

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.,)	
425 Third Street SW, Suite 800)	
Washington, DC 20024,)	
)	
<i>Plaintiff,</i>)	
)	Civil Action No.
v.)	
)	
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH)	
AND HUMAN SERVICES,)	
200 Independence Ave SW)	
Washington, DC 20201,)	
)	
<i>Defendant.</i>)	
_____)	

COMPLAINT

Plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. brings this action against Defendant U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to compel compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. § 552. As grounds therefor, Plaintiff alleges as follows:

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

1. The Court has jurisdiction over this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.
2. Venue is proper in this district pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

PARTIES

3. Plaintiff Judicial Watch, Inc. is a not-for-profit, educational organization incorporated under the laws of the District of Columbia and headquartered at 425 Third Street SW, Suite 800, Washington, DC 20024. Plaintiff seeks to promote transparency, accountability, and integrity in government and fidelity to the rule of law. As part of its mission, Plaintiff regularly requests records from federal agencies pursuant to FOIA. Plaintiff analyzes the

responses and disseminates its findings and the requested records to the American public to inform them about “what their government is up to.”

4. Defendant U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (“Defendant”) is an agency of the United States government headquartered at 200 Independence Avenue S.W., Washington, DC 20201. Defendant has possession, custody, and control of records to which Plaintiff seeks access.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

5. On May 30, 2025, Plaintiff submitted a FOIA request via the web portal to the National Institutes of Health (“NIH”), a component of Defendant, seeking access to the following public records:

All documents and communications of officials in the Office of Extramural Research concerning the Final Research Performance Progress Report (FRPPR) for the GUDMAP program at the University of Pittsburg (Project Number U24-DK110791-01).

6. On May 30, 2025, Plaintiff received web confirmation that the request was successfully submitted (ID 2166811) and was later assigned request number 64096.

7. Plaintiff has received no further communication from Defendant regarding the request.

8. As of the date of this Complaint, Defendant has failed to: (i) determine whether to comply with the request; (ii) notify Plaintiff of any such determination or the reasons therefor; (iii) advise Plaintiff of the right to appeal any adverse determination; or (iv) produce the requested records or otherwise demonstrate that the requested records are exempt from production.

COUNT I
(Violation of FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552)

9. Plaintiff realleges paragraphs 1 through 8 as if fully stated herein.

10. Defendant is in violation of FOIA.

11. Plaintiff is being irreparably harmed by Defendant's violation of FOIA, and Plaintiff will continue to be irreparably harmed unless Defendant is compelled to comply with the law.

12. To trigger FOIA's administrative exhaustion requirement, Defendant was required to make a final determination on Plaintiff's request by June 30, 2025, at the latest. Because Defendant failed to make a final determination on Plaintiff's FOIA request within the time limits set by FOIA, Plaintiff is deemed to have exhausted its administrative appeal remedies.

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that the Court: (1) order Defendant to conduct searches for any and all records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request and demonstrate that it employed search methods reasonably likely to lead to the discovery of records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (2) order Defendant to produce, by a date certain, any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request and *Vaughn* indices of any responsive records withheld under claim of exemption; (3) enjoin Defendant from continuing to withhold any and all non-exempt records responsive to Plaintiff's FOIA request; (4) grant Plaintiff an award of attorneys' fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred in this action pursuant to 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(E); and (5) grant Plaintiff such other relief as the Court deems just and proper.

Dated: December 23, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Meredith Di Liberto

Meredith Di Liberto

DC Bar No. 487733

JUDICIAL WATCH, INC.

425 Third Street SW, Suite 800

Washington, DC 20024

Phone: (202) 646-5175

Email: mdiliberto@judicialwatch.org

Counsel for Plaintiff