



Brian Carr <carrbp@gmail.com>

Appeal of FOIA Case No. 2025-FPRO-01666 - Revised Results

1 message

Brian Carr <carrbp@gmail.com>

Wed, May 14, 2025 at 6:06 PM

To: USPS FOIA Appeals <FOIAAppeal@usps.gov>

Cc: "Williams, Rashonda - Washington, DC" <Rashonda.C.Williams@usps.gov>, FOIA - PA <FOIA12@usps.gov>

Dear Sir / Madam:

I would like to appeal two aspects of the results returned in this action. The results for the specific tracking number cited, 9405 5301 0935 5122 4328 47, did not fully specify whether there was a banking record indicating that refund was actually paid. Also, the redaction of the results concerning approved refunds which do not have records of actual payment is not justified as they are not commercial in nature.

Specific Transaction Record Required to Demonstrate Payment

My FOIA request inquired about a specific refund where 'no transaction for the refund has been located to date'. There were several records returned with this FOIA request for that refund which indicated that the refund was approved and then, purportedly, paid, but there was no record returned with the actual payment via a bank transfer or cash payment (presumably with a cashier ID and ID check for the recipient).

I ask that FOIA office determine whether that refund qualified for 'No Record of Bank Transfer' which would require that the office look for:

- * A transaction ID for credit card refund,
- * A check deposited transaction in a specific account with a specific bank , or
- * Cash payment by a specific clerk and the ID which was verified via a payment ID

The FOIA request is asked to respond with any record which was found and, if no record was found, respond with the data source where the office looked and a statement that no record was found.

It is also possible that a refund was paid to the wrong party, but the way to correct that is to first find the actual record of payment and then determine who received the payment. There could have been a error or even fraud so the wrong person was paid, but we first need the transaction ID to find out who was paid and then correct the error.

Not Redact Count of Unpaid Refunds

I understand your concerns about information which is 'commercial in nature', but the number of refunds which have not been properly paid is not really commercial in nature. It is more about proper accounting practices and accurate reporting of results (noting liabilities which are still pending). For current results can you redact all columns except for the column listing the count and value of pending refunds.

Summary

Thanks for your help with this. I hope that we can resolve all these differences promptly without further appeals.

Wishing you all the best,

Brian

On 5/13/2025 1:13 PM, FOIA - PA wrote:

Good afternoon Mr. Carr,

Unfortunately, the Controller's Office does not preserve the data you sought prior to 2021. I apologize that this was not addressed in your response letter. Moreover, your fee estimate was accurate as it took 10 hours to retrieve all the records you sought. The fee estimate may have been more if that office did have the records prior to 2021.

If you are unsatisfied with your response in any way, you can follow the appeal rights provided in your response.

Thank you,

Eboni Francis

Senior, Government Information Specialist

Privacy & Records Management Office

United States Postal Service



From: Brian Carr <carrbp@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, May 12, 2025 9:06 PM

To: FOIA - PA <FOIA12@usps.gov>

Cc: Williams, Rashonda - Washington, DC <Rashonda.C.Williams@usps.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to FOIA Case No. 2025-FPRO-01666 - Revised

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Good evening Ms. Francis,

Thanks for checking with Rashonda about the follow up questions. I am wondering if we can sort out any differences without resorting to an appeal. I have three points for you to consider.

Specific Transaction Record Required to Demonstrate Payment

First, my FOIA request did in fact ask about the transaction ID with 'but no transaction for the refund has been located to date'. As all the people I talked to back then said that I would get a refund to my credit card, that is the transaction for the refund I was asking about. However, on reflection the precise request was for 'No Record of Bank Transfer' when you looked for:

- * A transaction ID for credit card refund or
- * A check deposited transaction in a specific account with a specific bank
(both of which are externally verifiable).

In the case of a cash refund at the Post Office where the postage was paid, the logical equivalent would be a debit in the Post Office's receipts for the day to demonstrate that some person was actually paid the refund. Presumably there would have been an ID check to make sure the right person was paid and some record of the ID which was presented.

So, can you answer my FOIA request as to whether you looked in the appropriate place for a record demonstrating that some person was actually paid the refund. You mention checks being the default, but a record requesting a check to be sent is insufficient as that would not be a record of a bank transfer. Only a deposit being paid to an external bank would qualify and I am pretty sure that you won't find any such deposit (no such check was deposited to my account).

In the specific refund request for that tracking number, can you say where you looked for the refund payment and what you found (to answer the actual question of whether you found the requested record of a bank transfer).

It is also possible that a refund was paid to the wrong party, but the way to correct that is to first find the actual record of payment and then determine who received the payment. There could have been a error or even fraud so the wrong person was paid, but you first need the transaction ID to find out who was paid and then correct the error.

Retain Cumulative Results, Not Redact Count of Unpaid Refunds

I understand your concerns about information which is 'commercial in nature', but the number of refunds which have not been properly paid is not really commercial in nature. It is more about proper accounting practices and accurate reporting of results (noting liabilities which are still pending). For current results can you redact all columns except for the column listing the count and value of pending refunds.

I also ask you retain the other rows for possible release of the data of a confidential nature to another trusted party which is interested in correcting any defects and paying pending refunds (e.g. the courts or Congress). The courts and Congress routinely get access to confidential data and maintain the confidentiality as required.

Continue to Analysis Back to 2017

My original FOIA request asked for cumulative results back to 2017 but the redacted results only went back to 2021. I believe the original estimate was for analysis back to 2017 and I have paid the full amount (I believe) so can you collect those results. I would be especially interested in tracking pending refunds over time and suspect that the results back to 2017 will be interesting as policies have changed over time.

Summary

Thanks again for your help with this. I hope that we can resolve all these differences without needing to appeal, but it would be great if we could resolve even one or two before an appeal.

Wishing you all the best,

Brian

On 5/6/2025 9:33 AM, FOIA - PA wrote:

Good morning Mr. Carr,

Rashonda and I spoke about your request and your follow-up question. You did not request transaction ID information in your initial request. If you seek transaction ID records, please submit a new FOIA request.

As information, refunds for service mail delivery failures are sent to customers via check. However, there are a few exceptions to this rule. Thus, the Postal Service would not have records of banking routing information of its customers regarding issuing refunds for mail delivery failures.

I hope this answers your question. Thank you for your interest in the Postal Service.

Eboni Francis

Senior, Government Information Specialist

Privacy & Records Management Office

United States Postal Service



From: Brian Carr <carrbp@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, May 2, 2025 8:44 AM

To: Williams, Rashonda - Washington, DC <Rashonda.C.Williams@usps.gov>

Cc: FOIA - PA <FOIA12@usps.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to FOIA Case No. 2025-FPRO-01666 - Revised

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Hi Ms. Williams,

Thanks for defining the new terms. Can you please confirm that you did not provide the requested bank transaction ID for that 'Dispute approved notification' because you could not find any matching transaction ID. As such, the record would be 'No Record of Bank Transfer' in the cumulative results.

Thanks again for your help with this and wishing you all the best,

Brian

On 5/1/2025 8:02 PM, Williams, Rashonda - Washington, DC wrote:

Hi Mr. Carr -

ptr_call_back is the automated username that sent the product tracking system the Dispute approved notification (paid).

Rashonda C. Williams, MBA

Manager, Business Support

Office of the VP, Controller

United States Postal Service

rashonda.c.williams@usps.gov

From: Brian Carr <carrbp@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, May 1, 2025 7:37:34 PM

To: Williams, Rashonda - Washington, DC

<Rashonda.C.Williams@usps.gov>

Cc: FOIA - PA <FOIA12@usps.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Response to FOIA Case No. 2025-FPRO-01666 -

Revised

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Good afternoon,

Thanks for putting together the data I requested. Needless to say I was disappointed when I learned that most of the interesting data was redacted. Oh well, I suspected there would be a catch. The best we can hope for is learning from our experiences.

I mailed the required payment today and the original payment went through fine so we should be all set in a few days.

I was happy that I got the specific tracking number results. Is it possible for you to elaborate on what 'ptr_call_back' means as a user for 'PTR Dispute Approve Notified'? Does that mean that you couldn't find any banking transaction ID to track which, if any, account was credited?

Thanks again for your help with this.

Brian

On Thu, May 1, 2025 at 10:48 AM Williams, Rashonda - Washington, DC
<Rashonda.C.Williams@usps.gov> wrote:

Good morning – Please see the attached response to FOIA Case No. 2025-FPRO-01666.

Please ignore prior email received as I inadvertently left out the outstanding fee language.

Thanks,

Rashonda C. Williams, MBA

Manager, Business Support

Office of the VP, Controller

United States Postal Service

rashonda.c.williams@usps.gov



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