

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION**Rockford Public Library
Freedom of Information ~ Guidelines**

- I. **Preface:** The Illinois Freedom of Information Act provides that “all persons are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and 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.” 5 ILCS 140/1.

This statutory provision applies to all information collected, assembled, or maintained by a public body in the course of its official business that is to be made available during normal business hours for inspection or copying. It assures that a written request for information will receive a timely response and allows the organization to recoup any production costs incurred by supplying the response.

Rockford Public Library is committed to providing citizens and taxpayers access to applicable public records under the Act. The intent of this policy is to clarify the requirements and to assist staff in the compliance of both the letter and the spirit of the Act. The intent of the Act is not to violate individual privacy, nor to further commercial enterprise, nor to disrupt the work of any public body. The spirit of the Act is to minimize the restraints of information access by limiting exceptions to the general rule that the people have a right to know 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.

- II. Information and records available to the public may be requested in the following manner:
 - A. Request form must be completed (see attached). There is no requirement under the Act to respond to oral requests or to provide information other than what already exists in records.
 - B. Request is to be directed to the Assistant Director for Public Services, FOIA officer, Administrative Office, at the main library, 215 North Wyman Street, Rockford, IL 61101-1061, weekdays 9 a.m. through 5 p.m. excluding holidays. Requests received after 3 p.m. will be dated as being received on the next consecutive business day.
 - C. The request must specify the records requested to be disclosed for inspection or to be copied. If any records are to be certified, they must be specified. Records may be inspected or copied. If inspected, an employee must be present throughout the inspection. Reimbursement for actual costs for reproducing and certifying (if requested) the records will be charged as follows: \$.25 per page for employee copied records, \$1.00 per page for certification of records.

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- D. Within seven days of the receipt of a written request in the Administrative Office, the Library will respond with information regarding access to the information, request an extension under the Act, or deny the request in writing. Legal counsel may be solicited to advise as to the proper response to the request. Denial of the request will occur if the public records requested fall within one of the specific exemptions of the Act, or in those situations where the public body does not have either a right of access or ownership of the information. If only part of the request is denied, and access will be given to the remainder, it will be stated in the response. Any denial will include the reason or exemption. The person making the request will also be notified of the right to appeal the denial to the Executive Director.
 - E. Denial of access by the FOIA officer may be appealed to the Executive Director in writing within fourteen days. Upon receipt of an appeal, the Director will review the public record, determine whether the record is open to public inspection, and respond in writing to the appeal within seven working days.
 - F. Records will be made available by appointment on weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., excluding holidays, at Rockford Public Library Administrative Office, 215 North Wyman Street.
- III. Certain types of information maintained by the Library is exempt from inspection and copying. However, the following types or categories of records are maintained and available for public viewing:
- A. Monthly Financial Statements
 - B. Annual Receipts and Disbursements Reports
 - C. Budget Levy Resolutions
 - D. Operating Budgets
 - E. Annual Audits
 - F. Minutes of the Board of Library Trustees
 - G. Library Policies
 - H. Annual Reports to the Illinois State Library