

Open Records Policy– City of Philadelphia

Effective January 1, 2009

Last updated on February 22, 2018

The City of Philadelphia has adopted a policy to comply with the Commonwealth’s Act 3 of 2008, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101 et seq., commonly known as the “Right to Know Law.” With certain exceptions, members of the public have the right to inspect and/or copy such records upon request.

1. Definitions

- a. Right to Know Law (or Open Records Law).** Act 3 of 2008, 65 P.S. §§ 67.101 et seq., commonly known as the Right to Know Law (“Law”).
- b. Business day.** Monday through Friday during regular business hours¹, except those days when the City, the main office of the Law Department, or the office, department, board or commission to which a request is submitted (hereinafter any one of which a “City Agency”) is closed. For the purpose of this Open Records Policy, City Agencies are closed when any of the following apply: (a) the City, the Law Department, or the particular City Agency operates on an “essential services only” basis; (b) the City, the main office of the Law Department, or the particular City Agency is closed for four or more hours during regular business hours; or (c) the City, the main office of the Law Department, or the particular City Agency closes for any portion of regular business hours on an emergency basis.
- c. Public Record.** Any document that satisfies the general definition of “public record” set forth in the Law and does not fall within any of the exceptions set forth therein, as the definition and exceptions are amended from time to time and as the definition and exceptions are interpreted by state, federal and/or local courts.
- d. Open Records Officer.** Any official or employee of the City of Philadelphia who is officially assigned responsibility for receiving, tracking and responding to requests for information under the Right to Know Law. The City of Philadelphia may designate a Deputy or Secondary Open Records Officer to act in the absence of an Open Records Officer.
- e. Requester.** A person who requests a record under the Right to Know Law.
- f. State Office of Open Records.** The State Office, under the Department of Economic and Community Development, as explained in §1310 of the Right to Know Law. The Office of Open Records shall be responsible for many duties, which include (but are not limited to): issuing advisory opinions, training agencies and public employees, assigning appeals officers to review decisions and conducting a biannual review of fees allowed under the Law.

¹ 8:30AM-5:00PM.

2. Open Records Officer

Please see below for the Open Records Officer specific to each City Agency. Should no Officer be listed, the request should be directed to the Officer for the City of Philadelphia Law Department (Office of the City Solicitor). Please indicate the City Agency the request is seeking records from. Please note that some independently elected officials, including the District Attorney's Office and City Controller's Office, may have their own separate and distinct policies. You should consult their respective websites for information specific to their offices, including information concerning their respective Open Records Officers.

Direction of Specific Requests:

- The City of Philadelphia Law Department represents the City of Philadelphia² on all Right to Know matters. Requests from lawyers or law firms must be directed to the Open Records Officer for the City of Philadelphia Law Department and should indicate the Office, Department, Board and/or Commission the request is seeking records from.
- Requests for Police Incident Reports must be directed to the Open Records Officer for the City of Philadelphia Department of Records.

The current list of Officers can be found below:

Agency

Officer & Contact Information

Mayor's Office

Kathleen Lonie
Room 204 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-7508 (phone)
(215) 686-2555 (fax)
kathleen.lonie@phila.gov

City Council

Mary McDaniel, Esq.
City Council Technical Staff
Room 564 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-1945
(215) 686-1941 (fax)
mary.mcdaniel@phila.gov

² Please be advised that the Law Department is not authorized to accept Right to Know Requests on behalf of the Philadelphia District Attorney. The Office of the District Attorney maintains a separate Open Records Policy and requests for that office should be directed to the Open Records Officer for the Office of the District Attorney.

Office of the Controller

Nicole McCormack
Office of the Controller
1230 MSB
1401 JFK Blvd
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-6159 (phone)
(215) 686-3832 (fax)
Nicole.McCormack@phila.gov

Office of the City Commissioners Officer

Nick Custodio
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Commissioner Deeley;
1400 John F Kennedy Blvd
City Hall Room 130
Philadelphia, PA. 19107
(215)-686-3460 (phone)
(215) 686-3947 (fax)

Law Department

Jill Freeman, Esq.
1515 Arch Street, 17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 683-5457 (phone)
(215) 683-5069 (fax)
RightToKnow@phila.gov

Airport

Maryanne Mahoney
Assistant Managing Director
Government Affairs Officer
Division Of Aviation
Philadelphia International Airport
8500 Essington Avenue
Executive Offices
Terminal D, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19153
(215) 863-3964 (phone)
(215) 863-4627 (fax)
Maryanne.Mahoney@phl.org

Department of Behavioral Health
& Intellectual Disability Services

Jeffrey Orlin
Administrative Services Director
Department of Behavioral Health &
Intellectual Disability Services (DBHIDS)
ARAMARK Building
1101 Market Street, 7th Floor
Philadelphia PA 19107 - 2907
(215) 685-5476 (phone)
(215) 685-5563 (fax)
jeffrey.orlin@phila.gov

Board of Ethics

Nedda Massar
Deputy Executive Director
City of Philadelphia Board of Ethics
One Parkway Bldg., 18th Floor
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1504
215-686-9450 (phone)
215-686-9453 (fax)
nedda.massar@phila.gov

Board of Pensions & Retirement

Shamika Taliaferro
Deputy Director
Two Penn Center Plaza, 16th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 496-7426 (phone)
(215) 496-3146 (fax)
Shamika.Taliaferro@phila.gov

Board of Revision of Taxes

Carla E. Pagan, CPE
Executive Director
Board of Revision of Taxes
The Curtis Center
601 Walnut Street, Suite 325 East
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 686-4343 (phone)
(215) 686-4336 (fax)
carla.pagan@phila.gov

Civil Service Commission

Barbara LaRocca
Civil Service Commission
1640 MSB
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-2320 (phone)

(215) 686-2374 (fax)
barbara.larocca@phila.gov

Commerce Department

Edward Garcia
Deputy Director
Department of Commerce
1515 Arch St., 12th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 683-2020 (phone)
Edward.w.garcia@phila.gov

Commission on Human Relations

Karen Forman, Esq.
Principal Assistant
Commission on Human Relations
The Curtis Center
601 Walnut Street, Suite 300 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 686-4891 (phone)
Karen.forman@phila.gov

Department of Finance
Budget Office
Risk Management

Beth Wetzell
Office of Finance
1401 J.F.K Blvd., 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-6203 (phone)
(215) 686-6202 (fax)
Beth.A.Wetzell@phila.gov

Department of Health

Elaine M. Strunk
Executive Assistant
Office of the Health Commissioner
Philadelphia Department of Public Health
1401 JFK Blvd., Room 600 MSB
(215) 686-5234 (phone)
(215) 686-5212 (fax)
elaine.strunk@phila.gov

Department of Public Property

Thomas C. McDade, III
Deputy Chief of Staff
Department of Public Property
City Hall Room 780
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-7898
Thomas.McDade@phila.gov

Department of Revenue

Manuela Hartley
Department of Revenue
Technical Staff
1401 JFK Blvd- 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-686-6435 (phone)
215-686-6898 (fax)
Manuela.Hartley@Phila.gov

Fleet Management

Dr. K Wilson
Administrative Services Director
Office of Fleet Management
Land Title Building
100 S. Broad Street, 3rd Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19110
(215) 686-1844 (phone)
k.wilson@phila.gov

Free Library of Philadelphia

Leslie Walker
Chief of Staff
Free Library of Philadelphia
1901 Vine Street-Room 120
Philadelphia, PA 19103
(215) 686-5306 (phone)
(215) 686-5368 (fax)
lesliemw@freelibrary.org

Division of Housing & Community Development
Philadelphia City Planning Commission
Philadelphia Historical Commission
Developer Services Committee

Paul D. Chrystie
Director of Communications
Division of Housing and Community
Development
City of Philadelphia
1234 Market Street, 17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-9721 (phone)
paul.chrystie@phila.gov

Labor Standards

Perritti DiVirgilio
Director of Labor Standards
Municipal Services Building
1401 JFK Blvd Room 170
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-2132 (phone)
perritti.divirgilio@phila.gov

Licenses & Inspections

Tia Platts
Municipal Services Building Rm. 1130
(215) 686-1441 (phone)
(215) 686-1443 (fax)
Tia.Platts@phila.gov

Managing Director's Office
Office of Emergency Management

David Torres
Administrative Services Director
Office of the Managing Director
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd. - 14th Fl.
Philadelphia, PA 19102-1683
(215) 686-1988 (phone)
(215) 686-3479 (fax)
david.torres@phila.gov

Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Stephanie Tipton
Chief-of-Staff
Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
1401 JFK Blvd; Ste 630
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-6673 (phone)
Stephanie.Tipton@phila.gov

Office of Innovation & Technology

Steven E. Robertson, Esq.
Chief of Staff
Office of Innovation & Technology
City of Philadelphia
(215) 686-8268 (phone)
(215) 686-8258 (fax)
steven.robertson@phila.gov

Office of the Inspector General

Alexander F. DeSantis
Office of the Inspector General
601 Walnut Street, Suite 300 East
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 685-1770 (phone)
Alexander.DeSantis@phila.gov

Office of Property Assessment

Drew Aldinger, Esq.
Deputy Administrator
Office of Property Assessment
The Curtis Center
601 Walnut Street - Suite 300 West
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 686-4353 (phone)
(215) 686-9223 (fax)
RighttoKnowOPA@phila.gov

Office of Administrative Review

Melissa Andre
100 S. Broad St., Ste 400
Philadelphia, PA 19110
(215) 686-5216 (phone)
Melissa.C.Andre@phila.gov

Office of Homeless Services

Linda A. White
Office of Supportive Housing
1401 JFK Boulevard, Suite 1030
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-6726 (phone)
(215) 686-7126 (fax)
linda.white@phila.gov

Parks & Recreation

Barry A. Bessler
Director of Policy and Compliance
Philadelphia Parks & Recreation
One Parkway, 10th Floor
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102
215-683-0203 (phone)
215-683-0205 (fax)
barry.bessler@phila.gov

Philadelphia Department of Prisons

Gregory J. Vrato, Esq.
Philadelphia Department of Prisons
Director of Policy Compliance &
Legal Affairs
7901 State Rd.
Philadelphia, PA 19136
(215) 685-7840
Greg.Vrato@prisons.phila.gov

Philadelphia Fire Department

Carl W. Randolph, Sr.
Philadelphia Fire Department
Deputy Chief/Fire Marshal
301 Island Ave,
Philadelphia, PA 19153
(215) 686-1362 (phone)
(215) 686-1162 (fax)
Carl.W.Randolph@phila.gov

Philadelphia Gas Commission

Erin Baley Lai, Esq.
Philadelphia Gas Commission
1515 Arch St., 9th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 683-0904 (phone)
(215) 683-0911 (fax)
elai@phlgc.net

Philadelphia Water Department

Sheilah Louis, Esq.
Philadelphia Water Department
ARAMARK Tower
1101 Market Street, 5th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 685-6139 (phone)
(215) 685-6389 (fax)
sheilah.louis@phila.gov

Philadelphia Police Department

Lieutenant Barry Jacobs
Philadelphia Police Department
750 Race Street, Room 203
Philadelphia, PA 19106
(215) 686-3277 (phone)
(215) 686-1183 (fax)
police.righttoknow@phila.gov

Procurement

Pamela Peterson
Public Information Supervisor
Procurement Department City of Phila.
1401 John F Kennedy Blvd., Room 150
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-4746 (phone)
(215) 686-4716 (fax)
Pamela.Peterson@phila.gov

Department of Records

Joseph Gilorma
City of Philadelphia Department of Records
City Hall Room 156
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-1475
Joseph.Gilorma@phila.gov

Sinking Fund

Christopher DiFusco, Esq.
Chief Investment Officer,
Sinking Fund Commission
1500 John F. Kennedy Blvd
17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 496-7463 (phone)
(215) 496-7460 (fax)
Christopher.Difusco@Phila.gov

Streets Department

Tamalar Geiger
City of Philadelphia, Department of Streets
1401 JFK Blvd., Room 730 MSB
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 686-7813 (phone)
(215) 686 -7812 (fax)
RightToKnowStreets@phila.gov

Treasurer

Keola Harrington
Treasurer's Office
1401 JFK Blvd, Ste. 640
(215) 686-3823 (phone)
(215) 686-3518 (fax)
keola.harrington@phila.gov

Water Revenue Bureau

Lawrence Taylor
Administrative Assistant
(215) 686-6838 (phone)
(215) 686-6704 (fax)
Water Revenue Bureau
1401 John F. Kennedy Blvd., Room 230
Philadelphia, PA 19102
lawrence.taylor@phila.gov

Any agency/office/board/department without an Officer currently listed

Jill Freeman, Esq.
1515 Arch St., 17th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102
(215) 683-5457 (phone)
(215) 683-5069 (fax)
RightToKnowLaw@phila.gov

3. Procedure

The Law requires that the City of Philadelphia act upon each non-anonymous written request when such request is made in person, by mail, by facsimile or by e-mail. The Law does not require that the City of Philadelphia act upon an oral request, and the City of Philadelphia shall refuse to accept oral requests. Furthermore, the Law does not require that the City of Philadelphia act upon an anonymous request, and the City of Philadelphia will refuse to honor an anonymous request.

Pursuant to the Law, the State Office of Open Records has created and published on its website a standard statewide form which must be accepted by the City of Philadelphia for the filing of a request. (<http://openrecords.state.pa.us/portal/server.pt>). Effective February 1, 2012, the City of Philadelphia will require the standard statewide form be used for the submission of Right to Know requests, and will not consider a request to be a written request pursuant to the Right to Know Law unless the request is submitted on or with the standard statewide form. Beginning February 1, 2012, the City of Philadelphia will consider any request not submitted on or with the standard statewide form to be an informal request not subject to the Right to Know Law.³ If a requester submits a request on or with the standard statewide form after submitting an informal request for the same (or similar) records, the City of Philadelphia will consider the informal request to have been withdrawn. The City of Philadelphia reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to require a written request pursuant to the Right to Know Law before releasing records. A copy of the standard statewide form appears at the end of this policy.

The Law sets forth various specifications for the contents of a written request. To qualify as a written request under the Right to Know Law and the City of Philadelphia Open Records Policy the request must (a) be directed to the appropriate Open Records Officer designated above, (b) be submitted on or with the standard statewide form (beginning February 1, 2012), and (c) contain, at a minimum, the following information:

- i. name of requester;
- ii. address of requester; and
- iii. records being sought, identified or described with sufficient specificity to allow the City of Philadelphia to ascertain which records are being requested.

³ The City of Philadelphia reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to use the Right to Know Law as guidance in responding to informal requests for records and/or information.

Under the Law, the City of Philadelphia has a duty to make a good faith effort to determine if the record(s) requested is a public record and to respond as promptly as possible under the circumstances existing at the time of the request; this time shall not exceed five (5) business days from the date the request is received by the agency's Open Records Officer. The Law provides that either a final or interim response be provided to the requester within five (5) business days from the date of receipt by the agency. If the agency fails to respond within this five (5) day time period, the Open Records Request is deemed denied.

The Law and the City of Philadelphia's policy contemplates that requesters will receive a response within five (5) business days. The Law, however, does provide the City of Philadelphia with specific reasons that may be invoked to receive a single extension of time which shall not exceed thirty (30) calendar days. If an extension is invoked and no response is provided to the requester within the thirty (30) day time period, the Open Records Request is deemed denied. Additionally, should the City of Philadelphia notify the requester it needs more than the maximum thirty (30) day extension, the request is deemed denied unless the requester has agreed in writing to an extension to the date specified in the notice. If the requester agrees to the extension, the request shall be deemed denied on the day following the date specified in the notice if the agency has not provided a response by that date.

The City of Philadelphia's final response to a request will do one of the following:

- i. grant the request;
- ii. deny the request;
- iii. grant the request in part and deny the request in part; or
- iv. grant the request and redact part of the information provided pursuant to the Law and/or other applicable federal, state and local law.

4. Appeals of Denied Requests

If a request for access to a record is denied (in whole or in part) or deemed denied, the requester may file an appeal as follows within fifteen (15) business days of the mailing date of the City of Philadelphia's denial as follows:

Records Other Than Criminal Investigative Records

Appeals of denials related to requests for records other than criminal investigative records must be directed to the Pennsylvania Office of Open Records at the following address:
Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Office of Open Records, Commonwealth Keystone Building,
400 North Street, 4th Floor, Harrisburg, PA 17120-0225.

Criminal Investigative Records

Appeals of denials related to requests for criminal investigative records must be directed to the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office within fifteen (15) business days of the mailing date of the City of Philadelphia's denial. Appeals to the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office should be directed to the following address: District Attorney's Office, Civil Litigation Unit, Open Records Appeals Officer, Three South Penn Square, Philadelphia, PA 19107-3499.

For All Administrative Appeals

Unless the requester agrees otherwise, the Appeals Officer shall make a final determination which shall be mailed to the requester and the City of Philadelphia within thirty (30) days of receipt of the appeal. Should the Appeals Officer fail to issue a ruling within thirty (30) days, the appeal is deemed denied.

Before a final determination is issued, a hearing may be held. The determination by the Appeals Officer shall be a final order. The Appeals Officer shall provide a written explanation of the reasons for the decision to the requester and the City of Philadelphia.

Within thirty (30) days of the mailing date of the final determination of the Appeals Officer, a requester or the City of Philadelphia may file a petition for review or other document(s) as required by rule of court with the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas.

5. Fees and Charges

Fees for duplication of records have been established and posted by the State Office of Open Records. The City of Philadelphia will charge fees consistent with the State Office of Open Records regulations.

The City of Philadelphia reserves the right to impose additional fees if it incurs costs for complying with a request, pursuant to the Right to Know Law; such additional fees, when charged, must be reasonable. This includes, but is not limited to, fees for enhanced electronic access and certified copies of documents.

6. Written Policies and Regulations

The City of Philadelphia and each Open Records Officer shall retain the discretion and authority to adopt any other written policies that are consistent with the Right to Know Law, and these policies, as amended from time to time, that they deem to be necessary or prudent, consistent with the Right to Know Law.

ATTACHMENT
STANDARD RIGHT TO KNOW REQUEST FORM



pennsylvania

OFFICE OF OPEN RECORDS

STANDARD RIGHT-TO-KNOW REQUEST FORM

DATE REQUESTED: _____

REQUEST SUBMITTED BY: ___E-MAIL ___U.S. MAIL ___FAX ___IN-PERSON

REQUEST SUBMITTED TO (Agency name & Address): _____

NAME OF REQUESTER: _____

STREET ADDRESS: _____

CITY/STATE/COUNTY (Required): _____

TELEPHONE (Optional): _____ EMAIL (Optional): _____

RECORDS REQUESTED: **Provide as much specific detail as possible so the agency can identify the information. Please use additional sheets if necessary.*

DO YOU WANT COPIES? YES or NO

DO YOU WANT TO INSPECT THE RECORDS? YES or NO

DO YOU WANT CERTIFIED COPIES OF RECORDS? YES or NO

**** PLEASE NOTE: RETAIN A COPY OF THIS REQUEST FOR YOUR FILES ****
**** IT IS A REQUIRED DOCUMENT IF YOU WOULD NEED TO FILE AN APPEAL ****

FOR AGENCY USE ONLY

RIGHT TO KNOW OFFICER:

DATE RECEIVED BY THE AGENCY:

AGENCY FIVE (5) BUSINESS DAY RESPONSE DUE:

***Public bodies may fill anonymous verbal or written requests. If the requestor wishes to pursue the relief and remedies provided for in this Act, the request must be in writing. (Section 702.) Written requests need not include an explanation why information is sought or the intended use of the information unless otherwise required by law. (Section 703.)*
