



FOIA AND OMA RESOURCES

Michigan's Freedom of Information Act:

[MCL 15.231-15.246](#)

Michigan's Open Meeting Act:

[MCL 15.261-15.275](#)

The Michigan Attorney General [website](#) includes a FOIA Pamphlet and an Open Meetings Handbook – both in pdf form.

The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press also published an [Open Government Guide](#), which is a compendium of information on every state's open records and open meetings laws. Each state's section is arranged according to a standard outline, making it easy to compare laws in various states.

For [Federal FOIA Requests](#), the Department of Justice (DoJ) maintains a website with helpful information.

The [Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press](#) also has helpful information, including sample letters and agency addresses.

SAMPLE FOIA REQUESTS

FOIA Coordinator
____ Police Department
Address

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Sir/Madam:

This is a request under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (MCLA § 15.231 et. seq.). I write to request all records, relating to any arrests, charges, prosecutions or complaints filed against [name], who has resided at: [fill in any addresses you know] from January 1, 2017 to the present.

I will pay reasonable costs for locating and reproducing the requested material. Please contact me at [phone number] if the costs for the requested material will exceed \$25.00.

You have 5 business days to respond to this request by either providing copies of the records or a detailed written explanation for any denial, including a reference to the specific statutory exemption(s) upon which you rely and the category of documents covered by the exemption. In addition, to the extent that you claim some portions of the responsive materials are exempt from disclosure, please provide all segregable non-exempt portions. Please call me at the above number if you should have any questions.

Very truly yours,

Other requested information

This is a request under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (MCLA § 15.231 et. seq.). I write to request all communications between Suzy Clerk and Johnny Commissioner beginning January 1, 2018 through January 5, 2018, relating to the January 8, 2018 board meeting.

This is a request under the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (MCLA § 15.231 et. seq.). I write to request the monthly progress reports made by the Municipal Lighting Authority of Robin City to the Robin City City Council for the last 3 months.

FAQS

WHAT IS A FOIA REQUEST?

A Freedom of Information Act request is a “written request that describes a public record sufficiently to enable the public body to find the public record.” [MCL 15.243\(1\)](#).

WHO IS SUBJECT TO FOIA AND WHERE DO I SEND A FOIA REQUEST?

There are over 10,000 public bodies in the State of Michigan subject to FOIA. The FOIA provides that a “public body” means any of the following:

- i. A state officer, employee, agency, department, division, bureau, board, commission, council, authority, or other body in the executive branch of the state government, but does not include the governor or lieutenant governor, the executive office of the governor or lieutenant governor, or employees thereof.
- ii. An agency, board, commission, or council in the legislative branch of the state government.
- iii. A county, city, township, village, inter-county, intercity, or regional governing body, council, school district, special district, or municipal corporation, or a board, department, commission, council, or agency thereof.
- iv. Any other body which is created by state or local authority or which is primarily funded by or through state or local authority.
- v. The judiciary, including the office of the county clerk and employees thereof when acting in the capacity of clerk to the circuit court, is not included in the definition of public body. [MCL 15.232\(d\)](#).

If you wish to request records held by a particular public body, your request should be sent to that specific public body.

DO I NEED A SPECIAL FORM TO MAKE A FOIA REQUEST?

The FOIA does not require a request in any specific form. It only requires a “written request,” which is defined as a “writing that asks for information, and includes a writing transmitted by facsimile, electronic mail, or other electronic means.” [MCL 15.232\(i\)](#). Further, however, the “written request” must also describe “a public record sufficiently to enable the public body to find the public record.” [MCL 15.233\(1\)](#).

HOW LONG DOES THE PUBLIC BODY HAVE TO RESPOND TO MY FOIA REQUEST?

Upon legal date of receipt of a FOIA request, the public body has five (5) business days to respond. If needed, however, the public body may also send a written notice extending the time to respond by an additional 10 business days.

CAN A PUBLIC BODY CHARGE FOR A FOIA RESPONSE AND, IF SO, HOW MUCH?

A public body may charge a fee for the cost of the search, examination, review, copying, separation of exempt from nonexempt information, and mailing costs. A fee can only be charged for the cost of search, examination, review, and the separation of exempt from nonexempt information if the failure to charge a fee for that request would result in unreasonably high costs to the public body, and the public body specifically identifies the nature of these unreasonably high costs. See [MCL 15.234](#).