



FAIRFIELD TOWNSHIP PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY b

MISSION STATEMENT:

Consistent with the premise that government at all levels exists first and foremost to serve the interests of the people, it is our mission and intent to at all times fully comply with and abide by both the spirit and the letter of Ohio's Open Records Act and Open Meetings Act.

In order to accomplish the mission of fully complying with both the letter and spirit of the Open Records and Open Meetings Acts, Fairfield Township hereby incorporates the following Statement of Principles as the foundation for its Public Record Handbook:

STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Fairfield Township: Will enact a formal resolution to establish a policy for all Fairfield Township Government Offices to make public records available at all reasonable times during regular business hours, in accordance with the law of the State of Ohio.

Will assure that appropriate personnel become and remain fully trained in and aware of the provisions of the acts;

Will do nothing that abridges the public's right to obtain information about their government or that inhibits or discourages citizens from doing so;

Will do everything possible to aid those who are seeking information, including but not limited to, fully explaining the scope and operation of the acts and assisting citizens in the formulation of requests;

Will construe the provisions of the acts in a manner that favors compliance with requests for information;

Will seek guidance from legal counsel whenever a question arises about the application of the acts or about the appropriateness of a request for information;

Will clearly and concisely state the reason or reasons why a request for information has been denied.

Policy:

1. It is the policy of the Fairfield Township Board of Trustees that openness leads to a better-informed citizenry, which leads to better government and better public policy.
2. It is the policy of Fairfield Township Board of Trustees to adhere to the State of Ohio Public Records Act. Any denial of public records in response to a valid request will be accompanied by an explanation, including legal authority, as outlined in the ORC. If the request is in writing, the explanation will also be in writing. Fairfield Township reserves the right to amend this policy Handbook from time to time, as required, to keep pace with revisions to the Ohio Public Records Law.
3. It is the policy of Fairfield Township that all records subject to disclosure, including email, as required by Ohio Law, will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. Record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and shall be posted within the administrative offices of all Fairfield Township agencies.
4. Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the guidelines established within the Fairfield Township Public Records Policy Handbook (copy available upon request). All requests shall be forwarded to the Fairfield Township Fiscal Officer.
5. Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requestor must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the designated employee(s) or agents of Fairfield Township to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the Township will contact the requestor for clarification, and will assist the requestor in revising the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which the Township keeps its records.
6. The requestor shall not be required to put a records request in writing, and shall not be required to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. However, in certain instances, individuals requesting public records may voluntarily provide his/her identity and/or contact information in order to assist Fairfield Township staff in complying with the public records request.
7. Public records shall be made available for inspection during regular business hours at the offices of the respective Fairfield Township agency, with the exception of published holidays. Public records shall be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records will be made available within a reasonable period of time. The determination of the terms "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.
8. Each request for public records will be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records requested. Routine requests for records will be satisfied immediately, if feasible. Routine requests include, but are not limited to, meeting minutes, resolutions, budgets, salary information, forms and applications, personnel rosters, etc.
9. In processing the request, the office does not have an obligation to create new records or perform a search or research for information in the office's records. An electronic record is deemed to exist so long as a computer is

already programmed to produce the record through the office's standard use of sorting, filtering, or querying features.

10. If fewer than twenty pages of copies are requested or if the records are readily available in an electronic format that can be readily emailed, electronically copied, or downloaded easily by the requestor, the aforementioned files, copies, or data will be made as quickly as Township technology allows.
11. All requests for public records to Fairfield Township will either be satisfied or be acknowledged in writing by the Township within three (3) business days following the receipt of the request. If request is deemed to be beyond the scope of daily activities, such as seeking a voluminous number of copies or requiring extensive research, the acknowledgment shall include the following information: an estimated number of business days it will take to satisfy the request and an estimated cost if copies are requested.
12. Any denial of public records requested will include an explanation, including legal authority for such denial. If there are redactions, each redaction must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority for said redaction(s). In every instance Fairfield Township shall seek an opinion from the Law Director prior to finalizing and redaction to any requested records, or prior to denying a request for public records,
13. Not all of Fairfield Township's records are "public records." Certain records are exempt from the Public Records Act. Exempt records include records: (1) the release of which is prohibited by state and federal law, or (2) that are subject to an express exception set forth in Ohio's Public Records Act, which may be released only if Fairfield Township decides to waive the express exception.
14. Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies incurred by Fairfield Township in the process of fulfilling a specific public records request. Employee time should not be calculated into the charge for copying a public record. Fairfield Township shall issue a receipt of payment for the requested public records to the requestor. Requested records will not be released until such time that payment is received for such request in full from the requestor.

Public Records Fee Schedule:

<i>Record Type/Media</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>\$/Unit</i>
8.5 X 11" paper copies	Page	\$.10
8.5 X 14" paper copies	Page	\$.10
11 X 17" paper copies	Page	\$.15
Oversize plans, prints, or other	Page	\$5.00
Outsources plans, prints or other	All	Actual cost
3.5" Computer Diskette	1.44m diskette	\$2.00
DVD recordings of public meetings	Disc	\$5.00
Audio cassette Tape	Tape	\$2.00
Emailed Documents (if possible)	No Charge	N/C
Any mailed documents	Actual Charge	Depends

15. Records in private email, text message, twitter, and other similar accounts used to conduct public business are subject to disclosure, and all employees or reps off this office are instructed to retain their emails, text messages, etc. that relate to public business in accordance with Article I of this document.

16. Any employee of Fairfield Township, included the designated Records Custodian for each Fairfield Township agency, who willfully fails to fulfill a Public Records request by failing to follow the instructions of the appointed Records Custodian or who fails to observe the policies and procedures adopted within this document may be subject to disciplinary action as established within the Personnel Policy Manual of Fairfield Township, Butler County, Ohio.