

TITLE: Public Records Requests

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines and establish office procedures for responding to requests for public records. This policy applies to all City employees.

II. POLICY STATEMENT

All records received or created by City of Avondale employees are presumed to be public records unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under Arizona law. The City Clerk's Office is responsible for responding to public records requests.

III. POLICY PROVISIONS

- A. Pursuant to ARS §39-121 public records are to be made available for inspection during the City of Avondale's regular business hours, with the exception of city observed holidays.
- B. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time taking into account the volume and availability of the information and the necessity for redaction of content exempt from disclosure.
- C. All requests for information will be responded to by producing the requested documents, by producing redacted documents, or by notification to the requestor of why the information was not provided.
- D. The City Attorney is responsible for determining if a document maybe withheld from disclosure.
- E. Although the requestor may request a certain format for documents to be provided for inspection or copying, the City is not required to create a new public record, transform the requested documents into a format that is different than the requested public record, create new records or perform a new analysis of existing information.
- F. To maintain the integrity of all public records while ensuring public access to records, it is the City Clerk Department's policy to have a city employee accompany customers who request to inspect public records.
 - 1. The city employee will remain with the customer for the duration of his/her inspection of the public records.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. Anyone wishing to request public records must fill out the records request form indicating who is requesting the information and providing a clear description of the records being sought.
 - 1. Requests for electronic data should include a list of the terms to be used in the search as well as a timeframe. If search criteria brings up more than 10,000 hits, City Clerks staff will ask for more search criteria to narrow the scope of the request.
 - 2. In order to ease production of requested documents, requestors are asked to limit their requests to one item per form, but may submit multiple forms at the same time.
 - 3. The requestor must identify the records with sufficient clarity to allow the city to identify, retrieve, and review the records.
 - a. If the request is unclear, the City Clerk's Department will contact the requestor for clarification.
 - 4. Effective March 20, 2014 the City Clerk's Department will return requests that are not submitted as described in this policy to the requester with notations as to the necessary changes.
- B. Each request will be evaluated to determine the length of time that will be required to respond to the request.
 - 1. Routine requests should be satisfied within 72 hours of receipt.
 - 2. For requests requiring more time to complete, the requester will be notified of the estimated review time.
- C. Individuals requesting public records will only be charged for the actual cost for reproducing the documents. The fees assessed by the city for reproduction are determined by the city council as part of the city's annual budget or by separate resolution.

V. APPROVAL



David Fitzhugh, Acting City Manager

March 19, 2014

Date of City Manager's Approval