



Why Should I Attend this Training Conference? (A Dozen Reasons)

1. Good People Need Great Skills – Agencies processed over 800,000 requests this past fiscal year. That staggering amount requires a tremendous amount of scarce agency resources. While requests continue to increase so is the amount of complex requests. Do more with less continues to be the order of the day. Agencies continue to experience internal turmoil brought on by any presidential election, particularly with a political party change. With hiring freezes, it’s difficult to staff appropriately for the job. **Knowing what to do and how to do it correctly the first time** is key to a running a good shop and avoiding appeals and lawsuits – and it goes a very long way to providing excellent customer service.

2. Quality Training – ASAP prides itself on providing educational sessions that are live, instructor-led. Webinars, teleconferences, hybrid meetings, etc. – they are all great tools; however, nothing tops the face-to-face experience. Numerous studies show that attendees at instructor-led training programs process and retain much more information.

Just like many agencies and organizations, budget issues continue to impact ASAP. As it currently stands, the July NTC is the ONLY formal, instructor-led training that ASAP has scheduled for the Washington, D.C. metro area. ASAP also will hold its FOIA-Privacy Act Training Workshop in Chicago on September 5-7, 2018.

3. Qualification Standards - When OPM recognized the importance of your work with the establishment of the Government Information Series, 0306, they specified the need for “keeping abreast of recent developments in the field of disclosure, including recent court and department decisions, current legislative resolutions or problems encountered within the FOIA program” and “serving as liaison to external customers and recipients to clarify and resolve issues.” As it pertains to Privacy Act work, OPM qualification standards include, “planning and conducting educational training sessions on Privacy Act requirements.” Many agencies have obstacles in establishing quality, internal training.

OPM has encouraged agencies “to continue to consider professional training organizations and affinity groups as a source of training.” ASAP training conferences and workshops are:

- ✓ Educational.
- ✓ About 85 percent of the time is scheduled for planned, organized exchange of information between instructors and attendees. The balance of the time is dedicated to breaks and lunch breaks. ASAP takes pride in the fact that our classrooms are filled at 8:00 am to 4:30 pm (regardless of the site location).
- ✓ Content is germane to improving individual performance.
- ✓ Development benefits will be derived through the attendee’s attendance.

The ASAP program is a one-stop shop that meets the agencies' requirements for training and validates you on a professional and personal level.

4. Collaborative Approach to Training - Come out of your Silo! For lack of a better term, when agencies provide training for their employees, it is usually a "tunnel-vision" approach. There is little or no consideration for the requester viewpoint or best practices used in other agencies. ASAP programs are designed as a collaborative effort with multiple agencies and requesters. Hence, agency folks can liaise with other agency colleagues and external customers. They can learn what works or does not work in other agencies. Build connections – build a community.

5. Agency-Specific Training – Cross-pollination in training is paramount. ASAP also recognizes that there is a need for folks to meet with their own agency peers and discuss issues that are germane to their agency. The NTC provides this opportunity on the last day of the event. Some savvy FOIA Officers and Privacy Act Officers are holding additional agency meetings the following day. What a great opportunity for local and field folks to come together with virtually no additional costs!

6. Collegial Approach to Training – Some agencies send several employees from the same or different locations to the training so that they have the opportunity to learn together. Many times, the supervisor will also attend to support these employees and help them understand the nuances of the information as it applies to their agency regulations. What a great opportunity for HQ and field office folks to come together! Many times we hear attendees say, "It was so great to finally meet my colleagues. I've talked with them on the phone for years, but have never met them."

7. Affordability – ASAP is a non-profit association dedicated to education. Traditionally, our registration fees/tuition are the lowest in the field. With the per day pricing option, agencies and companies can tailor attendance in accordance with their budget and get the most bang for the buck. Most agencies would spend far more in resources for planning and executing internal training than the registration fee. When it's time for supervisors to report annually the progress in training, having sent employees to the ASAP training is an easy fix.

8. An Evolving Field – All government information training will have core subject matter. These classes serve those new to the field and those with limited experience. Not to be overlooked is the value these classes provide as a refresher. We don't know it all; we can't remember everything; and new situations present new issues. Hence, a refresher course can be very beneficial. The ASAP training also addresses needs of the intermediate/advanced levels, hot topics, recent events, technology developments, records management, and compliance with other government statutes. Even though some of the courses are standard offerings, there is plenty of new information, new perspectives and new ideas.

9. Alignment with Agency or Organizational Goals – Practical advice, core knowledge, technical education, professional development, working with the public: you can get all of this and more at ASAP training conferences and programs. You are vital in your agency or organization's mission and ASAP training helps you help your agency/organization meet its crucial business objectives.

10. Information Exchange of Innovative, Creative Ideas – Different people learn in different ways, and information is exchanged in various ways. Networking with peers from your own agency, other agencies, the requester community and experts from the field creates an exciting and immeasurable learning experience. Many times, the most important thing you learn at a conference or training event is learned in a side conversation. Making connections with counterparts in other agencies and folks from the requester community is another invaluable resource.

11. Conducive Learning Environment – You are more than your title. You are a professional, and you deserve the best education that is available. Getting away from the daily routine and never-ending distractions in the office cannot be understated.

12. THE Best Instructors – ASAP enjoys a stellar reputation for providing the best in the biz when it comes to instructors. From many agencies and organizations, these experienced, established thought-leaders offer the technical and statute expertise while enhancing the learning with real-life experiences. They will inspire you and help you build your skill set.