

PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY **WARREN METROPOLITAN HOUSING AUTHORITY**

MISSION STATEMENT

The Mission of the Warren Metropolitan Housing Authority (WMHA) is to provide safe, sanitary, decent, and affordable housing to low-income families, while at the same time providing its families the opportunity to grow socially, economically, and financially. WMHA strives to give respect to, and earn respect from, every member of our community and to give those members of our community the very best possible service, without regard to their sex, race, religion, or nationality.

INTRODUCTION

We are an open government. Openness leads to a better-informed public, which leads to better government and better public policy. Consistent with the premise that government at all levels exists first and foremost to serve the interests of the people, it is the mission and intent of WMHA that citizens are entitled to access government records. Therefore, WMHA always fully comply with and abide by both the spirit and the letter of Ohio's Public Records Act.

DEFINING PUBLIC RECORDS

A record is defined to include the following: A document in any format – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, business e-mail) – that is created, received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of WMHA that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office.

Records in the form of e-mail, text messaging, and instant messaging, including those sent and received via a hand-held communications device (such as Blackberry) are to be treated in the same fashion as records in other formats, such as paper or audiotape.

Public record content transmitted to or from private accounts or personal devices is subject to disclosure. All employees or representatives of this office are required to retain their e-mail records and other electronic records in accordance with applicable records retention schedules.

HOURS AND COSTS

Public records are available between the hours of 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on weekdays, excluding government holidays.

For copies of public records on 8-1/2" x 11" inch one-sided paper in black ink, the copy cost is \$.10 per page; for 8-1/2" x 11" inch one-sided paper in colored ink, the copy cost is \$.20 per page.

WMHA records are subject to record retention schedules. The office's current schedules are available at 990 East Ridge Drive, Lebanon, Ohio, a location readily available to the public as required by 149.43 (B)(2), Ohio Revised Code.

PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

According to Ohio's Public Records, all records and information deemed "public records" must be promptly prepared and made available for inspection to any member of the public at all reasonable times during regular business hours and copies of public records must be made available at cost, within a reasonable period of time. The following guidelines will be observed:

1. The requested records will be described by the requesting party in writing, preferably on the Request for Public Records form, below. All requests for records or information must be directed to the Executive Director of WMHA.
2. All requests for records or information made in person must occur during normal office hours, Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., excluding holidays.
3. If duplication of the record or information cannot occur immediately, WMHA will advise the requesting party when to return, to obtain copies of the requested records. Generally, WMHA will make the record or information available no more than five (5) days after the request.
4. WMHA will send copies of the records to the requesting party by U.S. mail, so long as the requesting party pays in advance the cost of postage and other supplies used in the mailing or provide a pre-addressed envelope with sufficient postage.
5. Charges for General Public Records Requests:
 - A. The charge for duplication of documents capable of being reproduced on existing Housing Authority equipment, i.e., paper in size 8-1/2" x 11" are \$.10 per page, \$.20 per page for color ink.
 - B. The charge for copies of microfilm or microfiche, blueprints, maps, plats, or other large single documents not covered above shall be the actual cost for outside reproduction.
 - C. The charge for books and other multi-page volumes printed by the WMHA (i.e., annual budget, comprehensive grant, various financial reports, not covered above, and photographic reproductions and cassette tapes or video tapes videotapes shall be the cost to the WMHA.
 - D. The charge for a certified copy of a public record shall be \$1.00 per page.
6. Some records or information maintained by WMHA are not "public records" but are considered confidential under Ohio and Federal law. Examples of confidential records are (this list is not exhaustive): medical records; trial preparation records; records and communications by and between WMHA and its attorneys (A); records containing information that is confidential under Civil Rights Commission; security and infrastructure records and records the release of which are prohibited by state or federal law.

These confidential records shall not be released by the WMHA. In the event that a party asks for information or records that are confidential, the requesting party shall be notified in writing by the Executive Director within five (5) days that disclosure will not occur.

