

**Requesting Public Information in Texas**  
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The Public Information Act (PIA) requires government to make information public. Citizens do not need a lawyer to use it. The PIA makes information public, but there are some exceptions.

You can request documents or information from any government agency, like school districts, police departments, cities, or counties. (A PIA request, however, can only be used for Texas state government. To request information from the federal government, use the federal Freedom of Information Act.)

The government is not required to release some information. For example, a school district can only release information about a child to the child's parent. The police cannot release information about ongoing investigations. If someone has threatened to sue the government, the government may withhold information until the lawsuit is over.

Send a letter describing what you want to the agency's public information officer to request information. Check the agency's website to find who the information office is, or call the agency to ask. Make sure to get the fax number. If you cannot find the name of the officer, send the request to the head of the agency (for example, the County Sheriff). You can use the letter below as a model. Fill in the correct addresses and the information you want.

The government must respond to your request in 10 business days. Business days do not include weekends and holidays. Make sure to *fax your letter and keep the receipt*, or send the letter return receipt requested. The receipt is proof the government received the letter.

After 10 business days, the government can either produce the documents, or ask the Texas Attorney General's office to decide the information is confidential. If the government chooses to ask the Attorney General, you will get a letter explaining the process. You will be allowed to explain to the Attorney General why the information is public. The Attorney General will make a decision and either require the government to produce the documents, or allow it to withhold them.

If the government does not respond after 10 business days, the information becomes public. You can file a lawsuit to make the government respond. Before filing a lawsuit, always consult an attorney. This information is not a substitute for a lawyer's advice. The Texas Lawyer Referral Service can help you find a lawyer. 1-800-252-9690.

Your Name  
Your Address  
Your Phone Number

Month Date, Year

Office for Public Information  
AGENCY NAME  
AGENCY ADDRESS  
CITY, STREET, ZIP

Certified Mail  
Return Receipt Requested

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Re: Request for copies of Public Documents and Waiver of Fees

Dear Public Information Officer:

Pursuant to Section 552.221 of the Government Code of Texas, I respectfully request a certified copy of the following:

1. *Describe document 1.*
2. *Describe document 2.*
3. *Describe document 3.*

I make this request for nonprofit purposes and to serve the public interest. I respectfully request, pursuant to Section 552.267 of the Government Code, that fees be waived. If you choose not to waive fees and the cost of copying exceeds \$25, would you please tell me the actual costs before making the copies? Thank you.

Please contact me if there are any questions. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,