



USDA Implementation of M-21-04

22 February 2024

USDA Privacy Act Request – Link on Privacy Page

- <https://www.usda.gov/home/privacy-policy/privacy-office>



Privacy Office

About the Privacy Office

The United States Department of Agriculture Privacy Office is located within the Office of the Chief Information Officer. The mission of the USDA Privacy Office is to preserve and enhance privacy protections for all individuals, to promote transparency of USDA operations, and to serve as a leader in the federal privacy community. The Office accomplishes its mission by focusing on two key activities: (1) requiring compliance with the letter and spirit of federal laws promoting privacy and to provide policy and programmatic oversight and support operational implementation within the components; (2) providing education and outreach to build a culture of privacy and adherence to Fair Information Practice Principles (FIPPs) across the Department.

The USDA Privacy Office operates under the direction of the Chief Information Officer and the Chief Privacy Officer. The USDA Privacy Office works within the parameters of the Privacy Act of 1974, the e-Government Act of 2002 and the numerous laws, Executive Orders, Department policies that protect the use, and disclosure of personal and Departmental information.

Privacy Act Requests

The Privacy Act grants individuals a right of access to their records and any information pertaining to them that are contained in the agency systems of records. While the Privacy Act increases an individual's right to access the individual's own record, it restricts an individual's ability to access a record pertaining to someone else. The Privacy Act prohibits disclosure of records in a system of records to any person or agency, unless disclosure is pursuant to the prior written request by, or with the prior written consent of, the individual to whom the record pertains.

To make an Electronic Privacy Act Request, please click here: [USDA Public Access Link](#).

Note: This link will allow you to electronically complete your request.

The USDA Public Access Link (PAL) is a web portal that allows requestors to create, submit, and track the status of their [FOIA](#) and [Privacy Act Request\(s\)](#). To use the system, the requestor must **register** and create a username and password. This system also provides remote identity proofing and authentication through login.gov for Privacy Act requests.

USDA Privacy Act Request – Public Access Portal

- <https://efoia-pal-test.usda.gov/>
- The link provided above is the test environment and will be moved to the production environment once approved. Link will be updated accordingly on the Privacy Office Page.

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[Register](#) [Sign In](#) [Help](#) ▾

[Public Access Home](#) [Requester Categories](#) [USDA.gov](#)

[Public Access Home](#)

Welcome to the United States Department of Agriculture Freedom of Information Act Public Access Portal

To Submit a FOIA Request Online (or Privacy Act Request)

Using links in the upper right corner of this page, **Register** to create an online profile or **Sign In** to your existing profile. Once logged in to your account profile, you can submit a request, check the status of a request, send a message to the FOIA officer, or download responsive records from a request.

Helpful Information to Review Prior to Submitting a Request

The Freedom of Information Act, or FOIA, is a law that provides any person access to agency records, except to the extent that such agency records or portions of such agency records are protected from disclosure by one or more of the [nine FOIA exemptions](#).

There are certain requirements for making a USDA FOIA request, and in some cases, the records you are requesting may already be posted online. Prior to submitting a request, navigate to the [USDA's FOIA website](#) for information about the following topics:

- Requirements and tips for making a USDA FOIA request
- USDA FOIA component reading rooms
- USDA FOIA points of contact
- Prior published USDA FOIA reports
- FOIA resources

If after reviewing the USDA's FOIA site, you determine that you need to file a FOIA request, we encourage you to submit your request online to facilitate faster processing.

USDA Privacy Act Request – Register / Sign In

- Step 1: Register OR Sign In
 - New User: Select Register, create a requestor profile, username, and password.
 - Return User: Enter username and password if an account has already been established.

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[Register](#) [Sign In](#) [Help](#) ▾

[Public Access Home](#) [Requester Categories](#) [USDA.gov](#)

Registered User

User Name:

Password:

[Sign In](#)

[Forgot User Name or Password ?](#)

[Click here to Register](#)

REGISTRATION TIPS

1. During the registration process it is required that you provide an email address which will be validated during the registration process to identify if a profile already exists for the provided email address

- If you have previously submitted requests in hard copy/fax/mail etc. to USDA we may already have your email address in your profile. If the email address exists you will be prompted to retrieve a temporary password which will be sent to the email address we have on file

USDA Privacy Act Request – Requestor Registration

- Step 1(a): If Register is selected, create a Requestor Registration, username, and password.

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[Register](#) [Sign In](#) [Help](#)

[Public Access Home](#) [Requester Categories](#) [USDA.gov](#)

Read this before creating your account: If you have already created an account, do not create another one. Duplicate accounts will be deleted. If you need to change information in your account, 1) sign into the system and 2) locate and click the **My Account** link at the top-right section of the Welcome or Home screen.

Requester Registration

Requester Profile

Prefix	-----Select-----	First Name*	<input type="text"/>
Middle Name	<input type="text"/>	Last Name*	<input type="text"/>
Suffix	-----Select-----	Address1*	<input type="text"/>
Address2	<input type="text"/>	City*	<input type="text"/>
State*	-----Select-----	State (Other)	<input type="text"/>
Zip Code*	<input type="text"/>	Country*	United States
Contact Number*	<input type="text"/> Home	Email Address*	<input type="text"/>
Organization	<input type="text"/>	Confirm Email Address*	<input type="text"/>

Job Title Default Category* -----Select-----

Account Details

User Name*	<input type="text"/>
Select a Hint Question*	-----Select-----
Enter the Hint Answer*	<input type="text"/>

Security Information

Please enter the text shown in the image
Enter the text shown in th

USDA Privacy Act Request –Sign In

- Step 1(b): Once registration is complete, you will be returned to the Home Page to Sign In. Enter newly created username and password.

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[Register](#) [Sign In](#) [Help](#) ▾

[Public Access Home](#) [Requester Categories](#) [USDA.gov](#)

Registered User

User Name:

Password:

[Sign In](#)

[Forgot User Name or Password?](#)

[Click here to Register](#)

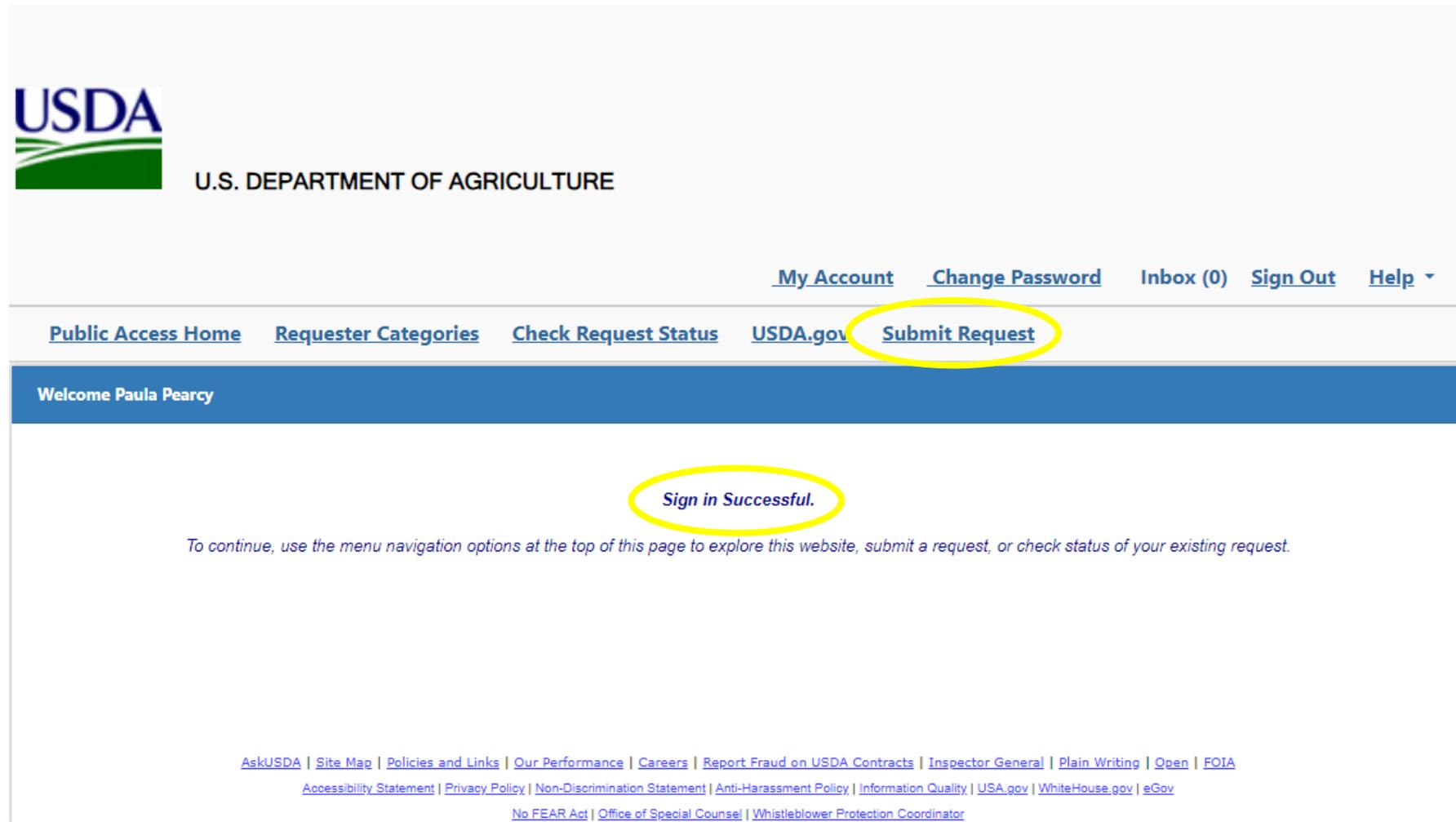
REGISTRATION TIPS

- During the registration process it is required that you provide an email address which will be validated during the registration process to identify if a profile already exists for the provided email address

- If you have previously submitted requests in hard copy/fax/mail etc. to USDA we may already have your email address in your profile. If the email address exists you will be prompted to retrieve a temporary password which will be sent to the email address we have on file

USDA Privacy Act Request – Submit a Request

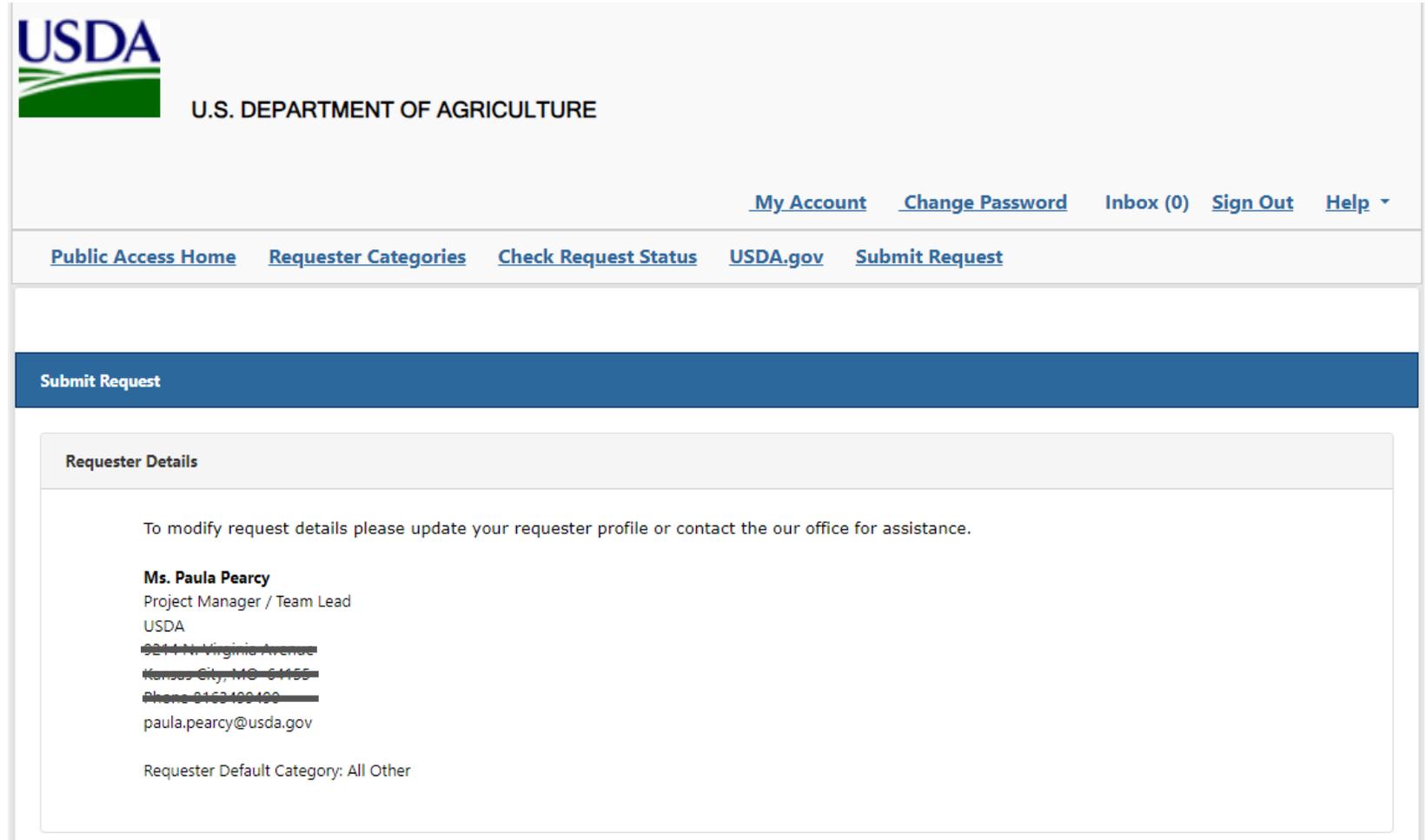
- Step 2: “Submit Request” for new requests or check status for previous requests.



The screenshot displays the USDA website interface. At the top left is the USDA logo with the text "U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE". A navigation bar at the top right contains links for "My Account", "Change Password", "Inbox (0)", "Sign Out", and "Help". Below this, a secondary navigation bar includes "Public Access Home", "Requester Categories", "Check Request Status", "USDA.gov", and "Submit Request", with the latter circled in yellow. A blue banner below the navigation bar reads "Welcome Paula Percy". The main content area features a yellow circle around the text "Sign in Successful." and a paragraph: "To continue, use the menu navigation options at the top of this page to explore this website, submit a request, or check status of your existing request." The footer contains a list of links: "AskUSDA", "Site Map", "Policies and Links", "Our Performance", "Careers", "Report Fraud on USDA Contracts", "Inspector General", "Plain Writing", "Open", "FOIA", "Accessibility Statement", "Privacy Policy", "Non-Discrimination Statement", "Anti-Harassment Policy", "Information Quality", "USA.gov", "WhiteHouse.gov", "eGov", "No FEAR Act", "Office of Special Counsel", and "Whistleblower Protection Coordinator".

USDA Privacy Act Request – Requestor Details

- Step 3: Confirm requestor profile data is accurate (this information auto populates when making a request).
 - Name
 - Title
 - Address
 - Phone
 - Email



The screenshot displays the USDA website interface for a Privacy Act Request. At the top left is the USDA logo and the text "U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE". On the right side of the header, there are links for "My Account", "Change Password", "Inbox (0)", "Sign Out", and "Help". Below the header is a navigation bar with links for "Public Access Home", "Requester Categories", "Check Request Status", "USDA.gov", and "Submit Request". A blue bar with the text "Submit Request" is positioned below the navigation bar. The main content area is titled "Requester Details" and contains the following text:

To modify request details please update your requester profile or contact the our office for assistance.

Ms. Paula Percy
Project Manager / Team Lead
USDA
~~924 N. Virginia Avenue~~
~~Kansas City, MO 64155~~
~~Phone 816 400 400~~
paula.pearcy@usda.gov

Requester Default Category: All Other

USDA Privacy Act Request – Select Agency/Request Type

- Step 4: Select a USDA Component (USDA Agency).
- Step 5: Select request type

General Request Information

You must direct your request to a USDA component. Review the information below before selecting a USDA Component:

- If you do not know where to submit your request to, [click here](#) for descriptions of each component and their primary functions.
- Within the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), FOIA responsibilities are distributed across multiple service centers. To assist you on identifying what USFS office may have the record you are seeking, click [Forest Service FOIA Service Centers](#) to see a map of Forest Service areas of responsibility.
- Please note this submission site does not currently provide the ability to submit a single FOIA request to multiple components. You can, however, easily submit the same request to multiple components or alternatively you can submit one request to the General Counsel's Office of Information Affairs (OIA) by selecting the Office of the General Counsel (OGC) when prompted to select an office. Upon receipt, the OIA will then forward your request to the appropriate components.

Select a USDA Component*

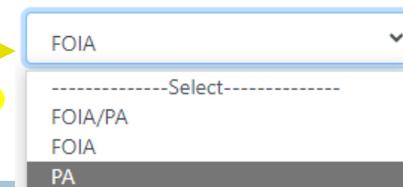


USDA Component Details



Select a Request Type. If you select a Privacy Act request type (either PA or FOIA/PA in the drop-down list), you will need to provide additional information in the **Proof of Identity** section which will be displayed below. Also, depending on the nature of your request, you may need to complete one of the **Consent** sections which will be displayed below.

Request Type*



USDA Privacy Act Request – Verify ID

- Step 6: Select Verify ID (the Proof of Identity field populates when a Privacy Act request is selected). This selection will take the requestor to login.gov for digital authentication.

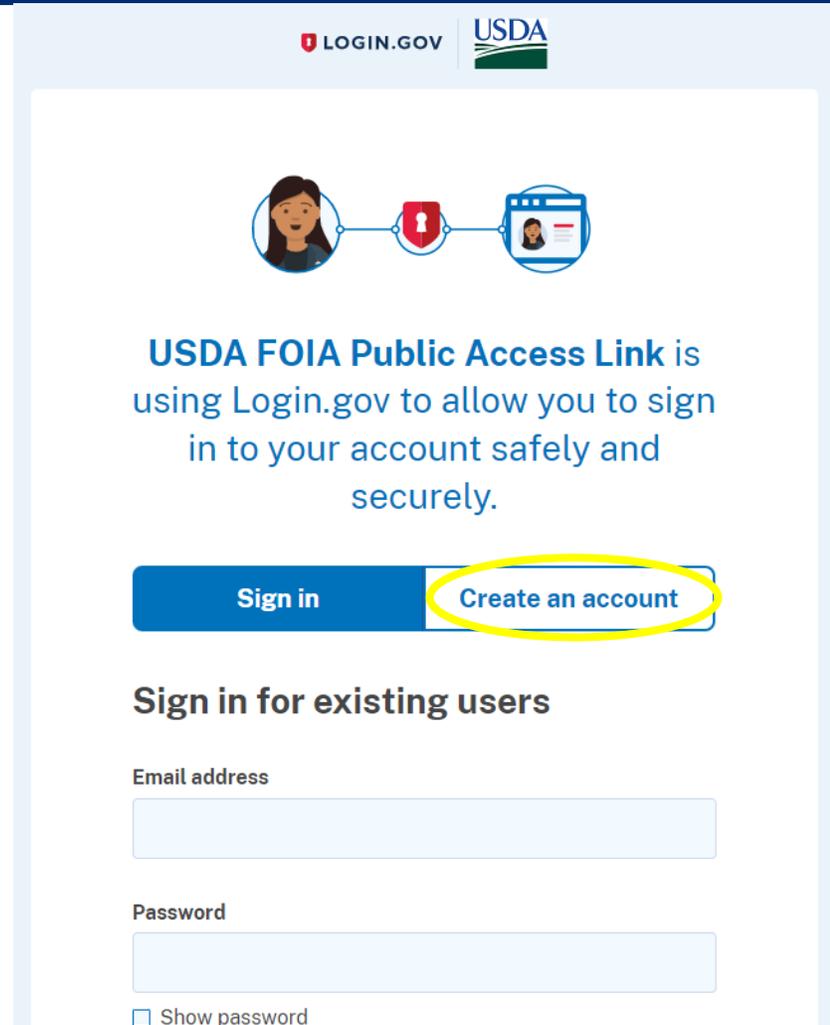
Proof of Identity

This submission requires your proof of identity. Click the Verify ID button to verify your identification using Login.gov, where you can sign into an existing Login.gov account or follow the instructions to register a new account. Once you successfully verify your identity using Login.gov and submit your request, you will have an option to update your ID verification if necessary.

Digital Authentication* 

USDA Privacy Act Request – Login.gov

- Step 7: Create an Account OR sign in if you have an existing account to Verify Identity with login.gov.



LOGIN.GOV USDA



USDA FOIA Public Access Link is using Login.gov to allow you to sign in to your account safely and securely.

[Sign in](#) [Create an account](#)

Sign in for existing users

Email address

Password

Show password

USDA Privacy Act Request – Validated/Verified

- Step 8: Once you have completed the steps to verify your identity via login.gov, you will receive the message, “Your ID has been validated. Please click on close button and continue with your request.
- Step 9: Upon selecting close, the requestor will be automatically redirected back to the PAL with a verified date of proof of identity.

Your ID has been validated. Please click on close button and continue with your request.

Close

Proof of Identity

This submission requires your proof of identity. Click the Verify ID button to verify your identification using Login.gov, where you can sign into an existing Login.gov account or follow the instructions to register a new account. Once you successfully verify your identity using Login.gov and submit your request, you will have an option to update your ID verification if necessary.

Digital Authentication*

Verify ID

Verified on 2/22/2024

USDA Privacy Act Request – Optional Consent

- Step 10 (Optional): ONLY REQUIRED IF: you are the parent or legal guardian requesting records of a minor or of an individual who has been declared by a court to be incompetent, please enter the name of records subject.
- Step 11 (Optional): ONLY REQUIRED IF: you are providing consent and authorizing the agency to disclose your records to another person or entity, please provide the name of the recipient (person or entity) to whom disclosure is authorized and the address for receiving the requested information.

Consent of Parent/Guardian	
Only required if: you are the parent or legal guardian requesting records of a minor or of an individual who has been declared by a court to be incompetent. Please enter the name of the records subject below:	
First Name	<input type="text"/>
Middle Initial	<input type="text"/>
Last Name	<input type="text"/>
Relationship to Record Subject	<input type="text" value="-----Select-----"/>

Consent to Disclose Your Records to Another Person or Entity	
Only required if: you are providing consent and authorizing the agency to disclose your records to another person or entity. Please provide the name of the recipient (person or entity) to whom disclosure is authorized and the address for receiving the requested information below:	
Recipient (Person or Entity)	<input type="text"/>
Street Address	<input type="text"/>
Apt. # or PO Box	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text"/>
State	<input type="text"/>
Zipcode	<input type="text"/>

USDA Privacy Act Request – Requestor Category/Delivery

- Step 12: Select Requestor Category.
- Step 13: Select Delivery Method of Response.

The image shows a web form interface for a USDA Privacy Act Request. It consists of two main sections, each with a label circled in yellow and a corresponding dropdown menu.

Requester Category* (Step 12): The dropdown menu is open, showing the following options: Commercial Use, Educational Institution, Non-Commercial Scientific Institution, News Media, and All Other.

Delivery Method of Response (Step 13): The dropdown menu is open, showing the following options: PAL, E-mail, Fax, PAL, and Other.

USDA Privacy Act Request – Mailing Address

- Step 14: Mailing address is automatically populated from the user account registration. These fields can be altered, if necessary.

Mailing Address			
Address1	<input type="text" value="5211 N Virginia Avenue"/>	Address2	<input type="text"/>
City	<input type="text" value="Kansas City"/>	State	<input type="text" value="Missouri"/>
Country	<input type="text" value="United States"/>	Zip Code	<input type="text" value="64133"/>

USDA Privacy Act Request – Description of Records

- Step 15: Enter Description of Records Request. For additional “guidelines on how to describe your request” link: [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-1#p-1.3\(c\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-1#p-1.3(c))
- Step 16: (Optional) Enter a Date Range.
- Step 17: (Optional) Add an attachment to describe the document.

Description of Records Request

You should identify the records that you want as specifically as possible to increase the likelihood that the components will be able to locate them. Any facts you can furnish about the time, authors, events, subjects, and other details of the records will be helpful to the agency in deciding where to search and in determining which records respond to your request, saving you and the government time and money. Please list, as clearly as possible, the name of the record(s), the type of record(s), and any other specifics you may have that will identify the records you seek. See [guidelines on how to describe your request](#) for additional information.

Enter a detailed description*

Date Range for Record Search:
From(mm/dd/yyyy)  To (mm/dd/yyyy) 

Description Document [Add Attachment](#)

USDA Privacy Act Request – Fee Waiver Requests

- Step 18: Determine if you would like to Request a Fee Waiver. Link to “criteria used to determine if fee waiver requests are justified”: [https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-1#p-1.12\(p\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-1#p-1.12(p))

Fee Waiver Requests

See [criteria used to determine if fee waiver requests are justified](#) before completing this section.

Amount Willing to Pay (\$)

If additional processing fees are applicable,
Check to Request a Fee Waiver

Reason for Waiver Request

USDA Privacy Act Request – Expediting/Security

- Step 19: (Optional) Provide reason for expediting the request. Link to “procedures to request expediated processing”:
[https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-1#p-1.6\(e\)](https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-7/subtitle-A/part-1#p-1.6(e))
- Step 20: Security Information, enter text shown in box above.
- Step 21: Select “submit”.
- The request is now complete and sent to the Privacy Officer within the selected agency.

Expedite Information

See [procedures to request expedited processing](#) before completing this section.

Request Expedited Processing

Reason for Expedite Request

Security Information


Please enter the text shown in the image

USDA Privacy Act Request – Additional Notes:

- All fields show in screenshots are on one (1) continuous page as shown here.
- Each field has directions provided.
- This process has been successfully utilized for FOIA requests across Federal Agencies and now able to accept Privacy Act Requests with digital authentication.

General Request Information

You must direct your request to a USDA component. Review the information below before selecting a USDA Component:

- If you do not know where to submit your request to, [click here](#) for descriptions of each component and their primary functions.
- Within the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), FOIA responsibilities are distributed across multiple service centers. To assist you on identifying what USFS office may have the record you are seeking, click [Forest Service FOIA Service Centers](#) to see a map of Forest Service areas of responsibility.
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Select a USDA Component*

USDA Component Details

Select a Request Type. If you select a Privacy Act request type (either PA or FOIA/PA in the drop-down list), you will need to provide additional information in the **Proof of Identity** section which will be displayed below. Also, depending on the nature of your request, you may need to complete one of the **Consent** sections which will be displayed below.

Request Type*

Requester Category*

Delivery Method of Response

Proof of Identity

This submission requires your proof of identity. Click the Verify ID button to verify your identification using Login.gov, where you can sign into an existing Login.gov account or follow the instructions to register a new account. Once you successfully verify your identity using Login.gov and submit your request, you will have an option to update your ID verification if necessary.

Digital Authentication*

Consent of Parent/Guardian

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First Name

Middle Initial

Last Name

Relationship to Record Subject

Consent to Disclose Your Records to Another Person or Entity

Only required if: you are providing consent and authorizing the agency to disclose your records to another person or entity. Please provide the name of the recipient (person or entity) to whom disclosure is authorized and the address for receiving the requested information below:

Recipient (Person or Entity)

Street Address

USDA Implementation of M-21-04

Submitted by:

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USDA Chief Privacy Officer

Office of the Chief Information Officer

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