



PUBLIC SUMMARY OF FOIA PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

*Michigan Freedom of Information Act, Public Act
442 of 1976, MCL 15.231, et seq.*

Introduction -

It is the public policy of this state that all persons (except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities) are entitled to full and complete information regarding affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees. The people shall be informed so that they may full participate in the democratic process.

Consistent with the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Public Act 442 of 1976, the following is the written Public Summary of the District Health Department #10 (DHD#10)'s FOIA Procedure and Guidelines are available at no charge at any agency office and on the agency's website: dhd10.org.

1. How do I submit a FOIA request to DHD#10?

- A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable the agency to find it.
- Please include the words "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the request to assist the agency in providing a prompt response.
- Requests to inspect or obtain copies of the public records prepared, owned, used, possessed, or retained by DHD#10 may be submitted on DHD#10's FOIA Request Form, in any other form of writing (letter, fax, email, etc.).
 - No specific form of submitting a written request is required. However, a FOIA Request Form and other FOIA – related forms are available for your use and convenience on DHD #10's website at dhd10.org, and at any DHD #10's office.
 - The request must include:
 - First and Last Name
 - Mailing address
 - Phone number or email address
 - Sufficiently describe the public record, for agency personnel to identify and located the record.
- Electronic Requests may be submitted through
 - Request Portal dhd10-mi.nextrequest.com
 - Emailed to foia@dhd10.org
 - Faxed: 231-775-5372
- Written Requests
 - Mailed:
District Health Department #10
Attn: FOIA Coordinator
521 Cobb St.
Cadillac, MI 49601
 - In person to any of the DHD#10 offices

2. What kind of response can I expect to my request?

- Notice of receipt of request and due date of response.
- Within five (5) business days after DHD #10 received your request will issue a response. If the response is received electronically (fax or email), the request is deemed to have been received the following business day. The County will respond to your request in one of the following ways:
 - Grant the request, with cost or no cost
 - Deny the request in-part, with cost or no cost
 - Deny the request,
 - Denial in-part/denial exemptions under FOIA can be found at:
<https://www.legislature.mi.gov/Laws/MCL?objectName=MCL-15-243>
 - Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the agency needs and additional ten (10) business days to respond, or
 - Issue notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on DHD#10's website.
- If the request is granted, or granted in-part, with cost. DHD#10 will ask that payment be made for the allowable fees associated with the responding request before the public record is made available.
- If the cost of processing the request is expected to exceed \$50, or if you have not paid for a previously granted request, DHD #10 will require a deposit before processing the request.
- If a request does not sufficiently describe a public record, the FOIA Coordinator may, in lieu of issuing a Notice of Denial indicating that the request is deficient, seek clarification or amendment of the request by the person making the request.
 - Any clarification or amendment will be considered a new request that will begin a new five-day response period.

3. What are DHD#10's deposit requirements?

- If DHD#10 has made a good faith calculation that the total fee for processing the request will exceed \$50.00, DHD#10 will require that you provide a deposit in the amount of 50% of the total estimated fee. When DHD#10 requests the deposit, it will provide you a non-binding best efforts estimate of how long it will take to process the request after you have paid your deposit.
- If DHD #10 receives a request from a person who has not paid DHD#10 for copies of a previously granted and fulfilled request, DHD#10 will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before it begins to search for the public record for any subsequent request when all of the following conditions exist:
 - The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;
 - The public records made available contained information sought in the prior written request and remain in DHD#10's possession.
 - The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the best effort time frame estimated by DHD#10 to provide the records.
 - Ninety (90) days have passed since DHD#10 notified the individual that the public records were available.
 - The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to DHD#10; and

- DHD#10 has calculated an estimated detailed itemization that is the basis for the current request's increased fee deposit.
- DHD#10 will not require the 100% estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:
 - The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full in DHD#10;
 - DHD#10 is subsequently paid in full for all applicable prior requests; or
 - Three Hundred Sixty-five (365) days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to DHD#10.

4. How does DHD#10 calculate FOIA processing fees?

The Michigan FOIA statute permits DHD#10 to charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:

- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to non-paper physical media or through the Internet.
- Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to DHD#10.
- Labor costs associated with review of a record to separate and redact information exempt from disclosure, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to DHD#10.
- The cost of copying or duplication, not including labor, of paper copies of public records. This may include the cost for copies of records already on DHD#10's website if you ask for DHD#10 to make copies.
- The cost of computer discs, computer tapes, or other digital media or similar media when the requestor asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include the cost for copies of records already on DHD#10's website if you ask for DHD#10 to make copies.
- The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor.

Labor Costs

- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments, with all partial time increments rounded down. If the time involved is less than 15 minutes, there will be no charge.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid DHD#10 employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually preforms the work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits. DHD#10 may add up to 50% to the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits, but in no case may it exceed the actual cost of fringe benefits.
- Overtime wages will not be included in labor costs unless agreed to by the requestor; overtime costs will not be used to calculate the fringe benefit cost.
- Contracted labor costs will be charged at the rate of \$74.88 (6 times the state minimum hourly wage - \$12.48 (2025))
- A labor cost will not be charged for the search, examination, review, and redaction and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would

result in a unreasonable high cost to DHD#10. Costs are unreasonably high when they are excessive and beyond the normal usual amount for those services compared to DHD#10's usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in the particular instance. DHD#10 must specifically identify the nature of the unreasonably high costs in writing.

Copying and Duplication

DHD#10 must use the most economical method for making copies of public records, including using double-sided printing, if cost-saving and available.

Non-paper Copies on Physical Media

- The cost for records provided on non-paper physical media, such as computer discs, computer tapes, or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media.'
- This cost will be charged only if DHD#10 has the technology capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-paper physical media format.

Paper Copies

- Paper copies of public records made on the standard letter (8 ½ x 11) or legal (8 ½ x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$0.10 per sheet of paper.
- Copies for non-standard sized sheet will reflect the actual cost of reproduction.

Mailing Costs

- The cost to mail public records will use a reasonably economical and justified means.
- DHD#10 may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- No cost will be made for expedited shipping or insurance unless the requestor requests it.

Waiver of Fees

- The cost of the search for and copying of a public record may be waived or reduced if in the sole judgement of the FOIA Coordinator a waiver or reduced fee is in the public's interest because it can be considered as primarily benefitting the general public.
- The Health Officer and Board of Health may identify specific records or types of records it deems should be made available for no charge or at a reduced cost.

5. How do I qualify for an indigence discount on fees?

DHD#10 will discount the first \$20 of fees for a request if the requestor submits an affidavit stating that they are:

- Indigent and receiving specific public assistance; or
- If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence.

You are not eligible to receive the \$20.00 discount if you:

- Have previously received discounted copies of public records from DHD#10 twice during the calendar year; or
- Are requesting information on behalf of other persons who are offering or providing payment to you to make the request.

An affidavit is a sworn statement. For your convenience, DHD#10 has provided an Affidavit of Indigence for the waiver of FOIA fees, which is available on DHD#10's website: dhd10.org.

6. May a nonprofit organization receive a discount on fees?

A nonprofit organization advocating for the developmentally disabled or mentally ill individuals that is formally designated by the state to carry activities under subtitle C of the federal developmental disabilities assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, may receive a \$20.00 discount if the request meets all of the following requirements in the Act:

- Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
- Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330. 1931.
- Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

7. How may I challenge the denial of a public record or an excessive fee?

Appeal of a Denial of Public Record

If you believe that all or portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, you may appeal to the Health Officer by filing a written appeal of the denial with the office of the Health Officer.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal", and identify the reason(s) you are seeking a reversal of the denial.

The Health Officer is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Board of Health meeting following the submission of the written appeal. Within ten (10) business days of receiving the appeal the Health Officer will respond in writing by:

- Reversing the disclosure denial; or
- Upholding the disclosure denial; or
- Reverse the disclosure denial in-part and uphold the disclosure denial in-part.

Whether or not you submitted an appeal of denial to the Health Officer, you may file a civil action in the County's Circuit Court within 180 days after the County's final determination to deny your request. If you prevail in the civil action the court will award you reasonable attorneys' fees, costs, and disbursements. If the court determines that the Health Officer acted arbitrarily and capriciously in refusing to disclose or provide a public record, the court shall award you damages in the amount of \$1,000.

District Health Department #10's appeal form can be found on the website dhd10.org, under forms.

8. Appeal of an Excess FOIA Processing Fee

If you believe that the fee charged by DHD#10 to process your FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law, you must first appeal to the Health Officer by filing a written appeal for a fee reduction to the office of the Health Officer.

The word appeal must be specifically state the word “appeal” and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted.

The Health Officer is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Board of Health meeting following submission of the written appeal. Within ten (10) business days after receiving the appeal, the Health Officer will respond in writing by:

- Waiving the fee; or
- Reducing the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee; or
- Upholding the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or
- Issuing a notice detailing the reason(s) for extending for not more than ten (10) business days the period during which the Health Officer will respond to the written appeal.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Health Officer’s determination of the processing fee appeal, you may commence a civil action in the County Circuit Court for a fee reduction. If you prevail in the civil action by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may award all or appropriate amount of reasonable attorneys’ fees, costs, and disbursements. If the court determines that DHD #10 acted arbitrarily and capriciously by charging an excessive fee, court may also award you punitive damages in the amount of \$500.

District Health Department #10’s appeal form can be found on the website dhd10.org, under forms.