



CITY OF GAHANNA

Council office - Public Records  
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## PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY

The underlying purpose of the City of Gahanna's Records Policy is to provide for full and prompt disclosure of public records and assure that City employees take all reasonable steps to promptly comply with requests for public records. It is the policy of the City of Gahanna that, as required by Ohio Law, records will be organized and maintained so they are readily available for inspection and copying. City records are maintained in accordance with the City's Record Retention Schedules which are established by the City of Gahanna Records Commission.

### Record Requests

Public records are available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records will be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records will 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; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested.

Each request will be evaluated for an estimated length of time required to gather the records. Routine requests for records will be satisfied promptly if feasible to do so. If not feasible to do so, it will be done in a reasonable period of time.

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the public office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the records custodian will contact the requester for clarification, and assist the requester in revising the request by informing the requester of the manner in which the office keeps its records.

Responses to all public records requests will be in writing. The requester does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. To deliver the best customer service, forms for public records requests allowing for the documentation of both the request and response will be provided to the customer.

All exemptions to openness are to be construed in their narrowest sense and any denial of public records in response to a valid request must be accompanied by an explanation, including legal authority, as outlined in the Ohio Revised Code.

Any denial of public records requested will include an explanation, including legal authority as required by law. If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted and the rest released. If there are redactions, each redaction will be accompanied by a written supporting explanation, including legal authority as required by law.

The City of Gahanna has no obligation to create new records or perform analysis of existing information. A request that seeks to have the City of Gahanna create new records or perform analysis of existing information may be denied.

If a requester makes an ambiguous or overly broad request, or has difficulty in making a request for copies or inspection of public records such that the City staff member responsible for the requested public record cannot reasonably identify what public records are being requested the City of Gahanna may deny the request. However, the City of Gahanna shall provide the requester with an opportunity to revise the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which records are maintained by the City in the ordinary course of business.

### E-mail & Digital Public Records

Documents in digital format are records as defined by the Ohio Revised Code when their content relates to the business of the office. E-mail is to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats and in accordance with the City of Gahanna retention schedules. Records in private e-mail accounts used to conduct public business are subject to disclosure and all City employees or representatives are instructed to retain their e-mails that relate to public business and to copy them to their business e-mail accounts and/or to the office's records custodian.

### Costs for Public Records

The copy fee schedule is approved by the City of Gahanna Records Commission in accordance with Seciton 133.08, Copy Charges, of the Codified Ordinances of the City of Gahanna.

### Failure to respond to a Records Request

The City of Gahanna recognizes the legal and non-legal consequences of failure to properly respond to a public records request. In addition to the distrust in government that failure to comply may cause, the City of Gahanna's failure to comply with a request may result in a court ordering the City of Gahanna to comply with the law and to pay the requester attorney's fees and damages.

*This Public Records Policy for the City of Gahanna was adopted by the City of Gahanna Records Commission on the 14<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2016, in accordance with the Ohio Public Records Act.*

Records Commission Chair signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Shane Ewald