



Public Records Requests: Policy & Procedures

I. What are public records?

- Public records encompass all materials made or received by an agency in connection with official business which are used to perpetuate, communicate, or formalize knowledge.¹
- Asking a question of an agency is generally not a public records request. Rather, a public records request seeks to obtain copies of, or inspect, specific “documents, papers, letters, maps, books, tapes, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other material.”²

II. Making a Request

- Instructions for requesting standard voter data are available on our [Data Requests page](#).
- To submit any other records request, the best way to do so is to submit the request through our online request [form](#).
- Alternatively, you can submit your request by mail, in person, via email to publicrecords@votehillsborough.gov, or by calling (813) 744-5900.

III. Acknowledgement of Request and Next Steps

- Once we receive a public records request, we will promptly acknowledge it as having been received. If you have provided contact information – email or mail – the acknowledgement will be in writing. If you made an in-person or telephonic request and did not provide email or mail contact information, the acknowledgment will occur in person or telephonically at the time that you make the request.
- Following acknowledgement, staff will review the substance of the request to determine if responsive records exist and if so, the estimated time and potential costs involved in responding to your request.

¹ See *Shevin v. Byron, Harless, Shaffer, Reid and Associates, Inc.*, 379 So. 2d 633, 640 (Fla. 1980).

² See § 119.011(12), Fla. Stat. (2024) (defining “Public records”).

IV. Charges/Fee Schedule

- If your request can be fulfilled in 30 minutes or less, we will provide the records or coordinate with you for the inspection at no charge.
- If your request cannot be fulfilled in under 30 minutes, we will provide an estimated special service charge invoice indicating the staff time necessary to fulfill the request, with credit for the first 30 minutes at no charge.³
- If physical (as opposed to electronic) copies are requested, document pages of not more than 8.5 by 14 inches will be charged at a rate of 15 cents per page.
- Fulfillment time consists of the time necessary to locate the record(s), review for confidential and exempt information, copy or prepare for sending electronically, and refile the requested record(s).
- For multiple requests from the same requestor in short order involving the same or similar subject areas, each subsequent request beyond the initial request will be subject to a special service charge.⁴

V. Payment

- Once an estimated invoice has been provided, payment must be received before we will begin work on the request. If we do not receive payment within 15 days of providing you the invoice, we will consider the request closed.
- Checks or money orders can be made out to Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections and dropped off or mailed to:
Hillsborough County Supervisor of Elections
2514 N. Falkenburg Rd.
Tampa, Florida 33619
- If the work to fulfill the request takes less than the estimated time for which payment was received, we will provide a refund of the unused portion of the payment.

³ Special service charges are in accordance with section 119.07(4)(d): “If the nature or volume of public records requested to be inspected or copied pursuant to this subsection is such as to require extensive use of information technology resources or extensive clerical or supervisory assistance by personnel of the agency involved, or both, the agency may charge, in addition to the actual cost of duplication, a special service charge, which shall be reasonable and shall be based on the cost incurred for such extensive use of information technology resources or the labor cost of the personnel providing the service that is actually incurred by the agency or attributable to the agency for the clerical and supervisory assistance required, or both.” *See also Board of County Com’rs of Highlands County v. Colby*, 976 So. 2d 31 (Fla. 2d DCA 2008) (affirming County’s handling of public records request where County’s policy defined “extensive” as over 15 minutes to locate, review for confidential information, copy and refile the requested material, and charged for such requests).

⁴ *See id.* at 37 (discussing legislature’s determination that taxpayers should not shoulder entire expense of responding to extensive requests for public records).

- If the work to fulfill the request is more extensive than initially estimated and for which payment was received, we will notify you of additional costs before performing additional work and provide you the portion of the responsive records that we were able to complete in the amount of time for which payment was received.

VI. Confidential and Exempt Information

- Responsive records must be reviewed to determine whether there is any confidential and exempt information required to be redacted under Florida law.
- Commonly applicable exemptions include, but are not limited to:
 - [§ 97.0585](#), Fla. Stat. (voter personal identification information and signature, as well as information concerning preregistered voter registration applicants and the place a voter registered to vote or updated a registration);
 - [§ 101.62\(2\)](#), Fla. Stat. (Vote By Mail request information, except when requested by statutorily authorized individuals);
 - [§ 119.071\(4\)](#), Fla. Stat. (individuals with protected addresses, birth dates and telephone numbers);
 - [§ 119.0725](#), Fla. Stat. (agency cybersecurity information and information relating to critical infrastructure); and
 - [§ 119.071\(3\)](#), Fla. Stat. (security and fire safety).
- If a record contains confidential and exempt information, that information will be redacted and the redacted record will be provided, along with a citation to the legal authority or authorities for the redaction(s).

VII. Fulfillment

- Our office regularly receives records requests and works to fulfill them at the earliest opportunity in conjunction with regular staff functions. Factors that may impact a response timeframe include the request being complex or extensive, the number of other pending requests at a point in time, and proximity to an active election.

VIII. Questions?

- Call (813) 744-5900 or email publicrecords@votehillsborough.gov