

U. S. Postal Service

CHIEF FOIA OFFICER REPORT

March 2012

This report is submitted in response to Attorney General Holder's directive to Agency Chief FOIA Officers to review and to report each year to the Department of Justice on their progress in improving transparency.

The Postal Service's mission is to provide the nation with reliable, affordable, universal mail service. The basic functions of the Postal Service were established in 39 U.S.C. § 101(a): "... [T]o bind the Nation together through the personal, educational, literary, and business correspondence of the people." The Postal Service is "an independent establishment of the executive branch" of the government, created by the Postal Reorganization Act, (PRA), 39 U.S.C. §§ 101, et seq., and directed to conduct its operations in accordance with sound business principles.

Under the Chief FOIA Officer, the Manager, Records Office, is responsible for the Postal Service's compliance with the FOIA, except for records independently maintained by the Postal Inspection Service and the USPS Office of Inspector General (OIG). The Office of the General Counsel (OGC) is responsible for FOIA appeals for the Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service. This report represents responses from the following FOIA program offices:

- U.S. Postal Service (USPS) FOIA Program
- USPS General Counsel (appeals for USPS and Postal Inspection Service)
- USPS OIG FOIA Program (initial requests and appeals)
- US Postal Inspection Service FOIA Program

The USPS, OIG, and Postal Inspection Service offices serve as FOIA Requester Service Centers.

**I. Steps Taken to Apply the Presumption of Openness**

Agency Overall:

1. In 2011, a training presentation titled "FOIA Overview Training" was posted online and made available to all postal employees across the nation.
2. A broad representation of FOIA professionals from each agency component attended FOIA training.
3. Each agency component made discretionary releases of otherwise exempt information.
4. The exemptions that would have covered the information that was released as a matter of discretion are: b2, b3, b5, b7(A), and b7(E).
5. All agency components apply the foreseeable harm standard when reviewing records to determine whether discretionary releases are possible.
6. All agency components work with senior management and organizations throughout the Postal Service to underscore the importance of the FOIA and of the agency's responsibility to fully comply with its provisions.

7. The agency did not have an increase in the number of responses where records were released in full. In FY 2011, 469 full releases were made compared to 494 in FY 2010. This decrease was due, primarily, to an increase in FOIA requests seeking financial details of individual postal facilities, data which USPS considers commercially sensitive.
8. The agency had an increase in the number of responses where records were released in part. In FY 2011, 498 partial grants were made compared to 411 for FY 2010.

## Postal Service:

Under the direction of the Chief FOIA Officer for the Postal Service, the Manager, Records Office, is responsible for the overall administration of the USPS FOIA Program. The Records Office is part of the USPS General Law Service Center ("GLSC"). The Managing Counsel of the GLSC acts as the Chief FOIA Officer.

The USPS FOIA program is decentralized. The Postal Service has nearly 32,000 facilities throughout the country at which records are maintained. FOIA Coordinators have been designated to assist records custodians in each of USPS Headquarters departments and each of the Area and District offices across the country. The FOIA Coordinators, an ad-hoc position, provide procedural guidance on the FOIA to records custodians within their area of responsibility.

The Records Office is responsible for developing a program and framework to assist records custodians in processing FOIA requests. As such, it issues detailed instructions to records custodians on the FOIA (see 39 Code of Federal Regulations § 265 and USPS Handbook AS-353, *Guide to Privacy, the FOIA, and Records Management*). The Records Office staff is available to assist FOIA Coordinators and records custodians or their designees throughout the organization with record release determinations and other FOIA matters. The General Counsel's office at Postal Service Headquarters and the Law Department's Area Law Offices provide advice to records custodians regarding the FOIA, including the applicability of exemptions.

It is USPS policy to make its official records available to the public to the maximum extent consistent with the public interest. Postal Service policy requires a practice of full disclosure subject only to the specific exemptions required or authorized by law. Postal Service regulations provide that a custodian may disclose exempt information as a matter of discretion if that disclosure is not prohibited by law and would not cause any foreseeable harm. This policy had been in place for some time prior to the issuance of President Obama's FOIA Memorandum.

1. The Records Office is responsible for the development and delivery of FOIA training to FOIA Coordinators, records custodians, and other agency personnel. In 2011, the Records Office and OGC jointly completed an interactive, on-line training presentation, titled "FOIA Overview Training." This training was posted in the USPS Enterprise Learning Management system for easy access by employees. It describes USPS FOIA regulations, identifies roles and responsibilities of employees in complying with the FOIA, and provides resources to help with processing FOIA requests for any USPS records custodian. Internal communications were distributed nationally to inform employees of the availability of the course. In 2011, 411 USPS employees completed this training course.

The Records Office specifically provided training to Field FOIA Coordinators twice in FY 2011. In each training session, it was emphasized that the Postal Service is to "adopt a presumption in favor of disclosure" and that the "foreseeable harm" standard is to be applied when withholding agency records. Attendees were also informed that exempt information may be disclosed as a matter of discretion if that disclosure is not prohibited by law and would not cause any foreseeable harm.

In addition, guidance concerning the FOIA was communicated to agency personnel through various formal and informal internal communications throughout the year.

2. FOIA training has been attended by all Records Office staff. In 2011, one or more representatives from the Records Office attended all DOJ FOIA conferences. One new staff member attended Freedom of Information and Privacy Acts, USDA Graduate School, and FOIA for Attorneys and Access Professional Training, Department of Justice. The vendor of the commercial-off-the-shelf FOIA Tracking System provided on-site training to the USPS Records Office, OGC, OIG and Postal Inspection Service FOIA professionals.

3. The USPS made discretionary releases of certain otherwise exempt information during this reporting period.
4. In cases where there was no foreseeable harm, the USPS released records that may have formerly been withheld under FOIA Exemption 5. In addition, the USPS was able to release records originally withheld on the basis of commercial sensitivity (under FOIA Exemption 3 and 39 U.S.C. 410(c)(2)) where the passage of time has significantly decreased such sensitivity or the subject matter records concern a program or technology that is obsolete. Consideration is given to any public interest that may exist.
5. The Records Office has consistently underscored the importance of the presumption of openness to postal employees at all levels of the organization. When coordinating the processing of records, the Records Office has diligently applied the presumption of openness, paying particular attention to the "foreseeable harm" standard articulated in the Attorney General's Guidelines. With the recent movement of Records Office from Consumer Affairs to the Law Department and the corollary shift of the Chief FOIA Officer role to the Managing Counsel of GLSC, there is now also a formal advocate for the presumption of openness within the Law Department with regard to the more complex FOIA issues.
6. The USPS Records Office and Law Department continue to work with senior management and organizations throughout the Postal Service to underscore the importance of the FOIA and of the agency's responsibility to fully comply with its provisions. In particular, they worked to educate newer members of postal management regarding the Postal Service's obligations as to the FOIA. In Fiscal Year 2011, many new FOIA Coordinators were appointed throughout the organization due to an organizational redesign initiative. The Records Office and Law Department worked individually with new FOIA Coordinators to ensure FOIA compliance. Furthermore, the Records Office works closely with Corporate Communications in responding to news media inquiries. In many instances, Corporate Communications is able to provide news media outlets with information about the Postal Service without a written FOIA request.
7. The number of responses where records were released in full decreased, from 445 in FY 2010 to 411 in FY 2011. This decrease was due, primarily, to an increase in FOIA requests seeking financial details of individual postal facilities, data which USPS considers commercially sensitive.
8. The number of responses where records were released in part increased, from 161 in FY 2010 to 225 in FY 2011.

In those cases in which records were withheld, the FOIA Exemption cited most often was FOIA Exemption 6. FOIA Exemption 6 was cited 418 times and the primary reason for withholding records was for personal privacy reasons. USPS commonly protects personal information about its employees, customers or other individuals which would be a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy. The type of information requiring protection to prevent the unwarranted invasion of an individual's personal privacy covered by FOIA Exemption 6 is not subject to discretionary disclosure.

FOIA Exemption 3, in conjunction with 39 U.S.C. 410(c)(1), was relied upon 204 times. 39 U.S.C. 410(c)(1) permits the Postal Service to withhold the name or address, past or present, of any USPS customer. This Exemption 3 statute is frequently used along with FOIA Exemption 6 for privacy reasons.

FOIA Exemption 3, in conjunction with 39 U.S.C. 410(c)(2) was relied upon 186 times to withhold records from disclosure. Section 410(c)(2) of Title 39, U.S. Code, provides that "information of a commercial nature, including trade secrets, whether or not obtained from a person outside the Postal Service, which under good business practice would not be publicly disclosed," is exempt from the disclosure requirements of the FOIA. This section was enacted as part of the Postal Reorganization Act, 39 U.S.C. § 101 et seq. (1970), which designated the Postal Service as an independent

establishment of the executive branch and generally directed it to conduct its operations in accordance with sound business principles. The public disclosure of the information described above could cause competitive harm to USPS.

Office of the General Counsel (OCG):

The Office of General Counsel (OGC) continues to be a firm advocate of agency transparency, working with its internal clients throughout the Postal Service to ensure that the FOIA's presumption of openness as underscored by the President and the Attorney General is clearly understood and thoughtfully followed. In addition to stressing the importance of this presumption in its day-to-day legal practice, members of the OGC worked closely with the agency's information law professionals in the Records Office over the past year to develop and implement specialized web-based training for agency personnel. Moreover, the General Counsel's Office has provided one-on-one counseling and training to a number of new management-level employees, who with little or no prior government service, came to USPS with limited knowledge of the transparency requirements of the FOIA and other open government initiatives.

1. See above.
2. OGC staff attended FOIA training provided by the Department of Justice and by American University.
3. In deciding administrative FOIA appeals, the OGC has used the "foreseeable harm" standard to make discretionary releases for records that originally were withheld on the basis of commercial sensitivity (under FOIA Exemption 3 and 39 U.S.C. § 410(c)(2)) where the passage of time significantly decreased such sensitivity. Additionally, the General Counsel's Office continues to release records that may have formerly been withheld under FOIA Exemption 2.
4. See #3.
5. See #3.
6. When providing advice to internal clients on FOIA-related matters, the OGC routinely underscores the importance of the presumption of openness.

7.	<u>Full Grants</u>	<u>Partial Grants</u>	<u>Full Denials</u>
FY2011 <sup>1</sup>	19 (18.63%)	31 (30.39%)	11 (10.78%)
FY2010	26 (20%)	56 (43.08%)	48 (36.92%)

8. The OGC processed fewer appeals in 2011 than in the previous year; a total of 102 appeals were processed in FY 2011, compared to 130 in FY 2010. The total number of records that were released in full or in part in FY 2011 was 50 or 49.01%, compared to 82 or 63% in FY 2010. This decrease was due, in part, to an increase in FOIA requests seeking financial details of individual postal facilities, data which USPS considers commercially sensitive.

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<sup>1</sup> Of the remaining appeals, it was determined: (a) there were no responsive records; (b) they constituted improper FOIA requests; or (c) they were remanded to the appropriate records custodian for further action.

Office of Inspector General (OIG):

1. OIG conducted three training sessions of audit staff focused on E-FOIA responsibilities; one training session for investigative staff addressing FOIA and Privacy Act privacy protections; and provided legal staff with on-line updates on recent court rulings affecting the use of exemption b2.
2. OIG FOIA professionals attended FOIA training.
3. OIG made discretionary releases of otherwise exempt information.
4. The exemptions that would have covered the information that was released as a matter of discretion are b2, b5, b7(A), and b7(E).
5. After searching for and locating responsive records, OIG approaches processing from the standpoint of presumptive release and limiting the use of exemptions, as far as possible, to situations that demand the OIG to:
  - protect privacy of third party information after applying a balancing test;
  - protect sensitive commercial data when in our judgment release would undermine the commercial ventures of the agency we oversee;
  - protect sensitive electronic data or information about the vulnerabilities of electronic data systems the release of which could lead to intrusions or similar dangers;
  - comply with Sec. 7 of the Inspector General Act of 1978, as amended, to protect from disclosure information provided by agency employees during the course of an investigation; and
  - not endanger law enforcement investigations when the agency can articulate the harm that a release would cause.
6. In addition, the OIG FOIA Unit works to maximize discretionary disclosure by segregating redactions as far as possible.
7. OIG did not have an increase in the number of responses where records were released in full. The releases in full during FY 2010 were 15 and during FY 2011 were 11. Expressed in percentage terms, FY 2010 percent of full grants when compared to partial grants or full denials is approximately 9 percent. FY 2011 percent of full grants when compared to partial grants or full denials is approximately 6 percent.
8. OIG did have an increase in the number of responses where records were released in part. In FY 2010, OIG made 121 partial releases. In FY 2011, the number of partial releases increased to 152.

Postal Inspection Service:

1. The Inspection Service did not hold a FOIA conference or otherwise conduct training during this reporting period.
2. Inspection Service FOIA staff members attended one or all of the listed training:
  - Dispute Resolution Skills Training at National Archives & Records Administration (NARA)
  - FOIA for Attorneys and Access Professional Training
  - OIP Holds FOIA Fee Summit for Agency Personnel
  - E-Discovery in Government Educational Summit
  - OIP Training Sessions on Exemption 2 After Milner
  - Vendor sponsored Users Group Conference 2011
3. The Inspection Service made discretionary releases on two requests that contained information over 20 years old.
4. The exemption that would have covered the information that was released as a matter of discretion is FOIA Exemption 2.
5. First, Postal Inspection Service FOIA personnel look at the age of the document. Second, FOIA personnel look at the content of the information contained in the documents to determine if any harm still exists if the information is released. Third, FOIA personnel review the documents to determine if the requester can identify any names of individuals associated with the documents.
6. Not applicable.
7. The Inspection Service increased their responses in full by 13 (FY10 – 34; FY11 – 47).
8. The Inspection Service decreased their releases in part by 8 (FY10 – 129; FY11 – 121).



II: Steps Taken to Ensure that Your Agency Has an Effective System in Place for Responding to Requests

Agency Overall:

1. USPS FOIA professionals have sufficient IT support.
2. In September 2011, Mr. Frank Bartholf, Managing Counsel, General Law Service Center, was named as the new Chief FOIA Officer by the Postmaster General. The Managing Counsel, General Law Service Center, a staff element under the General Counsel, has agency-wide responsibility for efficient and appropriate compliance with the FOIA and for administering FOIA policy throughout the agency. The Chief FOIA Officer has maintained regular interaction with and supervision of FOIA professionals since his appointment.
3. USPS does not have an established Open Government Team.
4. FOIA workload and staffing are continuously monitored and reviewed by all agency components.
5. USPS ensures that regular system upgrades to the FOIA Tracking System are made. FOIA personnel are trained on all software upgrades and enhancements to the System.

## Postal Service:

The Chief FOIA Officer is responsible for overseeing Postal Service compliance with the FOIA, making recommendations to the Postmaster General regarding the FOIA Program, and monitoring and reporting on FOIA implementation and performance for USPS. The Manager, Records Office, serves as the USPS FOIA Public Liaison and is responsible for managing the FOIA Requester Service Center (Center), establishing procedures and guidelines to ensure that record management practices comply with the FOIA, and providing procedural guidance to records custodians.

FOIA requests are received through the FOIA Requester Service Center (Records Office). The Records Office is part of the USPS Law Department's General Law Service Center (GLSC), whose Managing Counsel acts as the Chief FOIA Officer. Upon receipt, requests are entered into the FOIA Tracking System and assigned a tracking number. An acknowledgement letter is sent to the requester advising of the receipt of the request and the tracking number. The request is then assigned to an analyst for review. If the request is lacking any information that is needed for processing (e.g., a proper description of the records sought, etc.), the analyst will contact the requester to seek the required information or clarification. Once the request has been perfected, the request is referred to the appropriate records custodian(s) for processing and response through the designated FOIA Coordinator(s). FOIA Coordinators or Records Custodians may also contact the requester if clarifying information is needed or for fee-related matters. FOIA Coordinators ensure that the Center receives a copy of the final response sent to the requester. Once the final response is received, the analyst closes the case in the FOIA Tracking System. For requests that are coming up on their 20-day timeline, the analyst is alerted to follow up with the FOIA Coordinator with a reminder. Centralized tracking of requests received enables the Center to ensure that a final response is made to all requests received. The FOIA Tracking System has a robust report function. The report function allows the Center to accurately and timely produce required reports and management reports. Letter templates and referral memoranda are stored electronically in the FOIA Tracking System. The FOIA Tracking System allows for requests to be referred electronically to the appropriate office(s).

For requests that are not received in the Records Office, Headquarters and Field offices are instructed to promptly submit any FOIA requests received to the Records Office so that a FOIA tracking number can be assigned.

The Records Office and other GLSC staff personally coordinate and process certain complex and voluminous requests received.

FOIA Coordinators, located within each Headquarters department, Area office, and District office, are responsible for coordinating FOIA requests referred to or received by a functional or geographical area; providing procedural guidance to records custodians; and assisting the manager of the Records Office with national records management activities, such as annual reporting of local FOIA activities. FOIA Coordinators are responsible for ensuring that requests referred to them for processing are properly tracked and accounted for, and that all reporting requirements are met.

With over 32,000 facilities at which records are maintained, FOIA processing is decentralized. Records custodians or their designees are primarily responsible for processing and responding to FOIA requests. FOIA processing remains a collateral duty in most offices.

The Records Office is also responsible for maintaining an external and internal website. Contact information for the Requester Service Centers is found on both external and internal websites, and contact information for all FOIA Coordinators is found on the internal website. Sample letters for responding to requests are available on the Records Office internal website for use by records custodians on their designees. Links to other resource material (e.g., DOJ's FOIA website; USPS Handbook AS-353, *Guide to Privacy, the FOIA and Records Management*; 39 Code of Federal Regulations § 265, etc.) can

also be found on the internal and external websites. The eFOIA Reading Room, FOIA Annual Reports and Chief FOIA Officer Reports are found on the external website.

1. Under the Chief Information Officer, an information technology portfolio manager is assigned to work with the Records Office to ensure that necessary IT support is available for system maintenance and software updates for the FOIA Tracking System. Information technology provides assistance by conducting searches for electronic records, such as e-mail communications and database queries.
2. In September 2011, Mr. Frank Bartholf, Managing Counsel, General Law Service Center, was named as the new Chief FOIA Officer by the Postmaster General. The Managing Counsel, General Law Service Center, a staff element under the General Counsel, has agency-wide responsibility for efficient and appropriate compliance with the FOIA and for administering FOIA policy throughout the agency. The Chief FOIA Officer has maintained regular interaction with and supervision of FOIA professionals in the Records Office since his appointment.
3. USPS does not have an established Open Government Team.
4. In FY 2011, the FOIA Program faced challenges as the number of requests received increased by 319 compared to FY 2010, and the recruitment of new employees was limited by hiring freezes brought on by the Postal Service 2011 Redesign. The 2011 Redesign, announced by the Postmaster General on March 23, 2011, affected every administrative function within USPS at Headquarters and in the Field, reduced administrative layers and achieved a 20 percent reduction in authorized administrative office complement and Postal Career Executive Service (PCES) positions. Financial pressures have created a situation the Postal Service hasn't faced before – the need to adjust its entire infrastructure at every level. This situation is driven largely by continued and accelerated drops in First-Class Mail, historically the Postal Service's core product, and the source of the majority of its funding. The most recent financial results of the Postal Service continue to be grim.

The Records Office staff was under complement for much of the year due to hiring freezes. One vacant position has since been filled, and the other position will be filled in 2012, bringing the Records Office up to full complement. In 2011, two employees from companion Privacy Office groups assisted with FOIA processing due to the vacancies.

With 32,000 facilities throughout the country at which records are maintained, FOIA processing remains a collateral duty in most offices. FOIA request processing can be overtaken by other urgent priorities that compete for the attention of the same local staff. Further, privacy and records requirements, like FOIA, have also expanded; and the number of requests received has increased. These factors, and a growing trend of many requests being complex in nature due to the changes being made by USPS, point to the potential need for more resources for USPS to manage its FOIA Program. However, while the CFO can recommend the addition of resources or a change in how resources are being allocated, the financial situation of the Postal Service makes an increase in staffing unrealistic in light of the significant downsizing USPS will need to undergo in the next few years. As a self-supporting government enterprise, USPS receives no tax dollars for its operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. If that revenue stream continues to decline, the potential of USPS having difficulty meeting its overall operational standards may unfortunately preclude additional dedicated resources.

5. Addressed above

General Counsel (OGC):

In order to efficiently process appeals and to provide assistance with the processing of initial FOIA requests, the OGC works closely with the Records Office and agency IT personnel to obtain responsive records as well as review records for releasability.

1. OGC has sufficient IT support.
2. There is regular interaction between OGC FOIA professionals and the Chief FOIA Officer.
3. USPS does not have an established Open Government Team.
4. The OGC continuously monitors its workload and available resources, and as appropriate, works with senior management to address any resource requirements.
5. The OGC works closely with the Office of the Chief FOIA Officer to ensure the smooth, effective operation of the USPS FOIA program.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG):

1. OIG FOIA professionals have sufficient IT support.
2. Not applicable.
3. Not applicable.
4. USPS OIG FOIA Unit's performance is monitored and calibrated for constant improvement. In the event of decline in performance, staffing would be one of the issues examined.
5. OIG completed a revision of Standard Operating Procedures; initiated cross-training of allied employees.

Postal Inspection Service:

1. All Inspection Service FOIA personnel utilize the USPS Helpdesk for IT support.
2. Not applicable.
3. Not applicable.
4. The Inspection Service's FOIA unit continuously monitors workload and available resources and, as appropriate, works with management to address any resources requirements. The Unit is currently at full complement.
5. The Postal Service conducts regular system upgrades to the FOIA Tracking System. In addition, FOIA personnel are trained on all software upgrades and enhancements to the FOIA Tracking System.

### III. Steps Taken to Increase Proactive Disclosures

#### Agency Overall:

1. Each USPS component has added material to its website since last year.
2. Examples of the records, datasets, videos, etc., that have been posted this past year are listed by agency component in the sections that follow.
3. Each agency component has processes in place to identify records to proactively disclose records and information on the web. The FOIA Tracking System provides full-text search capability which can be used as a tool to identify records meeting the "frequently requested" standard.
4. USPS websites have been redesigned or are currently being redesigned. USPS will continue to make further improvements and updates in Fiscal Year 2012. USPS components have a social media presence (Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, blogs, Google+), and USPS has expanded online mobile technology.
5. USPS gathers feedback from the public posted to its website through surveys other customer forums.

## Postal Service:

*“The U.S. postal system, from the beginning, helped to create a single nation out of our diverse peoples and states. It plays that role still.” – Pia Lopez, Sacramento Bee*

Ours is a proud heritage built on a simple yet profound mission: Connect every American, every door, every business, everywhere through the simple act of delivering the mail. This idea of universal service is at the heart of a \$900 billion industry that drives commerce, plays an integral part of every American community and remains the greatest value of any post in the world. As USPS continues its evolution as a forward-thinking, fast-acting company capable of providing quality products and services for its customers, it continues to remember and celebrate its roots as the first national network of communications that literally bound a nation together. A self-supporting government enterprise, USPS receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. The Postal Service remains committed to the Administration’s policies on transparency by increasing its efforts to make proactive disclosures whenever possible.

## USPS.com Channel

The USPS.com group manages the overall direction and presentation of USPS.com, and coordinates the creation of organization-wide web-based solutions. More specifically, USPS.com ensures that web-based solutions launched on the corporate website serve key customer needs, support the goals of USPS, and are consistent with internal USPS policies and external industry best practices. Specific USPS.com initiatives include:

- Building capabilities to support the migration of retail transactions to USPS.com
- Developing shipping solutions for key customer segments
- Developing content, tools, and functionality for all USPS customers
- Enhancing and improving the overall online user experience on USPS.com
- Enabling value-added capabilities such as transaction history and account management

## USPS.COM – This Post Office is Always Open

The USPS website, found at [www.usps.com](http://www.usps.com), is one of the most frequently visited government sites averaging more than a million visitors each day. USPS provides a significant amount of information to the public through its website, with approximately 25,000 informational pages. In the past year, over 29,000 updates or additions were made to USPS.com.

The presence of the Postal Service on the Internet has moved beyond the provision of information, and now provides consumers and businesses with 24-hour-a-day access to enhanced USPS products, services, and transactions in the convenience of their homes and offices. “The world, technology and the Postal Service are evolving, so our website is evolving with it. We want to make it easier and more convenient for customers to access our products and services.” *Paul Vogel, president and chief Marketing/Sales office*

## The New *usps.com* is Here!

On July 25, 2011, USPS launched the redesigned *usps.com* and a brand new *about.usps.com*. The new *usps.com* is a major step in transforming how households and small businesses interact with the Postal Service digitally. Creating a website that’s simpler and easier for customers to use was a huge undertaking. Improving *usps.com* is one of the latest examples of the Postal Service’s commitment to improving the customer experience. The updated *usps.com* added many enhancements, including easier-to-find tools and information. As examples, at the top of every page, customers can select “Ship a Package,” “Send Mail,” “Shop,” or “Business Solutions.” Convenient drop-down menus offer links and information to help customers find what they need. Also on every page, new “Quick Tools” allow



customers to quickly perform the most common tasks: “Track & Confirm,” “Find a Post Office,” “Calculate Postage,” and “Look Up a ZIP Code.”

In October, USPS launched new features including Spanish and Chinese translated pages. After English, Spanish and Chinese are the two most popular languages spoken in the United States.

*About.usps.com* provides corporate information, such as USPS history, along with the latest news and information on the Postal Service. *About.usps.com* will help keep the public and the news media informed about what the Postal Service is doing with regard to sustainability, corporate structure and how we impact the world around us. “Users will learn who we are and what we are about, how we do more than deliver the mail, give them the latest news and information, and help the Postal Service connect our country and our world.” *Kelly Sigmon, vice president, Channel Access*

### Transparency

The Postal Service publishes a number of reports that are responsive to different legislative requirements. They provide stakeholders with an accounting of our activities and results. The Office of Strategic Planning publishes and posts online major documents including the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRO) mandated Five-Year Strategic Plans, Annual Performance Plans, and the Postal Comprehensive Statements that draws on the work of the entire organization. Since 2006, the Annual Performance Plans and Reports have been included in the Comprehensive Statement. The 2011 Annual Report to Congress and Comprehensive Statement now is available in ebook format. The ebook can be viewed using most reading devices and smartphones – including all Apple and Android devices – as well as the Nook and Kobo readers. The annual report is also available in PDF and MOBI formats.

### Innovation and creativity

The USPS is revitalizing its business-to-consumer channel by introducing new, innovative products that give customers a reason to visit America’s businesses. New product launches provide fresh reasons for businesses to use the mail as one of their communications channels. The new upgraded *USPS.com* contains new features to make mailing online easier. Strengthening the business-to-consumer channel is one of our core business strategies. Improving this channel means improving convenience for business customers, and providing better information for businesses to use to measure their return on investment.

### Creating a positive interaction

Improving the customer experience - whether online, at the Post Office, over the phone, dropping off bulk mail or chatting with a letter carrier, the experience our customers have determines whether they will want to do business with us. Improving our customers’ experience with us is one of our core business strategies. And it’s why our future growth is tied to creating those positive experiences at every point of contact with us. At every level of our organization, employees are working to ensure that interactions a customer has with the Postal Service are great ones. That means easier transactions, helpful solutions and friendly exchanges with the clerk or the carrier. It means basing every interaction with the Postal Service on the principles of convenience and simplicity.

### Convenient

Increasingly, consumers and businesses want access to USPS products and our delivery platform online. They want to buy stamps or send a package without having to go to a Post Office. They want their interactions with us to be easy and to fit their schedules. The Postal Service set out in 2011 to be more convenient for those who do their shopping on the go by offering more products and services online and making *USPS.com* more convenient and easy to use.

## USPS Expands its Social Media Presence

The Postal Service has had a page on a social media website for some time (Facebook), but it expanded its presence so that there's something for everyone – customers, mailers and stamp collectors – to like. [Facebook.com/USPS](https://www.facebook.com/USPS) allows USPS to better connect with the public and provides engaging content on everything from legislative updates, to mailing tips, to USPS sustainability efforts. Small- and medium-sized business owners, as well as advertising and marketing executives, can go to [facebook.com/USPSbusiness](https://www.facebook.com/USPSbusiness) for the latest on how USPS can help make them a success. From “Grow Your Business Days” to the joys of Every Door Direct Mail, visitors have access to best practices and case studies to help them improve their bottom line by using USPS.

USPS began its social media effort in 2009 with a single Facebook page. In 2011, the Postal Service created two new Facebook pages, one for businesses and one for collectors and fans of the stamp program. Today, the USPS Corporate has 20,205 fans, USPS Stamps has 6,666 fans, and USPS Business has 771 fans. The social media program also includes a Twitter account, which was started July 2011 and has 791 followers, and a traditional blog, a tumblr blog, and a Google+ account, all of which were started in October 2011.

Stamp collectors can put their “stamp of approval” on the [facebook.com/USPSstamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSstamps) page, where upcoming stamp issues and all manner of stamp products will be featured. Beginning in August 2011, USPS unveiled its 2012 Stamp Program to the public on its USPS Stamps Facebook page. Posts also include new stamp releases, exclusive photographs from stamp events, and biographies of artists, art directors, and Citizen Stamp Advisory Committee members.

USPS has a YouTube channel – [www.Youtube.com/uspstv](http://www.Youtube.com/uspstv) - on which it posts company videos and reposts executive interviews that have appeared on different broadcast outlets.

## USPS Expands Online Mobile Technology

In September, USPS expanded its public device application to include BlackBerrys, building on the same success of its iPhone, Android, and smart phone apps. This makes the fourth mobile platform deployed by USPS. Customers have downloaded the existing USPS apps more than 1.2 million times and there are more than 4 million visits per month through all Postal Service mobile channels.

The free business app has consistently been one of the top 10 in the App Store. With the new app, BlackBerry users will be able to track and confirm package delivery, locate nearby Post Offices and find a ZIP Code. The new Mobile application takes advantage of Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) capabilities, using the Locator function to show the closest Post Offices, Automated Postal Centers and collection boxes. Maps and directions to the closest location – driving, walking or mass transit – are available.

## What is on the USPS Website

An overview of the types of information found on the Postal Service website, and posted proactively without the need to submit a FOIA request, is provided, as follows:

### "We're Here to Stay"

On October 25, 2011, Postmaster General Pat Donahoe sent a message of reassurance to USPS customers, telling them the Postal Service is "here to stay" and that he has a plan to lead USPS to profitability and long-term growth (<http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/pmg/welcome.htm>). In a video posted on USPS.com, Mr. Donahoe brings customers up-to-date on steps the Postal Service is taking on the legislative, network optimization and wages and benefits fronts.

### Our Future Network

Faced with a massive nationwide infrastructure that is no longer financially sustainable, USPS has proposed sweeping changes designed to save the organization billions of dollars by cutting its network of processing facilities by over half and adjusting service standards. An electronic news kit containing the list of processing facilities being studied, the advance notice submitted to the "Federal Register" and additional information can be found on the USPS website - [www.about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/our-future-network/welcome.htm](http://www.about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/our-future-network/welcome.htm).

### USPS Corporate Communications

Information from Corporate Communications is posted in the *about.usps.com* site where the public has access to corporate information, such as financials, information for mailers, our network realignment, careers, leadership bios, transformational and sustainability initiatives, as well as information on doing business with USPS. Also on the site is "The Newsroom" – which offers the latest news and other material, including:

- News releases (national, local)
- Contact information for media representatives
- Feature topics (2011 Annual Report, Postal Facts, Five-Day Delivery, Green news, Board of Governors, Chief Financial Officer briefings)
- Electronic news kits (Our future network, Village Post Offices, Expanded access, Delivering the future)
- Broadcasts & downloads (audio, video)
- Photo Gallery
- Testimony & Speeches
- USPS Leadership bios
- Electronic Press Kits
- Fact Sheets
- Events Calendar
- Service Alerts
- Audio Casts - Corporate Communications, in partnership with other departments, now provides live audio webcasts of the open session meetings of the Board of Governors at <http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/bog/welcome.htm>. The Board of Governors of

the USPS is comparable to a board of directors of a private corporation. Audio webcast records of briefings given by the USPS Chief Financial Officer are available at <http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/cfo/welcome.htm>.

- Video casts are available to the public on the USPS website, 14 of which were added in 2011 (see <http://www.uspsvideo.com/videos>).

### Consumer and Industry Affairs (C&IA)

USPS is focused on making every customer experience a positive one. It is committed to providing timely, reliable, accurate and secure universal delivery of mail and packages. It has developed and continues to enhance a comprehensive reporting system to measure the performance of all mail categories. USPS has used single-piece First-Class Mail service performance as a model for service performance reporting and management. This category of mail is most familiar to our stakeholders. C&IA also measures service performance for other categories of mail (Presort-First-Class, Standard, Periodicals, Package Service, and Special Service).

- Measurement methods and quarterly service performance results are reported on the USPS website at <http://about.usps.com/what-we-are-doing/service-performance/welcome.htm>.
- Detailed information on service performance standards and measurement systems is available in the Annual Compliance Report (ACR) to the Postal Regulatory Commission. Public portions of the Postal Service's filing are available at the Commission's website, <http://www.prc.gov>.
- Mail Service Updates – Mail service updates are provided to customers so that they are aware when service is suspended at Post Office facilities for any reason, including natural disasters, such as floods or fires. Updates are made in real time, and the pages are updated frequently. (<http://about.usps.com/news/service-alerts/welcome.htm>)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ's) – information provided in the FAQ's respond to customer inquiries received through various USPS contact channels (usps.com, 1-800-ASK-USPS, etc.). FAQ's are organized by subject matter – About USPS, Customer Service, Sending Mail, Receiving Mail, Business, and Buying. Included on the FAQ page are links to "Hot Topics" and the "Top 10 FAQ's." (<http://faq.usps.com/eCustomer/iq/usps/request.do?create=kb:USPSFAQ>)

### Who We Are

- Leadership
- Board of governors
- Postmaster General & Executive Committee
- Postal Leadership
- Citizens' Stamp-Advisory Committee

### What We're Doing

- Transforming our Business
- Strategic Planning
- Envisioning Our Future
- Vision 2013
- Postal Act of 2006
- Universal Postal Service
- Current Initiatives

Expanded Access newsroom with Village Post Office information and study sites:  
<http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/expandedaccess/welcome.htm>

Service Standard Changes and Network Optimization:  
<http://about.usps.com/news/facility-studies/welcome.htm>

Area Mail Processing (AMP) Newsroom:  
<http://about.usps.com/streamlining-operations/area-mail-processing.htm>

Mail Services Updates "what's hot" box on right of page provides links to current or "hot topic" information: <http://about.usps.com/news/service-alerts/welcome.htm>

Delivery Unit Optimization (DUO) and scheduled closings list (link to list on this page):  
<http://about.usps.com/news/service-alerts/duo-closures.htm>

USPS facility closure link:  
<http://about.usps.com/news/service-alerts/facility-closures.htm>

Delivering the Future - information on the 2020 action plan:  
<http://about.usps.com/news/electronic-press-kits/delivering-future/welcome.htm>

### Financials

- Integrated Financial Plan FY 2012
- Form 10K
- Form 8K
- Quarterly Statistics Report (QR)
- Revenue, Pieces & Weight (RPW) Reports
- Financial Conditions & Results (10Q)
- Integrated Financial Plan
- Financial Condition & Results (Form 10Q)
- Annual Reports
- Comprehensive Statements on Postal Operations
- Financial Public Releases

### Sustainability

- 2010 Sustainability Report
- Leaving a Green Footprint
- Delivery on Climate change
- In the News
- Charged up and ready to deliver
- Save Money and Help the Environment

### Corporate Social Responsibility

- Community Connections
- Diversity Initiative
- Dog Bite Awareness
- Finding Missing Children
- Fundraising Stamps
- USPS Local Heroes
- Marrow Donor Program
- NALC Food Drive

## Serving the Community

When it comes to serving our communities the USPS delivers more than just mail. Our various community minded programs help foster community spirit, while educating and supporting worthwhile causes.

- Community Activities
- Greener Choices with USPS
- National Postal Customer Council
- Postmaster Finder
- Passport Application Information
- Government Service
- Support our Troops
- Security of the Mail

## Our History

- Significant Dates
- Stamps and Postcards
- Postage Rates and Historical Statistics
- Photo Galleries
- Postal People
- Moving the Mail
- Delivering the Mail
- Post Offices and Facilities
- Uniforms and Equipment
- Research Sources
- Awards

## Postal Facts

- Size and Scope
- A Decade of Historic Significance – 2001-2010
- Usps.com – This Post Office is Always Open
- Quick, Easy, convenient
- People, Community, Social Responsibility
- A Simpler Way to Ship
- Sustainability
- Innovation and Technology
- Security, Law Enforcement Preserving the Trust
- Forensics, Crime Scenes, Evidence
- Fun Facts

## Doing Business With Us

- How to Become a USPS Supplier: Supplier Registration; Unsolicited Proposal Program; Prequalify for Highway Transportation Contracts; Contract Delivery Service; Contract Postal Units, and Village Post Offices
- Purchase Cardholder List
- Business Disagreement Decisions
- Pass Through Pricing Contract Awards
- Purchasing Publications
- General Supplier Information: Supply Chain Philosophy; Supplier Performance Awards; Postal Supplier Council; Pass-Through Pricing; Supplier disagreements; sustainable Supply Chain; Treasury Offset Program; Supplier Forms and Publications
- What We Buy and Who Buys What: Supplies; Services; Transportation; Mail Equipment; Facilities
- Supplier Diversity: Supplier Diversity Statement; Supplier Diversity Program; Management Involvement; Communication/Outreach; Sourcing; Subcontracting; Innovation Initiatives; Training and Development; Performance Indicators; Tracking Progress; Recognition; Supplier Diversity Awards and Recognition
- Supplier Newsletter USPS/re: supply: A source for supplier-related news and information from the USPS.

## Forms and Publications

- Postal Bulletin Archives – the official source of updates to USPS policies and procedures
- Handbooks
- Manuals
- Interim Internal Purchasing Guidelines
- Supplying Principles and Practices
- MailPro
- Publications
- Kits
- Notices
- Posters
- Signs and Labels
- Management Instructions
- A Customer's Guide to Mailing
- Engineering Standards and Specifications

### USPS Leased Facilities & Land - <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/foia/readroom/welcome.htm>

All leased postal facilities and land by state and U.S. Territories which contains the facility name and address, lessor's name and address, date occupied, annual rent, annual rent by square footage, lease effective date, lease expiration date, renewal options, purchase options, interior square footage, site square footage, and tax clause.

### USPS Owned Facilities & Land - <http://about.usps.com/who-we-are/foia/readroom/welcome.htm>

All owned postal facilities and land by state and U.S. Territories; which contains the facility name and address, date occupied, facility type, facility subtype, building description, land description, interior square footage, site square footage, and date occupied.

## Rapid Information Bulletin Board System (RIBBS) Website ([www.ribbs.usps.gov](http://www.ribbs.usps.gov))

The RIBBS website has site indexes that are searchable from A to Z or by topic. RIBBS provides mailers online access to an excellent variety of downloadable Postal Service information such as Customer Support Rulings, Federal Register notices, weather and natural disaster condition reports, Domestic Mail Manual labeling lists, and certified vendor information, just to name a few. RIBBS users may also post questions and receive answers concerning postal products and services. RIBBS is geared toward business mailers but is open to anyone seeking information about the Postal Service.

## Postal Regulatory Commission

The USPS FOIA Reading Room contains a link to the Postal Regulatory Commission's website. The Postal Regulatory Commission (PRC) is an independent establishment of the Executive Branch that exercises regulatory oversight over the Postal Service. The PRC proactively publishes information of interest to the mailing community and general public. The PRC's online Library contains an array of information about USPS of interest to the public. The PRC's online Library includes:

- Dockets
- PRC reports and studies
- USPS periodic reports
- USPS mail classification schedule

## Legal

- Rules of Practice
- Administrative Decisions
- Board of Contract Appeals
- USPS Privacy

## Licensing

- Commercial Licensing Program
- Postal Lobby Products
- Promotional Product and Tift Card

## Careers

Auctions: Upcoming auction dates at the Atlanta Mail Recovery Center

## Rights & Permissions

## IT Policies Processes & Standards

## Public Key Infrastructure

## Security of the Mail



Identifying records that are appropriate for posting:

Each USPS Officer has appointed a contact person for each department to work with the Records Office to identify records to proactively disclose on the web. In addition, subject matter experts and cross functional teams within each department determine what information should be posted and work closely with Corporate Communications and in joint posting opportunities, such as news releases, fact sheets and videos. Communications Plans are followed when communicating with industry regarding current initiatives and proposals.

Corporate Communications regularly works cross-functionally with other departments to identify and produce material for posting on USPS.com. One example of this is a cross-functional group that meets twice a week to discuss legislative, regulatory and other issues that could generate news releases, public filings and other documents that are made available to the public through web postings. Groups within Corporate Communications – including Public Relations, Field Communications, Multi-Media Communications/Events and Public Affairs – work closely together to develop multi-media materials for web posting.

The USPS FOIA Tracking System provides full-text search capability which can be used as a tool to identify records meeting the “frequently requested” standard. Formal and information communications are used throughout the year to remind records custodians of their obligations to identify records that are appropriate for posting.

### Steps to make information more useful:

USPS will continue to make further improvements and updates in Fiscal Year 2012 to *usps.com* and *about.usps.com*. Building on initial groundwork that was laid nearly 18 months ago during a cross-functional Social Media Summit, USPS now has established a corporate social media policy and is set to more extensively use social media to reach customers. *Facebook.com/USPS* will allow the Postal Service to better connect with the public and provide engaging content on everything from legislative updates, to mailing tips, to USPS sustainability efforts. USPS has expanded its public mobile device application to include Blackberrys. Building on the success of its iPhone, Android, and smart phones, USPS expanded service in September 2011. With this new app, BlackBerry users will be able to track and confirm package delivery, locate nearby Post Offices and find a ZIP Code. This makes the fourth mobile platform deployed by USPS.

### Customer Feedback

Collectors can put their “stamp of approval” on the USPS *facebook.com/USPSstamps* page, where the USPS will feature upcoming stamp issues and stamp-related products. USPS Stamps Facebook page is one of the places where USPS solicited public suggestions for living and recently deceased people to feature on future stamps.

USPS Industry Engagement & Outreach is routinely leveraging its Mailers Technical Advisory Committee (MTAC) contacts, Postal Customer Council (PCC) network and using monthly meetings with industry executives to gather their feedback and suggestions on how USPS can improve the “Information for Mailers” website.

USPS Customer Contact Center (CCC) conducts customer satisfaction surveys related to the FAQ site on *usps.com* and analyzes the feedback to try to improve the overall usability of information and also to add information that is responsive to customer inquiries and requests. Using customer feedback, CCC has identified key words utilized by customers to locate information and have enhanced the key word fields within the FAQs to improve the customer experience. This helps reduce traffic to other channels as customers search for information.

The Customer Engagement & Strategic Alignment group monitors social media to ascertain what is being said about the USPS. The volume and types of comments are summarized and shared with functional groups as appropriate.

The public is invited to share their ideas and concerns by contacting: Manager, Industry Engagement and Outreach, U.S. Postal Service, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 4617, Washington, DC 20260, or to [IndustryFeedback@usps.com](mailto:IndustryFeedback@usps.com). All comments are reviewed and considered as part of the decision-making process.

Office of the General Counsel (OGC):

During 2011, the Office of General Counsel established a new internal process designed to ensure that members of the Law Department understand, and comply with, proactive disclosure requirements. Under that process, the Managing Counsel of each organizational unit is charged with responsibility for reviewing records generated within his or her practice area, and identifying those suitable for proactive disclosure. These records are then forwarded to the Law Department's administrative support unit for processing and posting.

1. OGC has added new material to *USPS.com* since last year.
2. Examples include updates pertaining to the USPS Ethics Program, as well as records related to purchasing protest decisions and related documents.
3. See above.
4. Not applicable.
5. Not applicable.

Office of Inspector General (OIG):

1. The OIG has added new material to its website since last year.
2. Examples include 143 audit reports, increasing use of Facebook, the “Pushing the Envelope” blog, and Twitter to share information and commentary on recently initiated audit projects.
3. The OIG FOIA Unit reviews audits before they are issued to promptly determine suitability for posting on its external website. OIG used Lean Six Sigma principles to improve efficiencies in the process.
4. The OIG’s blog, Facebook, and Twitterfeeds – as well as separate web pages for agency components – address individual topics. Documents concerning issues such as agency budget and strategic plans are also published to give context to the work the agency has underway.
5. Not applicable.

## Postal Inspection Service:

As one of the country's oldest federal law enforcement agencies, the Postal Inspection Service has a long, proud, and successful history of fighting criminals who attack our nation's postal system and misuse it to defraud, endanger, or otherwise threaten the American public. Postal Inspectors enforce more than 200 federal laws in investigations of crimes that may adversely affect or fraudulently use the U.S. Mail, the postal system or postal employees. The Inspection Service's website contains a list of some of its more important areas of jurisdiction: (<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/>).

Postal Inspectors respond when criminals try to use the mail to commit crimes of any sort against postal customers, from mail theft to mail fraud and even child exploitation via the mail. But prevention is often the best way to fight crime: Inspectors use the Internet to teach people how to spot scams before they become victims. The Postal Inspection Service posts scheme alerts, fraud alerts, wanted and reward posters, and related information on its website. The Inspection Service's website offers tips to help postal customers avoid becoming a victim of mail fraud or Ponzi schemes or identity theft. Publication 162, *Because the Mail Matters*, informs postal customers and employees about the Postal Inspection Service. This and a host of other fraud-prevention publications are available online for viewing and printing at the Postal Inspection Service's website.

## Social Media Connections

The Postal Inspection Service has established these social media sites to offer consumer-awareness videos, fraud-protection tips, and a forum to collect and respond to feedback from postal customers:

- Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/postalinspectors>
- Twitter: [www.twitter.com/USPISpressroom](http://www.twitter.com/USPISpressroom)
- YouTube: [www.youtube.com/postalinspectors](http://www.youtube.com/postalinspectors)

1. The Postal Inspection Service proactively posts material considered to be of public interest (without the requirement of a FOIA request) on its website. The following types of information are proactively made available on the Postal Inspection Service's website:

### About Us

Mission  
Chief Postal Inspector Biography  
History  
Fallen Officers (Postal Inspectors and Postal Police Officers)  
Jurisdiction & Laws  
Forensic Laboratory Service

### Investigations

Mail Fraud Schemes  
Revenue Protection  
Asset Forfeiture  
Mail Theft  
Violent Crimes  
Global  
Security  
Child Exploitation  
Dangerous Mail  
Homeland Security

## Press Room

Public Information Officers  
Inspectors in the News  
Press Releases  
Publications  
Scheme Alerts  
Videos  
Wanted and Reward Posters

## Consumer Awareness

Learn how to protect yourself from fraudsters  
Don't Fall For It!  
Identity theft

2. Listed below are new postings added to the Postal Inspection Service website over the past year:

### Annual Report

The Postal Inspection Service posted its 2011 Annual Report online to educate stakeholders—the Postal Service, the Board of Governors, Congress, and the American public—about its work to provide a secure mail system for all Americans and a safe environment for postal employees and customers. The report notes that last year's enforcement efforts resulted in 5,512 arrests, with 782 for mail fraud and 2,505 for mail theft. To protect postal customers, Inspectors seized 2.4 million fraudulent foreign lottery mailings at U.S. borders, preventing thousands of Americans from becoming victims of these illegal schemes. In their investigations related to revenue protection, Inspectors identified more than \$89 million in losses to the Postal Service and provided recommendations to help prevent future losses.

### Consumer-Awareness Radio Broadcast: Don't Fall for It!

These 60-minute "Don't Fall For It" radio shows, hosted by Inspector in Charge Tom Brady of the Chicago Division, offer wise counsel to postal customers across the country, with suggestions on how to avoid being victimized by fraudulent scams. A total of 44 shows were posted online to educate consumers.

### Consumer Crime Alerts

The Postal Inspection Service provides online alerts to notify postal customers about ongoing scams in hopes of preventing further victimization, including these posted in 2011:

- Scammers Cash in on Japan Disaster. Inspectors Advise Public to Check Charities Before Giving—not even three hours after an earthquake and tsunami struck Japan, scammers seeking to take advantage of the disaster sprang into action. An estimated 1.7 million websites were created for fake Japan charities, appearing in search engines under "Japan tsunami," "Japan relief," and "Japan donations."

- Beware of Bogus Change-of-Address Websites. Some postal customers wishing to change their address online have been duped into paying for the service on unauthorized websites. The sites charge customers up to \$30 to change an address and, in some cases, the change never gets made. Postal customers were informed that they could file a complaint online at <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov>.
- Beware of Spam! Bogus Delivery Messages E-Mailed to Postal Customers. Some postal customers received bogus emails about a package delivery. The emails contained a link that, when opened, installs a malicious virus that can steal personal information from a personal computer. The emails claimed to be from the USPS and contained fraudulent information about an attempted or intercepted package delivery. The Inspection Service alerted customers to simply delete the message without taking any further action and provided an email address ([spam@uspis.gov](mailto:spam@uspis.gov)) for those that wished to report spam.

### Inspectors in the News

Each week the Postal Inspection Service posts online approximately 10 links to news stories to inform postal customers about ongoing Inspection Service investigations and postal crime concerns in their areas.

### Intellectual Property Theft

The Postal Inspection Service is working closely with the National Intellectual Property Rights Coordinator Center, a clearinghouse for investigations of counterfeiting and piracy, to curb crime that threatens the public's health, safety, and the U.S. economy. To support this effort, the Postal Inspection Service posted a link on the homepage to give customers direct access to report Intellectual Property Theft.

### National Consumer Protection Week

The theme for National Consumer Protection Week, held in 2011 from March 6–12, was Your Information Destination: [ncpw.gov](http://ncpw.gov)! The Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service joined with other federal, state and local government agencies and consumer protection organizations for the week-long campaign, which offered a wealth of tips and information on how consumers can protect their privacy, stay safe online, manage their money, avoid identity theft, understand mortgages and steer clear of frauds and scams. A separate website of the Postal Service and Postal Inspection Service, [www.deliveringtrust.com](http://www.deliveringtrust.com), offered free fraud education and prevention videos about identity theft, work-at-home scams, Internet fraud, foreign lotteries, and investment scams and more. The website also offers tips on recognizing scams and instructions on reporting scammers to the appropriate authorities.

### National Crime Victims' Rights Week

Federal law requires investigative agencies — including the Postal Inspection Service — to provide crime victims with information and assistance. Throughout the year, the Inspection Service provides victims identified by its investigations timely notifications of their rights and information of available resources. The Postal Inspection Service teamed with the Department of Justice and the National Center for Victims of Crime to showcase this annual event, held last year on April 10-16, 2011, to promote public awareness about victims' rights and available services. As part of National Crime Victims' Rights Week, the Inspection Service website provided additional information about victims' rights and distributed posters and informational cards to nearly 12,600 Post Offices for customers throughout April (<https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/radDocs/consumer/ncvrwmain.htm>).

## National Police Week 2011

National Police Week, which occurs each year during the week in which May 15 falls, recognizes the service and sacrifice of U.S. law enforcement officers. Established by a joint resolution of Congress in 1962, National Police Week pays special recognition to those law enforcement officers who have lost their lives in the line of duty for the safety and protection of others. The Postal Inspection Service honored its federal law enforcement officers during that week, including its 13 Postal Inspectors and Postal Police Officers who died in the line of duty, with a special tribute on its website: Respect, Remember, Honor.

## News Releases from Other Agencies

Since March 2011 the Postal Inspection Service posted 43 news releases from other agencies publicizing significant Inspection Service investigations.

## Postal Inspection Service News Releases

The Postal Inspection Service posted 10 news releases over the past year related to significant investigative work and publicizing important ongoing operations for media outreach.

## Postal Inspection Service Publications

The Postal Inspection Service makes available to the public a wide range of brochures on its website for viewing and printing, all of which explain various types of mail-related crime and provide information to help consumers avoid being victimized. Handouts alerting postal customers about fake checks and reshipping schemes have been available for several years, but in January 2012 the Inspection Service published and posted online Spanish versions of these notices (Notice 129-S and 174-S). Another important publication for postal customers, mandated by the Department of Justice's Office of Victim Rights, was also updated and posted online in January: Publication 308, Know Your Rights: A Guide for Victims and Witnesses of Crime.

## Reshipping Fraud

Postal money orders represent millions of dollars in revenue each year for the Postal Service. To protect this important revenue stream, the Postal Inspection Service established the Money Order Protection Program (MOPP) in early 2011 to address the rise in the number of counterfeit postal money orders (CPMOs) being presented to banks for negotiation. The problem stems from various reshipping schemes targeting postal customers (and banks) in the United States, which are losing money to scammers. Postal Inspectors are returning the illegal parcels—which typically bear counterfeit postage—to the customer and referring them to a new webpage which explains the scam and offers tips on how to protect themselves from being victimized. (See <https://postalinspectors.uspis.gov/radDocs/consumer/ReshippingScam.html>)

## Wanted Posters

In addition to local dissemination by Postal Inspectors, the Postal Inspection Service offers reward and wanted posters online at its website to extend their investigative reach to all members of the public. In 2011, at least 28 new wanted posters were placed online, at least six wanted posters were updated to indicate a suspect was captured, and another five posters were removed.

3. The Postal Inspection Service immediately posts online all new publications as soon as they become available in print form. Weekly postings of news links are made available online to provide public awareness of ongoing criminal investigations. New crime alerts are added to the website when fraud schemes that target significant numbers of postal customers arise. In addition, the FOIA Unit utilizes



the USPS FOIA Tracking System. The Tracking System provides full-text search capability which can be used as a tool to identify records meeting the "frequently requested" standard.

4. The Postal Inspection Service is forming a project team to address opportunities for improvement in its communications with postal customers via the Internet. Improved site navigation, more user-friendly design, and a restructuring of its information architecture are the immediate areas that will be studied. Major restructuring that will simplify information and make it more easily available for customers is the long-term goal, but short-term changes, such as adding a site index and streamlining homepage layout and graphics, are expected to immediately improve the user experience and are expected to be completed over the next four months.
5. The Postal Inspection Service is in the process of developing its own FOIA webpage to provide the public with information about the Inspection Service and its activities.

#### IV. Steps Taken to Greater Utilize Technology

##### Agency Overall:

Electronic receipt of FOIA requests:

1. All agency components have the capability to receive both FOIA requests and FOIA appeals electronically.
2. All three agency components (USPS, OIG and Postal Inspection Service) receive FOIA requests electronically.

Online tracking of FOIA requests:

3. FOIA requesters have the ability to track FOIA requests over the internet through the USPS FOIA website.
4. Not applicable.

Use of technology to facilitate processing of requests:

5. USPS Information Technology functions as a resource providing support to all postal areas.
6. Not applicable.

Postal Service:

Electronic receipt of FOIA requests:

1. The public is able to submit FOIA requests over the internet on the USPS FOIA website. In addition, USPS receives FOIA requests via facsimile.
2. All three agency components (USPS, OIG and Postal Inspection Service) receive FOIA requests electronically.

Online tracking of FOIA requests:

3. FOIA requesters have the ability to track FOIA requests over the internet through the USPS FOIA website.
4. Not applicable.

Use of technology to facilitate processing of requests:

5. USPS Information Technology functions as a resource providing support to all postal areas. The USPS has one of the largest e-mail systems. Nearly one million e-mails a day are delivered to nearly 205,000 e-mail accounts. Technology is used to search, sort and de-duplicate e-mail documents. USPS has the world's third-largest computing infrastructure and maintains one of the world's largest intranets. With an inventory of over a thousand business applications with most classified as national applications, Information Technology professionals assist with FOIA records searches by running canned reports and ad hoc queries.
6. Not applicable.

General Counsel (OGC):

Electronic receipt of FOIA requests:

1. The OGC receives FOIA appeals electronically via email and facsimile.
2. Not applicable.

Online tracking of FOIA requests:

3. Not applicable.
4. Not applicable.

Use of technology to facilitate processing of requests:

5. OGC uses the Postal Service's FOIA tracking system in the processing of FOIA appeals. Also, OGC shares documents for consultation and searches for responsive records using an automated processing system utilized by the Records Office, Postal Inspection Service, and Office of Inspector General.
6. Not applicable.

Office of the Inspector General (OIG):

Electronic receipt of FOIA requests:

1. The USPS OIG FOIA Unit receives requests via a dedicated, published e-mail account and on-line web forms.
2. Not applicable.

Online tracking of FOIA requests:

3. The OIG does not offer on-line independent tracking.
4. Not applicable.

Use of technology to facilitate processing of requests:

5. Yes, as described by the Postal Service.
6. Not applicable.

Postal Inspection Service:

Electronic receipt of FOIA requests:

1. The Postal Inspection Service receives electronic requests through two venues. One is through the Inspection Service's email address [FOIA@USPIS.gov](mailto:FOIA@USPIS.gov). The second is through FAX.
2. Not applicable.

Online tracking of FOIA requests:

3. Not applicable.
4. Not applicable.

Use of technology to facilitate processing of requests:

5. Not applicable.
6. Not applicable.

V. Steps Taken to Improve Timeliness in Responding to Requests and Reduce Backlogs

Agency Overall:

1. Multi-track processing/response times
  - a. USPS utilizes a multi-track system for processing FOIA requests - simple, complex, and expedited.
  - b. In Fiscal Year 2011, the average number of days to process simple requests was 17, less than twenty working days.
  - c. Not applicable.
2. Backlog
  - a. The backlog of requests increased by 48 (FY 2011 – 79, FY 2010 - 31).
  - b. The backlog of appeals decreased (FY 2011 – 1, FY 2010 – 2).
  - c. The ten oldest requests that were pending as of the end of FY 2010 were closed.
  - d. The oldest administrative appeals that were pending at the end of FY 2010 were closed.

3. Reasons for Backlog

Request Backlog:

- a. The agency received 500 more requests in FY 2011 than in FY 2010.
- b. USPS was not at full complement for most of FY 2011.
- c. In FY 2011, 159 complex requests were processed compared to 111 in FY 2010.
- d. Not applicable.

Administrative Appeal Backlog:

- e. Not applicable.
- f. Not applicable.
- g. Not applicable.
- h. Not applicable.

4. Steps to reduce existing backlogs of requests and appeals and to improve timeliness

- a. USPS routinely sets goals and monitors the progress of its FOIA caseload.
- b. USPS did not increase its FOIA staffing in FY2011.
- c. USPS made software upgrades to the commercial-off-the-shelf FOIA Tracking System. Training was provided to all agency components on the enhancements to the FOIA Tracking System.

- d. USPS received and closed 10 consultation requests in FY 2011. Improvements in the handling of consultation requests are not required at this time.

Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"

1. USPS did not invoke a statutory exclusion during FY 2011.
2. Not applicable.

Spotlight on Success:

Each USPS component has added material to its website since last year and has a success story. Success stories for each component are included in the sections that follow.



Postal Service:

1. Multi-track processing/response times
  - a. USPS utilizes a multi-track system for processing FOIA requests - simple, complex, and expedited.
  - b. In Fiscal Year 2011, the average number of days to process simple requests was 13, less than twenty working days.
  - c. Not applicable.
2. Backlog
  - a. For Fiscal Year 2011, the backlog of requests increased by 46 (FY 2011 – 75, FY 2010 – 29).
  - b. Not applicable.
  - c. The ten oldest requests that were pending as of the end of FY 2010 were closed.
  - d. Not applicable.
3. Reasons for Backlog

Request Backlog:

  - a. USPS received 319 more requests in FY 2011 than in FY 2010. Although the backlog increased in FY 2011, 224 more requests were closed than in FY 2010.
  - b. The USPS Records Office, which serves as the FOIA Requester Service Center, was not at full complement for most of FY 2011 due to a hiring freeze. A position that was on loan from the Privacy Office, and which provided support to the Requester Service Center, was abolished during the USPS organizational redesign.
  - c. In FY 2011, 153 complex requests were processed compared to 97 in FY 2010.
  - d. Not applicable.

Administrative Appeal Backlog:

  - e. Not applicable.
  - f. Not applicable.
  - g. Not applicable.
  - h. Not applicable.
4. Steps to reduce existing backlogs of requests and appeals and to improve timeliness
  - a. The number and complexity of requests received by USPS varies from week to week. The FOIA case load is monitored daily with the FOIA Tracking System. The FOIA Tracking System home page displays the total number of open cases, the number of new requests pending assignment, and for each system user, it displays the number of pending and overdue cases. A weekly status report is prepared. The weekly report includes the number of

new requests received, the total number of requests closed, the total number pending, and the total number backlogged.

- b. USPS did not increase its FOIA staffing in FY2011. Employees that are assigned to other teams in the General Law Service Center were loaned to the Records Office to assist in processing complex and voluminous requests. However, in spite of the fact that the Postal Service's budgetary crisis lead to an HR imposed hiring freeze during a Service wide RIF avoidance process for management positions, and then a continuing nationwide 5% vacancy hold during FY2012, the vacancies in the Records Office FOIA group were identified as critical and have now been filled.
- c. Software upgrades to the commercial-off-the-shelf FOIA Tracking System are included in the contract between USPS and vendor. There were no other IT improvements made in 2011.
- d. USPS received and closed three consultation requests in FY 2011. Improvements in the handling of consultation requests are not required at this time.

#### Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"

- 1. USPS did not invoke a statutory exclusion during FY 2011.
- 2. Not applicable.

## Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"

1. USPS did not invoke a statutory exclusion during FY 2011.
2. Not applicable.

### Spotlight on Success:

The Postal Service website – *usps.com* – is one of the most frequently visited government sites averaging more than a million visitors each day. "The world, technology and the Postal Service are evolving, so our Website is evolving with it. We want to make it easier and more convenient for customers to access our products and services." *Paul Vogel, president and chief Marketing/Sales officer*

In July, USPS unveiled its redesigned website. The new *usps.com* is a major step in transforming how households and small businesses interact with the Postal Service digitally. Creating a website that's simpler and easier for customers to use was a huge undertaking. Improving *usps.com* is one of the latest examples of the Postal Service's commitment to improving the customer experience. It provides new, simpler navigation and quicker access to the tools customers use the most.

In October, USPS launched new features including Spanish and Chinese translated pages. After English, Spanish and Chinese are the two most popular languages spoken in the United States.

Also with *usps.com*, a related website is now available. *About.usps.com* provides corporate information, such as USPS history, along with the latest news and information on the USPS. *About.usps.com* will help keep the public and the news media informed about what the Postal Service is doing with regard to sustainability, corporate structure and how we impact the world around us. "Users will learn who we are and what we are about, how we do more than deliver the mail, give them the latest news and information, and help the Postal Service connect our country and our world." *Kelly Sigmon, vice president, Channel Access*

### USPS Expands its Social Media Presence

The USPS has had a page on a social media website for some time (Facebook), but it expanded its presence so that there's something for everyone – customers, mailers and stamp collectors – to like. *Facebook.com/USPS* allows the USPS to better connect with the public and provides engaging content on everything from legislative updates, to mailing tips, to USPS sustainability efforts. Small- and medium-sized business owners, as well as advertising and marketing executives, can go to *facebook.com/USPSbusiness* for the latest on how USPS can help make them a success. From "Grow Your Business Days" to the joys of Every Door Direct Mail, visitors have access to best practices and case studies to help them improve their bottom line by using the USPS. Even collectors can put their "stamp of approval" on the *facebook.com/USPSstamps* page, where upcoming stamp issues and all manner of stamp products will be featured.

### USPS Expands Online Mobile Technology

In September, USPS expanded its public device application to include BlackBerrys, building on the same success of its iPhone, Android, and smart phone apps. This makes the fourth mobile platform deployed by the USPS. Customers have downloaded the existing USPS apps more than 1.2 million times and there are more than 4 million visits per month through all USPS mobile channels.

"This year, people are spending more time using mobile apps than web surfing and mobile device sales have exceeded desktop and laptops so we need to have solutions for those users" says John Edgar, vice

president, Information Technology. “We’re making it easier for customers to conduct postal business, when and where they want,” said Kelly Sigmon, vice president, Channel Access.

The free business app has consistently been one of the top 10 in the App Store. With the new app, BlackBerry users will be able to track and confirm package delivery, locate nearby Post Offices and find a ZIP Code. The new USPS Mobile application takes advantage of Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) capabilities, using the Locator function to show the closest Post Offices, Automated Postal Centers and collection boxes. Maps and directions to the closest location – driving, walking or mass transit – are available.

General Counsel (OGC):

1. Multi-track processing/response times

- a. Not applicable.
- b. Not applicable.
- c. Not applicable.

2. Backlog

- a. Not applicable.
- b. The backlog of appeals for OGC decreased in Fiscal Year 2011. In FY 2011 the number of backlogged appeals was 1 (one) and in FY 2010 the number of backlogged appeals was 3 (three).
- c. Not applicable.
- d. The two oldest administrative appeals that were pending at the end of FY 2010 were closed in 2011.

3. Reasons for Backlog

Request Backlog:

- a. Not applicable.
- b. Not applicable.
- c. Not applicable.
- d. Not applicable.

Administrative Appeal Backlog:

- e. Not applicable.
- f. Not applicable.
- g. Not applicable.
- h. Not applicable.

4. Steps to reduce existing backlogs of requests and appeals and to improve timeliness
  - a. The OGC seeks to process the appeals in as timely a manner as possible, given current staffing and other work requirements.
  - b. The OGC has not increased staffing of the FOIA appeal process.
  - c. The OGC has increased its use of the electronic features offered by the FOIA Tracking System to expedite its consideration and processing of administrative appeals.
  - d. Not applicable.

#### Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"

1. OGC did not invoke a statutory exclusion during FY 2011.
2. Not applicable.

#### Spotlight on Success:

In 2011, the USPS witnessed increased interest in its MoverSource Program, which it operates in concert with a private company. This interest took the form of several FOIA requests, as well as a number of media inquiries. After the records custodian, at the initial level, redacted vast portions of the nearly 100-page contract governing the program, the OGC, on appeal, determined that a significant majority of the previously withheld materials could, and should, be released. The over-redaction of the document was used as a training opportunity for postal management with little experience with the FOIA. Several news stories addressing the MoverSource Program subsequently were published, providing details of its purpose and operation.

Office of Inspector General (OIG):

1. Multi-track processing/response times
  - a. OIG uses a multi-track process.
  - b. Yes, approximately 6 days
  - c. Yes, 6.11 days.
2. Backlog (consider a narrative response since the questions not shown in report)
  - a. No, this was a backlog of 1 case compared with 0 the previous year.
  - b. Not applicable.
  - c. Yes.
  - d. Yes.
3. Reasons for Backlog  
Request Backlog:
  - a. Yes; in addition it resulted from a fluctuation in the rate of arrival of requests.
  - b. No.
  - c. No.
  - d. It resulted from a fluctuation in the rate of arrival of requests.Administrative Appeal Backlog:
  - e. Not applicable.
  - f. Not applicable.
  - g. Not applicable.
  - h. Not applicable.

4. Steps to reduce existing backlogs of requests and appeals and to improve timeliness
  - a. Yes.
  - b. No.
  - c. Yes, OIG appeals unit is now using a shared automated system for processing, as used by the initial FOIA processors.
  - d. Not applicable.

Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"

1. The OIG did not invoke a statutory exclusion during FY 2011.
2. Not applicable.

Spotlight on Success:



Postal Inspection Service:

1. Multi-track processing/response times

- a. A multi-track system is utilized for processing requests.
- b. For FY 2011, the average number of days to process simple requests was 11.67.
- c. Not applicable.

2. Backlog

- a. No. For FY 2011, the backlog increased by one (FY 2011 – 3; FY 2010 – 2).
- b. Not applicable.
- c. Yes
- d. Not applicable.

3. Reasons for Backlog

Request Backlog:

- a. Yes. In FY 2011, the Postal Inspection Service received an increase of 48 requests.
- b. Yes. The Postal Inspection Service's FOIA complement was down by one due to a seasoned employee being detailed to another position.
- c. No.
- d. Not applicable.

Administrative Appeal Backlog:

- e. Not applicable.
- f. Not applicable.
- g. Not applicable.

4. Steps to reduce existing backlogs of requests and appeals and to improve timeliness
  - a. Yes. The FOIA Manager routinely runs a weekly work report to check the status of all requests, with emphasis on the amount of remaining processing days before the case should be closed.
  - b. No.
  - c. No IT improvements were made in FY 2011 to increase timeliness.
  - d. Yes. The Inspection Service received seven (7) consultation requests for FY 2011. No improvements to the handling of consultations are required at this time.

#### **Use of FOIA's Law Enforcement "Exclusions"**

1. No. The Inspection Service did not invoke any statutory exclusion during FY 2011.
2. Not applicable.

#### **Spotlight on Success:**

Each year, the Postal Service spends millions of dollars to replace Mail Transport Equipment (MTE) that leaks out of its network. With wooden and plastic pallets ranging from \$7 to \$20 each, cardboard and plastic letter trays ranging from 65 cents to \$2.75 per tray, and plastic flat tubs costing around \$4 each, losses quickly add up. Recovery efforts have proven to be fruitful: Last year, the U.S. Postal Inspection Service, working with the Mail Transport Equipment office, recovered more than 21,000 pallets and other MTE worth close to \$1.75 million. USPS has other initiatives to combat the problem, including the U.S. Postal Inspection Service Equipment Recovery Project and investigations underway in several parts of the country involving plastic recyclers, pallet bounty hunters and mailers. The Postal Service and the Postal Inspection Service each posted online news releases to announce a two-week amnesty period, from November 12 through 26, to promote the prompt return of postal-owned equipment, especially pallets and mail tubs—with no questions asked. The Postal Inspection Service also prepared a major homepage posting explaining to postal customers the illegality of retaining postal equipment and publicizing the amnesty period to solicit public cooperation. The results have not yet been tallied in full, but it is clear that large numbers of customers responded to the alert.

