



Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Inspector General
Washington, DC 20420



March 1, 2019

Austin Evers
1030 15th Street NW
Suite B255
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Evers:

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request dated January 28, 2018, to VA FOIA Service office, in which you asked for a copy of records as follows:

"All records reflecting costs reimbursed or paid directly by your agency for any reimbursable expenses attributable to any political appointee. Payments or reimbursements include any payments associated with travel (including the travel of any staff or security detail assigned to a political appointee), long-term housing, the cost of government transportation, individual airfare for government employees and/or their spouses, lodging, meals, per diem payments, rental vehicles, overtime payments, payments made via government-issued charge cards or travel cards, or any other reimbursable expenses."

You requested all records from "December 21, 2018, through January 25, 2018." Although your request stated you sought records from "December 21, 2018, through January 25, 2018," it was later clarified "January 25, 2018," should have read "January 25, 2019." You also requested the following:

"records describing the processing of this request, including records sufficient to identify search terms used and locations and custodians searched and any tracking sheets used to track the processing of this request. If your agency uses FOIA questionnaires or certifications completed by individual custodians or components to determine whether they possess responsive materials or to describe how they conducted searches, we also request any such records prepared in connection with the processing of this request."

Your request was forwarded to this office on February 4, 2019, and we assigned it FOIA Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA. Please refer to this number whenever communicating with VA about your request.

Please be advised no responsive documents were found pertaining to portion of your request regarding the "reimbursable expenses attributable to any political appointee."

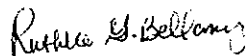
With regards to the portion of your request pertaining to the processing of your request, we have enclosed a copy of the requested records. However, we are withholding information protected under the deliberative process privilege, which permits withholding of all inter-agency or intra-agency information which would not be available by law to a party other than an agency in litigation with the agency, under FOIA Exemption 5, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(5). Specifically, all frank communications between government officials.

We have also withheld all information which, if disclosed, would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy under FOIA Exemption 6, 5 U.S.C. § 552 (b)(6). Specifically, names, job titles and other information which could reveal the identity of individuals mentioned in the records have been withheld. We do not find any public interest that outweighs the privacy interests of the individuals.

For your information, Congress excluded three discrete categories of law enforcement and national security records from the requirements of the FOIA. See 5 U.S.C. 552(c) (2006 & Supp. IV 2010). This response is limited to those records that are subject to the requirements of the FOIA. This is a standard notification that is given to all our requesters and should not be taken as an indication that excluded records do, or do not, exist.

You may appeal the determination made in this response to: Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Inspector General, Office of Counselor (50C), 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420, or by email to: VAOIGFOIA-Appeals@va.gov, or by fax to: (202) 495-5859. If you should choose to make an appeal, your appeal must be sent no later than ninety (90) calendar days after the date of this letter. Your appeal must include the assigned FOIA Tracking Number and any reason(s) why you believe the response was in error. If you choose to appeal only a portion of the determination, you must specify which part of the determination you are appealing. The appeal should include a copy of the request and VA's response. The appeal should be marked, or subject-titled, "Freedom of Information Act Appeal."

Sincerely,



Ruthlee G. Bellamy
Supervisory Government Information Specialist
VA OIG Release of Information Office

Enclosures

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6); (b)(6)
Cc: (b)(6)
Subject: RE: FOIA Request Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA (DUE DATE: 2/22/19)
Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 10:36:08 AM

(b)(6)

FYI, per telephone conversation with (b)(6) earlier this morning, info was emailed to her as requested. There were no travel documents to report in Concur for Mr. Missal during the travel period of 12/21/18-1/25/19.

(b)(5);(b)(6)

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 1:48 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov> (b)(6)@va.gov>
Cc: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: FOIA Request Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA (DUE DATE: 2/22/19)

(b)(6)

Attached is a FOIA request for all documents associated with Mr. Missal's travel between 12/21/18 and 1/25/19 (the request actually indicates 1/25/18 but we have clarified that 18 was a typo and it should be 19).

(b)(5)

If you have any questions about the FOIA, please contact (b)(6) who is working this request for the FOIA office. I am also available to answer any questions you may have about the process.

All responsive documents should be provided to VA OIG FOIA-PA no later than 2/22/19.

Thank you!

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

**Office of Inspector General
Department of Veterans Affairs**

(b)(6)

(b)(6)@va.gov

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Wednesday, February 13, 2019 11:44 AM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FOIA Request Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA

Good Morning (b)(6)

Please find attached a FOIA request for your review. Please provide our office any documents you may have responsive to the request.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Office of Inspector General
Release of Information Office (50CI)

From: (b)(6)
To: (b)(6)
Subject: FW: FOIA Request Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA (DUE DATE: 2/22/19)
Date: Wednesday, February 20, 2019 7:14:11 AM
Attachments: (b)(5);(b)(6)

(b)(5);(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 4:32 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: RE: FOIA Request Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA (DUE DATE: 2/22/19)

(b)(5);(

After looking again there actually is no travel during that date range. He traveled 12/10/18 and 1/28/19.

Thanks

(b)(6)

From: (b)(6)
Sent: Thursday, February 14, 2019 4:27 PM
To: (b)(6)@va.gov>
Subject: FW: FOIA Request Tracking Number 19-00198-FOIA (DUE DATE: 2/22/19)

Sorry,
It is 12/21/18-1/25/19.....
Thanks (b)