

Frequently Asked Questions
**GSIS's Implementation of the
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY**

1. What is the freedom of information (FOI) policy being implemented by GSIS?

The FOI policy being implemented by GSIS allows Filipino citizens to request information from GSIS other than their own records. *The GSIS FOI Manual* specifies the information that may be requested from GSIS.

2. Why is GSIS implementing the FOI policy?

The implementation of the GSIS FOI policy is in compliance with Executive Order (EO) No. 02, series of 2016 (Operationalizing in the Executive Branch the People's Constitutional Right to Information and the State Policies of Full Public Disclosure and Transparency in Public Service and Providing Guidelines Therefor), which was issued on 23 July 2016.

The EO aims to provide full public disclosure of government transactions and to respect the right of people to information, both involving public interest. It recognizes the free and open exchange of information that should be present in a democracy to enhance transparency and accountability in government official acts, transactions, or decisions.

3. What types of requests for information do not fall under the FOI?

Requests for information by GSIS members and pensioners pertaining to their membership or pension records fall under the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007 – not FOI.

Moreover, FOI does not apply to GSIS process or transaction between members or pensioners, other government agencies or public sector offices, and GSIS, which are acted upon in the ordinary course of business.

4. What is the procedure in requesting information that falls under the GSIS FOI?

Information may be requested from GSIS, provided the requester submits a copy of a government-issued identification card (ID) and any of the following:

- a. Duly accomplished FOI Request Form (downloadable from the GSIS website, www.gsis.gov.ph)

or

- b. Letter or email indicating the following:
 - Title of requested document;
 - Period covered;
 - Reason or purpose of request; and
 - Name, address, and contact number of the requesting party.

The duly accomplished FOI Request Form or letter of request may be submitted to the FOI booth located at the lobby (in the GSIS Head Office in Pasay City) or at any GSIS branch or extension office, which are designated information custodians (ICs). It may also be emailed to gsisfoi@gsis.gov.ph.

The updated GSIS directory of branch and extension offices may be accessed through the GSIS website, www.gsis.gov.ph.

5. Within how many days will GSIS respond to a request for information?

If the requested information falls under FOI and is readily available, GSIS will respond within 15 work days from receipt of the request.

If the request is invalid or unclear, IC will return the request and communicate the deficiencies to the requester within 2 work days from receipt of the request.

6. Under what instances may the period be extended in providing the requested information?

The requester will be duly notified of a 20 work-day extension in any of the following cases:

- a. The requested information is not in the custody of the receiving information custodian;
- b. The request requires examination of voluminous records; or
- c. Occurrence of fortuitous events or similar cases.

In exceptional circumstances, the period may be extended beyond 20 work days.

7. How will requesters receive the information they requested?

The concerned GSIS IC will notify requesters that the information is ready for pickup and will be released to them or their duly authorized representative.

8. What should the representative bring to get the requested information?

The representative must present the following:

- a. Authorization letter duly signed by the requester;
- b. Photocopy of the requester's government-issued ID;
- c. Government-issued ID of the authorized representative; and
- d. Payment receipt.

9. Can requesters use the furnished information for purposes other than what was stated in the request?

No, the information may not be used for other purposes. It cannot be used for commercial purposes, such as selling it, as well as sharing it with any person or entity without GSIS's consent.

10. Is there a processing fee when requesting an information that falls under FOI?

Yes, GSIS will charge a reasonable fee of Php2.00 per page, or Php5.00 per page for a certified true copy of the requested information.

11. When is the processing fee paid?

Processing fee is paid prior to release of the requested information.

12. Where is the processing fee paid?

Pay at the cashiering unit of the Head Office or branch or extension office. However, an order of payment must be obtained from the FOI Booth prior to payment.

13. Can the fees be waived?

Yes, if requester is indigent, as evidenced by a certificate of indigency issued by the concerned barangay chairperson, DSWD or its local district office, or Social Welfare and Development Office that has jurisdiction over the payee.

14. What if the requested information is already available in the GSIS website, www.gsis.gov.ph?

A request is no longer needed if the information is already in the GSIS website. If a written request was made, GSIS will advise requester to get the information directly from the GSIS website.

15. Can a request be denied or refused acceptance?

A request may only be denied or refused acceptance if it is contrary to law or existing rules and regulations; or is part of the inventory of exceptions.

16. Will GSIS notify the requester that the requested information is not for disclosure, not in GSIS's custody, or is already in the GSIS website?

Yes, GSIS will send a letter clearly identifying the basis for denying the request.

Similarly, GSIS will inform the requester if the requested information is not in its custody or is already in the GSIS website.

17. Can a requester appeal the denial of request to access information?

Yes, the requester may write an appeal addressed to the GSIS President and General Manager (PGM) within 15 work days from receipt of the Notice of Denial from the concerned GSIS IC. The PGM will decide on the appeal 30 work days from filing. Nondecision will be deemed denial of the appeal.

In case of denial by the PGM, the requester may elevate the appeal to the GSIS Board of Trustees.

Once all administrative appeals have been exhausted, the requester may file the appropriate case in accordance with the Rules of Court.

18. In light of FOI, what measures is GSIS implementing to protect an individual's right to privacy?

- a. Ensures that personal information under its custody is released only if it is material or relevant to the request;
- b. Makes reasonable security arrangements against leaks or premature disclosure of personal information that exposes its owner to vilification, harassment, or wrongful acts; and

- c. Prohibits any of its personnel who have access to personal information to disclose it, except when authorized under *The GSIS FOI Manual* or by existing laws, rules, or regulations.

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