

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

### **Who do I contact to make a public records request with the Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners?**

Public records requests for Okaloosa County Board of County Commissioners are coordinated through the office of Risk Management with few exceptions. Please contact Kelly Bird at 850-689-5979 or [riskinfo@myokaloosa.com](mailto:riskinfo@myokaloosa.com) for your records requests.

### **Will the Okaloosa County BOCC assist me with public records requests to other constitutional officers such as the Sheriff, Supervisor of Elections, Tax Collector, Property Appraiser or the Clerk of Court?**

No, we are unable to do that since these officers are separate and independent by Florida Statute. If you want to make public record requests for all other constitutional officers, please contact that constitutional officer for your requests. See the county website for links to each officer.

### **What is the cost associated with a public records request?**

As per Florida Statute, local municipalities may charge for reproduction of documents. The statutory fees are as follows:

Single sheet	\$0.15 per page
Two Sided sheet	\$0.20 per page
Certified documents	\$1.00 per page
CD/DVD	\$1.00 each
Photos/Charts/Drawings/Maps	Actual cost to reproduce
Email search	\$48.00 base charge per search (depending on the extensive nature of this email search, additional costs may be charged).

### **Are there any other charges for public records requests?**

Yes. Florida Statute allows local municipalities to charge a *special service charge* for those requests that require extensive use of information technology resources or extensive clerical or supervisory assistance. Extensive clerical assistance is defined to mean when the employee spends longer than 15 minutes to research and produce your request.

### **What is the service charge based on?**

The service charge is based on the cost actually incurred for the extensive use of information technology resources and/or the hourly rate of the lowest paid county employee able to research and produce the requested documents.

### **What if I just want to view public documents without having copies made?**

Document reviews lasting less than 15 minutes are free of charge. However, the special service charge will be assessed for document reviews lasting longer than 15 minutes. Note: as Okaloosa County is the "custodian" of public documents, records reviews will not be allowed without a County employee being present.

### **Can Okaloosa County require a deposit before a public records request can be researched?**

Yes. However, deposits are usually reserved for those public records requests that by their nature are voluminous, require multiple departments and/or employees to research, or are very broad in nature. The deposit will be based on an estimate of the work/technology involved, with any overage returned back to the citizen.

**How can I ensure my public records request will be produced accurately and as expeditiously as possible and at the least cost?**

Okaloosa County strives to provide documents as expeditiously as possible and at the least cost to the requestor. Though timeliness is important, equally important is the accuracy of the response. Therefore, please keep the following things in mind when making a records request:

- Public records requests for general government do not have to be in writing. However, for a more accurate response, writing down the criteria for your request is appreciated.
- If you only want to view documents, please note this on your request.
- If you know the title(s) of the document and/or the person that created the document, then state that in your request. The more direct information, the easier it is to retrieve.
- If you don't exactly know which document(s) you are looking for, try to describe the content of the document as best you can and from which person or department the document may have originated.
- Avoid listing multiple recipients/multiple county employees in your request and avoid phrases like "any and all", "any available documents", "all pertinent documents", etc., unless that is exactly what you are requesting – any and all documents within a subject matter.\*

(\*NOTE: These types of records requests are often voluminous in nature and require multiple departments having many county staff members researching your request. You will be charged a **special service charge** reflecting the hourly rates of those county employees required to participate as authorized by Chapter 119.07(4)(d), F.S.)