



POLICY

Approved by: Robert E. Oglesby, Commissioner	Policy Number: 17.01
Signature:	Supersedes: N/A
Application: All Department of General Services Employees	Effective Date: 4/19/2017
Authority: Tenn. Code Ann. §§10-7-503 and 10-7-506	

Subject:

Processing Requests to View Public Records

- I. **POLICY:** It is the policy of the Department of General Services to comply with the Tennessee Public Records Act. The Department shall respond to public records requests in a timely manner with accurate and useful information.
- II. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of this policy is to outline and set forth the procedure for receiving and responding to public records requests and to ensure the Department's compliance with the Tennessee Public Records Act.
- III. **APPLICATION:** Public records requests will be directed to the Public Records Request Coordinator. For the Department of General Services, the Director of Communications will serve as the Department's Public Records Request Coordinator, unless the Commissioner of General Services authorizes another administrator to handle the request.
- IV. **PROCEDURES:**
 - A. **Requesting Public Records:**
 1. A request to view public records held by the Department of General Services may be made online at:

https://stateofennessee.formstack.com/forms/dgs_public_records_request

Tennessee Department of Department of General Services

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2. If submitting the request through the US Postal Service, the request may be submitted using the [Records Request Form](#) to:

Department of General Services
Attn: Director of Communications
312 Rosa L. Parks Avenue, TN Tower, 22nd Floor
Nashville, TN 37243
General.services@tn.gov

3. The request may be made in person during the Department's regular business hours (8 a.m. - 4:30p.m. weekdays).
4. The Department requires any person seeking to inspect departmental records or requesting copies to present a government-issued photo identification card that bears the person's current address. A scanned image of such photo identification shall be submitted via the mail, with the records request, or via the link in Section IV. A. 1. The requestor's photo identification will be kept confidential.

B. Processing Public Records Requests:

1. The Public Records Request Coordinator, working in collaboration with legal staff and other departmental staff as necessary, shall evaluate the scope of the request, whether the Department actually has copies of the records requested, and the likely time required to respond to the request. If the records request is not adequately clear and specific, the Public Records Request Coordinator will contact the requestor to clarify or narrow the request.
2. All public records requests shall be handled as quickly as possible in accordance with all relevant State laws. The Department is not required to provide access to records on a schedule set by the requestor.
3. When record requests are for a large number of records, or for records that will require longer than a few weeks to provide, access to the records should be segmented and provided in waves instead of waiting to provide access until all records are available.
4. If appropriate departmental staff confirms that a requested record is in fact held by the Department, a member of the legal staff shall review that record. If there is no need to redact the record, it will be provided to the requestor in full. A member of the legal staff shall redact any data or portion of that record that contains or may contain confidential, privileged, or otherwise protected material subject to the Tennessee Public Records Act. A copy of the redacted record shall be provided to the requestor, along with an explanation of the legal basis for the redaction.
5. To the extent possible, requested records will be provided to the requestor electronically.

6. The Public Records Request Coordinator shall maintain a log of all public records requests which shall include the date of receipt, identity of the requestor, the records requested, the response to the requestor, and the date of the response.

C. Responding to Public Records Requests:

1. Within seven business days of receipt of the request, a member of the communications or legal staff shall take one of the following three actions: make the record(s) available to the requestor; deny the request in writing with the basis of the denial included; or provide the requestor a written explanation of how long it will take to produce the requested record(s).
 - a. [The Public Record Request Response Form](#) shall be used when a record cannot be made available within seven business days.
 - b. A request shall be denied if the requestor fails to identify the requested records sufficiently in accordance with the requirements of the Tennessee Public Records Act.

V. DEFINITIONS:

- A. Public Records-** defined in Tennessee Code Annotated Section 10-7-503 (a) (1) (A): As used in this part and Title 8, Chapter 4, Part 6, "public record or records" or "state record or records" means all documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency.
- B. Public Records Request Coordinator-** defined in Tennessee Code Annotated Section 10-7-503 (a) (1) (B): means any individual within a governmental entity whose role it is to ensure that public records requests are routed to the appropriate records custodian.
- C. Records Custodian-** defined in Tennessee Code Annotated Section 10-7-503 (a) (1) (C): means any office, official, or employee of any governmental entity lawfully responsible for the direct custody and care of a public record.
- D. Redacted Record-** a public record otherwise open for public inspection from which protected information has been removed or made obscured prior to release or inspection.
- E. Requestor-** a Tennessee citizen requesting access to or a copy of a public record.
- F. Legal Staff-** General Counsel or assigned attorney in the Department of General Services.