

Public Records Disclosure

Washington law (Chapter 42.56 RCW) requires that identifiable public records be made available promptly to members of the public for inspection and copying upon request.

What are public records?

Public records are any records prepared, owned, used, or retained by a state or local agency that contain information about the conduct of government or the performance of its functions.

Records may be kept in handwriting, typewriting, print, photocopies, photographs, electronic media, or any other means of recording and include, but aren't limited to:

- Writing
- A recording
- A picture
- An electronic disk
- A magnetic tape
- Motion picture, film, and video recordings
- E-mail.

What is the difference between public information and public records?

While, in general, we must provide access to existing, identifiable records in our possession, we aren't required to collect information or organize data to create a record that doesn't exist at the time of the request. Be as specific as possible in your description.

Retention of records

The Board keeps records according to its record retention schedule and few records are retained longer than six years. Some older records are in the possession of the State Archives. Those records may be requested directly from the archives.

Washington State Archives
PO Box 40238
Olympia, WA 98504-0238
Phone: 360.586.1492
Fax: 360.664.8814
E-mail: research@secstate.wa.gov
Web: www.secstate.wa.gov/archives/



Exemptions to public records

Only records that are exempt by law may be withheld from disclosure. These exemptions are generally intended to prevent invasion of privacy and the use of public records for personal, commercial, or political gain. They include, but are not limited to:

- Information regarding Board personnel, such as social security numbers, home phone numbers, home addresses, résumés, and employment applications.
- Data, the disclosure or information of which if disclosed could result in private gain and/or public loss.
- Correspondence between Board staff and the Attorney General's Office for the purpose of soliciting or providing legal advice.
- Information that if released, would constitute an invasion of privacy as defined in RCW 42.56.210 & 42.56.230.

For a complete list of exemptions, see RCW 42.56.210-480

The people of this state do not yield their sovereignty to the agencies that serve them... The people insist on remaining informed so that they may maintain control over the instruments that they have created.

—RCW 42.56.030



How do I request public records?

Step 1: Complete the request

- Download the Public Records Request Form from the Board's Web site as a PDF or Word document.

OR

- You may also choose to write a letter and e-mail; fax; deliver; or mail it to the Board. Please include in your letter:
 - Date of request
 - Your Name
 - Firm/Organization
 - Address, City, State, Zip
 - Telephone Number
 - Cell Phone Number
 - Fax Number
 - Email
 - Description of the public records you are requesting that is sufficiently specific for Board staff to identify and locate the records.

The Public Records Request Form may be used but it is not required. If you choose to use the form, please download it in either PDF or Microsoft Word format to your computer, fill in the requested information and send it to the Board as described above. Note: Adobe Reader does not save data entered in a PDF form.

Step 2: Submit the request

After filling out the form or letter:

- Return it by e-mail to:
wsboh@doh.wa.gov
- OR
- Return it by mail to:
Public Disclosure Officer
WA State Board of Health
PO Box 47990
Olympia, WA 98504-7990
- OR
- Return it by fax to:
360-236-4088
Attn: Public Disclosure Officer

Step 3: Costs to review or receive documents

There is no charge to view documents at the Board's office.

The Board charges the following for copying documents:

- Copying letter- and legal-sized documents: \$0.15 per impression plus postage
- Audio tapes, video tapes, diskettes, CD/DVD based on actual cost.

The Board will calculate costs and notify you of the charge in advance.

How long will it take?

Within five business days after receiving the request, we will:

- Provide the record(s); or
- Acknowledge your request and give you a reasonable estimate of how long it will take to respond; or
- Deny the request in writing, stating the reasons for the denial (this could also include a denial of part of your request and granting the remainder). By statute, RCW 42.56.520, the Board must cite the specific exemption that applies.

If the request is not clear, we may ask you for further clarification.

Board of Health Contact:

Public Disclosure Officer
Washington State Board of Health
PO Box 47990
Olympia, WA 98504-7990
Phone: 360.236.4110
Fax: 360.236.4088
E-mail: wsboh@doh.wa.gov
Web: www.sboh.wa.gov

The Board's Mission

The Board's mission is to provide statewide leadership in developing and promoting policies that protect and improve the public's health.

This mission is achieved by:

- Reviewing and monitoring the health status of all people in Washington;
- Initiating and supporting policy development, analyzing policy proposals, providing guidance, and developing rules;
- Promoting system partnerships; and
- Fostering public participation in shaping the health system.

The Board's Vision

The Board's vision is that the health and safety of all people in Washington will improve.