name is the FOIA tracking number of the case. For example, if the FOIA tracking number is 20-00001-F, the folder name is 20-00001-F.

a. Add files directly to the folder

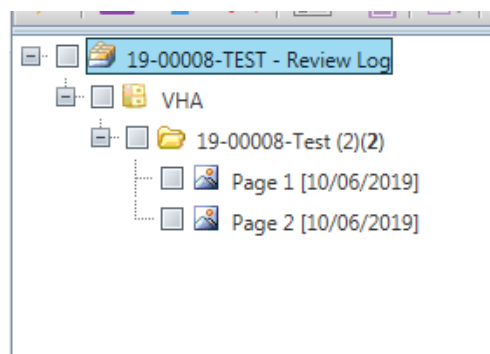
This option is only recommended if there is 1 responsive document as all documents/files are combined into a single document. For example, two documents, each containing 1 page, will be combined into one, 2-page document as shown below.

The screenshot shows the 'Review Log Documents' window with the following table:

	File Cabinet	Document	Sections	Pages
<input type="checkbox"/>	VHA	19-00008-Test (2)	0	2

Below the table, there are navigation controls: . A note at the bottom states: "Note: To remove documents from the Review Log you must select and Open the document(s) in Document Management."

The document will be displayed in the Review Log as:



- b. **Add each file as a separate section under the folder.** This option is recommended if there are multiple documents. The option can also be used if there is only one document.

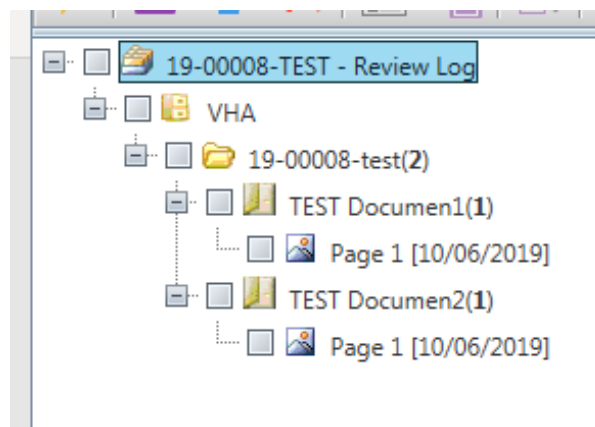
The screenshot shows the 'Add Documents' dialog box with the 'Document Management Options' tab selected. The 'File Cabinet Drawer' is set to 'VHA'. Under 'Option for Adding Pages', the radio button 'Add each file as a separate section under the folder' is selected. The 'Document Format (Image/Native)' section has 'Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)' selected. There is also an 'Other Option' section with a link 'Create Folder to Manually Create Sections and Add Files'.

All documents are contained in one folder, but each document is its own section. For example, two documents, each containing 1 page, will be combined in a single folder. Document one will be section 1 and document 2 will be section 2 as shown below.

The screenshot shows the 'Review Log Documents' window. It has buttons for 'Add Documents', 'Add Documents From DM', 'Add From Correspondence Log', and 'Refresh'. Below these is a table with columns: File Cabinet, Document, Sections, and Pages. The table contains one row for 'VHA' and '19-00008-test' with 2 sections and 2 pages. There are also navigation buttons and a 'Page size' dropdown set to 100. A note at the bottom states: 'Note: To remove documents from the Review Log you must select and Open the document(s) in Document Management.'

File Cabinet	Document	Sections	Pages
VHA	19-00008-test	2	2

The document will be displayed in the Review Log as:



iii. Document Format (Image/Native)

- a. **Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)** will allow you to redact the document in FOIAXpress.

- b. **Add files in Native format (Redaction Disabled)** will allow you to store the document(s) in FOIAXpress in native format. You would use this option if you will be releasing data to the requester in Excel. Currently, FOIAXpress does not handle large Excel spreadsheets well. In addition, the FOIA requires agencies to "provide the [requested] record in any form or format requested by the person if the record is readily reproducible by the agency in that form or format". The FOIA requires agencies to not only honor a requester's choice of format among existing formats of a record, but to also make "reasonable efforts" to disclose a record in a format not in existence, when so requested, if the record is "readily reproducible" in that new format.

iv. **Other Option** – Don't Use.

5. **Add Documents** using one of the three options:

- **Drag and Drop** – Drag document over to the drag and drop zone for uploading.
- **Scan File** – Will only work if a scanner is connected directly to your computer.
- **Attach Files** – Selecting document on your desktop or network.

6. The files will appear under the **File List**.

7. Select **Add**.

8. The documents should now appear in the Review Log.

Adding and Delivering Excel Documents in Native Format

1. You cannot redact Excel spreadsheets in their native format in FOIAXpress.
2. To retain copies of the Excel spreadsheets in their native format in FOIAXpress, you will need to redact the Excel spreadsheet outside of FOIAXpress and then upload an unredacted and redacted version of the Excel spreadsheet in FOIAXpress so both versions are maintained FOIAXpress.
3. When adding an unredacted Excel spreadsheet to the **Review Log**, select the following. The Folder Name is the "[FOIAXpress Number] Unredacted".

The screenshot shows a dialog box titled "Document Management Options". At the top, there is a "File Cabinet Drawer" dropdown menu set to "VHA". Below this, the dialog is divided into two main sections. The left section, "Option for Adding Pages", contains four radio button options: "Add each file as a separate folder", "Add all files to a single folder" (which is selected and has a text input field containing "[FOIAXpress Number] Unredacted"), "Add files directly to the folder", and "Add each file as a separate section under the folder". The right section, "Document Format (Image/Native)", contains two radio button options: "Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)" and "Add files in Native format (Redaction Disabled)" (which is selected). Below these sections is an "Other Option" section with a blue link that says "Create Folder to Manually Create Sections and Add Files".

- When adding a redacted Excel spreadsheet to the **Review Log** select the following. The Folder Name is “[FOIAXpress Number] Redacted”.

Document Management Options

File Cabinet Drawer*: VHA

Option for Adding Pages

☐ Add each file as a separate folder

☒ Add all files to a single folder: [FOIAXpress Number] Redacted

☐ Add files directly to the folder

☒ Add each file as a separate section under the folder

Document Format (Image/Native)

☐ Add pages in Image Format (Redaction Enabled)

☒ Add files in Native format (Redaction Disabled)

Other Option

[Create Folder to Manually Create Sections and Add Files](#)

- Add Documents** using one of the three options:
 - Drag and Drop** - Drag document over to the drag and drop zone for uploading.
 - Scan File** – Will only work if a scanner is connected directly to your computer.
 - Attach Files** – Selecting document on your desktop or network.
- The files will appear under the **File List**.
- Select **Add**.
- In the Review Log there should be two folders. One containing the redacted records and the other containing the unredacted records.

Reviewing/Redacting in the Review Log

- After the responsive documents are uploaded in FOIAXpress, you will be able to review and as appropriate, redact them. You can only redact in the Review Log. **At this time, you will not be able to redact medical records in FOIAXpress if withholding information under exemption 3 citing 38 U.S.C. 7332.**
- In the **Review Log** you will select the document you wish to review by checking the box next to the document and clicking **Open Document**.

Review Log Documents

Add Documents Add Documents From DM Add From Correspondence Log Refresh

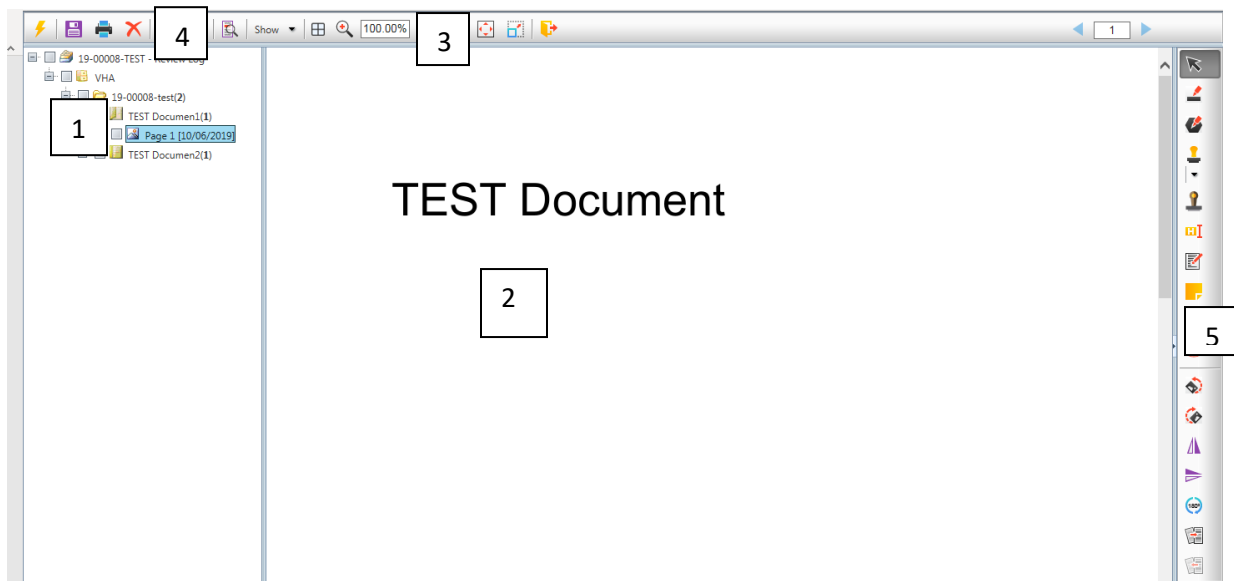
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	File Cabinet	Document	Sections	Pages
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	VHA	19-00008-test	2	2

K < 1 > X Page size: 100 1 items in 1 pages

Open Documents

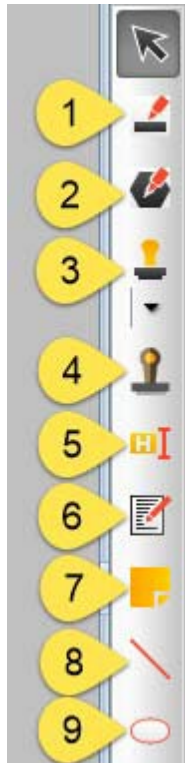
Note: To remove documents from the Review Log you must select and Open the document(s) in Document Management.

3. FOIAXpress will open to the following screen which will allow you to begin your review.



1. **Navigation:** Use the menu to navigate through (A) File Cabinet Drawers, (B) Folders, and to individual (C) Pages. You can also right-click to see a context menu which offers a list of available actions that you can perform on folders and pages.
2. **Viewing Pane:** Documents selected in the *Navigation* pane appear in the *Viewing* pane.
3. **View Settings:** You can adjust your view settings using these options.
4. **Document Actions:** Take actions on the selected document. This includes saving, printing, review layer actions, etc.

5. **Redaction and Image Tools:** The right-hand toolbar provides various redaction and image correction tools to configure the document for delivery. **Redact and Polygon Redact will be the most commonly used tools.** The other tools will rarely be used, if at all.



1. *Redact:* Use this tool to draw over content that requires redacting. Select the tool, then click and drag over the information you'd like to hide.
2. *Polygon Redact:* Use this tool to draw over content that requires redacting. This tool is useful if the area you are redacting is not in a rectangle shape e.g. a handwritten note or signature.
3. *Stamps:* Choose a stamp from the available options, including "Approved", "Rejected", "Paid", etc. After selecting a style, simply click and drag the stamp over the document as needed.
4. *Dynamic Stamps:* Use this tool to cover content in the document. Select the tool, then select a stamp and drag the stamp over the document as needed.
5. *Highlight:* Use this tool to highlight certain areas of the page. After selecting the tool, click and drag the highlight to the portion of the page you'd like highlighted. While the default color is yellow, the highlight color is selectable.
6. *Comments:* Add a text box with comments. Select the tool, then click and drag to create the box. You'll be prompted to fill in the comments.
7. *Sticky Note:* Similar to the Comment feature, the sticky note is brightly highlighted like an actual sticky note.
8. *Straight Line:* Use this tool to draw a line on the page by selecting the tool and using the click-and-drag method to draw.
9. *Ellipse:* Use this tool to draw an ellipse on the page by selecting the tool and using the click-and-drag method to draw.



4. Select to redact.

5. After you draw a box around the information you wish to redact, FOIAXpress will prompt you to select a Redaction Code for the following screen. If you will using the same redaction code through the document, you can check the box next to **Make selections as default for the current session** and whatever exemption code(s) you select will appear on future redactions. You will also be able to remove this setting if necessary as you continue to review the document.
6. At times, the redacted text may only be a few characters making the redaction code difficult to read by the requester. By checking the box next to **Move Codes to Margin**, FOIAXpress will move the redaction codes to the margin with a line directing back to the text. This feature should only be used when decreasing the size of the redaction code font will not work to ensure readability of the redacted document.



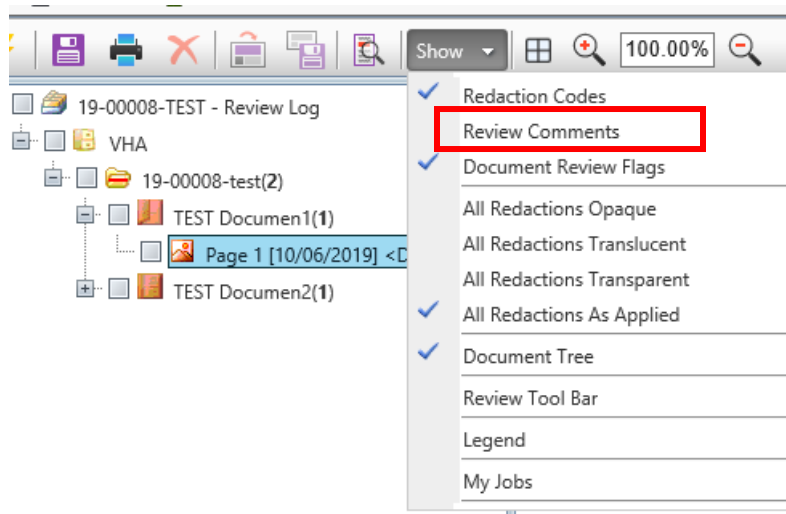
7. After you select the appropriate exemption code, click **Select**.
8. The text will appear translucent with the redaction code text as shown below. If the redaction is not translucent, it will need to be changed. This setting is changed under **Setting Preferences**.

TEST ^{(b)(6)} Document

9. To remove a redaction, right click on the redaction and select "delete". If you have multiple redactions on a page that need to be removed, right click on the page and

click “Select All”. FOIAXpress will draw a box around all the redactions, right click in the box and select “delete”.

10. If you need to change a redaction code, right click on the redaction and select “Redaction Code”. From the redaction code screen de-select the incorrect code and select the correct code and then click “select”. Code will be changed on the overlay.
11. To document the user’s reasoning for applying an exemption to the text, right click on the redaction box and select “comment” from the list. Enter the appropriate comments. This comment section is the equivalent of the “Explanation of Exemption” or “Statement of Harm” section on a Vaughn Index. To view all the comments, select **Show** from the View Setting and select **Review Comments**. As shown below:



12. FOIAXpress will prompt you save your work as a **Review Layer**. A review layer records your redactions and release determinations. The review layer is the equivalent of the redactions not applied version of the document. A document can have more than one review layer, but only one review layer can be applied to the documents that will be delivered to the requester. As a best practice, you should create only one review layer per document/folder. However, if a request is remanded back to you from OGC on appeal, the creation of a second review layer will be necessary in order to preserve the original review layer.
13. You will need to name the **Review Layer** and then select **Save**. The recommended naming convention for the **Review Layer** is **Review [your initials]**. If the request is remanded back from OGC on appeal, it is recommended that the **second Review Layer** be named **Review – Remand [your initials]**.

Save Review Layer

To continue, you must name and save the review layer. Once saved the review layer will automatically be saved as you move from page to page.

Layer Name*

Review

Select from List

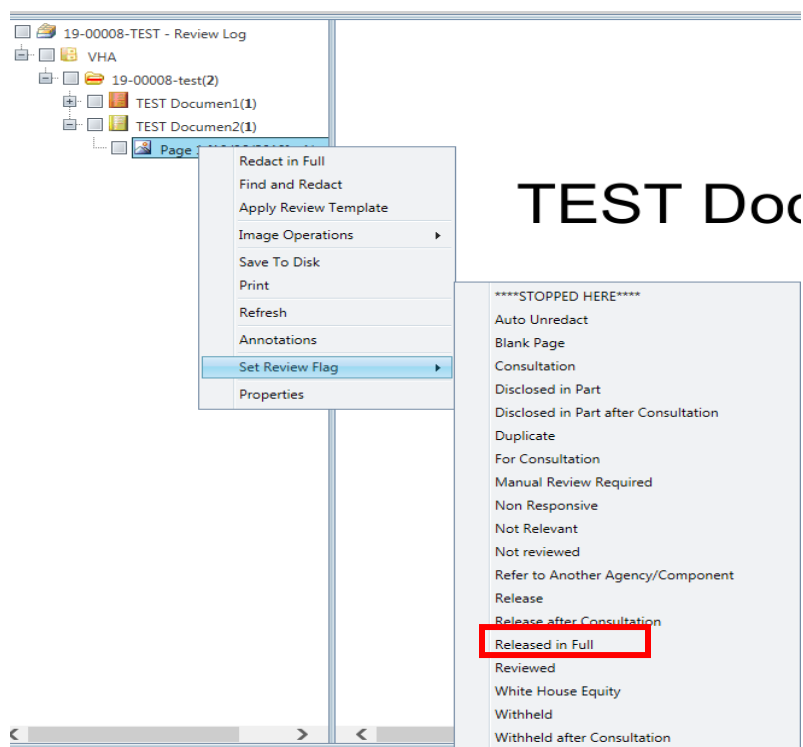
Existing Review Layers of '19-00008-test'

Created Date	User Name	Review Layer Name
No Review Layers found.		

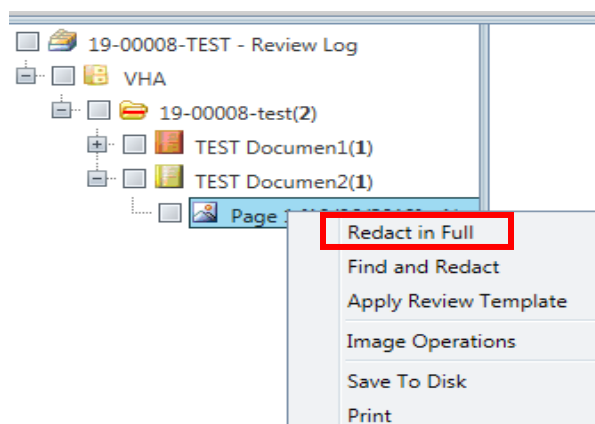
Save Cancel

14. To create a second review layer and still preserve the original review layer. Load the original review layer. Select the folder and right click. Select **Save Review Layer As** and name the review layer e.g. **Review – Remand [your initials]**. Review and redact as appropriate.

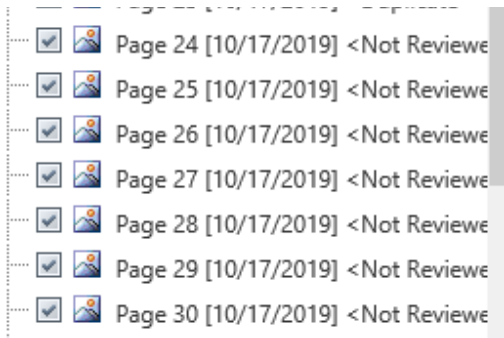
15. For pages in which you have determined they will be released in full, you will need to tell FOIAXpress your determination by right clicking on the page and selecting **Set Reviewing Flag** and **Release in Full**. See the below screen shot.



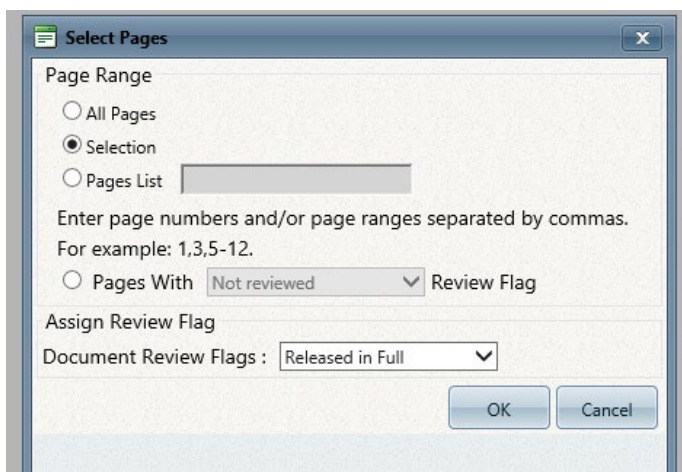
16. To redact a page in full, right click the page and select “Redact in Full” from the list, and then select the exemption code from the pop-up box.



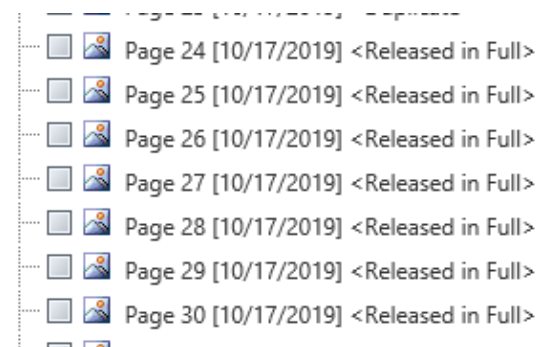
17. If you are releasing several pages in full, rather than selecting each page individually and set the review flag as “release in full”, you can mark several pages at the same time. Place a check mark in the page next to the pages you wish to flag. As shown below:




Next right click on the folder, then select “assign review flags”. The following pop-up box will appear. Make sure the radial button next to “Selection” is checked. Select “release in full” from the Document Review Flags and select “ok”.



The documents should now have a review status of “Release in Full” as shown below:



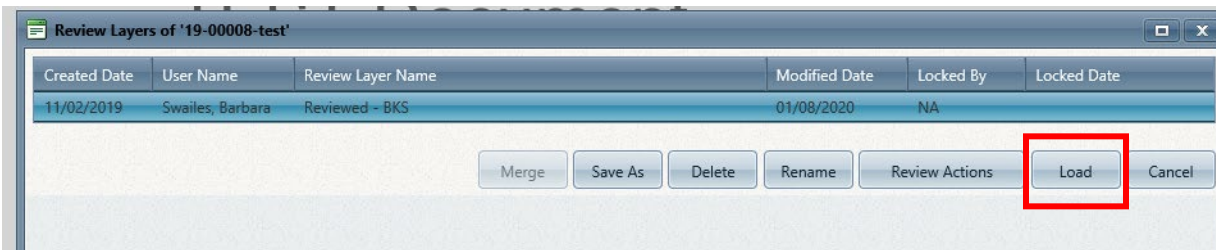
You can also mark several pages as withheld in full by following the same steps except select “Redact in Full” instead of “Assign Review Flags” and then select the appropriate redaction codes using the  button and then select “ok”.

18. As you are redacting and/or indicating **Release in Full** or other Review Flag you are building the Vaughn Index in FOIAXpress.

19. You can exit the review log before completing the review of the entire document and/or folder and your determinations will be saved in the review layer. To exit the

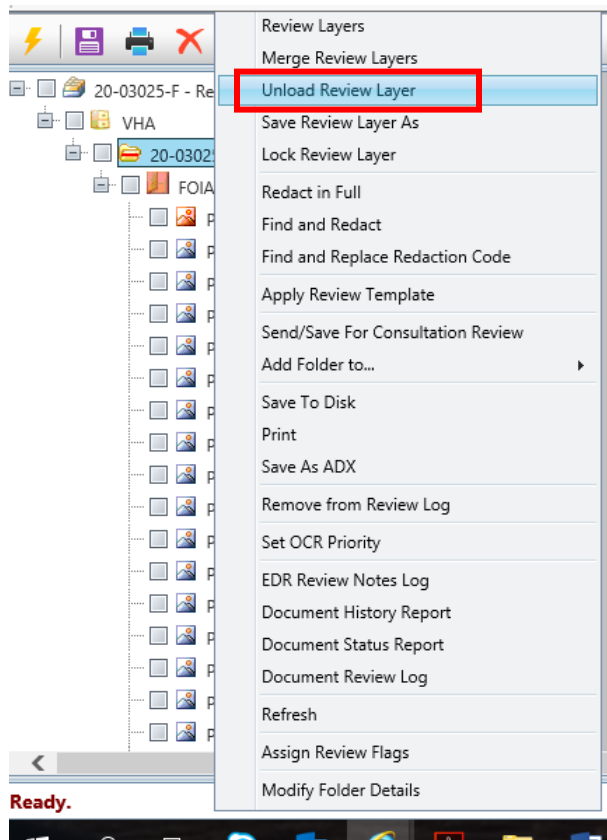


review log, select to . When you return to the document, FOIAXpress will prompt you to select a Review Layer when you open the document to begin redacting. Select **Yes** and FOIAXpress will give you a list of all review layers associated with the folder. As indicated earlier in this document, best practice is to have one review layer for the initial release determination. Highlight the review layer and select “load”.

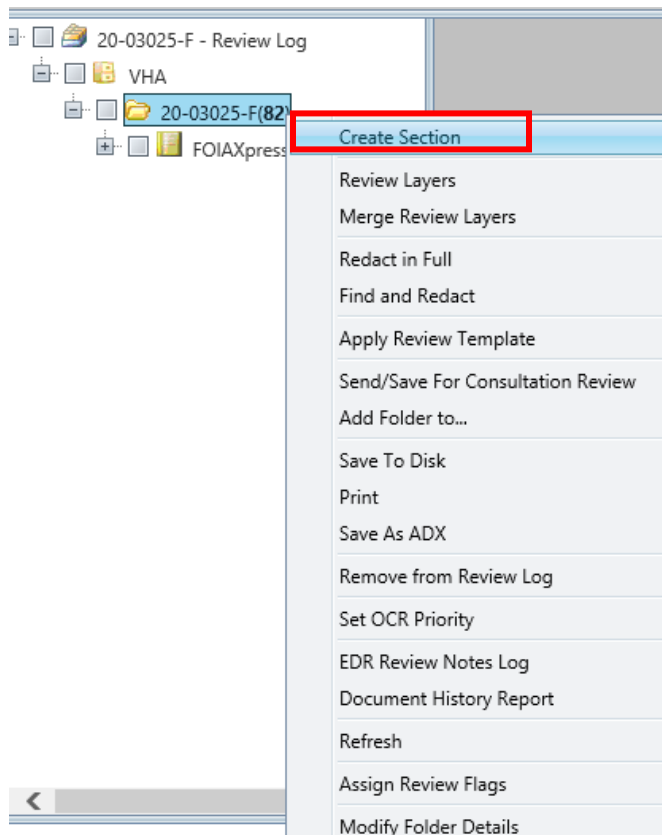


Adding Additional Documents to Review Log Folder

1. Additional documents can be added to a Review Log folder without the need to create another folder. The review layer cannot be loaded to add documents to a folder. If you have a review layer loaded, you will need to remove it. Right click on the folder and select **Unload Review Layer**.



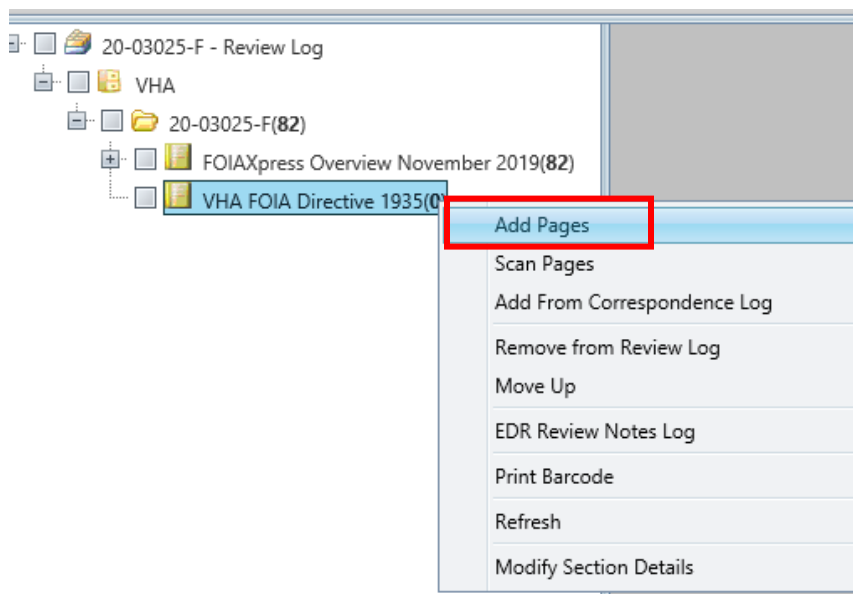
Next, right click on the folder again and select **Create Section**.



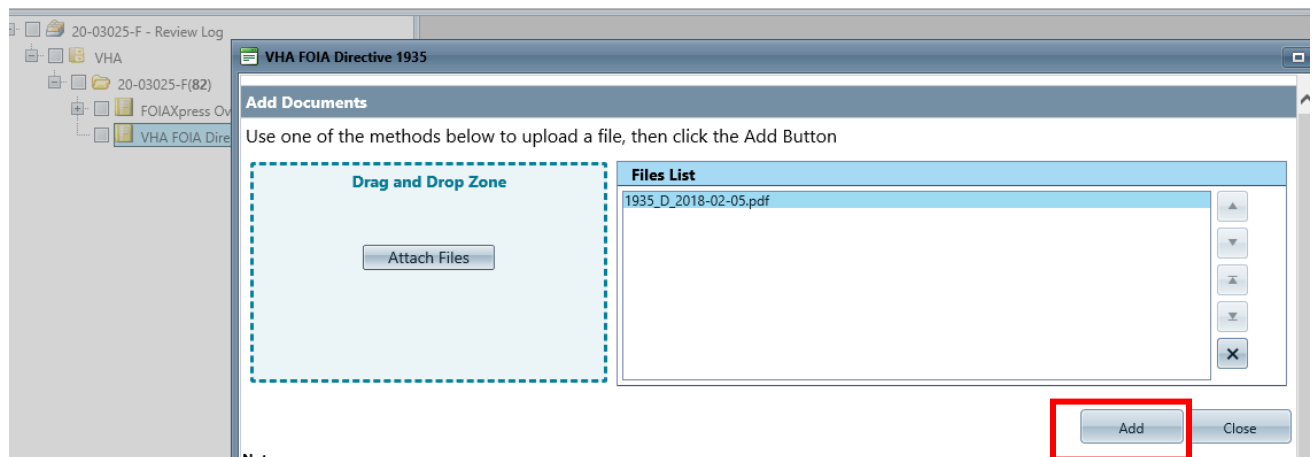
You will be prompted to enter the name of the section(document) you are adding. Use **Separate Single-Page File** as the document format so you can redact the document in FOIAXpress. Selecting Native Format as the document format will upload the document in native format, but you will not be able to redact in FOIAXpress, e.g. uploading an Excel Worksheet. Enter the name of the document and the select **Create Section**.

 A screenshot of a 'Create Section' dialog box. It has a title bar 'Create Section'. Below it, there are four input fields: 'File Cabinet Name' with a dropdown menu showing 'VHA', 'Folder Name' with the text '20-03025-F', 'Section Name*' with the text 'VHA FOIA Directive 1935' and a clear button (X), and 'Document Format' with a dropdown menu showing 'Separate Single-Page Files'. Below these is a section titled 'Bates Information' with two input fields for 'Prefix' and 'Suffix'. At the bottom left, there is a note: 'Note: * fields are mandatory'. At the bottom right, there are two buttons: 'Create Section' and 'Close'. The 'Create Section' button is highlighted with a red rectangular box.

You will see a new section within the folder. You must now add pages to the section (document). Click on the section and then right click to select "Add Pages".

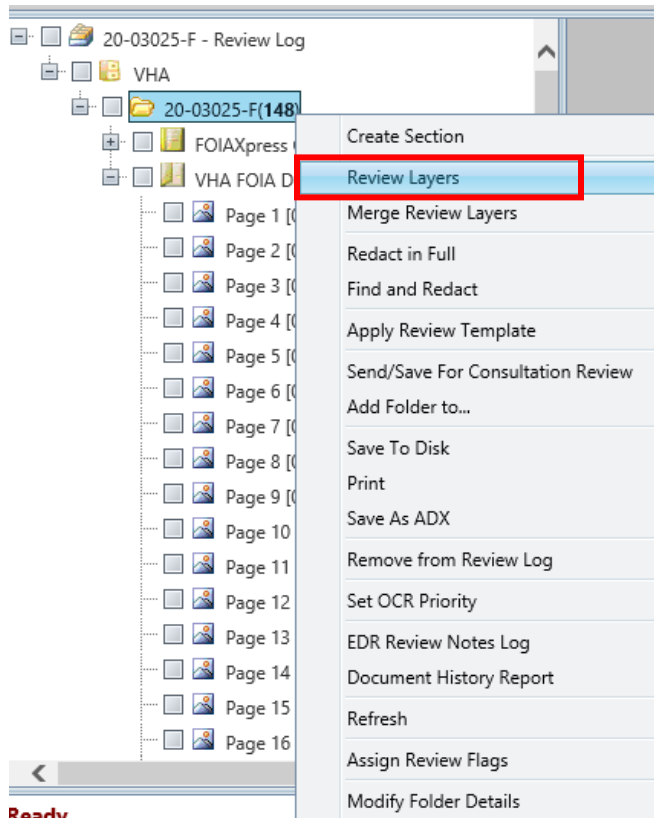


The **Add Documents** screen will display so you can add your document to the Review Log. This can be done by clicking on “attach” or you can drag and drop the file into the drag and drop zone from your computer. Then click “Add”.



Click “Yes” when asked if you want to add the documents to the file list. The pages have not been added to the section (document) and are ready to be reviewed.

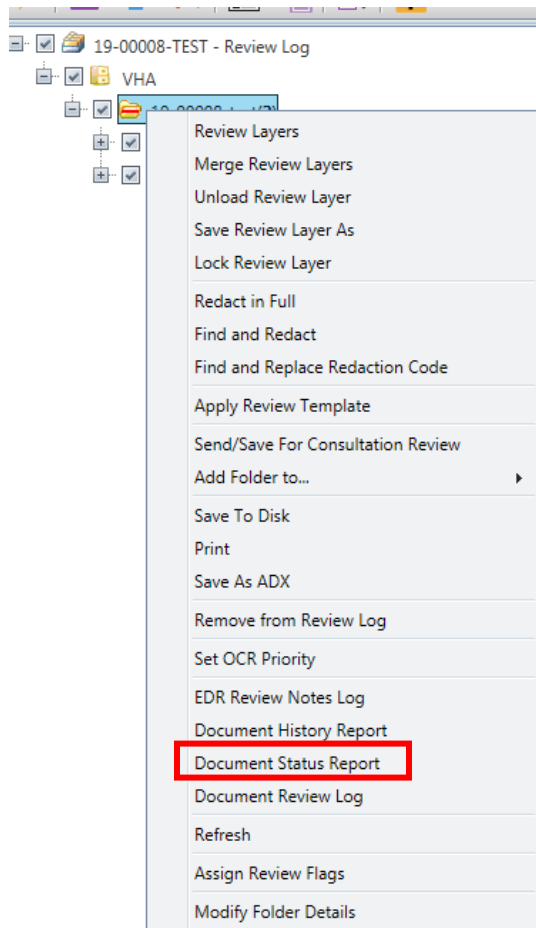
To resume your redactions, right click on the main folder and select “Review Layers”.



Select your review layer and click “Load”.

Document Status Report

Once completed with your review of the entire document, right click on the name of folder and select Document Status Report to ensure each page has a release determination. No pages should say **Not Reviewed**. By completing this step, you are previewing the Vaughn Index.



20. The Document Status Summary Report will display a version of the created Vaughn Index as shown below.

Summary

Disclosed in Part - 1 Pages

Released in Full - 1 Pages

Document Status Report

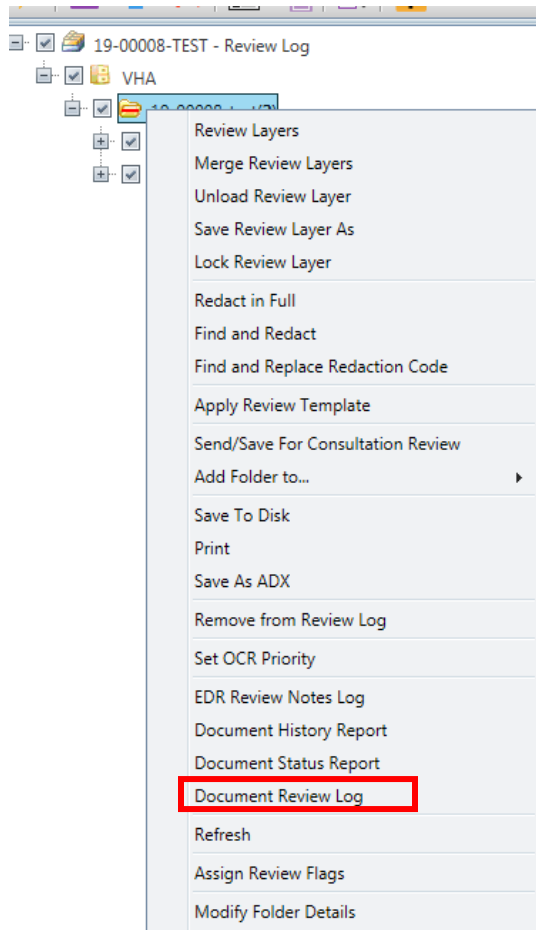
Folder Name :19-00008-test
Disposition :N/A
Section :TEST Documen1
Review Layer Name :Review

Page #	Review Status	Redaction Codes
1	Disclosed in Part	(b)(6)

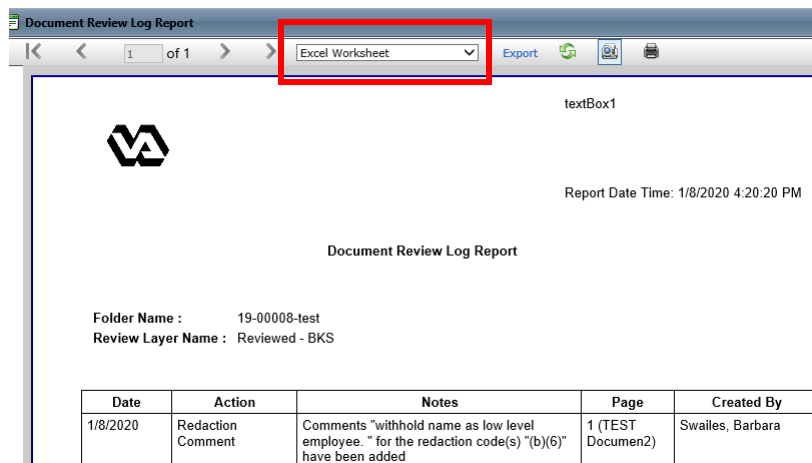
Section :TEST Documen2
Review Layer Name :Review

Page #	Review Status	Redaction Codes
1	Released in Full	-

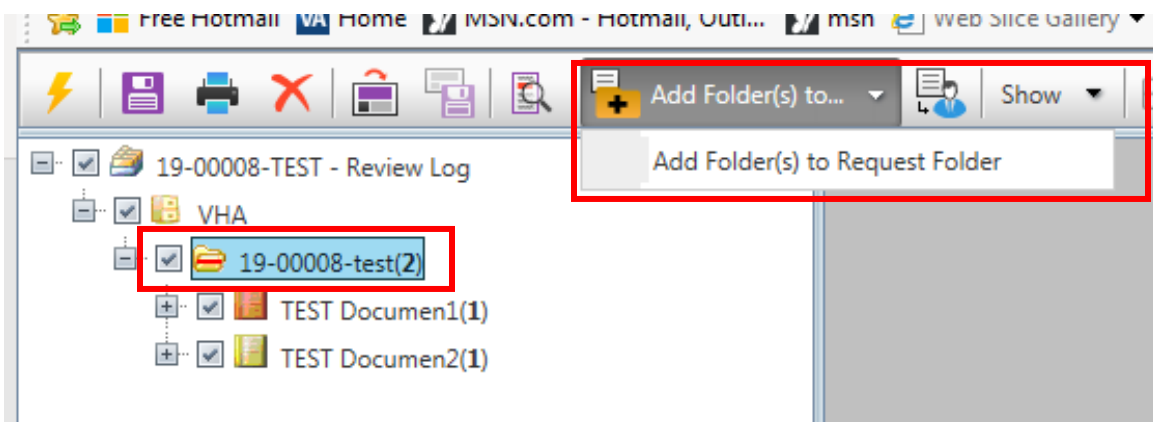
21. If you have entered comments with your redactions, before you move the reviewed documents from the **Review Log** to the **Request Folder**, you will need to generate and save a report containing those comments for future reference. With the review layer loaded, select the folder and then select Document **Review Log**.



22. Select **Print Document Review Log** and export as an **Excel Worksheet**.



23. The Excel Worksheet can then be uploaded under the Correspondence Log as case notes and available in case of appeal and/or litigation. This document may also be beneficial when completing the initial agency decision letter. It is recommended that the Excel Worksheet is not uploaded in the Correspondence Log as a PDF but rather in Excel format to permit merging with the FOIAXpress Vaughn Index as necessary in the future.
24. After you have completed your review/redaction, you will need to move the folder/document from the **Review Log** to the **Request Folder** by selecting the folder and **Add Folder(s) to the Request Folder** from the navigation bar.
25. Best practice is to fully review all materials intended for delivery to ensure any sensitive information is properly redacted.



26. The **Add Folders to Request Folder** screen will appear. From this screen you can deselect any document which you do not wish to move to the **Request Folder** at this time by unchecking the box. Then select **Add Folder(s)**.

Request No	Request Type	Requester	Primary User	Received Date	Target Date	Remaining Days	Request Status
19-00008-TEST	TEST	Requester, Test	Swales, Barbara	08/06/2019	04/30/2019	-110	Documents Added to...

Folder Name	File Cabinet
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 19-00008-test	VHA
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -TEST Document1	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> -TEST Document2	

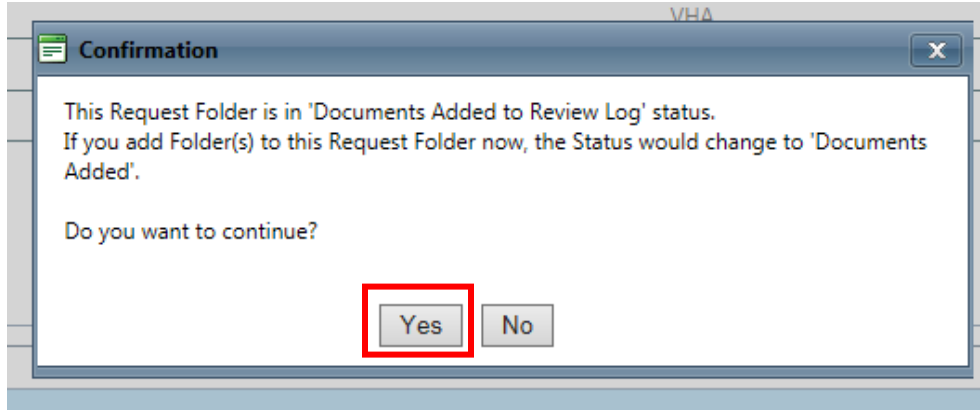
Review Status Details

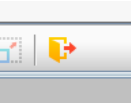
Review Status : None

Notes :

Add Folder(s) Close

27. A pop-up box will appear asking the following, select **Yes**.



28. Close the window and select to  to exit from the **Review Log**. Note, the selected documents should no longer appear in the **Review Log**.

Find and Redact/Find and Highlight

1. When reviewing a document in the Review Log, the Find and Redact/Find and Highlight tool may be beneficial.
2. In order to use Find and Redact/Find and Highlight tool, the document must have an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) status of done. Find and Redact/Find and Highlight tool will not function if the OCR status is pending or failed. To check on the OCR status, right click on the folder and select **Modify Folder Details**. Under OCR Information, OCR Status must be listed as "Done". Documents are placed in a queue for OCR. Depending on the size of the document and the number of documents in the queue, OCR completion may be delayed. If a document has been pending for **over 24 hours** or failed, please submit a help desk ticket to AINS.
3. If you want to use the tool on all the documents within a folder, select the parent folder and then right click. If you only wish to use the tool on a subfolder, select the folder and then right click. If you only wish to use the tool on a single page, select the page and then right click. Next select Find and Redact.

4. The Find and Redact screen will appear.

The screenshot shows a 'Find & Redact' dialog box with a title bar and a close button. It has two tabs: 'Find' (selected) and 'Advanced'. The 'Find & Redact' section contains a 'Find What' dropdown menu set to 'Word / Phrase', a text input field, a right arrow button, and a help button. Below this is a 'Redact' section with a 'Redaction Code(s)' text input field, a 'Select Codes' button, and a 'Clear Codes' button. The 'Page Range' section has four radio button options: 'All Pages' (selected), 'Current Page', 'Selection', and 'Pages List' (with an adjacent text input field). Below these options is a text instruction: 'Enter page numbers and/or page ranges separated by commas. For example: 1,3,5-12.' At the bottom are four buttons: 'Find & Strikethrough', 'Find & Create Highlight for Review', 'Find & Redact', and 'Cancel'.

4. The drop-down box will allow you to select one of the pre-populated fields that search will be utilized.
5. If you are searching for multiple items and/or words use the Advanced option.
6. Select the exemption codes as applicable if using the Find and Redact function.
7. Select the appropriate review layer option e.g. modify current review layer.
8. Select either “Find and Create Highlight for Review” or “Find and Redact” as appropriate.
9. Using the **Find and Redact** tool, does not alleviate the need for a line-by-line review as all pages must undergo a line-by-line review.

Sending Documents for Consultation Review

1. VHA is not currently using this functionality. Please do not select at this time.

Request Folder

1. Documents in the **Request Folder** are ready to be delivered to the requester.
2. Before the documents can be delivered, you will need to apply **Final Actions** on the request or partial delivery.

Final Actions

1. During the **Final Actions** step, the user enters information regarding the disposition, exemptions used, and if a discretionary release was made.
2. If you have multiple release determinations e.g. one document is a full grant and the other document is redacted, the user should create sub requests to capture all the release determinations. Sub requests must be entered before entering the final actions. Please refer to the **Sub Request** section of this document.

3. Select **Final Action**. The **Final Actions** screen will be displayed.

TEST - Request: 19-00005-TEST Remaining Days: 20 Status: Received NEXT

Request Information

- Assign Users
- Correspondence
- Advanced Document Review (0/0)
- Fees/Billing
- Final Actions**
- Stop the Clock
- Extensions (0/0)
- Transfer Request
- Appeals (0)
- Response Package Approval
- Logs/Reports

Disposition

Requested Date : 07/29/2019 FOIAXpress Calculated Disposition : -
Received Date : 08/01/2019 Reportable Disposition* : Select Reportable Disposition
Target Date : 08/29/2019 Multi-Track Type* : Complex
Disposition Accepted Date* : 8/1/2019
Perfected : Yes

Note: Update each Disposition listed below as TBD to calculate the Reportable Disposition.

Request Descriptions Double-click on each line item to update the 'TBD' action.

Description	Disposition	Action Date
testing	TBD	

Notes

4. If you redacted the document in FOIAXpress, some of the fields will be pre-populated. Please review for accuracy.
5. If you have a TBD listed in the **Request Description** box or the displayed "reportable disposition" and/or exemption information is not correct, double click on the item

6. “Final Actions” disposition window is displayed.

Policy on XYZ - Final Action - 19-00007-TEST

Action Date* : 2/6/2019


Final Disposition* : Select Final Disposition

Notes

Spell Check Save Cancel

Note: * fields are mandatory

7. Select the appropriate “Final Disposition” using the drop-down box.
8. Choose the appropriate Action and as appropriate FOIA Exemption Codes.
 - a. Denied in Full – Select at least one exemption code.
 - b. Granted in Full
 - c. Granted/Denied in Part – Select at least one exemption code.
 - d. Other Reasons (see page 23 of VHA Directive 1935 for further definitions).
 - i. No Records
 - ii. Records Referred to Another Agency
 - iii. Request Withdrawn
 - iv. Fee-Related Reason – select if the requester did not respond/unwilling to pay a fee estimate or is past due in the payment from a previous FOIA request.
 - v. Records Not Reasonably Described – select if the requester did not respond to a clarification request.
 - vi. Not a Proper FOIA Request for Some Other Reason – **DO NOT** select if fee or clarification related. This disposition should be rarely used.
 - vii. Not an Agency Record – select if the information is not a record within the meaning and definition of an “agency record” (e.g. personal records and inanimate objects).
 - viii. Duplicate Request – Identical requests received from the same requester through different means.
 - ix. Requester Died Before Request Was Completed
 - x. Glomar Response
 - xi. Subsumed by Litigation – Rarely used.
 - xii. Administratively Closed – Closed for any other reason not included in the other closure types. This closure status should rarely be used. The most likely scenario is if you are aggregating two requests under one FOIA tracking number or you are closing the request due to a lack of a response to a “still interested” letter.

9. Enter **Action Date**. **Action Date** should be the date the request was closed (the date the IAD was issued).
10. Select **Save**.
11. The disposition accepted date should be the date the request was closed (the date the IAD was issued).
12. If not populated, select the **Reportable Disposition** for the drop-down box.
13. If a grant or partial grant was entered, enter if a discretionary release was made. A discretionary release is one where the FOIA Officer could have withheld information under a FOIA exemption but did not, e.g. could have applied exemption 5 but did not. If you select "yes" indicating a discretionary release was made, enter the FOIA exemption(s) that would have applied if the FOIA Officer opted to withhold the information by selecting the  icon. Under "Discretionary Comments" briefly describe the documents or information that is being discretionally disclosed. For additional information please refer to **VHA FOIA Alert, Discretionary Releases in FOIAXpress**.


Disposition		
Requested Date : 07/29/2019	FOIAXpress Calculated Disposition : Granted in Full	
Received Date : 08/01/2019	Reportable Disposition* : <input type="text" value="Granted in Full"/>	
Target Date : 08/29/2019	Multi-Track Type* : <input type="text" value="Complex"/>	
Disposition Accepted Date* : <input type="text" value="8/1/2019"/>		
Perfected : Yes		
Note: Update each Disposition listed below as TBD to calculate the Reportable Disposition.		
Request Descriptions		
Double-click on each line item to update the 'TBD' action.		
Description	Disposition	Action Date
testing	Granted in Full	08/01/2019
Discretionary Releases		
Was a discretionary release of information made for this request? * : <input type="text"/>		
Discretionary Comments	Discretionary Code	
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	
Notes		
<input type="text"/>		
<input type="button" value="Spell Check"/> <input type="button" value="View Documents"/> <input type="button" value="Remove Final Action"/> <input type="button" value="Save"/>		

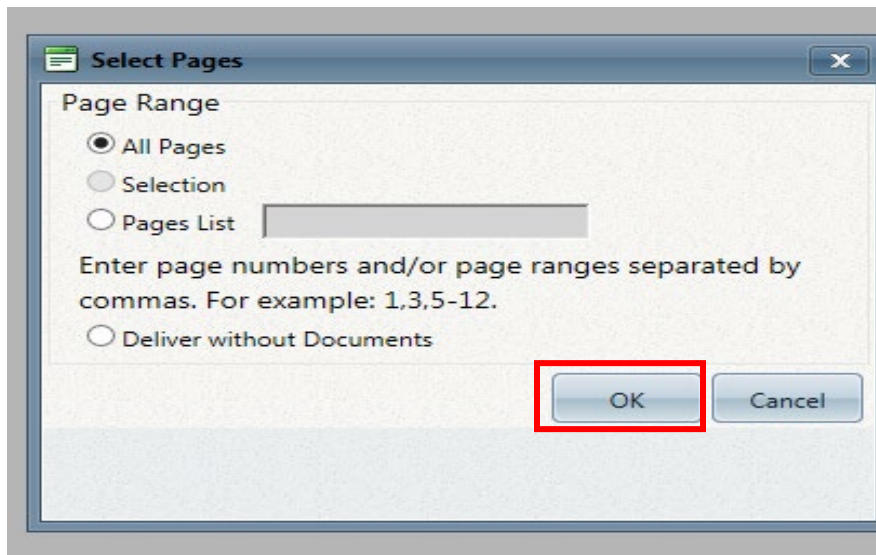
14. Select **Save**.

Delivering Documents

1. To access select **Deliver Documents** from the left-hand menu, then click the **Deliver Documents** icon. To access the **Deliver Documents** interface, the request must have a status of “Disposition Accepted”, “Delivery Pending”, “Documents Delivered”, “Delivery Failed”, or “Amended”. The **Deliver Documents** function will bundle on the documents into a package to be send to the requester.



2. After clicking the **Deliver Documents** icon, the **Document Management** interface opens, and documents added to this **Request Folder** appear in the **Document Management** navigation.
3. Use the checkboxes to select the individual folders and/or pages to include in the delivery package.
4. Click the **Deliver Documents** icon .
5. A pop-up box will appear asking you to select a page range to include in the delivery. Select a range and click **OK**.



6. The **Delivery Document** screen will appear.

1. **Document Delivery Type:** Select whether this is a **Final** or **Interim** (partial) release.
2. **Include:** Options to include additional documents, such as an IAD. If you have a template letter designated as “Pending Final Response”, you will be able to add and edit by checking “Select Default/Pending Final Response Letter” and then “Customize & Save”.
3. **Requester Information:** Configure the recipient information, including the *Delivery Options* below.

4. **Delivery Options:** Allows you to configure how the documents are delivered. In the sample above, **Email** is selected as the *Delivery Mode*, displaying several options to configure the outgoing email message. Depending on the size of the documents, you may need to select the option *CD and Diskette*. If the request is a Substantial Interest (SI) Request or contains DBRS, select *Other*. **Please note**, if the documents cannot be emailed due to VA security requirements, e.g. contains the requester's SSN, etc., you will need to mail them. **Until further guidance from the VHA FOIA Office, please do not use the email functions in FOIAXpress as not all the emails are being delivered. The VHA FOIA Office is working on resolving this issue.** The recommended "Output Format" is **PDF Image**.
5. **Review Options:** This includes areas to configure whether to *Include Review Objects* (like comments or redactions) and *Other Options* in the delivered documents, such as hiding redaction codes or delivering the documents in Black & White. All boxes under "Include Review Objects" should remain unchecked. Under other options, **check Include Fully Redacted Pages** and **Black & White**. Under Document Review Flags, use the drop-down box and review the selections. You **should not deliver documents marked "not reviewed", "not responsive", or "duplicate"** to the request and may need to de-select those documents if checked.
6. **Headers and Footers:** There is where you Bates number the documents. All responsive documents must be Bates numbered in accordance with VHA Directive 1935. Check the box next to **Bates Stamping**. Leave "Prefix" and "Suffix" blank. Bates Format is "Prefix NF Suffix". Select "Bates Start #" and ensure 1 is listed for the first delivery. If doing partials/interim responses, the number will be the last Bates page number of previous release plus one. For example, the first release ended with Bates page number 66. The second release the Batch Start # is 67. Page Format is "Page M". Position is "Bottom Center". Font Name is "Arial". Font Size is 12. As shown below:

Headers and Footers

☒ Bates Stamping

Prefix: Suffix:

Bates Format: [Note](#)

☐ Insert Page Numbers

Start Number: ☐ Document # ☒ Batch Start #

☐ Leading zeroes

Page Format:

Position:

Font

Font Name: Font Size:

Margin (Inches):

Left: Right: Top: Bottom:

☐ Include Annotation Text

7. **Include Annotation Text:** This section is used to include any annotation text in the delivered documents. Please **leave blank**.
8. **Page Summary for Withheld Pages:** If a document is partially withheld to include pages that are redacted in full, best practice is to provide those redacted in full pages in the delivery rather than a summary. To do this, check the radial button

next to “as individual page(s)”. **Page # Format** must match the format of the Bates Numbering, **Page M**.

Page Summary for Fully Withheld Pages

Save: ☒ as Individual Page(s) ☐ with Summary Page(s)

Position: Middle Center

Page # Format: Page M

Font: Font Name: Arial Font Size: 14

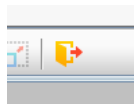
Header: Withheld pursuant to exemp Footer: of the Freedom of Informati

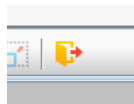
☐ Insert Watermark

Note: * fields are mandatory

Save Fully Redacted Page(s) Summary

9. To review what the selections will look like, select **Preview Pages**.
10. When ready to deliver the documents, select **Deliver Documents**.
11. Select **OK** to the pop-up box, “Do you want to deliver documents for this request?”
12. Select OK to the pop-up box stating your Bates number doesn’t have a prefix or suffix.



13. Close the window and select to  to exit from the **Document Delivery**.
14. Select **Document Delivery Log**, then **View Download** to access the package to be sent to the requester or to include in the SI or DBRS review.

Substantial Interest (SI) and/or DBRS Review

1. Follow the current process which is done outside of FOIAXpress.

Close Request

1. Select **Close Request** from the left-hand menu. This option is only displayed if the request is ready for closure, e.g. Final Actions have been taken on the request, documents have been delivered, or the request has been amended.
2. The **Close Request** screen will appear.

TEST - Request: 19-00005-TEST Remaining Days: 20 Status: **Disposition Accepted** [NEXT >](#)

Request Information
Assign Users
Correspondence
Request for Documents (0/0)
Advanced Document Review (0/0)
Add/Search/View Documents (0/0)
Fees/Billing
Final Actions
Deliver Documents
Close Request
Stop the Clock
Extensions (0/0)
Transfer Request
Appeals (0)
Response Package Approval
Logs/Reports

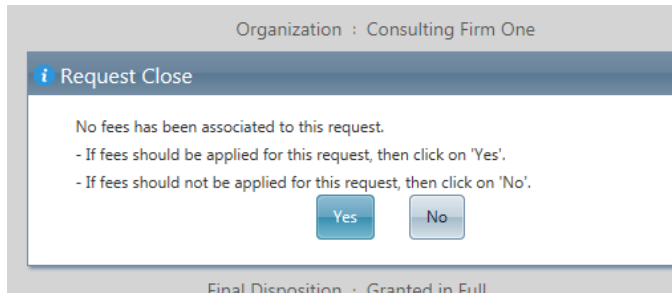
Closed Details

Requester : Requester, Test
Organization : Consulting Firm One
Fee Waiver : N/A
Fee Due : \$ 0.00
Received Date : 8/1/2019
Disposition Accepted Date : 8/1/2019
Closed Date* :
Final Disposition : Granted in Full
Review Status : [Select Review Status](#)
Multi-Track Type : Complex
Number of Pages Released* : Generated Count : 0
Number of Pages Reviewed* : Generated Count : 0
Number of Records Posted for Public Inspection* :

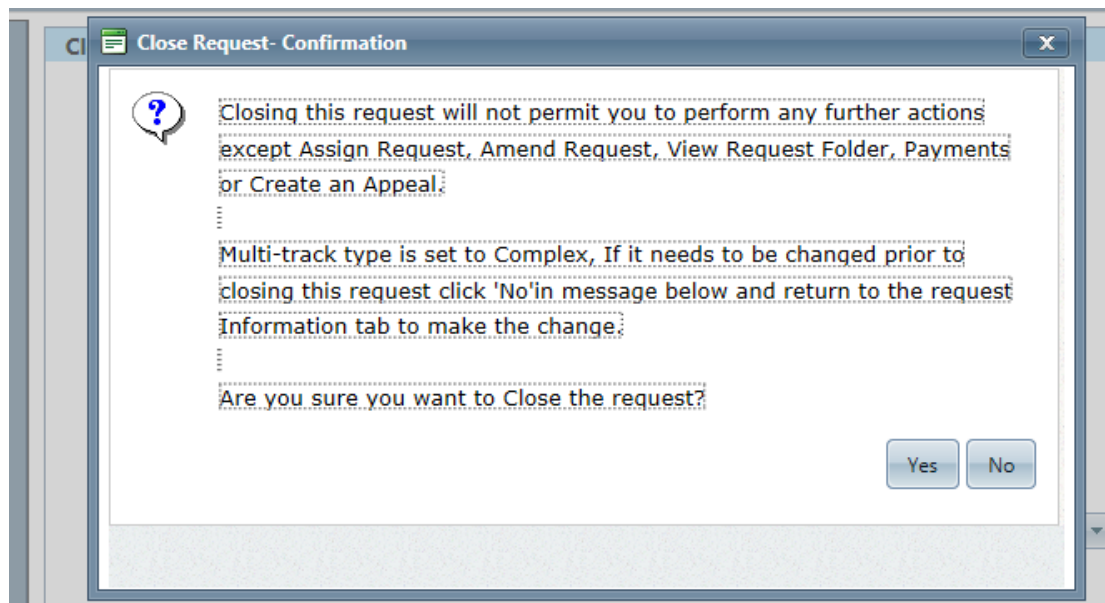
Notes

Notes: Fee Due value in **red color** implies balance amount to be received from the Requester.
Fee Due value in **blue color** implies balance amount to be paid to the Requester.

3. Review information for accuracy.
4. Enter the "Closed Date". Closed date must match the date on the IAD closing the request.
5. Enter the number of pages released and number of pages reviewed. If the documents are reviewed/redacted in FOIAXpress, this information will be pre-populated.
6. Enter "0" for the "Number of Records Posted for Public Inspection". More to come at a later date.
7. Enter a note to include any additional information about the request or closure that is not already in FOIAXpress. For example, if delivering an Excel spreadsheet in native format to the request a note may be "1 Excel workbook disclosed in Native Format".
8. Select **Save**.
9. Respond to the fee pop-up box.
 - a. If no fees are associated with the request, select "No" on the pop up.
 - b. If fees are associated with the request, select "Yes" and FOIAXpress will take the user to the "Fee/Billing" menu.



10. When prompted to confirm that you want to close the request, select “Yes”

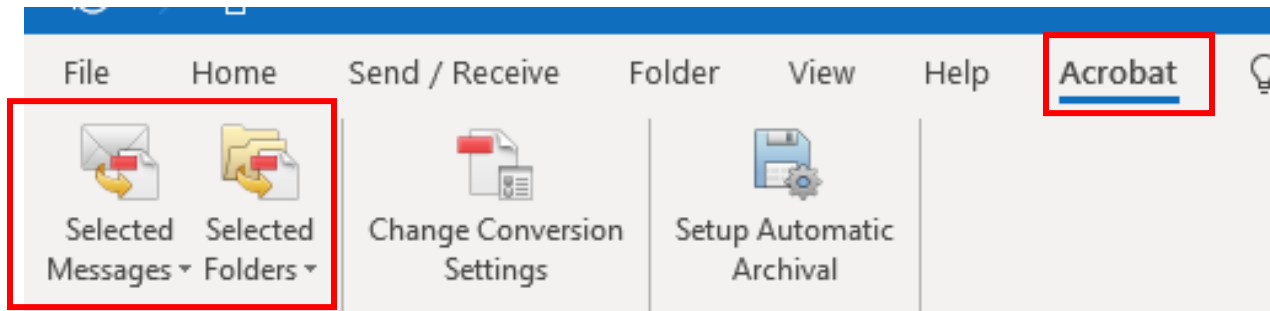


11. The request is now closed.

FOIA Administrative Case File

1. A best practice is to create a folder titled with the assigned FOIA tracking number in Outlook. All Outlook email regarding the request will be placed in the folder.
2. As emails are received, a best practice is to upload them in FOIAXpress under the Correspondence Log. The Correspondence Log is considered the FOIA Administrative Case File in FOIAXpress. Emails can be copied to your desktop and then uploaded by the following the steps in the “Receive Correspondence” section.
3. All emails related to the request are uploaded in chronological date order with the most recent document saved on top.
4. For open requests that were received prior FY2020, it is acceptable to create a PDF file with all the emails in the Outlook folder and then uploaded the file to the Correspondence Log. To create the PDF in Outlook, open the folder containing the emails. Select **Acrobat** from the toolbar. Click the icon for “Selected Message” if you

highlight messages. If you highlight the folder, click on the icon for “Selected Folders”.



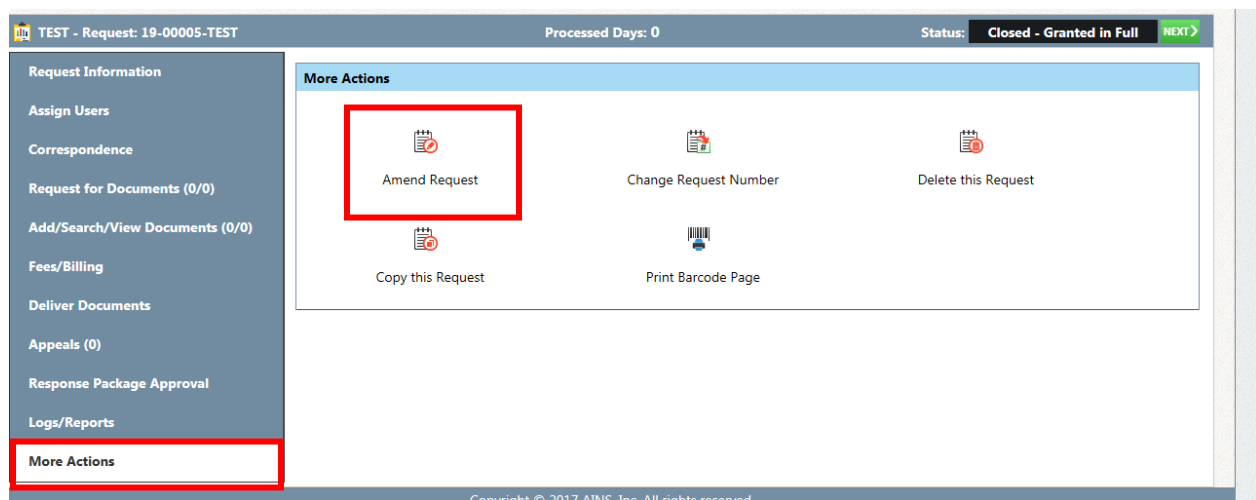
Select **Create New PDF** option from the drop-down box.

Name the PDF the “[FOIAXpress number] FOIA Administrative Case File”.

Upload the PDF to the Correspondence Log, using the naming convention of “[FOIAXpress number] FOIA Administrative Case File”.

Re-Opening a Closed Request

1. Once a request is closed, FOIAXpress will not allow the user to perform functions on a request. If the FOIA Officer needs to perform an action once the request is closed, the FOIA Officer will need to “Amend Request” the request to re-open it.
2. On the home page, pull up the request number of the closed request.
3. Select “More Action”



4. Select “Amend Request”
5. Set the status to “Amended” and select “save”.

Amend Request

19-00005-TEST - Amend Request

Requester : Requester, Test

Organization : Consulting Firm One

Fee Waiver : N/A

Fee Due : \$ 0.00

Set Status to** : Amended

Notes :

Spell Check Save Cancel

Note:- Amending a request sets request status to selected status and allows user to update data and repeat actions, not to be confused with creating an Appeal

Note: * fields are mandatory

6. The request is now open, and you can make any changes necessary.
7. When closing the request, take care to ensure the correct dates are entered. The closure date should match the date the initial agency decision was issued.

Deleting Entries in FOIAExpress:

1. Requests in can be deleted in FOIAExpress by the VHA FOIA Office.
 - a. Send an email to the VHA FOIA Office via the *VHA FOIA Issues* Outlook mail group.
 - b. The email must contain the FOIAExpress number and the reason for requesting the entry be deleted
 - c. Note: There is a distinction between a “duplicate request” and a “duplicate or double entry of a request.”
 - i. Duplicate Request – A FOIA request that is received by two or more distinct locations or by two more distinct received routes e.g. fax and postal mail. One request received by postal mail and same request received by fax is treated as two requests on which one will be closed as a duplicate. The latest request received is to be closed as the duplicate request e.g. the first request is received on September 1, 2019 and an identical request is received on September 8, 2019. The request received on September 8, 2019 will be closed as a duplicate request.
 - ii. Duplicate or Double Entry – The same request is entered twice in FOIAExpress. Only one request is received e.g. the FOIA Officer enters the request and then the Alternate FOIA Officer enters the same request not

realizing the FOIA Officer already entered the request. In this scenario, the second request will need to be deleted from FOIAXpress.

Transferring a FOIA Request to Another FOIA Office Within VA

1. Upon receiving confirmation from the VA/VHA FOIA Officer that they accept the request, complete and upload the transfer letter to the Correspondence Log.
2. Open the request in FOIAXpress.
3. Under **Request Information** change the facility under **Responsible Facilities** to the one to which the request is being transferred.
4. Select **Save**.
5. Select **Transfer Request**.
6. Select the appropriate **New Action Office** to which the request is being transferred from the drop-down box.
7. Transfer date should match date of the letter informing the requester of the transfer.
8. Under **Comments**, provide a brief explanation for the transfer. For example, Facility transfer to [fill in name of the receiving component, e.g. OIT].
9. Be sure the **Assign Request** box is checked
10. Select **Transfer**. Select **ok** to the pop-up box "Do you want to Transfer the Request?"
11. Choose the appropriate FOIA Officer to which this request is being assigned by selecting the ellipse (...) button next to **Change the Primary User for the request to**.
12. To view the names of FOIA Officer in non-VHA components select the appropriate office using the drop-down box next to **Action Office**.
13. Select **Search**.
14. Highlight the name of FOIA Officer you are transferring the request to and click **select**.
15. The name of the FOIA Officer you are transferring the request to should appear in the **Change the Primary User for the request to**". Check the box **Send Email Notification**, as FOIAXpress will send an email to the new FOIA Officer indicating a new request was assigned.

16. **DESELECT YOUR NAME** and any additional names by selecting the red check mark next to your name.
17. Select **Assign**.
18. A pop-up should appear asking if you would like to save your assignment selections. Select **Yes**.
19. A message should appear stating the request was successfully assigned to the new Action Office.
20. Select **OK**.
21. To validate the transfer, the **Receiving Office**, **Primary User**, and the **Responsible Facility** should all match.

Transferring a Request to Another VHA FOIA Component (Medical Center, VISN, VHA Central Office FOIA Office, Office of Community Care, Member Services, Veterans Crisis Line, or a Consolidated Patient Account Center)

1. Upon receiving confirmation from the VHA FOIA Officer that they accept the request, complete and upload the transfer letter to the Correspondence Log.
2. Open the request in FOIAXpress.
3. Under **Request Information**, change the facility under **Responsible Facilities** to the one to which the request is being transferred.
 - i. VISN FOIA Offices are listed as VHA 10N[VISN number]
 - ii. VHA Central Office FOIA Office is listed as VHA 101 – VA Central Office (VACO)
4. Select **Save**.
5. Select **Transfer Request**.
6. Select any **New Action Office** as the request is only being transferred temporality.
7. The transfer date must match date of the letter informing the requester of the transfer.
8. Under **Comments**, provide a brief explanation for the transfer e.g. Station XX transfer to XX.
9. **Do not** check the **Assign Request** box.
10. Select **Transfer**. Select **ok** to the pop-up box “Do you want to Transfer the Request?”

11. Select **Transfer Request**.
12. Select **VHA** as the **Receiving Office**.
13. The transfer date must match date of the letter informing the requester of the transfer.
14. Under **Comments**, provide a brief explanation for the transfer e.g. Station XX transfer to XX.
15. Be sure the **Assign Request** box is checked.
16. Select **Transfer**. Select **ok** to the pop-up box "Do you want to Transfer the Request?"
17. Choose the appropriate FOIA Officer to which this request is being assigned by selecting the ellipse (...) button next to **Change the Primary User for the request to**.
18. **DESELECT YOUR NAME** and any additional names from your facility. If you do not deselect your name, the request will show as a secondary assignment to you.
19. Select **Assign**.
20. A message should appear stating the request was successfully assigned to the new Action Office.
21. A pop-up should appear asking if you would like to save your assignment selections. Select **Yes**.
22. Select **ok**.
23. To validate the transfer, the **Receiving Office**, **Primary User**, and the **Responsible Facility** should all match.

Transferring a Portion of a Request to Another VA/VHA Component (Splitting a Request)

1. At times, a request may need to be split between multiple VA/VHA components. The need to split a request occurs when multiple components have documents responsive to a request or to specific item(s) of the request. To split a request, you will need to copy the request. Before you split a request always seek confirmation from the other FOIA Officer.
2. Select **More Actions** and then **Copy this Request**.

3. A pop-up box will appear asking “Do you want to include items from the correspondence log in the copied request”. If you select “Yes”, you will be able to select the documents you wish to copy to the new request e.g. a copy of the request.
4. If you select “Yes”, a listing of all the documents in the Correspondence Log will appear. Check the document you wish to copy to the new request.
5. On the request screen, change the “**Responsible Facility**” from your facility to the Responsible Facility of the FOIA Officer that will be receiving the request.
6. Select “**Save**”.
7. A pop-up will appear with the FOIAXpress number of the copied request and ask if you want to send correspondence to the requester. Select “**no**”.
8. The copied request will appear assigned to you in FOIAXpress. You will need to inform the requester that you are transferring the request or a portion of the request to another FOIA Office and provide the name, contact information, and new FOIA tracking number. You will also need to inform the requester that you will continue to process the request or portions of the request under the original FOIA tracking number. The new (copied) request is transferred to the other FOIA Officer following the steps outlined in the appropriate transfer section of this document. You will retain the original FOIA tracking number. Upload a copy of your transfer letter under both FOIA tracking numbers.

Billing

1. If FOIA processing fees are being applied to the request, select **Fees/Billing** from the left-hand menu and the Fees/Billing screen will appear.

AINS Request With RPA - Request: 2019-AR-HQ--0000001 Remaining Days: 7 Status: Documents Delivered NEXT

Summary 1

Amount Paid : \$0.00 Balance Due : \$29.00 Willing Amount : \$25.00
Total Refund Amount : \$0.00 Payment Status : Pending Pre-Payment Amount : \$0.00

Cost Sheets 2

Name	Invoice #	Created By	Cost sheet Date	Modified By	Modified Date	Amount (\$)
Cost Sheet 1	00000000071	Admin, Admin	11/08/2018	Admin, Admin	11/8/2018	\$29.00
Total :						\$29.00

Page size: 100 1 items in 1 pages

Invoices 3

Invoice #	Created By	Invoice Date	Modified By	Modified Date	Extended (\$)	Not Charged (\$)	Charged (\$)
00000000071*	Admin, Admin	11/08/2018	Admin, Admin	11/8/2018	\$29.00	\$0.00	\$29.00
* The existing invoices/estimates are based on old fee structure.						Total :	\$29.00 \$0.00 \$29.00

Page size: 100 1 items in 1 pages

Payments 4

Created Date	Invoice #	Received By	Payment Type	Invoice Total	Amount Paid	Remaining Bal	Interest Paid
There are no payments recorded							

Page size: 100 0 items in 1 pages

1. **Summary:** Provides a total financial summary for the request. If there is a
 2. **Cost Sheets:** Use *Cost Sheets* to determine prices for labor hours (to account for the time taken to fill the request) as well as any material costs associated with this request.
 3. **Invoices:** Create a final invoice using the values from a *Cost Sheet*. This invoice total is charged to the customer.
 4. **Payments:** A record of any payments received for the request.
2. First, you will need to create a **Cost Sheet**. The **Cost Sheet** will be used to create an **Invoice**.
 3. Select **New** under **Cost Sheet**.
 4. Enter **Name** for the cost sheet. The name is used as a reference in FOIAXpress.
 5. Enter the unit rate and quantity on the invoice form for the appropriate requester category under **Search** and **Review**. Unit rate is the hourly wage. Quantity is the number of hours associated with either the search or review. **Please note,**

FOIAXpress does not calculate the 16% benefit costs and therefore must calculate prior to entering the unit rate in FOIAXpress. FOIAXpress will adjust the amount based on the requester's fee category. Enter any associated **Reproduction** costs.

Fee Items	Description	Unit Rate	Quantity	Extended Value
SEARCH				
a. Commerical	Commerical - Search	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00
b. Educational or Non-Scientific...	Educational or Non-Scientific In...	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00
c. News Media	News Media - Search	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00
d. Other	Other - Search	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00
REVIEW				
a. Commercial	Commercial - Review	0.00 /1.00 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00
REPRODUCTION				
a. Commercial	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 PAGE(S) Fixed	0.00	0.00
b. Educational or Non-Scientific...	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 COPIES Fixed	0.00	0.00
c. New Media	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 COPIES Fixed	0.00	0.00
d. Other	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 COPIES Fixed	0.00	0.00
e. Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous (CDs, DVDs, etc.)	0.00 /1.00 UNIT(S) Variable	0.00	0.00
ACTUAL DIRECT COSTS		1.00 /1.00 UNIT(S) Fixed	0.00	0.00
Total :				0.00

Note: * fields are mandatory

6. Select **Save**.
7. Select **OK** to the pop-up box, "Are you sure you want to create this cost sheet?"
8. Select **OK** to the pop-up box, "The Cost Sheet has been saved successfully. To apply cost sheet values or waive fees for this request an invoice must be created."

Creating an Invoice

1. Select the check box(es) next to the **Cost Sheet(s)** you wish to use to create an **Invoice**. Multiple costs sheets can be combined into a single invoice.
2. Select **Create Invoice**.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Name	Invoice #	Create
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Item 1		Swaiter

K < 1 > X Page size: 100

New Edit View Delete **Create Invoice**

3. A **New Invoice Screen** will appear. Unit Rates, Quantity and Extended Costs cannot be changed on the Invoice Screen. They can only be changed on the Cost Sheet. The charged amount will remove the 2-hour search time for the all other fee category as well as the 100 pages free for the News Media, All Other, and Educational or Non-Scientific Institution. Please note, the VHA FOIA Office is working with the VA FOIA Service to enhance the detail of the invoice.

New Invoice - 19-00008-TEST

Invoice Date*: 10/11/2019

Comments:

Requester Category: Commercial Use

Fee Items	Description	Unit Rate (\$)	Quantity	Extended (\$)	Charged (\$)	Not Charged (\$)
SEARCH						
a. Commerical	Commerical - Search	56.75 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	12.00	681.00	681.00	0.00
b. Educational or Non-Scientific Institution	Educational or Non-Scientific L...	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
c. News Media	News Media - Search	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
d. Other	Other - Search	0.00 /1 HOUR(S) Variable	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
REVIEW						
a. Commercial	Commercial - Review	45.37 /1.00 HOUR(S) Variable	25.00	1,134.25	1,134.25	0.00
REPRODUCTION						
a. Commercial	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 PAGE(S) Fixed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
b. Educational or Non-Scientific Institution	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 COPIES Fixed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
c. New Media	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 COPIES Fixed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
d. Other	Pages Reproduced	0.15 /1 COPIES Fixed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
e. Miscellaneous	Miscellaneous (CDs, DVDs, etc.)	3.00 /1.00 UNIT(S) Variable	1.00	3.00	3.00	0.00
ACTUAL DIRECT COSTS						
		1.00 /1.00 UNIT(S) Fixed	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total:				1,818.25	1,818.25	0.00

Invoice Memo: TBD

Create **Close**

4. If the displayed information is accurate, select **Create** to create the invoice.
5. Select **OK** to the pop-up box, "Are you sure you want to create this invoice?"
6. If the total dollar amount exceeds the amount entered on the **Request Information** screen, a pop-up box will appear stating, "Invoiced Amount has exceeded the willing amount. Do you want to place the request on "Hold"? Select **Yes**, if you want to place the request on-hold. On **Stop the Clock** screen select **Stop the Clock**.

Stop the Clock Original Received Date: 3/21/2019

Reason for Stopping the Clock*: Fee Related Reason

Stop Clock Effective Date*: 10/11/2019

Options

- ☐ Change Review Status
- ☐ Create Task Reminder
- ☐ Send Correspondence

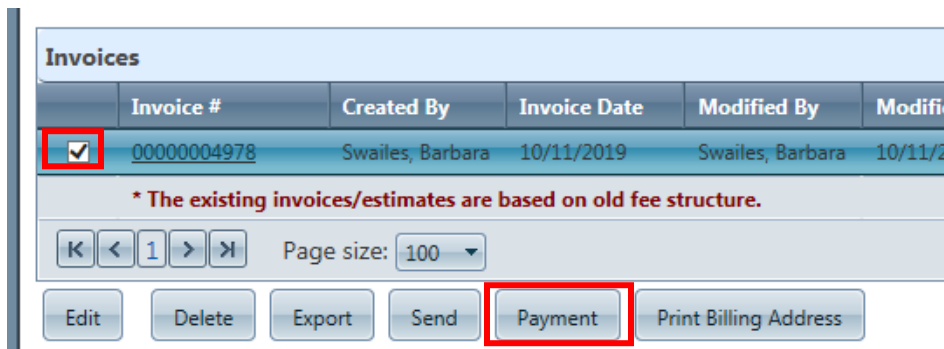
Notes

Stop the Clock

7. Select **OK** to the confirmation pop-up box.
8. Select **OK** to the pop-up box asking, “Do you want to Stop the Clock?”
9. **If the requester does not pay and the request is administratively closed for lack of payment, you will need to remove the cost sheet and invoice from FOIAXpress. If the invoice is not removed it appears that the requester owes FOIA processing fees when the requester chose not to proceed with the request.**

Payment

1. When payment is received from the requester, you will enter the payment from the **Fees/Billing** screen.
2. Check the box next to the **Invoice #** you wish to apply the payment to and the select **Payment**.



	Invoice #	Created By	Invoice Date	Modified By	Modified
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	00000004978	Swales, Barbara	10/11/2019	Swales, Barbara	10/11/2019

* The existing invoices/estimates are based on old fee structure.

Page size: 100

Edit Delete Export Send **Payment** Print Billing Address

3. The **New Payment Screen** will appear.

New Payment - 17-FOI-00078

Payment Details 1

Requester Name : Swanson, Ron Invoice Number : 00000000006
 Payment Type : ☒ Payment ☐ Refund Invoice Amount : \$58.00
 Payment Date : 2/16/2017 Invoice Balance Due : \$58.00

Amount Details 2

Cash/Money Order (\$) : Check (\$) :
 Credit Card (\$) :

Upload Copy of Payment 3

Drag and Drop Zone

Attachment Name/Description :

*Only a single attachment is accepted for each payment.

Notes 4

Note: * fields are mandatory

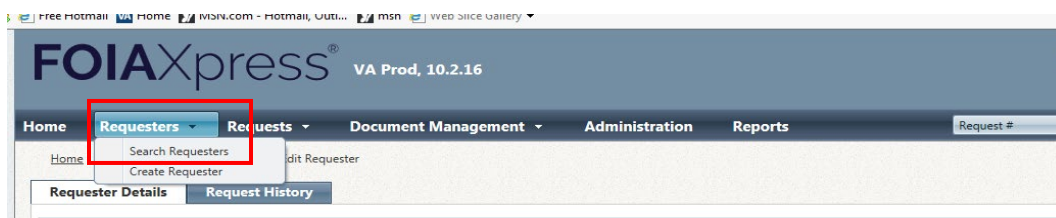
1. **Payment Details:** Information about the invoice being paid and the payment being applied.
 2. **Amount Details:** Enter the amount received in the correct field for the method used (*Cash/Money Order*, *Check*, or *Credit Card*).
 3. **Upload Copy of Payment:** Use the *Drag and Drop* zone to upload a copy of the payment information or scan it directly into FX using the **Add from Scan** button.
 4. **Notes:** Any additional notes about the payment can be entered in this field.
4. Enter the payment details.
 5. Select **Save**.
 6. Select **Yes** to the pop-up box asking, "A payment has been received and the request is "On Hold-Fee Related Reasons". Do you want to Restart the Clock?".
 7. The **Summary** under **Fees/Billing** should indicate a **Balance Due of \$0** and the **Amount Paid** by the requester.
 8. **ALL** FOIA processing fees must be entered into FOIAXpress for the annual FOIA report.

9. If the requester does not pay and the request is administratively closed for lack of payment, you will need to remove the cost sheet and invoice from FOIAXpress. If the invoice is not removed it appears that the requester owes FOIA processing fees when the requester chose not to proceed with the request.

Editing Requester Information

If the requester has notified you of a change in their mailing address, telephone number, email address, etc. please edit the requester's information as opposed to creating a new entry.

1. Click **Requesters**, **Search Requesters**.



2. The search criteria screen will be displayed. Enter the requester's name, click Search.

A screenshot of the FOIAXpress Search Criteria screen. The 'First Name' and 'Last Name' fields are highlighted with a red box. The 'Search' button is also highlighted with a red box. The screen displays various search criteria fields including First Name, Last Name, Email Address, City, Country, State, Organization, Category, Delinquent, and PAL Requester. There is also a section for Custom Fields.

3. A list of requesters with the same first and last name will appear or if using the * to search, with a variation of the entered first and last name.
4. From the list, highlight the Requester you want to edit. Select **Edit**.
5. The **Edit Requester** screen will be displayed and will include **Requester Details** and **Requester History** tabs.


6. Modify Requester details as required in the **Requester Details Tab**.
7. Select **Save** to save the changes. **Save** is at the bottom of the screen and you will need to scroll down.
8. If a Requester's address is updated after clicking **Save**, users will be prompted to either update the address retroactively (for all open and closed Requests). Please select "Open" and "Both Shipping/Billing Address".

Resetting FOIAXpress Passwords and Inactive Accounts

1. To reset a forgotten password, select "Forgot Password" on the FOIAXpress Log-In screen. You will be prompted to enter your FOIAXpress user name. FOIAXpress will email you an identification code to the email address entered in FOIAXpress. Enter the provided identification code in the "Forgot Password" interface to authorize the creation of a new password.

You are about to access a U.S. Government information system; system usage may be monitored, recorded, and subject to audit. Unauthorized use of the system is prohibited and subject to criminal and civil penalties; and use of the system indicates consent to monitoring and recording.

Welcome, Please log in



User Name :

Password :

Log In

[Forgot Password](#)

2. If you have an inactive FOIAXpress account or having problems logging into FOIAXpress, please sent an email description the issue to the *VHA FOIA Issues* mail group in the GAL.

Trouble Shooting

Unauthorized Access Error Message

- Close FOIAXpress and your internet browser then try logging into FOIAXpress.
- If issue is not resolved, reboot your computer and then try logging into FOIAXpress.
- If issue is still not resolved, submit an email to *VHA FOIA Issues* to check if account is locked.

2. Connectivity Issues

- Close FOIAXpress and your internet browser then try logging into FOIAXpress.
- If issue is not resolved, reboot your computer and then try logging into FOIAXpress.
- If issue is still not resolved, submit an email to *VHA FOIA Issues* to check if system issue.