FOIA Shield – Data & Information Documentation

This document provides a comprehensive description of how the FOIA Shield WordPress plugin collects, processes, transmits, and minimizes data. It is intended for public transparency, privacy review, civic-tech evaluation, and compliance purposes.

1. Data Collected from Users

FOIA Shield does not require user accounts and does not automatically collect personal data. All information entered into the FOIA request form is voluntarily provided by the user.

- Agency name (optional)
- Date range of requested records (optional)
- Incident or case number (optional)
- Keywords or description of requested records (optional)
- Draft FOIA request text (user-generated)

2. Data Storage

By default, FOIA Shield does not persistently store draft request content. Draft text exists only in the user's browser session unless the site administrator modifies the plugin to store submissions.

- Plugin configuration settings stored in the WordPress options table
- Template text stored in plugin code or WordPress options

3. Data Lifecycle and Retention

FOIA Shield follows a minimal data lifecycle. Draft content is created locally in the browser, optionally transmitted via email, and is not retained by the plugin after transmission. FOIA Shield does not maintain a request database, archive, or background processing queue.

4. Email Transmission

If enabled, FOIA Shield sends FOIA requests using WordPress's wp_mail() function. Email content is transmitted only to recipients specified by the user or administrator. FOIA Shield does not log or archive outgoing email content.

5. Threat Model and Risk Mitigations

- Risk: Oversharing personal data → Mitigation: Optional fields and user-controlled drafting
- Risk: Silent third-party sharing → Mitigation: No analytics, trackers, or embedded third-party scripts
- Risk: AI misuse → Mitigation: AI features disabled by default and admin-controlled

6. AI Use and Controls

Artificial intelligence features are optional and disabled by default. No user content is processed by AI services unless explicitly enabled by a site administrator. When enabled, only the draft text provided by the user is transmitted to the configured AI service.

7. Analytics and Tracking

FOIA Shield does not include analytics, tracking pixels, cookies, fingerprinting, or behavioral monitoring.

8. Accessibility

FOIA Shield is designed to be accessible and usable without requiring accounts, CAPTCHAs, or proprietary clients. Templates are plain text and compatible with assistive technologies.

9. Legal Scope and Disclaimer

FOIA Shield is a drafting and submission aid and does not provide legal advice. Templates are jurisdiction-agnostic and users are responsible for compliance with applicable public records laws.

10. For Records Officers and Agencies

FOIA Shield produces user-authored requests and does not automate bulk submissions. The tool encourages clarity, narrowing, and respectful engagement with public agencies.

FOIA Shield is designed to support transparent, privacy-respecting access to public records while giving users full control over what information they disclose.