



CITIZENS FOR
RESPONSIBILITY &
ETHICS IN WASHINGTON

July 31, 2025

BY EMAIL: foia@americorps.gov

Jana Maser
Chief FOIA Officer and FOIA Appeals Officer
AmeriCorps
Office of the General Counsel
Attn: Freedom of Information Act Officer
250 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20525

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear FOIA Officer:

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington (“CREW”) submits this request for records pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (“FOIA”), 5 U.S.C. § 552, and AmeriCorps regulations.

Specifically, CREW requests:

1. Records sufficient to identify AmeriCorps’ total expenditures paid to Trump National Doral in Miami, Florida,¹ its owners, or its operators in connection with the President’s Volunteer Service Awards event on May 8, 2025 (the “PVSA Event”).
2. All documents regarding the attendees of the PVSA Event, including but not limited to guests lists, visitor logs, and invitations.
3. All records related to the selection of the Trump National Doral as the location for the PSVA Event.

Please search for responsive records regardless of format, medium, or physical characteristics. We seek records of any kind, including paper records, electronic records, audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, data, and graphical material. Our request includes without limitation all correspondence, letters, emails, text messages, facsimiles, telephone messages, voice mail messages, and transcripts, notes, or minutes of any meetings,

¹ @psva_awards, Instagram (April 17, 2025), https://www.instagram.com/p/DIjeAJ6OZNh/?img_index=2

telephone conversations, or discussions. Our request also includes any attachments to emails and other records, and anyone who was cc'ed or bcc'ed on any emails.

If it is your position any portion of the requested records is exempt from disclosure, CREW requests that you provide it with an index of those documents as required under *Vaughn v. Rosen*, 484 F.2d 820 (D.C. Cir. 1973). If some portions of the requested records are properly exempt from disclosure, please disclose any reasonably segregable non-exempt portions of the requested records. See 5 U.S.C. § 552(b). If it is your position that a document contains non-exempt segments, but that those non-exempt segments are so dispersed throughout the document as to make segregation impossible, please state what portion of the document is non-exempt, and how the material is dispersed throughout the document. See *Mead Data Central v. U.S. Dep't of the Air Force*, 566 F.2d 242, 261 (D.C. Cir. 1977).

Please be advised that CREW intends to pursue all legal remedies to enforce its rights under FOIA. Accordingly, because litigation is reasonably foreseeable, the agency should institute an agencywide preservation hold on all documents potentially responsive to this request.

Fee Waiver Request

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A) and 45 C.F.R. § 2507.24, CREW requests a waiver of fees associated with processing this request for records. The subject of this request concerns the operations of the federal government, and the disclosures likely will contribute to a better understanding of relevant government procedures by CREW and the general public in a significant way. See *id.* § 552(a)(4)(A)(iii). Moreover, the request primarily and fundamentally is for non-commercial purposes. See, e.g., *McClellan Ecological v. Carlucci*, 835 F.2d 1282, 1285 (9th Cir. 1987).

By way of background, on May 8, 2025, AmeriCorps held the President's Volunteer Service Awards Hispanic Honor Edition at Trump National Doral in Miami.² The President's Volunteer Service Award, bestowed by AmeriCorps, recognizes the contribution of individuals or groups who perform a certain amount of community or public service hours within a 12-month period.³ Tickets for the General Admission Gala and Nomination Gala during the event were sold for \$195 and \$175,⁴ respectively, but the events' total cost to the taxpayer and the portion of that cost paid by AmeriCorps are unclear. Further, the event was held at the for-profit Trump National Doral just days after the Trump Administration's April 25, 2025 announcement that it would be terminating nearly \$400 million in grants awarded by AmeriCorps to pursue its mission.⁵ Following the event, on May 27, 2025, further awards of the President's Volunteer Service Award were suspended, with no date for resuming

² *Id.*

³ AmeriCorps, *Awards and Recognition*, <https://www.americorps.gov/partner/partnerships/awards>

⁴ Zeffy, *President's Volunteer Service Award (PVSA) Gala*, <https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/presidents-volunteer-service-award-pvsa-gala>

⁵ Jennifer Ludden, *Trump's gutting of AmeriCorps hits hard, for both volunteers and communities*, NPR (May 9, 2025), <https://www.npr.org/2025/05/09/nx-s1-5383188/trumps-gutting-of-ameri-corps-hits-hard-for-both-volunteers-and-communities>

program operations.⁶ The requested records will provide clarity on the cost of the event, along with information about event attendees and the decision to hold an AmeriCorps event at a Trump property, all of which will help the general public understand AmeriCorps' spending priorities and potential conflicts of interest, as it apparently spends taxpayer money at properties owned by the President while at the same time suspending hundreds of millions of dollars in grants meant to benefit the American public.

CREW is a non-profit corporation, organized under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. CREW is committed to protecting the public's right to be aware of the activities of government officials, to ensuring the integrity of those officials, and to highlighting and working to reduce the influence of money on politics. CREW uses a combination of research, litigation, and advocacy to advance its mission. CREW intends to analyze the information responsive to this request and to share its analysis with the public through reports, press releases, or other means. In addition, CREW will disseminate any documents it acquires from this request to the public through its website, www.citizensforethics.org. The release of information obtained through this request is not in CREW's financial interest.

CREW further requests that it not be charged search or review fees for this request pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(A)(ii)(II) because CREW qualifies as a member of the news media. *See Nat'l Sec. Archive v. U.S. Dep't of Defense*, 880 F.2d 1381, 1386 (D.C. Cir. 1989) (holding non-profit a "representative of the news media" and broadly interpreting the term to include "any person or organization which regularly publishes or disseminates information to the public").

CREW routinely disseminates information obtained through FOIA to the public in several ways. For example, CREW's website receives over 150,000 page views every month. The website includes blogposts that report on and analyze newsworthy developments regarding government ethics, corruption, and money in politics, as well as numerous reports CREW has published to educate the public about these issues. These reports frequently rely on government records obtained through FOIA. CREW also posts the documents it obtains through FOIA on its website.

Under these circumstances, CREW satisfies fully the criteria for a fee waiver.

Conclusion

If you have any questions about this request or foresee any problems in fully releasing the requested records, please email me at rjacobs@citizensforethics.org and foia@citizensforethics.org or call me at (202) 408-5565. Also, if CREW's request for a fee waiver is denied, please contact our office immediately upon making such a determination.

Where possible, please produce records in electronic format. Please send the requested records to rjacobs@citizensforethics.org and foia@citizensforethics.org or by mail to Zoe Kramer, Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, P.O. Box 14596, Washington, D.C. 20044.

⁶ Presidential Service Awards, <https://presidentialserviceawards.gov/>

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Zoe Kramer". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Zoe Kramer
Research Intern