

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

PUBLIC CITIZEN,
1600 20th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009,

Plaintiff,

V.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE,
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Defendant.

Civil Action No. 26-2926

COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

1. Plaintiff Public Citizen brings this action under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), 5 U.S.C. § 552, to compel defendant National Park Service (NPS) to produce records responsive to a FOIA request seeking contract documents related to the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

2. This Court has jurisdiction under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1331.

3. Venue is proper under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(B) and 28 U.S.C. § 1391(e).

PARTIES

4. Plaintiff Public Citizen is a nonprofit organization headquartered in Washington, DC. Public Citizen submitted the FOIA request at issue in this action.

5. Defendant NPS is an agency of the United States. NPS has possession and control of the records Public Citizen seeks.

STATEMENT OF FACTS

6. On April 28, 2026, Public Citizen submitted a FOIA request to NPS. The request sought “Copies any National Park Service contracts and similar agreements executed since January 2025, such as philanthropic support agreements with the National Park Foundation or other partners regarding Freedom 250- or America 250-related programs or events related to the 250th anniversary of the United States.”

7. In the request, Public Citizen sought a waiver of fees and explained in support that disclosure of the requested information would be in the public interest and not for a commercial purpose.

8. On May 7, 2026, NPS acknowledged receipt of Public Citizen’s FOIA request and assigned it control number DOI-2026-005731. In the acknowledgement letter, NPS stated that the request fell into the “Complex processing track,” that there were 59 requests ahead of the request in that track, and that it expected to “dispatch a determination” to Public Citizen by Wednesday, June 10, 2026. NPS also stated that it did not foresee a billable fee for processing the request and thus did not need to address the request for a fee waiver.

9. On July 7, 2026, Public Citizen asked NPS for an update on the status of the FOIA request and an estimated completion date.

10. NPS responded that day, stating that it had not yet been able to make a determination on the request and that there were 48 requests ahead of the request in the Complex processing track. It told Public Citizen that it could narrow the scope of its request to obtain quicker processing in the Complex processing track or to move the request into a different track.

11. On July 8, 2026, Public Citizen contacted NPS and clarified that it was seeking only contracts related to the 250th Anniversary, rather than all contracts and agreements entered

into by NPS since January 2025. Public Citizen asked whether that clarification would make the processing any quicker and whether it would help to narrow the request further.

12. On July 9, 2026, NPS responded, stating that further narrowing did not appear necessary but that the request remained in the Complex processing track.

13. On July 24, 2026, Public Citizen contacted NPS and narrowed the request to the following records concerning NPS's contracting activity for the 250th anniversary celebration:

- 1) A copy of the "master cooperative agreement" entered on November 12, 2025 between the U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS, and the National Park Foundation which authorizes the National Park Foundation to use the services of Freedom 250 LLC. The existence of this document is referenced on page 33 of the National Park Foundation's Financial Statement available for your reference online here: <https://annualreport.nationalparks.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/National-Park-Foundation-FY2025-Audited-Financial-Statements.pdf>
- 2) Contract documents for National Park Service award P26AC00101, a \$68 million grant to the National Park Foundation for "significant events to commemorate the nation's semiquincentennial."

Those documents should include but are not limited to (1) the Justification and Approval (J&A), (2) the Independent Government Cost Estimate, (3) the Responsibility Determination, (4) Contract Modification documents, and 5) any additional documentation or reporting from the National Park Foundation on the award recipients.

14. In its July 24, 2026, communication, Public Citizen asked for an estimated date of completion.

15. Public Citizen has received no communications from NPS about its FOIA request since it wrote NPS on July 24, 2026.

16. More than 20 business days have passed since Public Citizen submitted its FOIA request, and Public Citizen has not received a determination on its request or release of any records in response to its request.

CLAIM FOR RELIEF

17. Public Citizen has a right under FOIA, 5 U.S.C. § 552, to the records responsive to its FOIA request and to a public-interest fee waiver.

18. NPS's failure to disclose the requested records has no legal basis.

PRAYER FOR RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff requests that this Court:

A. Declare that NPS's failure to provide the records responsive to Public Citizen's FOIA request is unlawful;

B. Order NPS to make the requested records available to Public Citizen at no cost and without delay;

C. Award Public Citizen its costs and reasonable attorneys' fees under 5 U.S.C. § 552(a)(4)(E); and

D. Grant such other relief as this Court may deem just and proper.

Dated: August 20, 2026

Respectfully submitted,

/s/ Adina H. Rosenbaum
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