



Frequently Asked Questions and Helpful Hints for Public Records Requestors

Must my request for public records be in writing?
 No, public records requests do not have to be in writing. However, a written request provides an accurate record of the request and will help eliminate miscommunications.

Will Broward County acknowledge my public records request?
 Broward County's policy is to promptly acknowledge each public records request. Your acknowledgement letter will include a request number. Please reference this number in any subsequent correspondence about your request. If you make a request and do not receive a timely acknowledgement, please contact Broward County Public Records Request Program Administration at 954-357-5955 to verify that your request was received.

Will the acknowledgement letter include a cost estimate?
 The acknowledgement letter will include a cost estimate if it is available at that time. Depending on the nature of the request, the cost estimate may take additional time to compile. If so, you will receive separate correspondence about the cost estimate. If you do not receive a timely cost estimate, please contact Broward County Public Records Request Program Administration at 954-357-5955 to inquire about your request.

What does Broward County charge for public records?
 Public records requests are subject to the following charges and fees, pursuant to Section 35.20 of the Broward County Administrative Code.

No Fee Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Duplication of first 50 pages (single or double-sided, pages no more than 8 1/2 inches by 14 inches) is free. • First 15 minutes of staff time are free.
Duplication Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copies after first 50 pages no more than 8 1/2 inches x 14 inches: \$0.15 per single-sided page and \$0.20 per double-sided page • Plats: \$5.00 per page for blueprint plats; \$7.50 per page for mylar plats. A reasonable fee will be charged for the labor and overhead associated with the duplication of all other public records in this category.
Service Fees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certifications: \$1.00 per certified copy of record. • Delivery: actual mailing, shipping, or other delivery costs. • Notarial Fee: \$10.00 per each separate notarial act. • Physical Media (USB Drive, CD-R, etc.): \$2.00 or actual cost of medium, whichever is less.
Special Service Fees (if applicable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies if extensive IT resources, clerical or supervisory assistance by County staff is required for: searching for and locating requested records; reviewing for and redacting confidential or exempt information; and/or preparing to copy, copying, and refiling requested records. If applicable, the fee charged is based on the lowest hourly rate, plus benefits within the pay range of the job classification of the person(s) performing the applicable work, and shall be charged in 15-minute increments (excluding the first 15 minutes). Requestors must be notified in advance if a Special Services Fee is applicable to their request.

Am I required to pay a deposit for a public records request?
 Yes, if the estimated cost is greater than \$20.00. The deposit must be paid before the County will process the request. If payment is not received within 30 days, the request will be administratively closed.

What types of payment are acceptable?
 Preferred method of payment is cashier's check/money order payable to Broward County. Personal or company checks will be accepted only if the check includes a pre-printed account holder name and address.

What if I pay a deposit and your research reveals no responsive records exist?

Your deposit is based on a conservative estimate for duplication fees (if any) and service fees (if any), including any Special Service Fees. The labor required to respond to the request is performed even if the work does not yield any responsive records.

Does Broward County waive charges and fees associated with the fulfillment of public records requests for an indigent requestor or when information requested is intended to be used by the requestor for a public purpose?

No. Florida law does not provide for waiver of charges and fees for fulfilling a public records request if a requestor is indigent or asserts that the information is intended to be used for a public purpose.

Does Broward County have to respond to all public record requests, no matter how broad or vaguely stated?

Broward County provides records that are not exempt or confidential in response to a public records request. If your request is vague, the County may need to contact you for clarification or additional information. If we ask you for additional information about your request so that we can identify the requested records and we do not hear from you within 30 days, the request will be administratively closed. If your request is overly broad, the costs you are required to pay may be significantly higher because of research time and the large volume of potentially responsive records that must be reviewed and redacted. The County may offer you an opportunity to narrow your request to reduce the cost to you. It is a good idea to be as specific and precise as you can when making a public records request. Please include keywords or date ranges when making a request. Keywords and date ranges are strongly recommended for email extractions.

What records are exempt?

Some records are considered exempt and/or confidential under Florida law and therefore, not subject to disclosure in response to a public records request. Some commonly cited exemptions include active criminal intelligence information, active criminal investigative information, and security system plans.

Can Broward County give me legal advice?

Broward County cannot provide a public records requestor with legal advice. If you have questions concerning your legal rights or the laws of Florida, you should consult with an attorney.

How long will my request take?

Each request is unique. Some can be fulfilled almost immediately, and others require time to research. Public records law requires the County to respond within a "reasonable" timeframe. If extensive review and redaction of records is required, your request may take longer to fulfill. Once a cost estimate is issued, the payment is due within 30 days. If the County does not receive payment within 30 days, your request will be administratively closed.

Helpful Reminders

- A public records request applies to the County's existing records. New records will not be created in response to a public records request.
- Exemptions are applied at the time a public records request is received. A request for exempt records will not remain open until the records are no longer exempt.
- The County is not required to provide records in a specific format. A Special Service Fee may apply for records requested to be provided in a format not routinely used by the County.
- Responsive, non-exempt records will only be provided after payment of all applicable fees.
- The County is not required to explain records or answer questions about the content of records.
- The County is not required to process a "standing" public records request (e.g. a continuing request to provide minutes of a monthly meeting).
- The County is not required to proceed on new requests from the same requestor until balances due on open requests are either paid, or the request has been administratively closed.

Broward.org/OpenGovernment

500 copies of this public document were promulgated at a cost of \$220 or \$0.44 per copy, to provide the public with information about Public Records Requests.