

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

DEMOCRACY FORWARD FOUNDATION,

Plaintiff,

v.

OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND
BUDGET

Defendants.

Civil Action No. 25-0586 (JEB)

JOINT STATUS REPORT

Plaintiff Democracy Forward Foundation, and Defendant U.S. Office of Management and Budget (collectively, the “Parties”), through counsel, respectfully submit this Joint Status Report pursuant to the Court’s September 28, 2025, Minute Order and the Court’s Standing Order No. 25-55 (JEB) (D.D.C.) and Standing Order No. 25-59 (JEB) (D.D.C.).

1. This is a Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”) case. Plaintiff filed a complaint on February 28, 2025. ECF No. 1. Plaintiff seeks records, broadly speaking, about pauses and freezes of federal financial assistance. *Id.*

2. Defendant answered the complaint on April 13, 2025. ECF No. 11.

3. As the previously reported, Defendant completed a preliminary search for certain potentially-responsive documents, which revealed more than 30,000 records and reported these initial results to Plaintiff on April 23, 2025. On April 23 and 25, 2025 the parties conferred on ways to narrow these results. Plaintiff agreed to several narrowing measures, including reductions in the date range, removal of key terms, and a limitation for email records to those records sent by politically appointed custodians.

4. As discussed in more detail below, Defendant has identified responsive records to several items within Plaintiff's FOIA requests, which it is still currently processing. Defendant had endeavored to make a release of several of these items by September 30, 2025, but was unable to do so. Thereafter, government appropriations lapsed from October 1, 2025 to November 12, 2025, during which time this matter and other OMB FOIA matters were stayed. Defendant now anticipates making its anticipated release of several items responsive to Plaintiff's request by December 31, 2025. Regarding Plaintiff's remaining requests, Defendant continues its search and processing for records responsive to those other items, and the parties are conferring on other narrowing measures. Plaintiff has proposed additional narrowing that it would agree to.

5. Specifics as to the status of each of Plaintiff's FOIA Requests at issue in this case is as follows:

Request 25-616 "Impact and Legal Analysis"¹

6. As just discussed above, Defendant previously anticipated issuing a full response to this request by September 30, 2025 and now anticipates issuing its full response by December 31, 2025.

Request 25-617 "Freeze Communications Records"

7. As to Parts 1 and 2 of this request, Defendant is processing Matthew Vaeth's calendar records for release. Defendant has completed a search for the remaining aspects of these items and the results are being reviewed.

8. Parts 3 and 4 of this request seek communications, broadly speaking, concerning freezes and conditions on financial assistance. Plaintiff has inquired to ensure that Defendant's

¹ For ease of reference, the parties use the names of the requests used in Plaintiff's complaint. See ECF No. 1.

search for records responsive to these parts of Plaintiffs request are limited to sent communications in the government outboxes. Plaintiff has also agreed to defer processing attachments to responsive email communications. According to these parameters, Defendant confirms that it has conducted a search for responsive records, limited to emails gathered from custodians' outboxes only. In the parties' last joint status report, Defendant previously reported that it gathered approximately 7,000 potentially responsive documents from this search. This figure, however, included only responsive email communications from thirty custodians' outboxes and included attachments. Since the last joint status report, Defendant gathered additional responsive records from three other custodians. Defendant now estimates that there are 5,000 potential responsive documents from this search, which include only responsive email communications sent from thirty-three custodians, and excluding attachments. In response to Plaintiff's inquiry, Defendant has provided Plaintiff with the date range for its search and has provided Plaintiff with the list of thirty-three custodians used to gather responsive records. Plaintiff has requested this information about custodians and the date range to propose further narrowing and has agreed to reduce the number of custodians to 16 and to limit the date range to end on February 28, 2025. Plaintiff has requested information about the effect of these narrowing steps on the volume to be processed.

Request 25-618 "WH and DOGE Directives to OMB"

9. As discussed in paragraph 4 above, Defendant expected to issue a full response to parts 2 through 4 of this request by September 30, 2025 and now anticipates issuing its full response to parts 2 through 4 by December 31, 2025. Defendant is still searching for records responsive to part 1, which seeks records of directives or guidance received by OMB.

Request (25-619) “OMB Order Implementation”

10. As discussed in paragraph 4 above, Defendant previously anticipated issuing a full response to part 1 of this request by September 30, 2025 and now anticipates issuing its full response to part 1 of this request by December 31, 2025.

11. Part 2 of this request seeks communications, broadly speaking, containing terms that are likely to concern implementation of a court order. Plaintiff has inquired to ensure that Defendant’s search for records responsive to these parts of Plaintiff’s request are limited to sent communications in the government outboxes. Plaintiff has also agreed to defer processing attachments to responsive email communications. According to these parameters, Defendant confirms that it has conducted a search for responsive records, limited to emails gathered from custodians’ outboxes only. In the parties’ last joint status report, Defendant previously reported that Defendant gathered approximately 3,000 potentially responsive documents. This figure, however, included only responsive email communications from thirty custodians’ outboxes and included attachments. Since the last joint status report, Defendant gathered additional responsive records from three other custodians. Defendant now estimates that there are 3,000 potential responsive documents from this search, which include only responsive email communications sent from thirty-three custodians, and excluding attachments. In response to Plaintiff’s inquiry, Defendant has provided Plaintiff with the date range for its search and has provided Plaintiff with the list of thirty-three custodians used to gather responsive records. Plaintiff has requested this information about custodians and the date range to propose further narrowing and has agreed to reduce the number of custodians to 16 and to limit the date range to end on February 28, 2025. Plaintiff has requested information about the effect of these narrowing steps on the volume to be processed.

The Parties respectfully propose that they file an additional Joint Status Report on or before January 7, 2026, to update the Court on the status of the FOIA request.

Dated: November 24, 2025
Washington, DC

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