



## **CITY OF THE VILLAGE OF INDIAN HILL PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY**

The public records policy of the City of the Village of Indian Hill 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's Employee Handbook. For a copy of the full version of the Public Records Policy, please visit <https://indianhill.gov/>, or ask for a copy at the office where this poster is located. 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](http://www.OhioAttorneyGeneral.gov/YellowBook).

### **DEFINING AND ORGANIZING PUBLIC RECORDS**

The City, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including any document in any format or media – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, e-mail, text messages or other electronic communications) – that is created or received by, or coming under the jurisdiction of the City that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the public office. All records are public records except those that are otherwise identified as exempt under the Ohio Public Records Act or prohibited by state or federal law.

### **MAKING RECORDS ACCESSIBLE**

Public records are available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Records must be provided for inspection, and copies 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, the necessity for any legal review and redaction, and other facts and circumstances of the records requested.

### **PROCESSING REQUESTS**

No specific language is required to make a request for public records, and the request does not need to be in writing. The person making the request does not have to provide their identity, nor must they indicate how the records will be used. However, the requestor must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. 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. If a request is ambiguous or overly broad, the office may deny the request but needs to contact the requestor for clarification. The office should assist the person in revising the request by explaining how the office's records are organized and accessed.

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.

Records transmitted to or from private email accounts or personal devices to conduct public business are subject to disclosure. All employees and 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 requested records, it must provide an explanation, including legal authority. If portions of a record are public and other portions are exempt, the exempt portions may be redacted while the rest is released. When making public records available for public inspection or copying, the office shall notify the requestor of any redaction or make the redaction plainly visible.

### **DETERMINING COPYING AND MAILING CHARGES**

There is no charge to inspect public records. For paper copies of letter or legal-size documents, there is no charge for the first page up to 25 pages. For 26 or more pages, the charge is 5 cents per page calculated from the first page. Two-sided copies shall be charged at a rate of 5 cents per side. For videotapes, CDs, DVDs, cassette tapes or for any other type of media, the fee shall be the replacement cost of the blank media or the reproduction (copying) cost. Requestors may ask that documents be mailed to them. The actual cost of postage, mailing supplies, or other delivery costs may be charged. There is no charge for emailed documents. The City may require payment of all costs in advance of providing copies of the requested records.

### **MANAGING RECORDS**

The records of the City of the Village of Indian Hill are subject to records retention schedules, which are available at the City Administration building located at 6525 Drake Road, Cincinnati, OH 45243.