

# *FOIAonline Executive Briefing*



***Presented to:  
General Public  
and Keynote Address***

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# *Topics*

- Overview
- Workflow Process at Commerce
- Partnership Background
- Milestones
- Status
- What Is Left?
- System Usage
- Questions

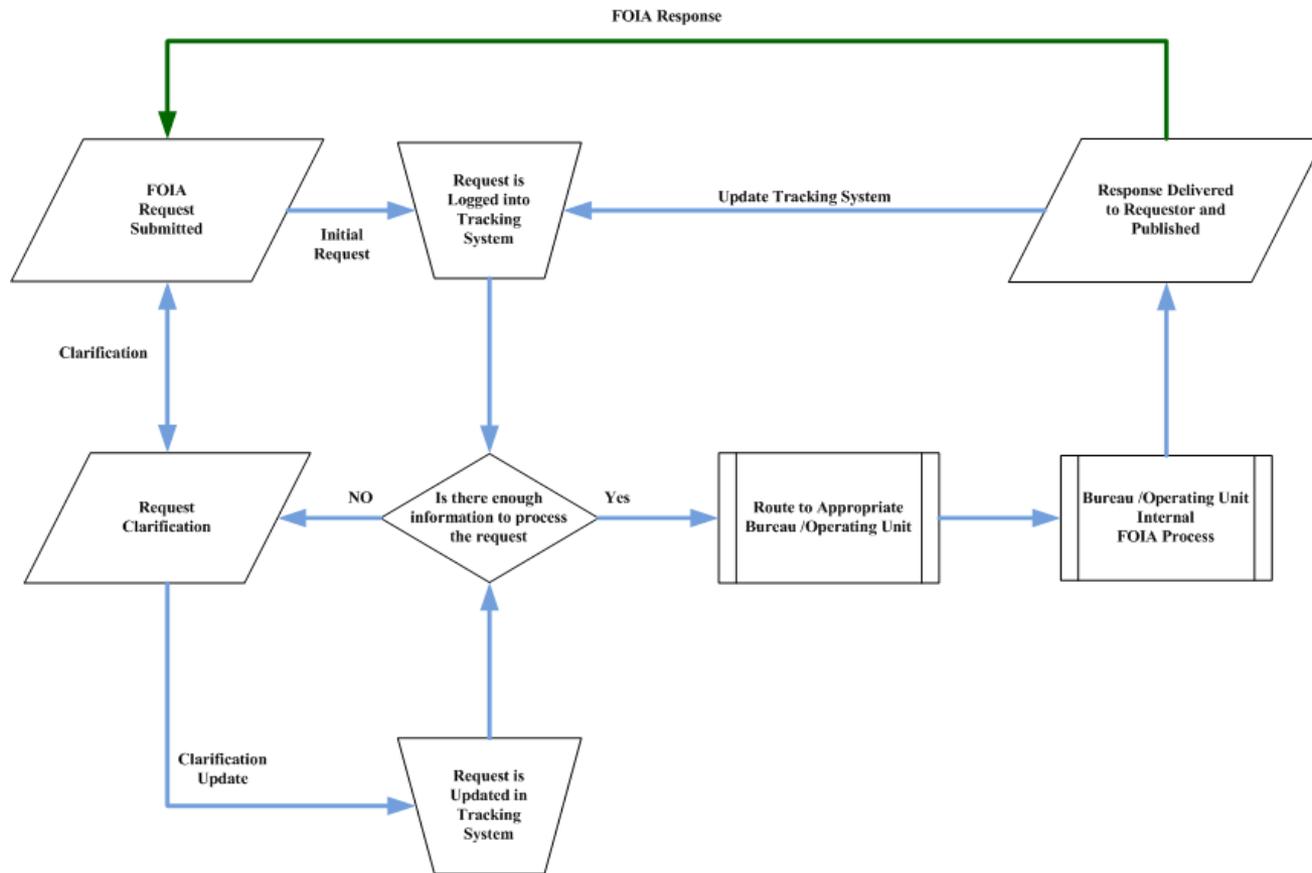
# Overview

- Commerce Background
  - 13 Individual Bureaus / Operating Units
  - FOIA Round Table
    - Departmental FOIA Officer
    - 13 FOIA Leads
- FOIA Working Environment
  - Pen and Paper
  - GOTS Spreadsheets and Simple Database
  - COTS (FOIAXpress)

# Overview (cont.)

- Need for Improved Tracking and Reporting
- Developed Strategy
  - Find Immediate Interim Solution
  - Develop Target End-State Goals
  - Find a way to achieve the End-State
- Results
  - Interim – FOIA Tracking Access database
  - End-State – Partnered developed Integrated FOIA Tracking Module (FOIAonline)

# Workflow Process at Commerce



*High Level Diagram*

# *Partnership Background*

- MOU
  - Draft - July 2011
  - Finalized - September 2011
- Current Products
  - Requirements Document – November 2011
  - Design Document – November 2011
- Reporting
  - Quarterly to Senior Stakeholders
  - Monthly to Steering Group

# *Milestones*

- Design and Requirements
  - Baseline Requirements established – **November 2011**
  - Design phase – **January 2012**
    - Screen Review and Baseline Terminology
    - Partners First look – January 4, 2012
    - Senior Stakeholder – January 11, 2012
    - Government-Wide – January 12, 2012
  - Design Baseline and Crosswalk – **February 2012**
- Routine Reporting – **March 2012**

# *Milestones (cont.)*

- **Development 100% Complete – June 2012**
- **Internal Testing – June 2012**
- **Demonstration – June 22, 2012**
  - Non Government Organizations (NGO)
  - Capitol Hill (Senate and House Staffer)
- **User Acceptance Testing – July 2012**
- **Training and Data migration – August 2012**
- **Go Live DOC Internal Usage September 6, 2012**
- **Go Live Public October 1, 2012**

# *Current Status*

## **Completed Milestones**

- ✓ 10/28/11 Agencies reviewed and concurred with system functional requirements
- ✓ 11/30/11 Agencies finalized system functional requirements
- ✓ 12/16/11 Partners updated project plan and estimates to build
- ✓ 01/19/12 Agencies finalized “agency user” interface
- ✓ 01/23/12 Partners initiated system construction
- ✓ 04/19/12 Partners demonstrate in-progress version of system for agencies
- ✓ 07/09/12 Partners conduct user testing
- ✓ 08/10/12 Partner training/implementation configuration
- ✓ 09/06/12 Commerce deploy agency interface

## **Upcoming Milestones**

- 10/01/12 Deploy public interface

# *What Is Left?*

- Validate migrated data
- Prepare for Annual Report
- Production
  - LifeCycle Management

# System Usage – Public



## Capabilities

### Search and view FOIA responses

*Single repository to search FOIA responses across agencies*

### Submit FOIA requests

*Simple web form to submit FOIA request to many agencies  
 Create a user profile*

### Track progress

*Automated tracking of FOIA requests*

### Communicate with Agency staff

*Interact with agency staff to clarify questions*

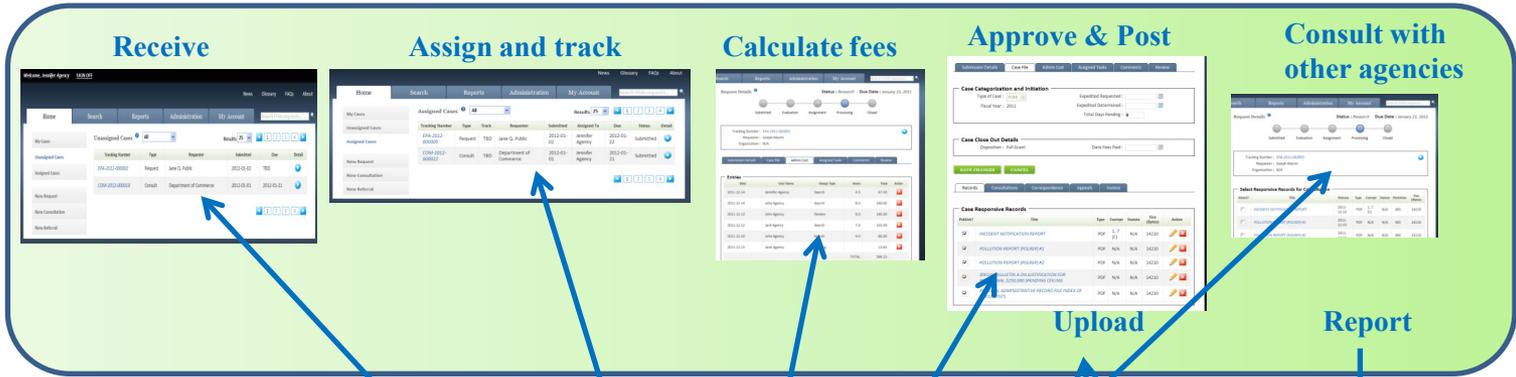
### File an appeal

*Simple web form to submit an appeal*




**PUBLIC**

# System Usage – Agencies



**Capabilities**

**Receive public requests**

*Each agency controls its data*

**Assign**

*Assign FOIA request within agency*

**Track progress**

*Automated tracking of FOIA requests*

**Upload, approve & post**

*Agency staff can upload documents responsive to FOIA requests*

*Agency can review / approve / post*

**Calculate fees**

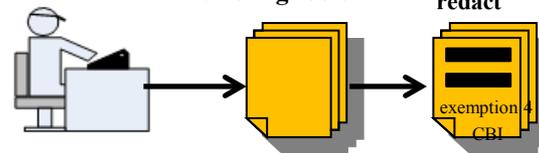
*Automatically calculate fees and generate invoices*

**Consult with other agencies**

*Agencies can refer or consult on requests*

**Report**

*Automatically generates annual FOIA reports and internal reports*



# *FOIAonline*



## *General Overview*

*Content built in partnership with EPA*

# Current FOIA situation?

**97 Agencies operate a multitude of systems and depend on manual processes**  
**Public faced with hundreds of disconnected sites** (offering limited information and self-service capabilities)

## Current challenges

### Agencies

*COTS tools are costly and limited (often only tracking). Agencies use a multitude of tracking tools, web sites, email forms, and spreadsheets*

*FOIA Reports are manually generated by each agency/unit*

*Inter-agency referrals are manually transferred, slowing response time*

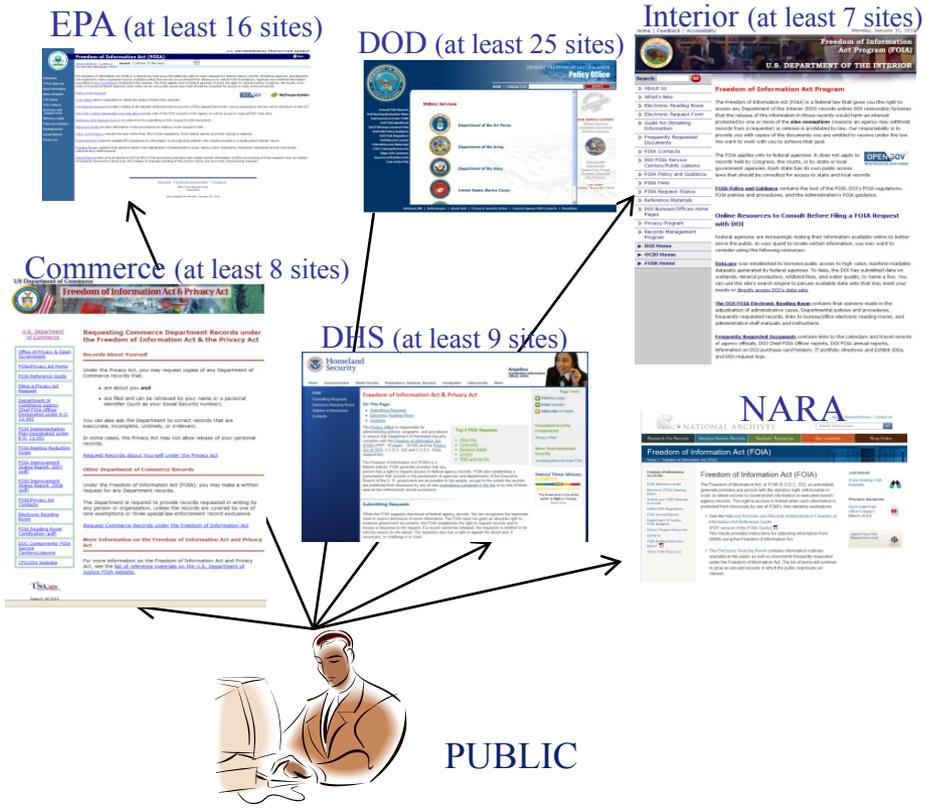
*June 13, 2011 Exec. Order to eliminate redundant web sites*

### Public

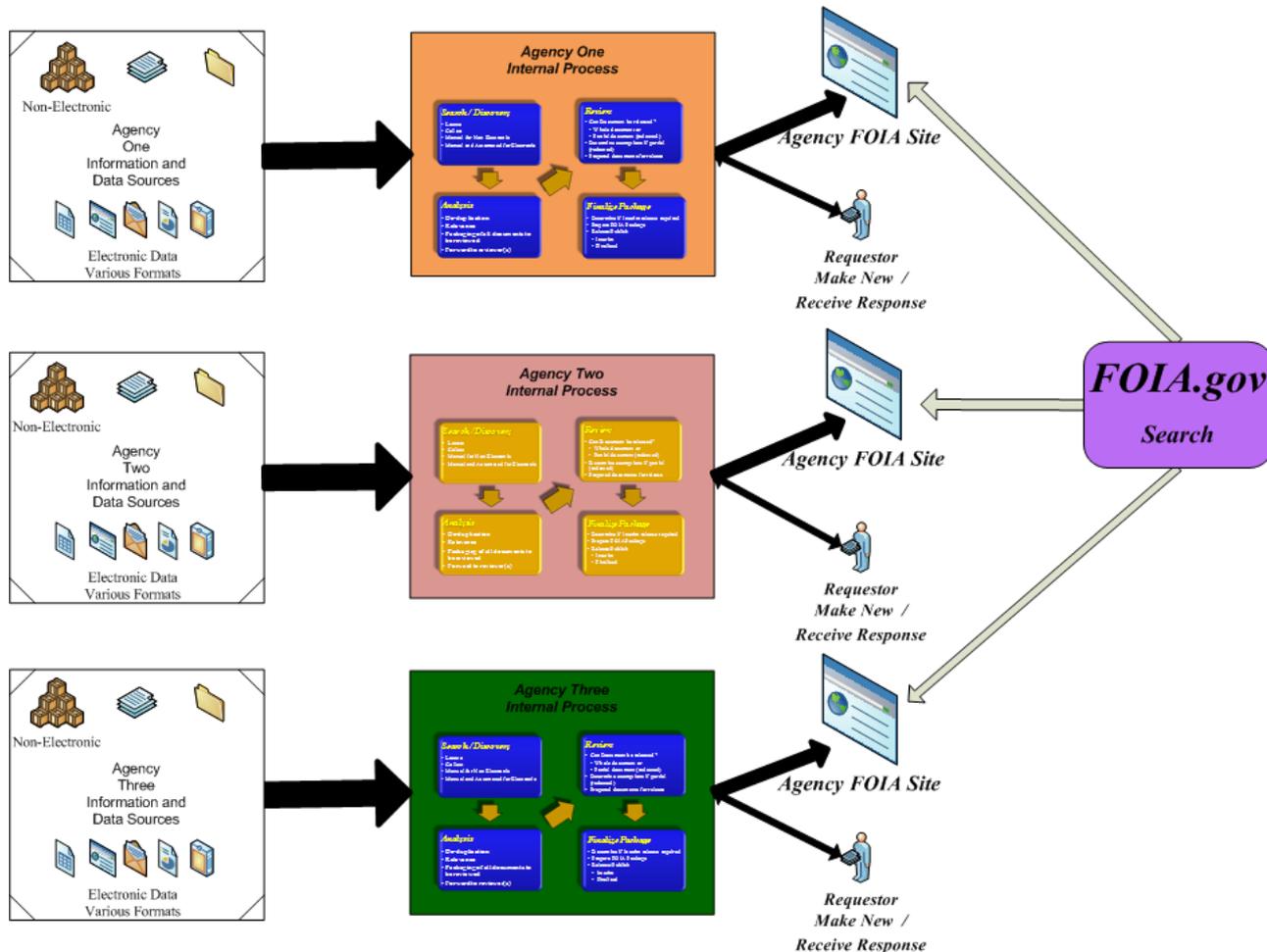
*Fragmentation – hundreds of duplicative web sites (Must submit requests to each agency or region or bureau separately)*

*No single place to search for previously released FOIA responses*

*Cannot check status of request (must call most Agencies to inquire about status of request)*



# Government – Wide FOIA Workflow



# Agency FOIA Process

## *Search / Discovery*

- Locate
- Collect
- Manual for Non Electronic
- Manual and Automated for Electronic

## *Review*

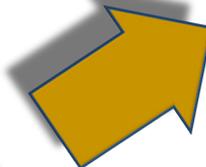
- Can Document be released?
  - Whole document or
  - Partial document (redacted)
- Determine exemptions if partial (redacted)
- Prepared documents for release

## *Analysis*

- De-duplication
- Relevance
- Packaging of all documents to be reviewed
- Forward to reviewer(s)

## *Finalize Package*

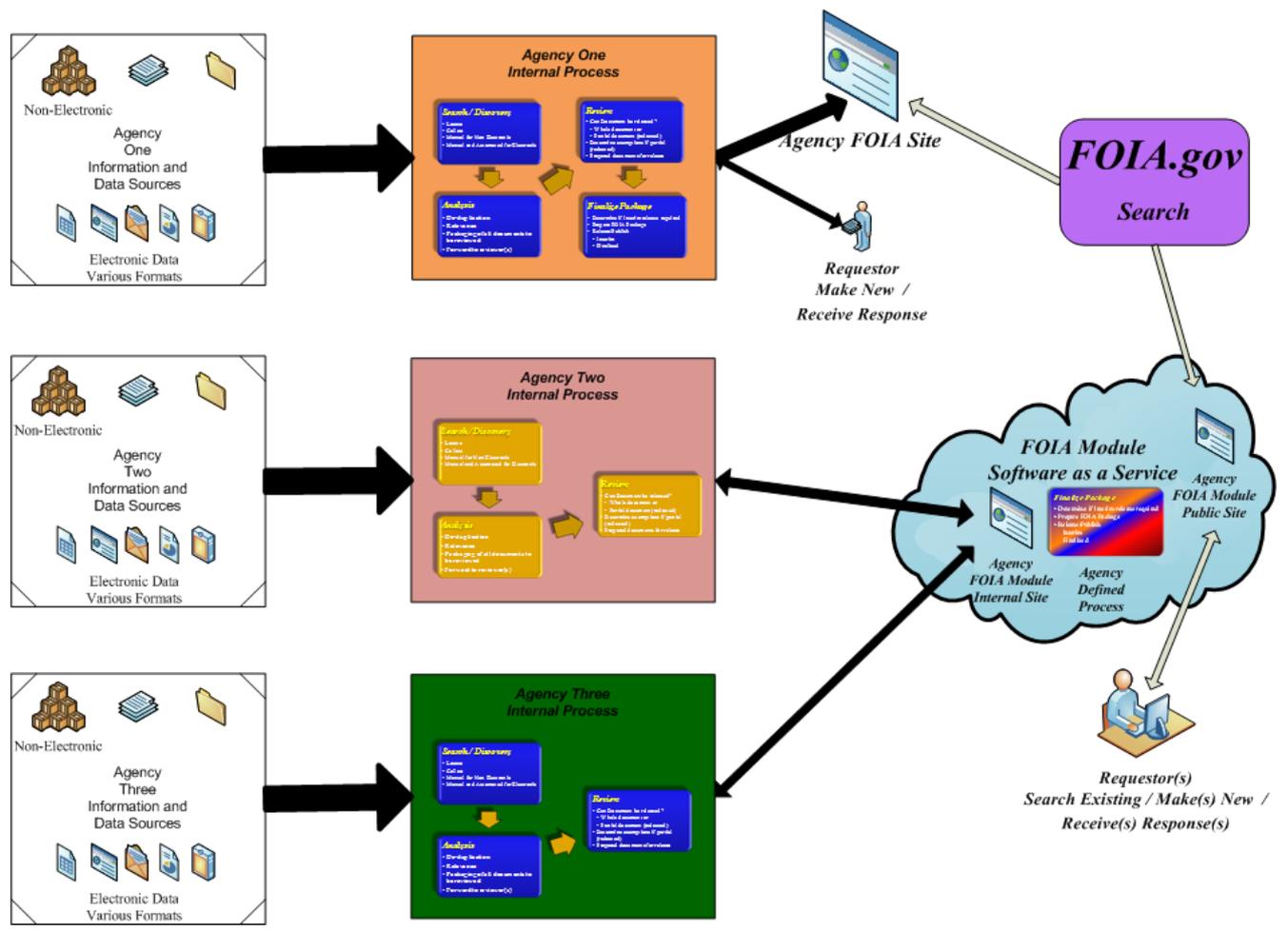
- Determine if Interim release required
- Prepare FOIA Package
- Release/Publish
  - Interim
  - Finalized



# *What is the FOIAonline?*

- Multi Agency FOIA web portal
  - web site for public to submit & track requests, search, and view any response;
  - Secure login access web site for Agencies to receive and store requests, assign and process requests (and refer to other agencies), post responses online, and provide metrics to DOJ for annual reporting
- Approach
  - Leverage the existing eRulemaking platform (this is a reverse flow for [www.regulations.gov](http://www.regulations.gov)); deploy in 1 year
  - Start-up cost estimated to be \$1.3M
  - Total Annual operational costs approximately \$500K – \$750K
  - Multi-agency governance structure for continued funding and system enhancement

# Government-Wide FOIA FOIA Module Implemented



# Agency Internal Process Using FOIA Module

## *Search / Discovery*

- Locate
- Collect
- Manual for Non Electronic
- Manual and Automated for Electronic



## *Analysis*

- De-duplication
- Relevance
- Packaging of all documents to be reviewed
- Forward to reviewer(s)



## *Review*

- Can Document be released?
  - Whole document or
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# *FOIA Module*

## *Agency Defined Process*

### *Finalize Package*

- Determine if Interim release required
- Prepare FOIA Package
- Release/Publish
  - Interim
  - Finalized

Finalize Package is only part of what FOIA Module provides.

Additional capabilities and features are listed on following slides.

All capabilities are based on the documented Requirements Traceability Matrix (RTM) which follows all existing DOJ FOIA requirements

# High Level Requirements

## Agency Core functionality defined in the RTM

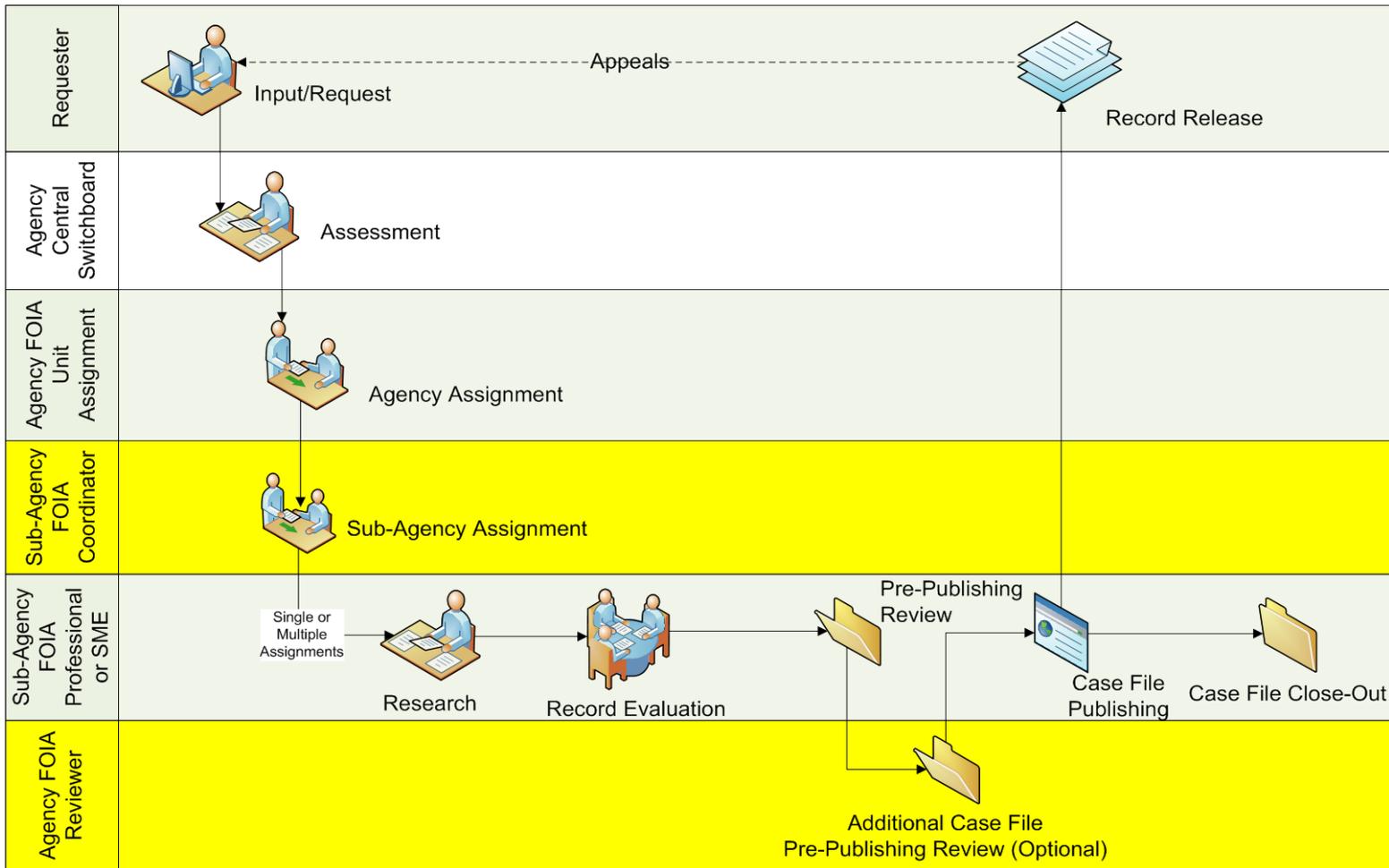
<p>✓ <i>Accept Requests Online</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow requester to pre-populate their information</li> <li>• Provide status to requesters</li> <li>• Create communications (i.e. letters via email) between agencies and requesters</li> </ul>
<p>✓ <i>Track Requests in a Case File</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• FOIA request processing and tracking</li> <li>• Breaking down requests into multiple tasks</li> <li>• Multi-track processing (Simple, Complex, Expedited)</li> <li>• Track time spent on requests</li> <li>• Assign case numbers</li> <li>• Start and stop the clock according to rules</li> <li>• Keep an online folder of all documents related to a request (<i>including notifications to requesters</i>)</li> </ul>
<p>✓ <i>Manage Deadlines</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Start/Stop the clock</li> <li>• Generate backlog reports</li> <li>• Monitor workload</li> <li>• Notify FOIA professionals based on 10 and 20 day deadlines</li> <li>• Close cases when fees are not paid (<i>according to business rules</i>)</li> </ul>
<p>✓ <i>Calculate Fees</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track fees and fee waiver processing</li> <li>• Generate invoices</li> <li>• Deduct what is free of charge (i.e. first 100 pages)</li> <li>• Manually adjust recorded time</li> <li>• Distinguish between search and review time</li> </ul>

# High Level Requirements - continued

## Agency Core functionality defined in the RTM

✓ <i>Research and Upload Records</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Store consultations, referrals and letters</li> <li>• Send tasks to others with instructions about which records to search</li> <li>• Upload scanned documents</li> </ul>
✓ <i>Publish Electronic Records</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review/sign the case file to approve redactions and fee calculations</li> <li>• Partial/incremental releases</li> <li>• System-generated email notifications to requesters</li> </ul>
✓ <i>Accept Appeals Online</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Track status and outcome of litigation and appeals</li> <li>• Issue supplemental release after appeal</li> <li>• Forward copies of processing to Appeals unit</li> </ul>
✓ <i>Prepare the Annual Report</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare the report in the required format with the required data structure</li> <li>• Use dashboards to display these metrics throughout the year, including trends</li> </ul>
✓ <i>Search and Retrieve</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Searching (including metadata and full-text)</li> </ul>

# Business Process Diagram - High Level Roles



# *Questions*