HOW TO USE THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT ("FOIA") TO GET COPIES OF YOUR IMMIGRATION RECORDS

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) allows you to request copies of your immigration records from U.S. government agencies. This can help you check your history, prepare for an immigration case, or correct mistakes in your file.

WHICH AGENCY SHOULD YOU CONTACT?

Different immigration records are held by different agencies. Here's where to send your FOIA request:

1. **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS)** – For records related to green card applications, naturalization, asylum, and other petitions.
   - **How to request:** Submit online at https://myaccount.uscis.gov/sign-in
2. **Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)** – For records about immigration detention, deportation proceedings, or enforcement actions.
   - **How to request:** Submit online at https://www.securerelease.us/
3. **Customs and Border Protection (CBP)** – For travel history, border crossings, and entries/exits into the U.S.
   - **How to request:** Submit online at https://www.cbp.gov/site-policy-notices/foia/records
4. **Department of State (DOS)** – For records related to visa applications, consular processing, and U.S. passports.
   - **How to request:** Submit online at https://foia.state.gov/Request/Submit.aspx or mail to:

     Office of Information Programs and Services (A/GIS/IPS)
     U.S. Department of State
     2201 C Street NW, Suite B266
     Washington, D.C. 20520-0000
5. **National Records Center (NRC)** – If you're not sure which agency has your records, start with **USCIS's NRC**, which stores many historical immigration records.

What You Need to Include in Your Request

To speed up your request, include:

- Full name (including any past names)
- Date of birth
- Alien Registration Number (A-Number) (if available). This can be found on most immigration documents.
- A copy of your ID (passport, green card, or driver's license)
- A signed privacy waiver (if requesting records for someone else)

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For **Department of State** records, include:

- Passport number (if applicable)
- Visa application number (if known)
- The name of the consulate or embassy where the visa was processed

How Long Does a FOIA Request Take?

FOIA requests can take **weeks to months** depending on the agency and request volume. You can check the status of your request on each agency's FOIA website:

- **USCIS:** https://first.uscis.gov/#/check-status
- **ICE:** https://www.securerelease.us/
- **CBP:** https://www.securerelease.us/
- **Department of State:** https://foia.state.gov/request/request2.aspx

You may request **expedited processing** of your request when:

1. There is an imminent threat to a person's life or physical safety.
2. A person is facing an upcoming immigration court hearing or removal proceeding.
3. A person is detained in ICE custody and needs records for their case.
4. There is an urgent need for documents to protect due process rights.

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