

# **Granville Township, Licking County, Ohio**

## **PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY**

### **Public Records**

The Board of Granville Township Trustees has established a public records policy. This public records policy establishes procedures that will be utilized by the Township for responding to requests for public records. This policy supersedes any and all previous records request policies.

### **Mission Statement**

It is the policy of the Township to serve the interests of the people, and as such it is the mission and intent of the Township at all times to fully comply with Ohio's Public Records Act.

### **Defining Public Records**

All public records of the Township are available for public inspection and copying, unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure. See Section 149.43(A) of the Ohio Revised Code. Public records are defined to include the following: Any document – paper, electronic, or other format that:

- 1) is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of the Township, or
- 2) that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the Township.

### **How to Make a Request**

In order to be fiscally responsible and best serve its residents, the Township does not employ full or part-time administrative staff that would be available during normal business hours to personally accept a request for public records, nor does the Township centrally locate its records. Therefore, to enable the requestor to promptly inspect and copy public records, requests for public records may be made in any of the following ways:

- 1) By telephone (Monday – Saturday 8:00AM until 4:30PM) at 740-587-3885
- 2) By e-mail (24 hours/day) at [BusinessOffice@GranvilleTownship.org](mailto:BusinessOffice@GranvilleTownship.org)
- 3) By toll-free facsimile (Monday – Saturday 8:00AM until 4:30PM) at 866-910-9601
- 4) By regular mail at P.O. Box 315, Granville OH 43023-0315
- 5) In-person at any regularly scheduled meeting of the Township Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees typically meets on the second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 7:00 P.M., with the meeting schedule being approved at the first meeting in January each year.

(See [www.granilletownship.org](http://www.granilletownship.org) )

To ensure a response, please call 740-587-3885 (Monday – Saturday 8:00AM to 4:30PM) and advise the Township that you have submitted a request by e-mail, facsimile or regular mail.

If specifically requested, within one (1) business day of receipt, the Township will acknowledge the request, provide an estimated response time, and if applicable, clarify the content of what has been requested and make the requestor aware of any potential issues that may arise in responding to the request.

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the Township to identify, retrieve, and provide the records sought. If it is not clear what records are being sought or the request is overly broad, the Township will attempt to contact the requester for clarification, and will attempt to assist the requester in revising the request.

While the requester is not required to provide the Township with a written request, his or her identity, or the intended use of the requested public records; providing such information may enhance the Township's ability to respond to the request in a more efficient and effective manner.

### **Processing Requests**

All requests should be submitted to the Fiscal Officer who will log in the request and determine the best person to search for and produce the requested documents. That person could be a township employee or Trustee.

The Fiscal Officer will also notify the Trustee who is responsible for oversight of the area for which the requested documents concern. Once the requested document(s) are located the responsible Trustee will review the requested documents to ensure that documents do not contain information exempted or protected as set out in Ohio Revised Code Section 149.43 and inadvertently released. Document requests that are routinely received by township departments (e.g. accident reports) can be directly processed by the receiving office without having to follow the above procedure.

Public records must be made available for prompt inspection. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. "Prompt" and "reasonable" take into account the volume of records requested; the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested. Each request will be evaluated by the Township to determine the estimated length of time required to gather the records and if possible, this information will be provided to the requestor.

In processing the request, the Township is not required to create new records or perform new analysis of existing records or information. An electronic record is deemed to exist so long as the existing Township computer system is programmed to produce the record through a simple search, sort or filter of information.

In processing a request for a public record, a Township employee or designated representative shall take all steps necessary to ensure original records will not be taken, altered or otherwise destroyed.

If the Township believes a request is for records that may be exempt or prohibited from disclosure, or if the request presents a unique issue or concern, the Township will contact the Licking County Prosecutor's Office/Civil Division to assist in processing the request.

### **Costs and Transmittal**

Those seeking public records shall be charged the actual cost of making copies and any postage and mailing supplies in transmitting the records as follows:

- The charge for paper copies (standard size, black & white, single-sided) shall be 10 cents per page. The Township shall provide all requested documents in paper copy form, unless another form is reasonably available and specifically requested.
- The charge for downloaded computer files to a compact disc (if available) shall be \$1.00 per disc.
- All actual charges associated with outside vendor duplication of black and white copies, color photographs, large maps and other non-standard sized documents.

- If an email address is provided, there shall be no charge for documents that are e-mailed (if possible) to the requestor. There will be no charge for documents that are transmitted to a local telephone exchange via facsimile (if possible).
- If the documents are to be mailed, the projected cost of the postage and mailing supplies shall be charged.

The Township may require payment of the above-noted charges prior to the release of the requested records. The Township reserves the right to waive these charges in its sole discretion.

**Denial of a Request**

Any denial of public records requested shall include an explanation, including legal authority. If the initial request was made in writing or if the Township has the necessary contact information, an explanation of denial will be provided in writing.

If portions of a record are public and portions are exempt, the exempt portions are to be redacted; however, the remainder of the record will be released. All redactions shall be plainly visible and will be accompanied by a supporting explanation, including legal authority.

If a requestor believes that the Township has denied him or her access to public records within a reasonable period of time, the requestor may contact the Licking County Prosecutor's Office/Civil Division to assist them in processing the request.