

**Trinity County
Appraisal District**

PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUEST PROCEDURES

Texas Government Code, Chapter 552, gives the general public the right to access government records; and an officer for public information and the officer's agent may not ask why you want them. All government information is presumed to be available to the public. Certain exceptions may apply to the disclosure of the information. Governmental bodies shall promptly release requested information that is not confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision, or information for which an exception to disclosure has not been sought.

Procedures to Obtain Information

1. Submit a request by mail, fax, e-mail or in person.
2. Include enough description and detail about the information requested to enable the governmental body to accurately identify and locate the information requested.
3. Cooperate with the governmental body's reasonable efforts to clarify the type or amount of information requested.

Information to be Released

You may review it promptly, and if it cannot be produced within 10 working days the public information officer will notify you in writing of the reasonable date and time when it will be available to pick up copies.

Cost of Records

You must respond to any written estimate of charges within 10 days of the date the governmental body sent it or the request is considered automatically withdrawn. If estimated costs exceed \$50.00, the governmental body may require a deposit. You may ask the governmental body to determine whether providing the information primarily benefits the general public, resulting in a waiver or reduction of charges. You must make a timely payment for all mutually agreed charges. A governmental body can demand payment of overdue balances exceeding \$50.00, or obtain a security deposit, before processing additional requests from you.

Information that may be withheld due to an exception

By the 10th business day after a governmental body receives your written request, they must:

1. Request an Attorney General opinion and state which exceptions apply;
2. Notify the requestor of the referral to the Attorney General; and
3. Notify third parties if the request involves their proprietary information.

Failure to request an Attorney General opinion and notify the requestor within 10 business days will result in a presumption that the information is open unless there is a compelling reason to withhold it. The Attorney General must issue a decision no later than the 45th working day from the day after the attorney general received the request for a decision. The attorney general may request an additional 10 working day extension. Governmental bodies may not ask the Attorney General to "reconsider" an opinion.

Internal Procedures

I. RECEIPT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUEST (PIAR)

- a. A PIAR received in person to the TCAD it is date stamped and transported from our Groveton office to our Trinity office where the System Administrator processes the request.
- b. Received through US Postal delivery/other delivery service: A PIAR received through a mail delivery service is date stamped with the current date received
- c. Received through PIAR email address or fax: When a request is received through the PIAR email account it is printed and processed.

II. PROCESSING

- a. Once a PIAR is received, the System Administrator signs off that the request is processed and files in the completed Open records request folder by date order.

III. RESPONSE

- a. Upon request from the requestor to pick up the responsive documents, System Administrator will notify the requestor when the documents are processed, available for pickup at either office or the cost associated with the request at the time of pickup if not already paid. Requestor can email regarding the pickup date.
- b. If requestor wants documents mailed, a copy of the request made and responsive documents are placed in an envelope in the outgoing mail for pickup by TCAD personnel for postal delivery or placed in Customer Service for pick up.
- c. Payments will be received by Bookkeeping and a copy made for the documentation.

IV. REQUESTING EXTENSION OF REQUESTS

- a. If an extension is requested, the appropriate requestor is consulted regarding the estimate for the date the documents will become available. Upon completion of the documents, an estimate for charges will be sent notifying the requestor that the documents are available and processed.