



***Linda L. Fraley***

Clermont County Auditor

## **CLERMONT COUNTY AUDITOR PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY**

It is the policy of the Clermont County Auditor to strictly adhere to the state's Public Records Act. 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. If the request is in writing, the explanation must also be in writing.

### **Public records**

The Clermont County Auditor's Office, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic, or other format – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. All records of this office are public unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

It is the policy of the Clermont County Auditor's Office that, as required by Ohio law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. Record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and posted prominently.

### **Record requests**

Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

- 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 deputy auditor must contact the requester for clarification, and should assist the requestor in revising the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which the office keeps its records.
- It is the general policy of this office that all requests are in writing with the requester's identity and with the intended use of the information requested. However, you must disclose to the requester that a written request is not mandatory and that the requester may decline to reveal his identity or the intended use but a written request would benefit the requester by enhancing the ability of the office to identify, locate and deliver the public records to the requester.

- Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must 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.
- All requests should be reviewed by the Chief Deputy Auditor and evaluated for the length of time required to gather the records.
- All requests for public records must either be satisfied or be acknowledged by the office following the office’s receipt of the request. If a request is deemed significantly beyond “routine,” such as seeking a voluminous number of copies or requiring extensive research, the acknowledgement must include the following:
  - An estimated number of business days it will take to satisfy the request.
  - An estimated cost if copies are requested.
  - Any items within the request that may be exempt from disclosure.
- Any denial of public records requested must include an explanation, including legal authority. 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 must be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority.

**Costs for Public Records**

Those seeking public records will be charged only the actual cost of making copies.

Paper Copies	\$0.10 per page for black and white \$0.75 per page for color
CD-ROM	\$0.30 per CD
Standard Paper Map (36”X44”)	\$10.00
Standard Paper Map with aerial photo	\$15.00
ArcView Shapefiles (entire County)	\$25.00
Digital Aerial Photos	\$25.00
High Resolution tiff Images	\$5.00 per tile

There is no charge for documents e-mailed or downloaded from the County Auditor’s website.

Requesters may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies.

### **Failure to respond to a public records request**

The Clermont County Auditor's Office recognizes the legal and non-legal consequences of failure to properly respond to a public records request. The Clermont County Auditor's Office failure to comply with a request may result in a court ordering the Clermont County Auditor's Office to comply with the law and to pay the requester attorney's fees and damages.