

§ 612.3 Requirements for making requests.

(a) *Where to send a request.* You may make a FOIA request for records of the National Science Foundation by writing directly to the NSF FOIA Officer, Office of the General Counsel, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1265, Arlington, VA 22230. Requests may also be sent by facsimile to (703) 292-9041 or by email to foia@nsf.gov. The National Science Foundation includes one agency component, the NSF Office of the Inspector General (OIG). For records maintained by the NSF OIG, you may write directly to the Office of Inspector General, National Science Foundation, 4201 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1135, Arlington, VA 22230. Requests may also be sent to the OIG by facsimile to (703) 292-9158. The NSF FOIA Officer and the OIG component will also forward requests as appropriate.

(b) *Form of request.* A FOIA request need not be in any particular format, but it must be in writing, include the requester's name and mailing address, and be clearly identified both on the envelope and in the letter, or in a facsimile or electronic mail message as a Freedom of Information Act or "FOIA" request. It must describe the records sought with sufficient specificity to permit identification, and include agreement to pay applicable fees as described in § 612.10. NSF and its OIG component are not obligated to act upon a request until it meets these procedural requirements.

(c) *Personal records.* (1) If you are making a request for records about yourself and the records are not contained in a Privacy Act system of records, your request will be processed only under the FOIA, since the Privacy Act does not apply. If the records about you are contained in a Privacy Act system of records, NSF will respond with information on how to make a Privacy Act request (see NSF Privacy Act regulations at 45 CFR 613.2).

(2) If you are making a request for personal information about another individual, either a written authorization signed by that individual in accordance with § 613.2(f) of this chapter permitting disclosure of those records to you, or proof that that individual is deceased (for example, a copy of a death certificate or a published obituary) will help the agency process your request.

(d) *Description of records sought.* Your request must describe the records that you seek in enough detail to enable NSF personnel to locate them with a reasonable amount of effort. A record must have been created or obtained by NSF and be under the control of NSF at the time of the request to be subject to the FOIA. NSF has no obligation under the FOIA to create, compile, or obtain a record to satisfy a FOIA request. Whenever possible, your request should include specific descriptive information about each record sought, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient, and subject matter of the record. As a general rule, the more specific you are about the records or type of records that you want, the more likely the Foundation will be able to locate those records in response to your request, and the more likely fees will be reduced or eliminated. If NSF determines that your request does not reasonably describe records, you will be advised what additional information is needed to perfect your request or why your request is otherwise insufficient.

(e) *Agreement to pay fees.* Your request must state that you will promptly pay the total fees chargeable under this regulation or set a maximum amount you are willing to pay. NSF does not

charge if fees total less than \$25.00. If you seek a waiver of fees, please see § 612.10(k) for a discussion of the factors you must address. If you place an inadequate limit on the amount you will pay, or have failed to make payments for previous requests, NSF may require advance payment (see § 612.10(i)).

(f) *Receipt date.* A request that meets the requirements of this section will be considered received on the date it is properly received by the Office of the General Counsel or the Office of the Inspector General. In determining which records are responsive to a FOIA request, the NSF will include only records in its possession as of the date the NSF or OIG begins its search. If any other date is used, the NSF or OIG shall inform the requester of that date.

(g) *Publications excluded.* For the purpose of public requests for records the term “record” does not include publications which are available to the public in the Federal Register, or by sale or free distribution. Such publications may be obtained from the Government Printing Office, the National Technical Information Service, or through NSF's Home Page on the World Wide Web at <http://www.nsf.gov/publications/>. Requests for such publications will be referred to or the requester informed of the appropriate source.