

## **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **(5 ILCS 140/) Freedom of Information Act.**

(5 ILCS 140/1) (from Ch. 116, par. 201)

Sec. 1. Pursuant to the fundamental philosophy of the American constitutional form of government, it is declared to be the public policy of the State of Illinois that all persons are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts and policies of those who represent them as public officials and public employees consistent with the terms of this Act. Such access is necessary to enable the people to fulfill their duties of discussing public issues fully and freely, making informed political judgments and monitoring government to ensure that it is being conducted in the public interest.

The General Assembly hereby declares that it is the public policy of the State of Illinois that access by all persons to public records promotes the transparency and accountability of public bodies at all levels of government. It is a fundamental obligation of government to operate openly and provide public records as expediently and efficiently as possible in compliance with this Act.

This Act is not intended to cause an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy, nor to allow the requests of a commercial enterprise to unduly burden public resources, or to disrupt the duly-undertaken work of any public body independent of the fulfillment of any of the fore-mentioned rights of the people to access to information.

This Act is not intended to create an obligation on the part of any public body to maintain or prepare any public record which was not maintained or prepared by such public body at the time when this Act becomes effective, except as otherwise required by applicable local, State or federal law.

Restraints on access to information, to the extent permitted by this Act, are limited exceptions to the principle that the people of this State have a right to full disclosure of information relating to the decisions, policies, procedures, rules, standards, and other aspects of government activity that affect the conduct of government and the lives of any or all of the people. The provisions of this Act shall be construed in accordance with this principle. This Act shall be construed to require disclosure of requested information as expediently and efficiently as possible and adherence to the deadlines established in this Act.

The General Assembly recognizes that this Act imposes fiscal obligations on public bodies to provide adequate staff and equipment to comply with its requirements. The General Assembly declares that providing records in compliance with the requirements of this Act is a primary duty of public bodies to the people of this State, and this Act should be construed to this end, fiscal obligations notwithstanding.

The General Assembly further recognizes that technology may advance at a rate that outpaces its ability to address those advances legislatively. To the extent that this Act may not expressly apply to those technological advances, this Act should nonetheless be interpreted to further the declared policy of this Act that public records shall be made available upon request except when denial of access furthers the public policy underlying a specific exemption.

This Act shall be the exclusive State statute on freedom of information, except to the extent that other State statutes might create additional restrictions on disclosure of information or other laws in Illinois might create additional obligations for disclosure of information to the public.  
(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/1.1) (from Ch. 116, par. 201.1)

Sec. 1.1. This Act may be cited as the Freedom of Information Act.  
(Source: P.A. 86-1475.)

(5 ILCS 140/1.2)

Sec. 1.2. Presumption. All records in the custody or possession of a public body are presumed to be open to inspection or copying. Any public body that asserts that a record is exempt from disclosure has the burden of proving by clear and convincing evidence that it is exempt.  
(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/2) (from Ch. 116, par. 202)

(Text of Section from P.A. 96-261)

Sec. 2. Definitions. As used in this Act:

(a) "Public body" means any legislative, executive, administrative, or advisory bodies of the State, state universities and colleges, counties, townships, cities, villages, incorporated towns, school districts and all other municipal corporations, boards, bureaus, committees, or commissions of this State, any subsidiary bodies of any of the foregoing including but not limited to committees and subcommittees which are supported in whole or in part by tax revenue, or which expend tax revenue, and a School Finance Authority created under Article 1E of the School Code. "Public body" does not include a child death review team or the Illinois Child Death Review Teams Executive Council established under the Child Death Review Team Act.

(b) "Person" means any individual, corporation, partnership, firm, organization or association, acting individually or as a group.

(c) "Public records" means all records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, maps, photographs, microfilms, cards, tapes, recordings, electronic data processing records, recorded information and all other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared, or having been or being used, received, possessed or under the control of any public body. "Public records" includes, but is expressly not limited to: (i) administrative manuals, procedural rules, and instructions to staff, unless exempted by Section 7(p) of this Act; (ii) final opinions and orders made in the adjudication of cases, except an educational institution's adjudication of student or employee grievance or disciplinary cases; (iii) substantive rules; (iv) statements and interpretations of policy which have been adopted by a public body; (v) final planning policies, recommendations, and decisions; (vi) factual reports, inspection reports, and studies whether prepared by or for the public body; (vii) all information in any account, voucher, or contract dealing with the receipt or expenditure of public or other funds of public bodies; (viii) the names, salaries, titles, and dates of employment of all employees and officers of public bodies; (ix) materials containing opinions concerning the rights of the state, the public, a subdivision of state or a local government, or of any private persons; (x) the name of every official and the final records of voting in all proceedings of public bodies; (xi) applications for any contract, permit, grant, or agreement except as exempted from disclosure by subsection (g) of Section 7 of this Act; (xii) each report, document, study, or publication prepared by independent consultants or other independent contractors for the public body; (xiii) all other information required by law to be made available for public inspection or copying; (xiv) information relating to any grant or contract made by or between a public body and another public body or private organization; (xv) waiver documents filed with the State Superintendent of Education or the president of the University of Illinois under Section 30-12.5 of the School Code, concerning nominees for General Assembly scholarships under Sections 30-9, 30-10, and 30-11 of the School Code; (xvi) complaints, results of complaints, and Department of Children and Family Services staff findings of licensing violations at day care facilities, provided that personal and identifying information is not released; (xvii) records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, and other documentary information, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared, or having been or being used, received, possessed, or under the control of the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority dealing with the receipt or expenditure of public funds or other funds of the Authority in connection with the reconstruction, renovation, remodeling, extension, or improvement of all or substantially all of an existing "facility" as that term is defined in the Illinois Sports Facilities Authority Act; and (xviii) reports prepared by institutions of higher education in the State of Illinois documenting their relationship with credit card issuers, otherwise disclosed to the Illinois Board of Higher Education.

(d) "Copying" means the reproduction of any public record by means of any photographic, electronic, mechanical or other process, device or means.

(e) "Head of the public body" means the president, mayor, chairman, presiding officer, director, superintendent, manager, supervisor or individual otherwise holding primary executive and administrative authority for the public body, or such person's duly authorized designee.

(f) "News media" means a newspaper or other periodical issued at regular intervals whether in print or electronic format, a news service whether in print

or electronic format, a radio station, a television station, a television network, a community antenna television service, or a person or corporation engaged in making news reels or other motion picture news for public showing.

(Source: P.A. 96-261, eff. 1-1-10.)

(Text of Section from P.A. 96-542)

Sec. 2. Definitions. As used in this Act:

(a) "Public body" means all legislative, executive, administrative, or advisory bodies of the State, state universities and colleges, counties, townships, cities, villages, incorporated towns, school districts and all other municipal corporations, boards, bureaus, committees, or commissions of this State, any subsidiary bodies of any of the foregoing including but not limited to committees and subcommittees thereof, and a School Finance Authority created under Article 1E of the School Code. "Public body" does not include a child death review team or the Illinois Child Death Review Teams Executive Council established under the Child Death Review Team Act.

(b) "Person" means any individual, corporation, partnership, firm, organization or association, acting individually or as a group.

(c) "Public records" means all records, reports, forms, writings, letters, memoranda, books, papers, maps, photographs, microfilms, cards, tapes, recordings, electronic data processing records, electronic communications, recorded information and all other documentary materials pertaining to the transaction of public business, regardless of physical form or characteristics, having been prepared by or for, or having been or being used by, received by, in the possession of, or under the control of any public body.

(c-5) "Private information" means unique identifiers, including a person's social security number, driver's license number, employee identification number, biometric identifiers, personal financial information, passwords or other access codes, medical records, home or personal telephone numbers, and personal email addresses. Private information also includes home address and personal license plates, except as otherwise provided by law or when compiled without possibility of attribution to any person.

(c-10) "Commercial purpose" means the use of any part of a public record or records, or information derived from public records, in any form for sale, resale, or solicitation or advertisement for sales or services. For purposes of this definition, requests made by news media and non-profit, scientific, or academic organizations shall not be considered to be made for a "commercial purpose" when the principal purpose of the request is (i) to access and disseminate information concerning news and current or passing events, (ii) for articles of opinion or features of interest to the public, or (iii) for the purpose of academic, scientific, or public research or education.

(d) "Copying" means the reproduction of any public record by means of any photographic, electronic, mechanical or other process, device or means now known or hereafter developed and available to the public body.

(e) "Head of the public body" means the president, mayor, chairman, presiding officer, director, superintendent, manager, supervisor or individual otherwise holding primary executive and administrative authority for the public body, or such person's duly authorized designee.

(f) "News media" means a newspaper or other periodical issued at regular intervals whether in print or electronic format, a news service whether in print or electronic format, a radio station, a television station, a television network, a community antenna television service, or a person or corporation engaged in making news reels or other motion picture news for public showing.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/2.5)

Sec. 2.5. Records of funds. All records relating to the obligation, receipt, and use of public funds of the State, units of local government, and school districts are public records subject to inspection and copying by the public.  
(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/2.10)

Sec. 2.10. Payrolls. Certified payroll records submitted to a public body under Section 5(a)(2) of the Prevailing Wage Act are public records subject to inspection

and copying in accordance with the provisions of this Act; except that contractors' employees' addresses, telephone numbers, and social security numbers must be redacted by the public body prior to disclosure.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/2.15)

Sec. 2.15. Arrest reports and criminal history records.

(a) Arrest reports. The following chronologically maintained arrest and criminal history information maintained by State or local criminal justice agencies shall be furnished as soon as practical, but in no event later than 72 hours after the arrest, notwithstanding the time limits otherwise provided for in Section 3 of this Act: (i) information that identifies the individual, including the name, age, address, and photograph, when and if available; (ii) information detailing any charges relating to the arrest; (iii) the time and location of the arrest; (iv) the name of the investigating or arresting law enforcement agency; (v) if the individual is incarcerated, the amount of any bail or bond; and (vi) if the individual is incarcerated, the time and date that the individual was received into, discharged from, or transferred from the arresting agency's custody.

(b) Criminal history records. The following documents maintained by a public body pertaining to criminal history record information are public records subject to inspection and copying by the public pursuant to this Act: (i) court records that are public; (ii) records that are otherwise available under State or local law; and (iii) records in which the requesting party is the individual identified, except as provided under Section 7(1)(d)(vi).

(c) Information described in items (iii) through (vi) of subsection (a) may be withheld if it is determined that disclosure would: (i) interfere with pending or actually and reasonably contemplated law enforcement proceedings conducted by any law enforcement agency; (ii) endanger the life or physical safety of law enforcement or correctional personnel or any other person; or (iii) compromise the security of any correctional facility.

(d) The provisions of this Section do not supersede the confidentiality provisions for arrest records of the Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/2.20)

Sec. 2.20. Settlement agreements. All settlement agreements entered into by or on behalf of a public body are public records subject to inspection and copying by the public, provided that information exempt from disclosure under Section 7 of this Act may be redacted.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/3) (from Ch. 116, par. 203)

Sec. 3. (a) Each public body shall make available to any person for inspection or copying all public records, except as otherwise provided in Section 7 of this Act. Notwithstanding any other law, a public body may not grant to any person or entity, whether by contract, license, or otherwise, the exclusive right to access and disseminate any public record as defined in this Act.

(b) Subject to the fee provisions of Section 6 of this Act, each public body shall promptly provide, to any person who submits a request, a copy of any public record required to be disclosed by subsection (a) of this Section and shall certify such copy if so requested.

(c) Requests for inspection or copies shall be made in writing and directed to the public body. Written requests may be submitted to a public body via personal delivery, mail, telefax, or other means available to the public body. A public body may honor oral requests for inspection or copying. A public body may not require that a request be submitted on a standard form or require the requester to specify the purpose for a request, except to determine whether the records are requested for a commercial purpose or whether to grant a request for a fee waiver. All requests for inspection and copying received by a public body shall immediately be forwarded to its Freedom of Information officer or designee.

(d) Each public body shall, promptly, either comply with or deny a request for public records within 5 business days after its receipt of the request, unless the time for response is properly extended under subsection (e) of this Section. Denial

shall be in writing as provided in Section 9 of this Act. Failure to comply with a written request, extend the time for response, or deny a request within 5 business days after its receipt shall be considered a denial of the request. A public body that fails to respond to a request within the requisite periods in this Section but thereafter provides the requester with copies of the requested public records may not impose a fee for such copies. A public body that fails to respond to a request received may not treat the request as unduly burdensome under subsection (g).

(e) The time for response under this Section may be extended by the public body for not more than 5 business days from the original due date for any of the following reasons:

(i) the requested records are stored in whole or in part at other locations than the office having charge of the requested records;

(ii) the request requires the collection of a substantial number of specified records;

(iii) the request is couched in categorical terms and requires an extensive search for the records responsive to it;

(iv) the requested records have not been located in the course of routine search and additional efforts are being made to locate them;

(v) the requested records require examination and evaluation by personnel having the necessary competence and discretion to determine if they are exempt from disclosure under Section 7 of this Act or should be revealed only with appropriate deletions;

(vi) the request for records cannot be complied with by the public body within the time limits prescribed by paragraph (c) of this Section without unduly burdening or interfering with the operations of the public body;

(vii) there is a need for consultation, which shall be conducted with all practicable speed, with another public body or among two or more components of a public body having a substantial interest in the determination or in the subject matter of the request.

The person making a request and the public body may agree in writing to extend the time for compliance for a period to be determined by the parties. If the requester and the public body agree to extend the period for compliance, a failure by the public body to comply with any previous deadlines shall not be treated as a denial of the request for the records.

(f) When additional time is required for any of the above reasons, the public body shall, within 5 business days after receipt of the request, notify the person making the request of the reasons for the extension and the date by which the response will be forthcoming. Failure to respond within the time permitted for extension shall be considered a denial of the request. A public body that fails to respond to a request within the time permitted for extension but thereafter provides the requester with copies of the requested public records may not impose a fee for those copies. A public body that requests an extension and subsequently fails to respond to the request may not treat the request as unduly burdensome under subsection (g).

(g) Requests calling for all records falling within a category shall be complied with unless compliance with the request would be unduly burdensome for the complying public body and there is no way to narrow the request and the burden on the public body outweighs the public interest in the information. Before invoking this exemption, the public body shall extend to the person making the request an opportunity to confer with it in an attempt to reduce the request to manageable proportions. If any body responds to a categorical request by stating that compliance would unduly burden its operation and the conditions described above are met, it shall do so in writing, specifying the reasons why it would be unduly burdensome and the extent to which compliance will so burden the operations of the public body. Such a response shall be treated as a denial of the request for information.

Repeated requests from the same person for the same records that are unchanged or identical to records previously provided or properly denied under this Act shall be deemed unduly burdensome under this provision.

(h) Each public body may promulgate rules and regulations in conformity with the provisions of this Section pertaining to the availability of records and procedures to be followed, including:

(i) the times and places where such records will be made available, and

(ii) the persons from whom such records may be obtained.

(i) The time periods for compliance or denial of a request to inspect or copy records set out in this Section shall not apply to requests for records made for a commercial purpose. Such requests shall be subject to the provisions of Section 3.1 of this Act.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/3.1)

Sec. 3.1. Requests for commercial purposes.

(a) A public body shall respond to a request for records to be used for a commercial purpose within 21 working days after receipt. The response shall (i) provide to the requester an estimate of the time required by the public body to provide the records requested and an estimate of the fees to be charged, which the public body may require the person to pay in full before copying the requested documents, (ii) deny the request pursuant to one or more of the exemptions set out in this Act, (iii) notify the requester that the request is unduly burdensome and extend an opportunity to the requester to attempt to reduce the request to manageable proportions, or (iv) provide the records requested.

(b) Unless the records are exempt from disclosure, a public body shall comply with a request within a reasonable period considering the size and complexity of the request, and giving priority to records requested for non-commercial purposes.

(c) It is a violation of this Act for a person to knowingly obtain a public record for a commercial purpose without disclosing that it is for a commercial purpose, if requested to do so by the public body.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/3.3)

Sec. 3.3. This Act is not intended to compel public bodies to interpret or advise requesters as to the meaning or significance of the public records.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/3.5)

Sec. 3.5. Freedom of Information officers.

(a) Each public body shall designate one or more officials or employees to act as its Freedom of Information officer or officers. Except in instances when records are furnished immediately, Freedom of Information officers, or their designees, shall receive requests submitted to the public body under this Act, ensure that the public body responds to requests in a timely fashion, and issue responses under this Act. Freedom of Information officers shall develop a list of documents or categories of records that the public body shall immediately disclose upon request.

Upon receiving a request for a public record, the Freedom of Information officer shall:

(1) note the date the public body receives the written request;

(2) compute the day on which the period for response will expire and make a notation of that date on the written request;

(3) maintain an electronic or paper copy of a written request, including all documents submitted with the request until the request has been complied with or denied; and

(4) create a file for the retention of the original request, a copy of the response, a record of written communications with the requester, and a copy of other communications.

(b) All Freedom of Information officers shall, within 6 months after the effective date of this amendatory Act of the 96th General Assembly, successfully complete an electronic training curriculum to be developed by the Public Access Counselor and thereafter successfully complete an annual training program. Thereafter, whenever a new Freedom of Information officer is designated by a public body, that person shall successfully complete the electronic training curriculum within 30 days after assuming the position. Successful completion of the required training curriculum within the periods provided shall be a prerequisite to continue serving as a Freedom of Information officer.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/4) (from Ch. 116, par. 204)

Sec. 4. Each public body shall prominently display at each of its administrative or regional offices, make available for inspection and copying, and send through the mail if requested, each of the following:

(a) A brief description of itself, which will include, but not be limited to, a short summary of its purpose, a block diagram giving its functional subdivisions, the total amount of its operating budget, the number and location of all of its separate offices, the approximate number of full and part-time employees, and the identification and membership of any board, commission, committee, or council which operates in an advisory capacity relative to the operation of the public body, or which exercises control over its policies or procedures, or to which the public body is required to report and be answerable for its operations; and

(b) A brief description of the methods whereby the public may request information and public records, a directory designating the Freedom of Information officer or officers, the address where requests for public records should be directed, and any fees allowable under Section 6 of this Act.

(c) A public body that maintains a website shall also post this information on its website.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)

(5 ILCS 140/5) (from Ch. 116, par. 205)

Sec. 5. As to public records prepared or received after the effective date of this Act, each public body shall maintain and make available for inspection and copying a reasonably current list of all types or categories of records under its control. The list shall be reasonably detailed in order to aid persons in obtaining access to public records pursuant to this Act. Each public body shall furnish upon request a description of the manner in which public records stored by means of electronic data processing may be obtained in a form comprehensible to persons lacking knowledge of computer language or printout format.

(Source: P.A. 83-1013.)

(5 ILCS 140/6) (from Ch. 116, par. 206)

Sec. 6. Authority to charge fees.

(a) When a person requests a copy of a record maintained in an electronic format, the public body shall furnish it in the electronic format specified by the requester, if feasible. If it is not feasible to furnish the public records in the specified electronic format, then the public body shall furnish it in the format in which it is maintained by the public body, or in paper format at the option of the requester. A public body may charge the requester for the actual cost of purchasing the recording medium, whether disc, diskette, tape, or other medium. A public body may not charge the requester for the costs of any search for and review of the records or other personnel costs associated with reproducing the records. Except to the extent that the General Assembly expressly provides, statutory fees applicable to copies of public records when furnished in a paper format shall not be applicable to those records when furnished in an electronic format.

(b) Except when a fee is otherwise fixed by statute, each public body may charge fees reasonably calculated to reimburse its actual cost for reproducing and certifying public records and for the use, by any person, of the equipment of the public body to copy records. No fees shall be charged for the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies requested by a requester. The fee for black and white, letter or legal sized copies shall not exceed 15 cents per page. If a public body provides copies in color or in a size other than letter or legal, the public body may not charge more than its actual cost for reproducing the records. In calculating its actual cost for reproducing records or for the use of the equipment of the public body to reproduce records, a public body shall not include the costs of any search for and review of the records or other personnel costs associated with reproducing the records. Such fees shall be imposed according to a standard scale of fees, established and made public by the body imposing them. The cost for certifying a record shall not exceed \$1.

(c) Documents shall be furnished without charge or at a reduced charge, as determined by the public body, if the person requesting the documents states the

specific purpose for the request and indicates that a waiver or reduction of the fee is in the public interest. Waiver or reduction of the fee is in the public interest if the principal purpose of the request is to access and disseminate information regarding the health, safety and welfare or the legal rights of the general public and is not for the principal purpose of personal or commercial benefit. For purposes of this subsection, "commercial benefit" shall not apply to requests made by news media when the principal purpose of the request is to access and disseminate information regarding the health, safety, and welfare or the legal rights of the general public. In setting the amount of the waiver or reduction, the public body may take into consideration the amount of materials requested and the cost of copying them.

(d) The imposition of a fee not consistent with subsections (6)(a) and (b) of this Act constitutes a denial of access to public records for the purposes of judicial review.

(d) The fee for each abstract of a driver's record shall be as provided in Section 6-118 of "The Illinois Vehicle Code", approved September 29, 1969, as amended, whether furnished as a paper copy or as an electronic copy.

(Source: P.A. 96-542, eff. 1-1-10.)