

## CONTRA COSTA COUNTY

### How to Request the County's Public Records

#### Policy Regarding Access to Public Records

The California Public Records Act declares that access to information concerning the conduct of the people's business is a fundamental and necessary right of every person in the State because it gives the public an opportunity to monitor the functioning of their government. It is the County's goal to provide the public with timely access to its public records.

#### What Is a Public Record

The California Government Code defines public records as, "...any writing containing information relating to the conduct of the public's business prepared, owned, used or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristic." For example, public records can include, but are not limited to, papers, books, maps, charts, photographs, audiotapes, videotapes, and information stored on a computer.

#### What are the County's Public Records

The Public Records Act applies to the records of the County and all agencies, boards, and commissions created by the County's Board of Supervisors.

#### Who Can Request Public Records

Anyone may make a request to inspect or obtain a copy of a public record. A requester is not required to provide any personal identification or reason for the request.

#### What Can Be Requested

Generally, all County records are available to the public unless there is a statute that exempts them from disclosure. California Government Code section 6254 provides a partial list of records that may be exempt from disclosure. Some of the types of records that are potentially exempt include:

- personnel records, medical records and similar files which would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy if publicly disclosed;
- records pertaining to pending litigation to which a public agency is a party;
- preliminary drafts, notes and memoranda;
- records of complaints to or investigations conducted by a police agency;
- records covered by the attorney-client privilege;
- examination data used to administer a licensing, employment or academic examination; and
- criminal history information.

#### Where to Find or Request County Records

You can find frequently requested County records at the County's website at [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us).

You also may request records directly from the County department that has the records you are seeking. If you are not sure which department has the records you are seeking, you can use the following resources to help identify the correct department:

- **County Website:** The County's website at [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us) contains an alphabetical listing of departments with links to their website.
- **Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors:** The staff of the Office of the Board of Supervisors is familiar with the County's departments and may be able to help you identify the department that has the records you are seeking. The Office of the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors can be reached at (925) 335-1900 or you can visit the office during regular business hours at 651 Pine Street, Room 106 in Martinez.

Once you have identified the County department that you believe has the records you are seeking, you may request the records from it in the following ways:

- **By Telephone:** Each County department has a telephone number that the public can call during regular business hours to make requests or to be referred to a County employee who can help with the request.
- **By visiting the front counter of a department:** Each County department will have a staff person to assist the public with walk-in requests during regular business hours.
- **By submitting a request in writing via E-mail, U.S. Mail or Fax:** Most County department can accept requests by email, mail or fax. When submitting a request by one of these methods, provide contact information to permit staff to respond to your request.

Department telephone numbers, fax numbers and addresses are published in the Business Listings of the local telephone book and on the County's website at [www.co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://www.co.contra-costa.ca.us). Email addresses may be obtained by calling the appropriate department.

#### How to Make a Request

1. You may make an oral or written request to the appropriate County department.
2. To speed up your request, make your request as specific as possible about the records you are seeking. For example, you may want to provide a date range for your request, the department or staff that created the requested records, and/or any helpful keywords.
3. Provide contact information or arrange to call or meet with a department representative at a later time to discuss the availability of the requested records.
4. Let the County department know whether you would like to inspect the records or have copies made (which may involve a cost- see below).

#### How Your Request is Processed

Each County department will respond directly to requests it receives. If a department receives a request

for records that it does not possess, it will notify you that it has no responsive records and, if it can do so, will forward the request to departments that may possess the requested records.

#### **When You Can Expect a Response**

Upon a request for records that reasonably describes an identifiable record or records, County staff will make every reasonable effort to make the records promptly available to you upon the payment of any applicable fees. If County staff cannot respond immediately, they will tell you when you reasonably can expect a response.

#### **When Requested Records Are Ready**

After you receive a response from the County department concerning the availability of the requested records, you can arrange to inspect or have the records copied:

- **Inspection.** If you wish to inspect the records and have provided contact information, a department representative will contact you to make an appointment to inspect the records. If you have not provided the department with contact information, you will need to call or return to the department to arrange for inspection of the records.
- **Copies.** If you wish to obtain copies of records and have provided contact information, a department representative will contact you with a time and cost estimate for producing the requested records. You may make pick up the records when they become available or have them mailed to you. If you have not provided the department with contact information, you will need to call or return to the department to arrange for copying and pick up of the records.

#### **How Much Does It Cost to Obtain Public Records**

There is no charge to review records; however, County policy permits the County to charge a fee to cover any

duplication, electronic media, and/or data system programming costs. Generally, copies are:

- ◆ \$ 0.10 for a single-sided page
- ◆ \$ 0.20 for a double-sided page
- ◆ \$ 3.00 for a data compact disc

Data system programming costs related to extracting, compiling, and displaying data are dependent on the request and the system on which data is stored, and will vary on a case-by-case basis.

Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors  
651 Pine Street, Room 106  
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CONTRA COSTA COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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