



THE PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

OF THE CITY OF OBERLIN

The public records policy of the City of Oberlin guides employees in making available the materials to which the public is entitled by law. The policy summarized below, appears in full in the City of Oberlin's Employee Policy Handbook. Also, a copy of the most recent edition of the Ohio Sunshine Laws: An Open Government Resource Manual, which explains open records laws, is available free at www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/YellowBook

DEFINING AND ORGANIZING PUBLIC RECORDS

The City of Oberlin, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic, including but not limited to, e-mail, text messages or other electronic communications – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization's functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. All records are public unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

MAKING RECORDS ACCESSIBLE

Public records are available for inspection during regular business hours. Records must be provided promptly for inspection, and copies must be made available within a reasonable period of time.

PROCESSING REQUESTS

All requests for public records must either be satisfied or be acknowledged in writing or electronically as soon as is practicable. An oral response shall satisfy the requirement of a receipt when the requestor does not provide an email or postal address. If a request is deemed significantly beyond "routine," such as seeking a voluminous number of copies or requiring extensive research, the acknowledgment should include the following:

- An estimated number of business days it will take to satisfy the request.
- An estimated cost if copies are requested.



HANDLING ELECTRONIC RECORDS

Electronic records are to be treated in the same way as records in other formats. Email, text messages, and instant messages, for example, may be public records if their content documents the business of the office.

Public Records content transmitted to or from private email accounts or personal devices are subject to disclosure. All employees or representatives of the City are required to retain their email records and other electronic records in accordance with applicable records retention schedules.

DEALING WITH DENIALS OR REDACTIONS

If the office withholds, redacts, or otherwise denies a requested record, it must provide an explanation, including legal authority were applicable. If portions of a record are public and other portions are exempt, the exempt portions may be redacted while the rest are released. If there are redactions, each identified redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority.

DETERMINING COPYING AND MAILING CHARGES

There is no charge to inspect public records. Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies, excluding labor. The charge for paper copies is 5 cents per page. The charge for electronic files downloaded to a compact disc is \$1 per disc. The charge for oversized copies (such as maps, drawings, etc.) is \$2.00 per page. For video tapes, cassette tapes or any other type of media, the fee shall be \$5.00, or the actual reproduction cost, if a commercial service is utilized. Requesters may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies, or other actual cost of delivery. There is no charge for emailed documents. The City may require payment prior to providing copies of the requested records.

MANAGING RECORDS

Records retention schedules are also available on the City of Oberlin's website at www.cityofoberlin.com and the Oberlin Clerk of Council's office located at 85 South Main Street in Oberlin, Ohio 44074.