



CORE ARTICLE 155

Demanding Transparency: Records, Oversight, Appeals, and Public Accountability

Transparency is not a request for institutional kindness. It is a pressure system made from records, deadlines, written reasons, appeals, audits, hearings, public files, and a chain of custody that makes denial visible.



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ACCOUNTABILITY BEGINS WITH RECORDS

Name the Action, the Office, and the File

Institutions survive broad accusations by dividing responsibility until nobody appears to own the result. A serious transparency campaign reverses that process. Name the decision or operation, the office with authority, the people or systems that executed it, the contractors involved, and the records each step should have created.

Start with ordinary administrative residue: policies, directives, delegations, legal reviews, budgets, purchase orders, contracts, statements of work, invoices, system notices, privacy assessments, meeting calendars, visitor logs, correspondence, audit trails, incident reports, complaints, referrals, after-action reports, and records-destruction schedules. Secret activity still consumes money, equipment, labor, permissions, and storage.

Every request should force three answers: what happened, under what authority, and where the record is kept. If the agency refuses, the refusal becomes a new document with a date, signer, exemption, search description, and appeal route. Silence is no longer empty once it has a tracking number.

FOIA AS AN INVESTIGATIVE TOOL

Request Record Categories, Not Confessions

A federal FOIA request must reasonably describe the records. Target the component most likely to hold them. Name the date range, office, custodian, program term, device class, contract number, location, record type, and preferred electronic format. Set a fee limit and request a tracking number. A narrow request can be expanded after the first production reveals the agency's vocabulary.

Ask for the language the system uses on itself: acquisition plans, market research, capability statements, interagency agreements, memoranda of understanding, test plans, safety reviews, spectrum authorizations, training records, maintenance logs, privacy impact assessments, data-use agreements, access logs, complaints, investigations, and disposition instructions.

Use the FOIA Generator (<https://targeted.army/tools/foia>) to build the request and save the full chain: submission, acknowledgment, clarification, fee notice, extension, search description, production, denial, and appeal. The response tells you which office searched, which terms it accepted, what exemptions it invoked, and which record systems it avoided naming.

OVERSIGHT NETWORK

Send Each Record to the Body With Jurisdiction





Oversight works when evidence is routed by jurisdiction and every office is held to a documented task.

Inspectors general audit and investigate defined agencies and programs. Oversight.gov indexes federal inspector-general offices, published reports, and open recommendations. A submission should identify the program, office, people, dates, records, witnesses, control failure, public consequence, and exact investigative or audit action requested.

Congressional committees can demand documents, hold hearings, request briefings, direct audits, limit appropriations, and write law. Route the dossier to the committee with subject and agency jurisdiction. Lead with a one-page chronology, the five strongest records, the missing record categories, and the oversight act being demanded. Do not make the recipient reconstruct the entire case from a raw archive.

GAO and other auditors follow evidence, controls, compliance, performance, and public money. Audit reports are especially valuable because they identify management responses and open recommendations. Track whether the agency completed the promised correction, changed the deadline, redefined the recommendation, or closed it without resolving the underlying condition.

DENIAL BECOMES EVIDENCE

Turn Withholding Into the Next Reviewable Act

Read every denial line by line. Extract the exemption, claimed harm, record category, date, decision maker, search description, segregability statement, fee ruling, and appeal deadline. Compare the response with the original scope. Agencies often answer the easiest fragment while leaving the operational record untouched.

An administrative appeal can challenge an inadequate search, wrong component, narrow interpretation, unsupported exemption, excessive redaction, failure to segregate releasable material, fee decision, denied expedition, missing format, or delay. Attach the request, acknowledgment, response, and a numbered explanation of each error. Preserve proof of delivery.



The Administrative Procedure Act provides standards for reviewing qualifying final agency action and for compelling action unlawfully withheld or unreasonably delayed. The critical preparation occurs before review: consistent requests, preserved deadlines, written objections, complete exhibits, and a record showing exactly what the agency did.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY

Build a Dossier That Can Outlast Delay

Accountability fails when the record is fragmented across inboxes and personal drives. Centralize the chronology, duplicate the originals, and build an index that a new investigator can understand in minutes. Every file should answer where it came from, when it was obtained, what it shows, and which question remains open.

Continue with Privacy Is a Human Right (<https://targeted.army/content/rights/privacy-is-a-human-right>) to define the protected boundary, The 1973 MKUltra Records Purge (<https://targeted.army/content/archives/1973-mkultra-records-purge>) to trace the consequences of destroyed files, and the Beginner's Guide to TARGETED.ARMV (<https://targeted.army/content/defense/beginners-guide-targeted-army>) for the full site workflow. The goal is not another unanswered letter. The goal is a public record that makes the next denial cost more than the last one.

- Maintain one master chronology for requests, tracking numbers, custodians, deadlines, productions, denials, appeals, referrals, and promised actions.
- Use the Evidence Tracker (<https://targeted.army/tools/evidence>) for incidents and responses, and the Matrix (<https://targeted.army/tools/matrix>) for officials, contractors, programs, records, oversight bodies, and unresolved links.
- Publish primary records with dates, source paths, redaction notes, and hashes; keep private identifiers under deliberate control.
- Use the File Explorer (<https://targeted.army/tools/explorer>) to index public files and the article ZIP and manifest to distribute a fixed package.
- Track changing explanations, missed deadlines, open recommendations, closed investigations, and commitments made in public testimony.

SOURCE LEDGER

Primary Sources and Public Records

1. Freedom of Information Act Statute

U.S. Department of Justice / Current Through July 19, 2026

<https://www.foia.gov/foia-statute.html>

2. Freedom of Information Act Frequently Asked Questions

U.S. Department of Justice / Accessed July 19, 2026

<https://www.foia.gov/faq.html>

3. Oversight.gov

Council of the Inspectors General on Integrity and Efficiency / Accessed July 19, 2026

<https://www.oversight.gov/>



4. 5 U.S.C. 706: Scope of Review

Office of the Law Revision Counsel, U.S. House of Representatives / Current Through July 19, 2026

<https://uscode.house.gov/view.xhtml?edition=prelim&num=0&req=granuleid%3AUSC-prelim-title5-section706>

5. Government Auditing Standards: 2024 Revision

U.S. Government Accountability Office / February 1, 2024

<https://www.gao.gov/yellowbook>

Related TARGETED.ARMY Content

[Privacy Is a Human Right](#)

<https://targeted.army/content/rights/privacy-is-a-human-right>

[The 1973 MKUltra Records Purge](#)

<https://targeted.army/content/archives/1973-mkultra-records-purge>

[Beginner's Guide to TARGETED.ARMY](#)

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