

Freedom of Information Act

Overview

According to the Illinois Attorney General, the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a State statute that provides the public with the right to access government documents and records. The law provides that a person can ask a public body for a copy of its records on a specific subject and the public body must provide those records, unless there is an exemption in the statute that protects those records from disclosure (for example: records containing information concerning trade secrets or personal privacy).

FOIA Requests

You may request documents via mail, email, fax, or personal delivery. Your request must include the following information:

1. Requester's full name, address, and daytime telephone number. We need this information in case we have questions about the request.
2. A written description of the desired records containing the details necessary to fulfill the request.

Acorn Public Library has a FOIA form that can be used for requests.

Mail/Personal Delivery

Acorn Public Library
15624 Central Avenue
ATTN: FOIA Officers
Oak Forest, IL 60452

Email: reference@acornlibrary.org

Fax: (708)687-3712

Please note: Write or type "ATTN: FOIA Officers" on faxed requests

FOIA Officers

FOIA Officers are responsible for responding to FOIA requests in a timely and thorough manner.

Acorn's FOIA Officers are:

Donna Dukes, Reference Librarian
Dorothy Koll, Director

Fees

Black and white copies:

- First 50 copies on letter or legal-sized paper: free
- Remaining copies on letter or legal-sized paper: \$0.10 per page
- Non-letter or legal-sized paper in black and white: cost of paper

Color copies:

- On letter or legal-sized paper: \$.50 per page
- Non-letter or legal-sized paper: cost of paper + \$.50 per page

FOIA Process

The public body must respond to a FOIA request within five business days after the public body receives the request. Day one of the five-day timeline is the first business day after the request is received by the public body. "Business days" are defined as Monday through Friday.

If additional time is needed to process the FOIA request, the requester will be notified within five business days after receiving the request. The response to the deadline extension must be in writing. Agreeing to this extension relieves the public body of adhering to the legally-mandated deadlines.

Denied Requests

The public body must disclose the specific reasons for denying FOIA requests. The denial must also include the requester's right to file a Request for Review with the Public Access Counselor (PAC), the PAC's contact information, and the right to seek judicial review by filing a court case. The Request for Review must be filed within 60 calendar days of the public body's final response.

Failure to Respond

If the public body fails to respond, you can file a Request for Review with the Counselor (PAC) or file a case in court.

PAC contact information:

Sarah Pratt
Public Access Counselor
Office of the Attorney General
500 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706
Phone: 1-877-299-FOIA (1-877-299-3642)
Fax: (217) 782-1396

E-mail: publicaccess@atg.state.il.us

Request for Review

A Request for Review is a letter that must be submitted by a requester in the event that it is believed that a public body is not adhering to FOIA. It is a formal way of asking the PAC to examine a request in order to determine if FOIA is being followed correctly.

The Request for Review must be in writing, signed by the requester, and attached to a copy of the original FOIA request and any related correspondence. It must be filed within 60 calendar days of the public body's final response or response due date.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

Aside from the potential civil penalty of between \$2,500 and \$5,000 per FOIA violation, public bodies have an additional incentive to respond within the time limits set forth. If a public body fails to respond within five business days (or 10 days if the extension was properly requested), it cannot charge for reproduction costs at a later time, nor can it treat the request as unduly burdensome.

Library Information

The Acorn Public Library District is located in the southwest suburbs of Chicago and serves a population of almost 38,000. It provides books, programming, audiovisual materials, music, electronic databases, and computer use for its patrons.

Budget

The total operating budget for the 2018-19 fiscal year is \$1,656,700.

Staff

Acorn Public Library has 29 total employees. Nine employees are full-time and 20 are part-time

Organizational Structure

