

The Texas Public Information Act gives the public the right to request access to government information.

### **Request for Public Information**

While there is no strict form required to request public information, there are certain guidelines that must be met. The following guidelines are to help you make a successful Public Information Act request.

1. Your request must be in writing. Only written requests trigger the city's obligations under the Public Information Act.
2. Your request should be for documents or other information that is already in existence. The City of Alice is not required to answer questions, perform legal research, or comply with a continuing request to supply information.
3. We recommend that all requests be sent by U.S. mail or email.
4. We recommend that all requests be addressed to the City Clerk.

The City of Alice will promptly produce public information in response to your request if such information exists. The City of Alice may take a reasonable amount of time (within ten days) to produce the information, which varies depending on the facts in each case. The amount of information you request is highly relevant to what makes for a reasonable response time.

The Public Information Act prohibits the City of Alice from asking you why you want the information you have requested. We may, however, ask you to clarify your request if we are uncertain as to what you want, and we may discuss with you how the scope of your request may be narrowed if you have requested a large amount of information.

If the City of Alice wishes to withhold information from you, we will seek an attorney general decision within ten business days of its receipt of your request and state the exceptions to disclosure that we believe are applicable. We will also send you a copy of our letter to the attorney general requesting a decision within ten business days. If we do not notify you of our request for an attorney general decision, the information you requested is generally presumed to be open to the public. Within fifteen business days of receiving your request, we will send the attorney general our arguments for withholding the information you requested and copies of the information you have requested. You are entitled to receive this notice; however, if the letter to the attorney general contains the substance of the information requested, you may receive a redacted copy of the letter.

### **Information not created by the City of Alice**

If you have requested information from the city, and the information requested implicates a third party's interests, that third party may send a letter or brief to the attorney general stating why its information that is held by us should be withheld. This situation may occur, for example, in instances where a requestor has asked us for a copy of a proposal that a certain individual or business has submitted to the city. In such an instance, you should receive a copy of that third party's letter to the attorney general, however, if the letter to the attorney general contains the

substance of the information you requested, you may receive a redacted copy. If you have questions about a decision you have received, you may call the Open Government Hotline toll free at (877) 673-6839 (877-OPENTEX). If you have questions about charges for the information you have requested, contact the Texas Building and Procurement Commission at (512) 475-2497.

### **Judicial Records**

The Public Information Act does not govern records maintained by the judiciary. However, there are other laws that do govern the release of information maintained by the judiciary. For more information, you may contact the State Office of Court Administration, P.O. Box 12066, Austin, Texas 78711; phone (512) 463-1625.

### **Freedom of Information Act**

The Texas Public Information Act does not apply to the federal government or to any of its departments or agencies. If you are seeking information from the federal government, the appropriate law is the federal Freedom of Information Act ("FOIA"). That law's rules and procedures are different from those of the Public Information Act.

### **Request Documents from the City of Alice**

If you would like to view or obtain copies of our records, please send a written request by mail, fax or e-mail to the following:

Odilia Rodriguez  
City Clerk  
City of Alice  
Post Office Box 3229  
Alice, Texas 78333  
Fax: 361.668.4353  
Email: [CityClerk@CityofAlice.org](mailto:CityClerk@CityofAlice.org)

Clearly label your correspondence as a "Public Information Request". Please include enough description and detail about the information requested to enable the City's personnel to accurately identify and locate the information requested; and cooperate with the governmental body's reasonable efforts to clarify the type or amount of information requested. Keep all appointments to inspect records and to pick up copies. Failure to keep appointments may result in losing the opportunity to inspect information at the time requested. Directing your request to any other department or division within the City of Alice will only delay your request. Written requests will be responded to in the order received.

### **Cost of Copies**

You must respond to any written estimate of charges within 10 business days of the date we send it or the request is considered to be automatically withdrawn. If estimated costs exceed \$100.00

we may require a bond, prepayment or deposit. You may ask the City of Alice to determine whether providing the information primarily benefits the general public, resulting in a waiver or reduction of charges. We ask that you make timely payment for all mutually agreed charges. We can demand payment of overdue balances exceeding \$100.00, or obtain a security deposit, before processing additional requests from you. Examples of our standard charges are:

1) Standard paper copy - \$.10 per page; 2) Nonstandard-size copy; 2) Diskette - \$1.00; 3) Rewritable CD (CD-RW) - \$1.00; 4) Non-rewritable CD (CD-R) - \$1.00; 5) Digital video disc (DVD) - \$3.00; 6) VHS video cassette - \$2.50; 7) Audio cassette - \$1.00; 8) Oversize paper copy (e.g.: 11 inches by 17 inches, greenbar, bluebar, not including maps and photographs using specialty paper) - \$.50; 9) Magnetic tape, Data cartridge, Tape cartridge, JAZ drive and other electronic media at actual cost; and 10) Specialty paper (e.g.: Mylar, blueprint, blueline, map, photographic) at actual cost. (Reference: Text of Cost Regulations Promulgated by the Office of the Attorney General 2010 Public Information Handbook • Office of the Attorney General.)