

OhioDAS

PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

The purpose of this policy is to provide DAS employees with information regarding the public records act and to establish a procedure within DAS for responding to requests for public records.

Public Records

This office, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, e-mail), or other format – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. Records created using personal devices and software may be considered public records for the purposes of this policy. All records of this office are public unless they are exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

DAS records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. Record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and made available online through the Records Information Management System.

Record Requests

Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the public office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the records custodian must contact the requester for clarification, and should assist the requestor in revising the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which the office keeps its records.

The requester does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. It is this office's general policy that this information is only being requested if the information would improve the ability to comply with the request. In this case, the requestor will be told the information is not required.

Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. "Prompt" and "reasonable" take into account the volume of records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested.

Each request should be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records. All requests for public records must be satisfied within a reasonable time.

Records requests should be coordinated with the Office of Communications and the Office of Chief Legal Counsel. Any denial of public records requested must include an explanation, including legal authority. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. Redactions must be plainly visible or the office must notify the requestor of the redaction.

Costs for Public Records

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies.

- The standard charge for paper copies is 5 cents per page.
- The charge for downloaded computer files to a compact disc is \$1 per disc.

Requesters may ask that records be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies. The office may require the requestor to pay the cost of providing the records in advance.

For questions regarding this policy, please contact the Office of Chief Legal Counsel at 644-1773.