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# How to Access Declassified CIA Documents

27 million formerly sensitive records now released

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By [Robert Longley](#), About.com Guide

Since its inception in 1995, the CIA Declassification Center has released some 27 million pages of formerly sensitive records to the public. These records, declassified and released under Executive Order (EO) 12958, contain intelligence documents, operational information reports from the field, policy files from all CIA Directorates and administrative records documenting the establishment and management of the CIA. The documents chronicle major CIA programs such as the U-2 airborne system development and deployment, including records of the National Photographic Interpretation Center (NPIC), and translated summaries of foreign publications.

**How to Get Access to the Documents** Copies of declassified National Intelligence Estimates and related publications as well as declassified intelligence analyses on the former Soviet Union produced by CIA's Directorate of Intelligence are available to researchers at the National Archives (NARA) as part of Record Group 263, the Records of the Central Intelligence Agency. The documents reside in the National Archives Building (Archives II) located in College Park, Maryland. They are available without charge in the Steny H. Hoyer Research Room. If you do not have a research card, you must obtain one at Archives II; there is no charge for the card.

The National Archives Building is open (except federal holidays) from 8:45 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday and Wednesday; from 8:45 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday; and from 8:45 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. on Saturday. Please call the NARA Archives II Modern Military Reference Branch at (301) 713-7250 to arrange to have the records ready for your use.

You also may order copies of the documents from NARA for a fee. Please contact the National Archives for the current schedule of fees. For more information, visit NARA's internet website at [www.archives.gov](http://www.archives.gov).

**Note:** Executive Order 12958, Issued by President Clinton, requires the automatic declassification of unreviewed records of permanent historical value over 25 years old on December 31, 2006.

- [Official Duties of the Central Intelligence Agency](#)