

Texas Government Code, Chapter 552, gives you 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.

For more information and details, please see our [TPIA FAQ page](#)

Rights of Requestors

You have the right to:

- Prompt access to information that is not confidential or otherwise protected;
- Receive treatment equal to all other requestors, including accommodation in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requirements;
- Receive certain kinds of information without exceptions, like the voting record of public officials, and other information;
- Receive a written statement of estimated charges, when charges will exceed \$40, in advance of work being started and opportunity to modify the request in response to the itemized statement;
- Choose whether to inspect the requested information (most often at no charge), receive copies of the information or both;
- A waiver or reduction of charges if the governmental body determines that access to the information primarily benefits the general public;
- Receive a copy of the communication from the governmental body asking the Office of the Attorney General for a ruling on whether the information can be withheld under one of the accepted exceptions, or if the communication discloses the requested information, a redacted copy;
- Lodge a written complaint about overcharges for public information with the Office of the Attorney General. Complaints of other possible violations may be filed with the county or district attorney of the county where the governmental body, other than a state agency, is located. If the complaint is against the county or district attorney, the complaint must be filed with the Office of the Attorney General.

Responsibilities of Governmental Bodies

All governmental bodies responding to information requests have the responsibility to:

- Establish reasonable procedures for inspecting or copying public information and inform requestors of these procedures;
- Treat all requestors uniformly and shall give to the requestor all reasonable comfort and facility, including accommodation in accordance with ADA requirements;

- Be informed about open records laws and educate employees on the requirements of those laws;
- Inform requestors of the estimated charges greater than \$40 and any changes in the estimates above 20 percent of the original estimate, and confirm that the requestor accepts the charges, has amended the request, or has sent a complaint of overcharges to the Office of the Attorney General, in writing before finalizing the request;
- Inform the requestor if the information cannot be provided promptly and set a date and time to provide it within a reasonable time;
- Request a ruling from the Office of the Attorney General regarding any information the governmental body wishes to withhold, and send a copy of the request for ruling, or a redacted copy, to the requestor;
- Segregate public information from information that may be withheld and provide that public information promptly;
- Make a good faith attempt to inform third parties when their proprietary information is being requested from the governmental body;
- Respond in writing to all written communications from the Office of the Attorney General regarding charges for the information.
- Respond to the Office of the Attorney General regarding complaints about violations of the Act.

Procedures to Obtain Information

1. Submit a request by mail, e-mail, or in person, or any other appropriate method approved by the governmental body.
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.
- Keep all appointments to inspect records and to pick up copies. Failure to keep appointments may result in losing the opportunity to inspect the information at the time requested.

Cost of Records

- You must respond to any written estimate of charges within 10 business days of the date the governmental body sent it or the request is considered automatically withdrawn.

- If estimated costs exceed \$100.00 (or \$50.00 if a governmental body has fewer than 16 full time employees) the governmental body may require a bond, prepayment or 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.
- Make a timely payment for all mutually agreed charges. A governmental body can demand payment of overdue balances exceeding \$100.00, or obtain a security deposit, before processing additional requests from you.

Information That May be Withheld Due to an Exception

- If a governmental body determines the requested information is not subject to a previous determination or a statute that allows the information to be withheld without requesting a ruling, by the 10th business day after a governmental body receives your written request, a governmental body 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.
- Requestors may send a letter to the Attorney General arguing for release, and may review arguments made by the governmental body. If the arguments disclose the requested information, the requestor may obtain a redacted copy.
- 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.

Visit the [Attorney General's Office website](#) for more information.

Pursuant to section 552.301(c) of the Texas Government Code, Trinity Metro has designated an email addresses and a fax number to receive requests for public information held by Trinity Metro. A request sent to any email address or fax number other than those listed below does not trigger the requirements of the Public Information Act, Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code.

- For requests: PublicInfo@ridetm.org

You may also submit a written request via fax or through regular mail:

- Download the [PIA request form](#) (not required, but helpful)
- Mail a Request to:
Trinity Metro
ATTN: Freedom of Information Officer, Administration
801 Grove Street,
Fort Worth, TX 76102
- Fax a Request to: 817-215-7533

Following this process will help expedite your request and improve our ability to provide you with the information you request in the most efficient way possible.

For complaints regarding failure to release public information please contact your local County or District Attorney.

You may also contact the Office of the Attorney General, Open Records Hotline, at 512-478-6736 or toll-free at 877-673-6839.

For complaints regarding overcharges, please contact the Cost Rules Administrator of OAG at 512-475-2497.

If you need special accommodation pursuant to the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), please contact our ADA coordinator, Kelli Shields at 817-215-8700.

Texas Public Information Act FAQs

The Texas Public Information Act, formerly known as the Open Records Act is located at Chapter 552 of the Texas Government Code. The act provides a way for the public and media outlets to review or copy the agency's records. It also allows Trinity Metro to withhold its records from the general public under certain circumstances.

- **How is a public request submitted to Trinity Metro?**
 - The request must be made in writing. The TPIA is triggered when a person submits a written request to the agency. Note, the request must ask for information that is already in existence. Written requests include a request submitted by hand delivery, U.S. Mail, email or fax. Please download and complete [Trinity Metro's official form for requestors](#) to help expedite the process.
- **If Trinity Metro staff member receives a public information request, how do they respond to the requestor?**
 - Employees must direct all requests to our public information request site at PublicInfo@ridetm.org to follow the procedures posted there.
- **What types of records are subject to the Public Information Act?**
 - Any information that is accessed, collected, assembled or maintained by Trinity Metro is subject to the Public Information Act. The format (e.g. paper, electronic, microfilm, DVR video, DriveCam video, audio recordings, etc.) of the record does not affect its status as a public record. Information means documents, photos, data, video that exists at the time of the request.
- **What type of language triggers a TPIA request?**
 - There is no specific language required to trigger the Texas Public Information Act. However, the written request must be for a particular piece of information or document that can be produced, not just by asking a question.
- **The language contained in the TPIA request is vague and unclear. May I request clarification directly from the requestor?**
 - If staff requires clarification from the requestor on the content of the request for information, they should notify the public information coordinator to do so on their behalf. In your request for clarification, please indicate what types of questions need to be asked of the requestor in order for you to identify what they are asking for. It's helpful to provide examples of documents that their request could include but may not be what they actually seek. Staff should notify Legal with their request for clarification within 5 business days upon receipt of the written request.

- **Can staff from the agency contact the requestor and ask why the records are requested?**
 - No. Trinity Metro staff cannot inquire why they want the records or about the purpose for the records will be used. However, if the request is unclear, very broad or voluminous, Trinity Metro may ask the requestor to more clearly identify or narrow his or her request.
- **What is the timeframe for the agency to respond to a request made under the TPIA?**
 - Trinity Metro has 10 business days after the date of receipt of the request to provide a response.
- **Can the agency request additional time to fulfill/comply to the request.**
 - Yes. If staff requires additional time to gather information responsive to the request beyond the 10-day response time, then staff must notify the requestor and provide the anticipated date as to when the information will be provided.
- **Can agency staff charge for information produced?**

 - Yes, in some instances. Under the TPIA, charges to produce information compiled and maintained by the agency may incur a charge if it is more than 50 pages.