



## THE OHIO PUBLIC RECORDS ACT

The Ohio Public Records Act is based on the idea that a working democracy can only be accomplished if citizens are able to oversee their government's operations. Therefore, the law allows anyone to request access to public records.

Under the Ohio Public Records Act, a public record is any item kept by a public office that:

- (1) is stored on a fixed medium
  - (2) is created, received, or sent under the jurisdiction of a public office,
- and*
- (3) documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office.

The City of Cincinnati is committed to upholding both the letter and spirit of the Ohio Public Records Act. Therefore, the City will take the following actions:

- Adopt and post a public records policy.
- Organize and maintain its records in a way that allows access and inspection by the public.
- Maintain a copy of its records retention schedule at a location easily accessible to the public.

### **How do you request access to public records?**

- You may contact any City Department or the City Manager's Office to make your request.
- You may be asked to put your request in writing. The City will not require a written request; however, submitting the request in writing allows the City to better track the request.
- You must identify the records sought in a manner that allows the City to determine what is being requested. If your request is too broad, or the records are not kept in the manner they are requested, you may be asked to narrow the scope of your request

### **What can you expect in response to a public records request?**

As required by the Ohio Public Records Act, the City will:

- Provide prompt inspection of public records.
- Provide copies of records within a reasonable time. There is no set time limit for responding to a request. Instead, the appropriate time frame is determined based on the circumstances in each individual case, allowing time for legal review, if necessary.

- Charge for copies at a rate that does not exceed its actual copy costs.
- Mail records if requested (the office may charge the actual costs for postage and mailing supplies.)
- Certain records are exempted from the definition of a public record. The City will provide an explanation of any information redacted or withheld under the Public Records Act.