



United States International Trade Commission
2025 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT



Chief FOIA Officer:
Lisa R. Barton
Secretary to the Commission

2025 USITC Chief FOIA Officer Report

If you have questions regarding this report, please contact:

Lisa R. Barton

Secretary to the Commission

U.S. International Trade Commission

500 E Street, SW

Washington, DC 20436

Telephone: (202) 205-2595

Email: lisa.barton@usitc.gov

Sharon Bellamy

FOIA Liaison, Office of the Secretary

U.S. International Trade Commission

500 E Street, SW

Washington, DC 20436

Telephone: (202) 205-2219

Email: sharon.bellamy@usitc.gov

U.S. INTERNATIONAL TRADE COMMISSION

2025 CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Congress established the U.S. International Trade Commission (USITC or Commission) in 1916. It is an independent, quasi-judicial federal agency whose mission is to investigate and make determinations in proceedings involving imports claimed to injure a domestic industry or violate U.S. intellectual property rights; provide independent analysis and information on tariffs, trade, and competitiveness; and maintain the U.S. tariff schedule.

The Commission has identified two mission-related strategic goals. First, it will produce sound, objective, and timely determinations in trade remedy proceedings. Second, the Commission will produce independent, objective, and timely analysis and information on tariffs, trade, and competitiveness. These goals reflect the interests of its principal customers – the president, the U.S. Trade Representative, and Congress, and thereby also serve U.S. industry, workers, and the general public. In order to deliver greater impact, the Commission also established a management goal to efficiently and effectively advance the agency's mission.

The USITC's Chief Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Officer administers the USITC's FOIA Program with the assistance of the FOIA Public Liaison. As a small agency, the USITC maintains staff commensurate with its needs to effectively implement its FOIA program.

2025 USITC Chief FOIA Officer Report

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(j)(1), the USITC has designated a senior official as its Chief FOIA Officer, Lisa R. Barton, Secretary to the Commission.

The Commission's FOIA program is reflected in the mission and function statement of the Office of the Secretary, and is an integral part of the Commission's records management program. The Commission has taken efforts to promote transparency and accessibility of public information regarding its investigative work via the Electronic Document Information System (EDIS), the agency's investigative record, and the Investigations Database System (IDS), which contains investigation information across all three major investigatory missions: unfair imports, import injury, and factfinding matters.

The USITC places a high priority on training and education. During calendar year 2024, FOIA staff attended the Department of Justice's (DOJ) training sessions covering updates to the annual report, and the Chief FOIA Officer's Council meetings. Agency staff now have access to DOJ issued FOIA training through our agency's Learning Management System.

The USITC's FOIA Program continued to update its FOIA correspondence templates to promote efficiency and expediency in responding to FOIA requests. Using templates as a baseline to respond to requestors also continues to ensure that the agency provides clear and consistent information to requestors. To enhance consistent, thorough responses to FOIA requests, FOIA personnel meet with each responsible programming office prior to searches. Agency staff assigned to FOIA appeals also conducted a review of our appeals process and implemented new procedures to streamline the review process.

As part of its continuous efforts to ensure that the USITC's FOIA Program operates efficiently and effectively, Commission FOIA staff, including the Chief FOIA Officer and the FOIA Public Liaison, meet at least quarterly to review the current-year FOIA files. We review our FOIA checklist to ensure that all appropriate documents are contained within each file, as well as recorded accurately, and we ensure that staff has followed all internal procedures. This approach enables the FOIA staff to continually improve and streamline the FOIA process to ensure that our FOIA Program operates efficiently and effectively.

The Commission utilizes electronic means, when feasible, to communicate with FOIA requestors. When requestors provide their email address, we respond by email and acknowledge receipt of their request. We also use email as an opportunity to communicate with requestors during processing the FOIA request and to respond to any general concerns or feedback relating to the request. Additionally, the Commission provides electronic records whenever possible and uses software to electronically apply any necessary redactions to released records. In addition, the USITC website provides the public with reference materials and a guide for requesting records or information (<https://www.usitc.gov/offices/secretary/foia/index.htm>). Additionally, at the end of 2023, the Commission procured FOIA-related software with the goal to utilize the case management and metrics data features and is currently working to implement the new system in the 2025 calendar year.

The Commission uses separate tracking for simple requests. Notably, we submitted all of the Commission's quarterly FOIA reports to our agency's web team for transmittal to DOJ for web posting. All quarterly reports were timely under DOJ's deadlines.

2025 USITC Chief FOIA Officer Report

To identify records and information of interest for proactive public disclosure, the Commission applies an informal, but extensive, review of records. Staff working in each functional area review their applicable section(s) of the Commission's website to determine how best to address the interests of the public. The USITC website provides links to the resources of interest to the public noted below.

- *Federal Register* notices (since March 2024, published **1543** columns notices in the Federal Register and posted **68** notices on the Commission's website),
- Publications (since March 2024, made **84** additional publications available online),
- EDIS (since March 2024, posted over **14,000** public documents),
- Press releases (**126** press releases issued and posted during the 2024 calendar year), and
- The Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States (HTS) (received approximately **10.94** million visits to the HTS Search website for tariff information in 2024.).

The Commission offers free email updates to the public through eSubscribe. Users may select multiple topic areas of interest to receive email notifications. Likewise, the Commission offers free document notification filings via an RSS feed in EDIS.

Additionally, the Commission maintains the FOIA Releasable Documents page, which provides the public with documents requested under FOIA. The Commission actively reviews closed FOIA requests throughout the year in order to be able to proactively disclose records likely to be of interest to the public. We are dedicated to ensuring openness and transparency as is evidenced by our commitment to increase proactive disclosures. The agency's FOIA Releasable Documents page is available at: <https://www.usitc.gov/secretary/foia/foia-releasable-documents>.

Lastly, IDS (<https://ids.usitc.gov/>), includes information regarding investigation topics, schedules, participants, and outcomes. This system, integrated with EDIS (<https://edis.usitc.gov/>), manages investigations across the Commission and provides helpful features such as advanced search functionalities to aid in accessing Commission investigative data. IDS serves as an authoritative data source, facilitating in-depth search results across multiple practice areas. Key investigation information, such as procedural schedules, participants, products, countries, outcomes, and are accessible to the public in an easily searchable format.



500 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20436