



International Refugee
Assistance Project

Date: May 5, 2023

Submitted via USCIS FIRST

FOIA REQUEST RE:

THE U.S. REFUGEE ADMISSIONS PROGRAM'S IRAQI DIRECT ACCESS PROGRAM

Records Requested

The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) requests the following records relating to the Direct Access Program for U.S.-affiliated Iraqis ("Iraqi Direct Access Program"):

1. All final reports, recommendations, or memoranda produced by the Department of State and/or the Department of Homeland Security relating to the March 1, 2022 resumption of the Iraqi Direct Access Program, *see* <https://www.state.gov/restarting-the-direct-access-program-for-u-s-affiliated-iraqis-iraqi-p-2-program/>, including but not limited to documents concerning potential readjudication of prior applications and anticipated timelines for any such re-adjudications.
2. All final policy memoranda, standard operating procedures, and/or other similar records used to establish final agency policy or guidance in effect since January 1, 2021, relating to:
 - a. The adjudication of applications to the Iraqi Direct Access Program
 - b. The readjudication and/or re-review of previously approved and/or currently pending Iraqi Direct Access Program applications, including but not limited to documents describing factors that lead to re-review, the process of the re-review, and adjudication standards for the re-review.
3. All records sufficient to show the total number of currently pending Iraqi Direct Access Program applications, disaggregated by current stage of processing, e.g., pending re-review, pending eligibility determination, etc. Please produce the records in Excel or other spreadsheet format that allows for manipulation of the data, if readily reproducible in that format.
4. All records sufficient to show the number of Iraqi Direct Access Program applications processed by month since January 1, 2019, disaggregated by approvals, denials, and discretionary denials of such applications. Please produce the records in Excel or other spreadsheet format that allows for manipulation of the data, if readily reproducible in that format.

Fee Waiver Request

IRAP is a non-profit organization with a mission that includes disseminating current information about topics related to pathways for safety for displaced persons. See <https://refugeerights.org/who-we-are/mission-values>.

IRAP seeks a public interest fee waiver as IRAP has no commercial interest in the records requested and the records requested are likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the activities of the government, specifically relating to the administration of the Direct Access Program for U.S.-Affiliated Iraqis. Since its formal re-opening in March 2022, the Program has received little media attention, and public information about its current operation remains scarce. Disclosure of the requested records will aid the public in understanding and assessing the procedural guidelines and efficacy of a program designed to aid those who risked their safety and well-being to assist the U.S.

IRAP also seeks a fee waiver as a representative of the news media. IRAP routinely uses materials obtained through FOIA and other methods to create and publish informational and educational materials about safe pathways for displaced people. These materials are widely disseminated to the public free-of-charge through IRAP's legal information website, blogs and publications posted on its website, and social media platforms (see, e.g., <https://twitter.com/IRAP>; <https://www.facebook.com/RefugeeAssist/>). IRAP's website dedicated to providing legal information about migration pathways to displaced people (<https://support.iraplegalinfo.org/hc/en-us>) was viewed by over 130,000 unique visitors between May 2021 and 2022. In the same time frame, IRAP's News & Resources pages (<https://refugeerights.org/news-resources>) that host its publications was viewed by over 100,000 unique visitors.

The information requested is about current events and will be of current interest to the public because the resettlement of refugees displaced by American military activity remains a pressing public issue. This records request coincides with the recent 20th anniversary of the U.S.'s war in Iraq, a time for public reflection and assessment of the U.S.'s involvement in Iraq—and its promises to Iraqis who aided its mission. Moreover, the Iraqi Direct Access Program had been suspended for investigation into fraud allegations in January 2021 and has been reopened only recently. The current status of the Program remains largely unknown to the public.

Electronic Submission

[Getting Started](#) [Contact Information](#) [Description](#) [Handling](#) [Fees](#) [Additional Information](#) [Review](#)

Review

Name	Ms. Mariko Hirose
Email	mhirose@refugeerights.org
Address	One Battery Park Plaza 33rd floor, IRAP New York, New York 10004
Telephone	5167014620
Fax	N/A
Date Range	01/01/2019 to 05/05/2023
Description	<p>The International Refugee Assistance Project (IRAP) requests the following records relating to the U.S. Refugee Admission Program's Direct Access Program for U.S.-affiliated Iraqis ("Iraqi Direct Access Program"): 1. All final reports, recommendations, or memoranda produced by the Department of State and/or the Department of Homeland Security relating to the March 1, 2022 resumption of the Iraqi Direct Access Program, see https://www.state.gov/restarting-the-direct-access-program-for-u-s-affiliated-iraqis-iraqi-p-2-program/, including but not limited to documents concerning potential readjudication of prior applications and anticipated timelines for any such re-adjudications. 2. All final policy memoranda, standard operating procedures, and/or other similar records used to establish final agency policy or guidance in effect since January 1, 2021, relating to: a. The processing of applications to the Iraqi Direct Access Program b. The processing of previously approved Iraqi Direct Access Program applications, including but not limited to documents describing factors that lead to re-review, the process of the re-review, and adjudication standards for the re-review. 3. All records sufficient to show the total number of currently pending Iraqi Direct Access Program applications, disaggregated by current stage of processing, e.g., pending re-review, pending eligibility determination, etc. Please produce the records in Excel or other spreadsheet format that allows for manipulation of the data, if readily reproducible in that format. 4. All records sufficient to show the number of Iraqi Direct Access Program applications processed by month since January 1, 2019, disaggregated by approvals, denials, and discretionary denials of such applications. Please produce the records in Excel or other spreadsheet format that allows for manipulation of the data, if readily reproducible in that format.</p>
Expedited Handling	N/A
Maximum Fee	I am willing to pay \$100 for my request.
Requester Category	An individual seeking information for personal use and not for commercial use.
Fee Waiver	<p>I request a waiver of all fees for this request.</p> <p>Reason: IRAP is a non-profit organization with a mission that includes disseminating current information about topics related to pathways for safety for displaced persons. See https://refugeerights.org/who-we-are/mission-values. IRAP seeks a public interest fee waiver as IRAP has no commercial interest in the records requested and the records requested are likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the activities of the government, specifically relating to the administration of the Direct Access Program for U.S.-Affiliated Iraqis. Since its formal re-opening in March 2022, the Program has received little media attention, and public information about its current operation remains scarce. Disclosure of the requested records will aid the public in understanding and assessing the procedural guidelines and efficacy of a program designed to aid those who risked their safety and well-being to assist the U.S. IRAP also seeks a fee waiver as a representative of the news media. IRAP routinely uses materials obtained through FOIA and other methods to create and publish informational and educational materials about safe pathways for displaced people. These materials are widely disseminated to the public free-of-charge through IRAP's legal information website, blogs and publications posted on its website, and social media platforms (see, e.g., https://twitter.com/IRAP; https://www.facebook.com/RefugeeAssist/). IRAP's website dedicated to providing legal information about migration pathways to displaced people (https://support.iraplegalinfo.org/hc/en-us) was viewed by over 130,000 unique visitors between</p>

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Additional Comments

Please construe the time frame of this request to continue until the agency begins an adequate search for responsive records.

If you encounter difficulty using the electronic submission form, you may wish to use the FOIA Request Walkthrough and the Information Access Guide as guidance for writing your request.

The confidentiality of communications sent via the Internet cannot be guaranteed and the electronic submission of your Freedom of Information Act request is purely voluntary. You may alternatively print the contents of your request letter and submit via fax at (202) 485-1669 or via U.S. mail.

† Although you are not required to provide your email address or telephone number, doing so will help facilitate communication and providing an email address will allow us to provide you with an automatic acknowledgement of receipt.