

Public Records Request Policy

For County Officials Association of Tennessee

Effective Date: August 26, 2026 **Adopted by:** Board of Directors

Purpose and Policy

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(g), this Public Records Request Policy is adopted to provide economical and efficient access to public records of [County Officials Association of Tennessee] under the Tennessee Public Records Act (“TPRA”), Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-501 et seq. Public records are presumed open for inspection by Tennessee citizens during regular business hours unless otherwise provided by law. Personnel shall provide timely and efficient access and assistance, while protecting confidential information, maintaining record integrity, ensuring orderly operations, and ensuring employee and public safety. No provision of this Policy shall be used to hinder access to open public records.

Concerns regarding this Policy should first be directed to the Public Records Request Coordinator (“PRRC”). A request under the TPRA is a request for existing records; it does not require the Association to answer questions, create a new record, or compile information into a format not already maintained.

1. Definitions

- **Public Records:** Documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, electronic files and output, films, sound recordings, and other material, regardless of form, made or received pursuant to law or in connection with the transaction of official business by a governmental association.
- **Records Custodian:** The office, official, or employee lawfully responsible for the direct custody and care of a public record.
- **Public Records Request Coordinator (PRRC):** The individual designated to route requests to the appropriate Records Custodian and help ensure responses comply with the TPRA and this Policy.
- **Requestor:** A person seeking inspection or copies of public records.
- **Business Day:** A day the Association’s administrative offices are open for business, excluding weekends and legal holidays.

2. Public Records Request Coordinator (PRCC)

Name/Title: Ben Rodgers, Executive Director

Mail/Delivery Address: P.O. Box 934, Cookeville, Tennessee 38503

Email: ben@tncountyofficials.com

Telephone: 931-510-6902

Regular Business Hours: Monday – Friday, 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM

The PRRC shall review requests, assist requestors in identifying records, route requests to the appropriate Records Custodian, communicate with requestors regarding status and costs, maintain documentation as appropriate, and help ensure consistent application of this Policy.

3. Requesting Access to Public Records

1. Requests should be directed to the PRRC using the contact information above so they can be routed promptly.
2. A request must describe the records with sufficient specificity to enable identification. The PRRC may contact the requestor to clarify or narrow a request that is unclear or overly broad.
3. Requests to inspect records may be made orally or in writing. The Association may require a written request when permitted by law.
4. Requests for copies shall be made in writing, including by the Association's request form, email, mail, or hand delivery. A requestor is not required to have advance knowledge of the specific office maintaining a record.
5. Requests must be made by or on behalf of a Tennessee citizen. The Association may require reasonable proof of Tennessee citizenship consistent with law. Any identification information collected shall be safeguarded and used only as permitted by law.
6. Failure to provide contact information may prevent clarification, cost notice, or delivery.

4. Responding to Public Records Requests

Upon receiving a request, the PRRC shall promptly route it to the appropriate Records Custodian. If practicable, the Association shall make responsive, non-exempt records available promptly. If the request cannot be fulfilled promptly, the Association shall, within seven business days after receipt, provide access or copies, deny the request in writing with the legal basis, or provide a written response identifying the time reasonably necessary to produce the records or information.

- The Association is not required to create a record that does not exist or to recreate a record not maintained in the ordinary course of business.
- If the Association is not the custodian of the requested records, it shall notify the requestor. When known, it may identify the governmental association likely to maintain them.

- Requests shall be handled in a reasonably consistent manner. Large, complex, or multiple requests may be produced in installments.
- A request may be denied if the requestor is not entitled to access under the TPRA, the request does not sufficiently identify specific records after a reasonable opportunity to clarify, no responsive records exist, or the records are confidential or otherwise exempt from disclosure.
- The PRRC or Records Custodian shall provide an appropriate written response documenting fulfillment, denial, needed clarification, estimated completion, or costs.

5. Confidential Records and Redaction

Records or portions of records made confidential or exempt by state or federal law shall not be disclosed. When a record contains both public and confidential information, the Records Custodian shall redact the confidential information and provide the remainder when reasonably practicable. The response shall identify the legal basis for a denial or redaction unless prohibited by law. The Records Custodian shall use a method that prevents recovery of redacted content and, when appropriate, retain a copy showing what was withheld.

6. Inspection of Records

- Inspection shall occur during regular business hours at a mutually agreed time and location under reasonable supervision.
- There is no charge solely to inspect records unless a charge is specifically authorized by law. The requestor may take notes and, where permitted without disrupting operations or risking record integrity, may use personal equipment to make copies.
- The Association may establish reasonable rules to protect records from loss, alteration, damage, or disorganization and to avoid unreasonable disruption of essential functions.
- If records require redaction or segregation before inspection, the Association may take the time reasonably necessary to prepare them and may assess charges only as authorized by law and this Policy.

7. Copies, Fees, Billing, and Payment

The Association shall assess charges for copies in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-506, any other applicable law, and the most current Schedule of Reasonable Charges issued by the Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel, unless the governing authority has lawfully adopted a different schedule. Charges shall not exceed actual or reasonably calculated costs permitted by law.

Fee Schedule

Item	Charge
Standard black-and-white copies	\$0.15 per page per copy
Standard color copies	\$0.50 per page per copy
Oversized, specialized, or outsourced copies	Actual cost or amount authorized by law
Electronic media	Actual cost of media
Postage, shipping, or delivery	Actual cost
Labor	Hourly wage of the employee fulfilling the request

- Before incurring substantial costs, the Association shall provide an itemized estimate when practicable. The requester may narrow the request to reduce charges.
- Payment may be required before copies are made or delivered. Unless otherwise approved, payment shall be made by check or money order to the Association.
- The Association may waive or reduce charges when authorized by law and in accordance with its adopted policy, including when the administrative costs of collection exceed the amount due. Any waiver shall be applied consistently and documented.
- For frequent or multiple requests, the Association may aggregate requests and impose charges only as permitted by Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-506 and applicable OORC guidance.
- If a requestor fails to retrieve or pay for prepared records, the Association may require payment of outstanding lawful charges before processing a later request, as permitted by law.

8. Format and Delivery

Records shall be provided in the format in which they are maintained when practicable. The Association is not required to convert records to a requested format if conversion is not reasonably practicable. Copies may be made available for pickup, sent electronically, or mailed or otherwise delivered after payment of applicable charges. Electronic delivery shall use reasonable security measures where records contain sensitive information.

9. Records Management and Documentation

Public records shall be maintained and disposed of in accordance with applicable records-retention schedules and law. The Association shall not destroy, alter, conceal, or otherwise impair access to records responsive to a pending request. The PRRC shall maintain request and response documentation in accordance with the applicable retention schedule.

10. Review, Training, and Publication

The Association shall make this Policy available for inspection and duplication and, if it maintains a public website, post the Policy and current PRRC contact information there. Relevant personnel shall receive training on the TPRA, confidentiality, redaction, retention, and this Policy. The PRRC shall review the Policy periodically and recommend updates when laws, OORC guidance, contact information, fees, or operations change.

11. Severability and Controlling Law

If any provision of this Policy conflicts with applicable law, the law controls, and the remaining provisions remain effective. Nothing in this Policy expands or limits access beyond what the TPRA or other applicable law requires.

Adoption

Adopted by the County Officials Association of Tennessee on August 26, 2026.

Ms. Debbie Tittle, Board of Directors President

Date