



Response to Questions on the 2016 LOBs

Request By: Supervisor Herrity

Relevant LOB(s): LOB #47

Question: Provide the number of Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests handled by the Office of the County Attorney.

Response:

FY 2011—133

FY 2012—126

FY 2013—165

FY 2014—165

FY 2015—188

As previously stated, these numbers only reflect the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) matters that this Office formally opened as an assignment. This Office informally provides legal assistance to its clients in connection with a multitude of additional FOIA requests that are not reflected in these statistics. In addition, these statistics do not reflect the number of hours spent copying, reviewing, and redacting public records or documents for release. In particular, FOIAs requesting emails take an extraordinary amount of time due to the search by the Department of Information Technology (DIT) and then the review and redaction of each and every email before the documents can be released to ensure that the production of documents complies with FOIA and does not violate laws pertaining to the release of personally identifying information, such as social security numbers. To the best of our knowledge, the County does not track the total number of FOIAs responded to by all County agencies on an annual basis. The Police Department does track its statistics and for the 2015 calendar year received 479 requests. Similarly, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services (DPWES) received 334 requests in 2015. Although this Office did not necessarily give legal advice on all of the FOIA requests received by the Police Department or DPWES, this Office routinely gives advice to all agencies on FOIA requests. These numbers from the Police Department and DPWES merely highlight the high volume of FOIAs received by the County.