The Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation's Freedom of Information Act Report Fiscal Year 2019



Office of the General Counsel Disclosure Division

Report to the Attorney General of the United States For the Period of October 1, 2018 – September 30, 2019

I. BASIC INFORMATION REGARDING REPORT

1. Name, title, address, and telephone number of person(s) to be contacted with questions about the report:

D. Camilla Perry, Disclosure OfficerPension Benefit Guaranty Corporation1200 K Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20005-4026(202) 326-4040

2. Electronic address for report on the World Wide Web:

https://www.pbgc.gov/sites/default/files/2019-foia-annual-report.pdf

3. How to obtain a copy of the report in paper form:

A paper copy of the report can be obtained by writing the Office of the General Counsel, Disclosure Division, PBGC at the address in I.1 above, or by printing a copy at the Web address listed in I.2 above.

II. MAKING A FOIA REQUEST

1. Names, addresses, and telephone numbers of PBGC FOIA Officers and FOIA Liaison. FOIA requests should be submitted directly to the Disclosure Division

Attention: D. Camilla Perry, Disclosure Officer Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation 1200 K Street, N.W., Suite 11101 Washington, DC 20005-4026 Phone (202) 326-4040

Chief FOIA and Privacy Act Officer Paul Chalmers, Deputy General Counsel

FOIA Public Liaison Betty Gamez

A FOIA request should include a description of the requested records, an assurance that the requester is willing to pay the fees, if any, associated with processing the request, and the complete address of the requester. In addition, it is helpful to provide a phone number where the requester can be reached during business hours so that any questions regarding the scope of the request can be resolved quickly. If the requester is unsure of how to describe the records they desire or have specific questions relating

to processing of a request, they should call the FOIA staff for advice at (202) 326-4040 prior to filing their request.

2. Brief description of why some requests are not granted and an overview of certain general categories of the agency's records to which the FOIA exemptions applies

Records subject to disclosure and application of FOIA exemptions include, in part; records submitted to PBGC and created by PBGC in connection with processing distress plan terminations, or standard termination filing, comments on proposed regulations and documents outlining PBGC policies and procedures, as well as documents underlying PBGC policies and procedures.

Some requests are not granted because one or more of the exemptions from FOIA's disclosure requirement applies to the records requested. The primary exemptions used by PBGC are (b) (3), (4), (5), (6) and (7)(c).

PBGC denies access to records which have been submitted to the agency under Title 29 USC 4010 and 29 USC 4043 pursuant to exemption (b)(3).

In addition, companies often submit confidential financial and/or commercial information to PBGC in the course of doing business. This information is withheld under exemption (b)(4).

In some instances, PBGC did not possess any of the records that were requested.

Exemption (b) (5) in part, allows for the protection of records that reflect the deliberative process within the agency. It can be used to protect portions of records that contain pre-decisional opinions recommendations and advice when the disclosure of that information may have a chilling effect on the decision-making process. Exemption (b) (5) also protects attorney work product and attorney client communications.

In the vast majority of cases, denial of access to records involve requests by third parties for personal information about individuals contained in the individual's Privacy Act record or other record, where the subject individual has not authorized release of their personal information, a Privacy Act routine use does not apply, or the FOIA does not require the PBGC to otherwise release the personal information. These records or information are withheld under exemption (b)(6).

3. FOIA Regulations (including Fee Schedule)

PBGC FOIA regulations are available online at:

https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/textidx?SID=16114243668c4b39eb9106f2be470b7c&mc=true&node=pt29.9.4901&rgn=div5

III. ACRONYMS, DEFINITIONS, AND EXEMPTIONS

- 1. Agency-specific acronyms or other terms: None
- 2. Definitions of terms used in this report:
 - a. **Administrative Appeal** a request to a federal agency asking that it review at a higher administrative level a FOIA determination made by the agency at the initial request level.
 - b. **Average Number** the number obtained by dividing the sum of a group of numbers by the quantity of numbers in the group. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the average number is 8.
 - c. **Backlog** the number of requests or administrative appeals that are pending at an agency at the end of the fiscal year that are beyond the statutory time period for a response.
 - d. **Component** for agencies that process requests on a decentralized basis, a "component" is an entity, also sometimes referred to as an Office, Division, Bureau, Center, or Directorate, within the agency that processes FOIA requests. The FOIA now requires that agencies include in their Annual FOIA Report data for both the agency overall and for each principal component of the agency.

NOTE: PBGC is centralized and therefore does not have multiple components.

- e. **Consultation** the procedure whereby the agency responding to a FOIA request first forwards a record to another agency for its review because that agency has an interest in the record. Once the agency in receipt of the consultation finishes its review of the record, it responds back to the agency that forwarded it. That agency, in turn, will then respond to the FOIA requester.
- f. **Exemption 3 Statute** a federal statute that exempts information from disclosure and which the agency relies on to withhold information under subsection (b)(3) of the FOIA.
- g. FOIA/PA Request a FOIA request is generally a request to a federal agency for access to records concerning another person (i.e., a "third-party" request), or concerning an organization, or a particular topic of interest. FOIA requests also include requests made by requesters seeking records concerning themselves (i.e., "first-party" requests) when those requesters are not subject to the Privacy Act, such as non-U.S. citizens. Moreover, because all first-party requesters should be afforded the benefit of both the access provisions of the FOIA as well as those of

the Privacy Act, FOIA requests also include any first-party requests where an agency determines that it must search beyond its Privacy Act "systems of records" or where a Privacy Act exemption applies, and the agency looks to FOIA to afford the greatest possible access. All requests which require the agency to utilize the FOIA in responding to the requester are included in this Report. Additionally, a FOIA request includes records referred to the agency for processing and direct response to the requester. It does not, however, include records for which the agency has received a consultation from another agency. (Consultations are reported separately in Section XII of this Report.)

NOTE: PBGC processed all requests for access to records, regardless of which law was cited by the requester, under both the FOIA and PA, as appropriate.

- h. **Full Grant** an agency decision to disclose all records in full in response to a FOIA request.
- i. **Full Denial** an agency decision not to release any records in response to a FOIA request because the records are exempt in their entireties under one or more of the FOIA exemptions, or for some procedural reason, such as when no records could be located.
- j. **Median Number** the middle, not average, number. For example, of 3, 7, and 14, the median number is 7.
- k. **Multi-track Processing** a system in which simple requests requiring relatively minimal review are placed in one processing track and more voluminous and complex requests are placed in one or more other tracks. Requests granted expedited processing are placed in yet another track. Requests in each track are processed on a first-in/first out basis.
 - i. **Expedited Processing** an agency will process a FOIA request on an expedited basis when a requester satisfies the requirements for expedited processing as set forth in the statute and in agency regulations.
 - ii. **Simple Request** a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in its fastest (non- expedited) track based on the low volume and/or simplicity of the records requested.
 - iii. **Complex Request** a FOIA request that an agency using multi-track processing places in a slower track based on the high volume and/or complexity of the records requested.
- 1. **Partial Grant/Partial Denial** in response to a FOIA request, an agency decision to disclose portions or the records and to withhold other portions that are exempt under the FOIA, or to otherwise deny a portion of the request for a procedural reason.

5

- m. **Pending Request or Pending Administrative Appeal** a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has **not** taken final action in all respects.
- n. **Perfected Request** a request for records which reasonably describes such records and is made in accordance with published rules stating the time, place, fees (if any), and procedures to be followed.
- o. **Processed Request or Processed Administrative Appeal** a request or administrative appeal for which an agency has taken final action in all respects.
- p. **Range in Number of Days** the lowest and highest number of days to process requests or administrative appeals.
- q. **Time Limits** the time period in the statute for an agency to respond to a FOIA request (ordinarily twenty working days from receipt of a perfected FOIA request).
- 3. Concise description of the nine FOIA exemptions:

An agency may withhold information from disclosure if the information requested is the kind described in any of the nine exemptions listed in the FOIA.

- 1. **Exemption 1**: classified national defense and foreign relations information.
- 2. **Exemption 2**: information that is related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of an agency.
- 3. **Exemption 3**: information that is prohibited from disclosure by another federal law.
- 4. Exemption 4: trade secrets and other confidential business information.
- 5. **Exemption 5**: inter-agency or intra-agency communications that are protected by legal privileges.
- 6. **Exemption 6**: information which, if released, would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.
- 7. **Exemption 7**: records or information compiled for law enforcement purposes, to the extent that the production of those records (A) could reasonably be expected to interfere with enforcement proceedings, (B) would deprive a

person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication, (C) could reasonably be expected to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, (D) could reasonably be expected to disclose the identity of a confidential source, (E) would disclose techniques and procedures for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or would disclose guidelines for law enforcement investigations or prosecutions, or (F) could reasonably be expected to endanger the life or physical safety of any individual.

- 8. Exemption 8: Information relating to the supervision of financial institutions.
- 9. Exemption 9: Geological information on wells.

IV. EXEMPTION 3 STATUTES

Statute	Type of Information Withheld	Case Citation	Agency / Component	Number of Times Relied upon by Agency / Component	Total Number of Times Relied upon by Agency Overall
29 U.S.C. § 1310 (c) (ERISA section 4010)	Audited financial report and financial information necessary to determine the liabilities and assets of plans covered by Title 4 of ERISA.	N/A	PBGC	2	2
29 U.S.C. § 1343 (f) (ERISA section 4043)	Any information or documentary material submitted to the [agency] pursuant to Section [1343 of title 29 of the United States Code]	N/A	PBGC	5	5
41 U.S.C. § 253b(m)(1) (currently at 41 U.S.C. § 4702)	are in the possession or control of an executive agency and that have not been set forth or incorporated by reference into contracts.	Sinkfield v. HUD, No. 10-885, 2012 U.S. Dist. LEXIS 35233, at *13-15 (S.D. Ohio Mar. 15, 2012); Margolin v. NASA, No. 09-CV-00421, 2011 WL 1303221, at *6 (D. Nev. Mar. 31, 2011); Hornbostel v. U.S. Dep't of the Interior, 305 F. Supp. 2d 21, 30 (D.D.C. 2003), summary affirmance granted, No. 03-5257, 2004 WL 1900562 (D.C. Cir. Aug. 25, 2004).	PBGC	3	3

V.A. FOIA REQUESTS -- RECEIVED, PROCESSED AND PENDING FOIA REQUESTS

Agency / Component	Number of Requests Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Requests Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
PBGC	89	2348	2232	205
AGENCY OVERALL	89	2348	2232	205

V.B.(1). DISPOSITION OF FOIA REQUESTS -- ALL PROCESSED REQUESTS

		Number			Number of	of Full Den	ials Base	ed on Reaso	ns Other t	han Exe	mptions		
Agency / Component	Number of Full	Partial Grants / Partial	Number of Full Denials Based on Exemptions	No Records	All Records Referred to Another Component or Agency	Withdrawn	Fee- Related Reason	not	Improper FOIA Request for Other Reason	Not	Duplicate Request	Other *Explain in Chart Below	TOTAL
PBGC	1,334	414	142	118	0	28	6	5	23	2	160	0	2,232
AGENCY OVERALL	1,334	414	142	118	0	28	6	5	23	2	160	0	2,232

V.B.(2). DISPOSITION OF FOIA REQUESTS -- "OTHER" REASONS FOR "FULL DENIALS BASED ON REASONS OTHER THAN EXEMPTIONS"

Agency / Component	Description of "Other" Reasons for Denials from Chart B(1)	Number of Times "Other" Reason Was Relied Upon	TOTAL
PBGC	N/A	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL		0	0

V.B.(3). DISPOSITION OF FOIA REQUESTS -- NUMBER OF TIMES EXEMPTIONS APPLIED

Agency / Component	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex. 7(D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
PBGC	0	0	9	30	27	432	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	9	30	27	432	1	0	2	0	2	0	0	0

VI.A. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS OF INITIAL DETERMINATIONS OF FOIA REQUESTS -- RECEIVED, PROCESSED, AND PENDING ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number of Appeals Pending as of Start of Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Received in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Processed in Fiscal Year	Number of Appeals Pending as of End of Fiscal Year
PBGC	1	9	9	1
AGENCY OVERALL	1	9	9	1

VI.B. DISPOSITION OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS -- ALL PROCESSED APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number Affirmed on Appeal	Number Partially Affirmed & Partially Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number Completely Reversed/Remanded on Appeal	Number of Appeals Closed for Other Reasons	TOTAL
PBGC	5	0	0	4	9
AGENCY OVERALL	5	0	0	4	9

VI.C.(1). REASONS FOR DENIAL ON APPEAL -- NUMBER OF TIMES EXEMPTIONS APPLIED

Agency / Component	Ex. 1	Ex. 2	Ex. 3	Ex. 4	Ex. 5	Ex. 6	Ex. 7(A)	Ex. 7(B)	Ex. 7(C)	Ex. 7(D)	Ex. 7(E)	Ex. 7(F)	Ex. 8	Ex. 9
PBGC	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

VI.C.(2). REASONS FOR DENIAL ON APPEAL -- REASONS OTHER THAN EXEMPTIONS

Agency / Component	No Records	Records Referred at Initial Request Level	Request Withdrawn	Fee- Related Reason	not		Agency	Duplicate Request or Appeal	in Litigation	Appeal Based Solely on Denial of Request for Expedited Processing	in chart below
PBGC	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4
AGENCY OVERALL	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4

VI.C.(3). REASONS FOR DENIAL ON APPEAL -- "OTHER" REASONS

Agency / Component	Description of "Other" Reasons for Denial on Appeal from Chart C(2)	Number of Times "Other" Reason Was Relied Upon	TOTAL
PBGC	Improper Appeal	4	4
AGENCY OVERALL			4

VI.C.(4). RESPONSE TIME FOR ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Lowest Number of Days	Highest Number of Days
AGENCY OVERALL	17	15.33	6.0	20

VI.C.(5). TEN OLDEST PENDING ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component		10th Oldest Appeal	9th	8th	7th	бth	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Appeal
AGENCY	Date of Appeal	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2019-09-09
OVERALL	Number of Days Pending	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15

VII.A. FOIA REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME FOR ALL PROCESSED PERFECTED REQUESTS

	SIMPLE					COMPLEX				EXPEDITED PROCESSING			
Agency /		U		U		0		0		Average		0	
Component	Number	Number	Number										
	of Days	of Days	of Days										
AGENCY		10.05	_				_	• 10					
OVERALL	9.0	10.87	<1	115	26	35.97	<1	249	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

VII.B. PROCESSED REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME FOR PERFECTED REQUESTS IN WHICH INFORMATION WAS GRANTED

	SIMPLE					COMPLEX				EXPEDITED PROCESSING			
Agency / Component		Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Number	Average Number of Days	Number	Number	
AGENCY OVERALL	9.0	11.01	<1	115.0	26.0	36.51	<1	249	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

VII.C. PROCESSED SIMPLE REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME IN DAY INCREMENTS

Agency / Component	<1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101- 120 Days	121- 140 Days	141- 160 Days	161- 180 Days	181- 200 Days	201- 300 Days	301- 400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
PBGC	1,052	81	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,140
AGENCY OVERALL	1,052	81	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1,140

VII.C. PROCESSED COMPLEX REQUESTS -- RESPONSE TIME IN DAY INCREMENTS

Agency / Component	<1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101- 120 Days	121- 140 Days	141- 160 Days	161- 180 Days	181- 200 Days	201- 300 Days	301- 400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
PBGC	404	325	167	88	29	11	6	4	1	2	19	0	0	1,056
AGENCY OVERALL	404	325	167	88	29	11	6	4	1	2	19	0	0	1,056

VII.C. PROCESSED REQUESTS GRANTED EXPEDITED PROCESSING -- RESPONSE TIME IN DAY INCREMENTS

Agency / Component	<1-20 Days	21-40 Days	41-60 Days	61-80 Days	81-100 Days	101- 120 Days	121- 140 Days	141- 160 Days	161- 180 Days	181- 200 Days	201- 300 Days	301- 400 Days	401+ Days	TOTAL
PBGC	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

VII.D. PENDING REQUESTS -- ALL PENDING PERFECTED REQUESTS

		SIMPLE			COMPLEX		EXPED	TED PROC	ESSING
Agency / Component	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days	Number Pending	Median Number of Days	Average Number of Days
AGENCY OVERALL	145	6.0	6.01	60	9.0	9.84	0	N/A	N/A

VII.E. PENDING REQUESTS -- TEN OLDEST PENDING PERFECTED REQUESTS

Agency / Component		10th Oldest Request	9th	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Request
AGENCY	Date of Receipt	2019-09-06	2019-09-06	2019-09-06	2019-09-05	2019-09-05	2019-09-05	2019-09-05	2019-09-05	2019-09-05	2019-09-05
OVERALL	Number of Days Pending	16	16	16	17	17	17	17	17	17	17

VIII.A. REQUESTS FOR EXPEDITED PROCESSING

Agency / Component	Number Granted	Number Denied	Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	Average Number of Days to Adjudicate	Number Adjudicated Within Ten Calendar Days
AGENCY OVERALL	0	45	7.0	6.93	37

VIII.B. REQUESTS FOR FEE WAIVER

Agency / Component	Number Granted		Median Number of Days to Adjudicate	
AGENCY OVERALL	6	20	0.5	0.58

IX. FOIA PERSONNEL AND COSTS

		PERSONNEL		COSTS				
Agency / Component	Number of "Full- Time FOIA Employees"	Number of "Equivalent Full- Time FOIA Employees"	Total Number of "Full-Time FOIA Staff"	Processing Costs	Litigation-Related Costs	Total Costs		
PBGC	10	1.52	11.52	\$333,541.00	\$0.00	\$333,541.00		
AGENCY OVERALL	10	1.52	11.52	\$333,541.00	\$0.00	\$333,541.00		

X. FEES COLLECTED FOR PROCESSING REQUESTS

Agency / Component	Total Amount of Fees Collected	Percentage of Total Costs
PBGC	\$1,374.00	0.41%
AGENCY OVERALL	\$1,374.00	0.41%

XI.A. NUMBER OF TIMES SUBSECTION (C) USED

Agency/Component	Number of Times Subsection (C) Used
PBGC	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0

XI.B. NUMBER OF SUBSECTION (A)(2) POSTINGS

Agency/Component	Number of Records Posted by the FOIA Office	Number of Records Posted by Program Offices
PBGC	961	N/A
AGENCY OVERALL	961	

XII.A. BACKLOGS OF FOIA REQUESTS AND ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of Fiscal Year	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of Fiscal Year
PBGC	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0

XII.B. CONSULTATIONS ON FOIA REQUESTS -- RECEIVED, PROCESSED, AND PENDING CONSULTATIONS

Agency / Component	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that were <u>Pending</u> at the Agency as of <u>Start</u> of the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations <u>Received</u> from Other Agencies During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that were <u>Processed</u> by the Agency During the Fiscal Year	Number of Consultations Received from Other Agencies that were <u>Pending</u> at the Agency as of <u>End</u> of the Fiscal Year
PBGC	0	1	1	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	1	1	0

XII.C. CONSULTATIONS ON FOIA REQUESTS -- TEN OLDEST CONSULTATIONS RECEIVED FROM OTHER AGENCIES AND PENDING AT THE AGENCY

Agency / Component		10th Oldest Consultation	9fn	8th	7th	6th	5th	4th	3rd	2nd	Oldest Consultation
AGENCY	Date	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
OVERALL	Number of Days	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

XII.D.(1). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF REQUESTS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT --REQUESTS RECEIVED AND PROCESSED

Agency / Component	NUMBER OF REQ	UESTS <u>RECEIVED</u>	NUMBER OF REQUESTS <u>PROCESSED</u>		
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	
PBGC	1,618	2,348	1,598	2,232	
AGENCY OVERALL	1,618	2,348	1,598	2,232	

XII.D.(2). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF REQUESTS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT --BACKLOGGED REQUESTS

Agency / Component	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Requests as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
PBGC	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0

XII.E.(1). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT -- APPEALS RECEIVED AND PROCESSED

Agency / Component	NUMBER OF APP	EALS <u>RECEIVED</u>	NUMBER OF APPEALS <u>PROCESSED</u>		
	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Received During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Last Year's Annual Report	Number Processed During Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report	
PBGC	14	9	14	9	
AGENCY OVERALL	14	9	14	9	

XII.E.(2). COMPARISON OF NUMBERS OF ADMINISTRATIVE APPEALS FROM PREVIOUS AND CURRENT ANNUAL REPORT -- BACKLOGGED APPEALS

Agency / Component	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Previous Annual Report	Number of Backlogged Appeals as of End of the Fiscal Year from Current Annual Report
PBGC	0	0
AGENCY OVERALL	0	0