

**GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
MAYOR'S OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL
Freedom of Information Act Appeal: 2020-142**

September 7, 2022

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL ONLY

Michael Ayele

RE: FOIA Appeal 2020-142

Dear Mr. Ayele:

This letter is in response to the administrative appeal that you have submitted to the Mayor pursuant to the District of Columbia Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"), D.C. Code §§ 2-531, *et seq.* In your appeal, you have challenged the response of the Metropolitan Police Department ("MPD") to your February 24, 2020 FOIA request, identified as 2020-FOIA-03630, which sought answers to a series of questions.

FOIA requires that requests describe the records sought with sufficient detail to allow an agency employee familiar with the subject area of the request to locate the records following a reasonable search. More specifically, 1 DCMR § 402.4 states that:

A request shall reasonably describe the desired record(s). Where possible, the specific information regarding names, places, events, subjects, dates, files, titles, file designation or other identifying information shall be supplied.

In addition, under FOIA, an agency "has no duty either to answer questions unrelated to document requests or to create documents." *Zemansky v. United States Envtl. Prot. Agency*, 767 F.2d 569, 574 (9th Cir. 1985). The law only requires the disclosure of nonexempt documents, not answers to interrogatories. *Di Viaio v. Kelley*, 571 F.2d 538, 542-543 (10th Cir. 1978). "FOIA creates only a right of access to records, not a right to personal services." *Hudgins v. IRS*, 620 F. Supp. 19, 21 (D.D.C. 1985). *See also Brown v. F.B.I.*, 675 F. Supp. 2d 122, 129-130 (D.D.C. 2009).

On February 24, 2020, MPD closed your request because it did not reasonably describe the desired records. Based on the foregoing, we conclude that MPD properly responded to your FOIA request and we hereby deny your appeal.

This constitutes the final decision of this Office. If you are dissatisfied with this decision, you may commence a civil action against the District of Columbia in the Superior Court of the District of Columbia in accordance with D.C. Code § 2-537.

Respectfully,

Mayor's Office of Legal Counsel

cc: Brandynn Reaves, MPD FOIA Officer (via email only)