

## **PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK**

### **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**

#### **HOW TO REQUEST PUBLIC RECORDS**

The Park District maintains comprehensive forms, rules, and regulations related to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. The forms are intended as a simple, efficient, and consistent manner for a requester to seek and receive access to public records. The Rules and Regulations provide straightforward and understandable procedures and instructions for obtaining public records.

All requests to inspect, copy, or certify public records must be submitted in writing. The Park District encourages requesters to use the convenient standard forms provided by the Park District, which are available at the Park District Headquarters and on the Park District's website. The Park District will review all written requests in any form. The Park District will respond to each written request to inspect, copy, or certify public records in a manner consistent with the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.

Copies of public records will be provided after payment of a copying fee, if applicable, as provided in Section IV of the FOIA Rules. If requested, copies of public records will be mailed after the Park District receives payment of the cost of postage and copying.

Requests and other communications regarding Park District records relating to a request to inspect, copy, or certify public records, all requests for copies of the FOIA Rules, and all requests for any other information relating to the Park District's implementation of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act should be directed to:

Freedom of Information Act Officer  
Park District of Oak Park  
Hedges Administrative Center  
218 Madison Street  
Oak Park, IL 60302  
Telephone: (708) 725-2000  
E-mail: foia@pdop.org

The foregoing information is provided pursuant to Section 4(b) of the Illinois Freedom of Information Act.
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**PARK DISTRICT OF OAK PARK**  
**FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT**  
**RULES AND REGULATIONS**

These Rules and Regulations (“Rules”) include the procedures, instructions, and forms for requesting public records from the Park District of Oak Park (“Park District”) under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (“Act”).

The Park District will respond to written requests for inspection, copying, or certification of public records in accordance with the Act, these Rules, and any other applicable law. Generally, the Park District will provide public records for inspection or copying as requested except for records that are specifically exempted from disclosure by the Act or other applicable law.

Requests and other communications relating to public records should be sent to the Park District's Freedom of Information Officer ("FOIA Officer") at Park District of Oak Park, Hedges Administrative Center, 218 Madison Street, Oak Park, IL 60302, or via at foia@pdop.org. The Park District telephone number is (708) 725-2000.

**I. INTERPRETATION**

**A. Conflicts**

These Rules do not supersede the provisions of the Act. If a provision of these Rules conflicts with the Act, then the provisions of the Act will govern.

**B. Definitions**

In addition to the definitions provided in the Act or elsewhere in these Rules, the following definitions apply:

1. Business Hours: 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. on a Business Day.
2. Business Day: Any day on which general offices of the Park District at the Park District Headquarters are open and staffed for regular public business. Business Days generally are Monday through Friday except federal and state holidays.
3. FOIA Officer: The FOIA Officer of the Park District identified above and designated under Section 3.5 of the Act.
4. Public Access Counselor: The Public Access Counselor of the Office of the Illinois Attorney General.
5. Recurrent Requester: A requester who, in the 12 months immediately preceding submission of a Request, has submitted to the Park District (a) a minimum of 50 Requests, (b) a minimum of 15 Requests within a 30-day period, or (c) a minimum of seven Requests within a seven-day period. For purposes of this definition, Requests made by news media and non-profit, scientific, or academic organizations are not

considered in calculating the number of Requests made in the time periods in this definition when the principal purpose of the Requests is (i) to access and disseminate information concerning news and current or passing events, (ii) for articles of opinion or features of interest to the public, or (iii) for the purpose of academic, scientific, or public research or education.

6. Request: A request to inspect, copy, or certify public records.
7. Request Made for Commercial Purposes: A Request made with the intent to use the requested records (or the information derived from those records), in whole or in part, for sale, resale, or solicitation or advertisement for sales or services. However, a Request submitted by news media or by non-profit, scientific, or academic organizations will not be deemed to be made for commercial purposes if the principal purpose of the Request is (a) to access and disseminate information concerning news and current or passing events, (b) for articles of opinion or features of interest to the public, or (c) for the purpose of academic, scientific, or public research or education.
8. Requester: An individual, corporation, partnership, firm, organization or association that files a Request with the Park District.
9. Response Time: The time for response by the Park District to a request for public records, as calculated pursuant to Subsection III.A of these Rules.

**C. Days; Measurement of Time**

1. Days. In counting the number of days allowed for a response or a decision to be given by the Park District under the Act and these Rules, the Park District will not include the day on which the request or notice requiring the response or decision was first received.
2. Receipt Date. The Business Day on which the Request is physically received by the Park District. All Requests received after the close of business or on a non-Business Day will be deemed to have been received by the Park District on the next Business Day.
3. Supplemental Requests. Supplemental, amended, clarified, and additional Requests will not relate back to the time of receipt of the initial Request. Supplemental, amended, clarified, or additional Requests will be considered new Requests for purposes of determining the applicable Response Time.
4. Response Date. All responses and decisions to be issued by the Park District under the Act and these Rules will be deemed to have been given on (a) the date of personal delivery to the person or to the residence of the person entitled to the response or decision or (b) if mailed, faxed, or sent by e-mail, on the date of mailing, faxing, or e-mailing regardless of the date of actual receipt by that person. Each response and decision may include proof of service evidencing the method by which, and time at which, the response or decision was delivered.

## II. REQUESTS FOR INSPECTION, COPYING, OR CERTIFICATION OF PUBLIC RECORDS

### A. Officials Responsible for Responding to Requests

The FOIA Officer is the person responsible for receiving, processing, granting, and denying Requests, extending a Response Time, and issuing appropriate notices with respect to all related matters. The FOIA Officer, or his or her designee, may consult with Park District staff, officials, and others as appropriate before responding to a Request.

The Park District, from time to time, may appoint Deputy FOIA Officers to assist the FOIA Officer in the performance of his or her duties under the Act and these Rules or to act as the FOIA Officer in his or her absence.

### B. Form of Request

1. Required Information. A Request must be filed with the Park District in writing and in English. The Park District encourages Requesters to submit requests on the Park District's convenient Request Form, Short Request Form if appropriate, or a similar form that contains, at a minimum, the following information:
  - (a) the Requester's name;
  - (b) either the Requester's mailing address, email address, or telephone number;
  - (c) a description of the public records requested;
  - (d) a "statement of purpose" indicating whether the Requester intends to use the records, or the information derived from those records, for sale, resale, solicitation, or advertisement for sales or services, and if so:
    - (i) a statement of whether the Requester is, or represents, news media or a non-profit, scientific or academic organization; and
    - (ii) a statement of whether the principal purpose of the Request is either (i) to access and disseminate information concerning news and current or passing events, (ii) for articles of opinion or features of interest to the public, or (iii) academic, scientific or public research or education.
2. Supplemental Information. If a Requester submits a Request on a form other than the Request Form, and the Request does not contain all of the information required pursuant to Paragraph II.B.1 of these Rules, then the FOIA Officer may require the Requester to complete a Supplemental Information Form or similar writing.
3. Requests Must Be Complete. No Request will be deemed complete, and the Park District will have no obligation to produce the requested records, unless and until the Request contains, at a minimum, all of the information required pursuant to Paragraph II.B.1 of these Rules.

4. Subpoenas. Except as provided in Section 9.5(c) of the Act, these Rules will not apply to any subpoena for records received by the Park District and issued by, or in accordance with the rules of, a court or agency of competent jurisdiction.

### **C. Submittal of Request**

Completed Requests must be filed with the Park District FOIA Officer by United States mail, facsimile, overnight courier service, electronic mail, the Park District's website, or in person, in accordance with the following:

1. In-Person Submissions. Requests submitted in person should be given to the FOIA Officer or filed in the office of the Park District Executive Director.
2. Electronic Mail Submissions. Requests submitted by electronic mail must be sent directly to the FOIA Officer at foia@pdop.org and will be deemed received on the Receipt Date only upon actual receipt by the FOIA Officer.
3. All Other Submissions. Requests submitted by mail or other means must be addressed to the FOIA Officer at the Park District Headquarters and will be deemed received on the Receipt Date only upon actual receipt by the Park District.

All Park District officials and employees who receive a Request must immediately forward that Request to the FOIA Officer.

### **D. Processing of Request**

1. The FOIA Officer must complete the Checklist on receipt of a Request. If the FOIA Officer determines that the Request is not complete, then the FOIA Officer must send a Notice of Incomplete Request form and a Supplemental Information form to the Requester within five Business Days after receipt by the Park District of the Request or within 21 Business Days if the Request is a Request Made for Commercial Purposes. If the FOIA Officer determines that the Request is complete, then the FOIA Officer must stamp or otherwise indicate, on each completed Request, the date and time of receipt and, if known, the date on which the Park District must respond to the Request.
2. The FOIA Officer must maintain an electronic or paper copy of the Request, including all documents submitted with the Request, until all matters related to the Request have been completed.
3. The FOIA Officer must create an electronic or paper file for the retention of the original Request, a copy of the response by the Park District, a record of all written communications with the Requester regarding the Request, and a copy of other communications related to the Request.
4. The FOIA Officer must retain all Responses to Request for Public Records that include a denial or partial denial of a Request in a single central office file.

### III. RESPONSES TO REQUESTS

#### A. Time for Response

1. All Requests; Exceptions. For all Requests other than those described in Paragraph III.A.2, III.A.3, and III.A.4 below, the Park District will respond within five Business Days after a completed Request is received by the Park District, unless the Park District has extended the Response Time under Paragraph III.A.5 below.
2. Requests Made for Commercial Purposes. The Park District will respond within 21 Business Days after a complete Request Made for Commercial Purposes is received. The response must include one of the following: (a) an approval of the Request; (b) a partial approval and partial denial of the Request; (c) a denial of the Request; (d) a notice to the Requester providing an estimate of the time required by the Park District to provide the records requested and an estimate of the fees to be charged; or (e) or a notice to the Requester that the Request is unduly burdensome and extending an opportunity to the Requester to reduce the Request to manageable proportions.
3. Requests by Recurrent Requesters.
  - a. The Park District will respond within five Business Days after a completed Request is received from a Recurrent Requester, notifying the Requester that he or she has been deemed a Recurrent Requester, using the "Notice to Recurrent Requester" form attached to these Rules or a similar written form, which notice must include (i) the reason for designating the Requester as a Recurrent Requester and (ii) a statement that the Park District will respond in substance to the Request within 21 Business Days after the Request was received.
  - b. The Park District then will respond to a Request by the Recurrent Requester within 21 Business Days after the completed Request is received. This response must include one of the following: (i) an approval of the Request; (ii) a partial approval and partial denial of the Request; (iii) a denial of the Request; (iv) a notice to the Recurrent Requester providing an estimate of the time required by the Park District to provide the records requested and an estimate of the fees to be charged; (v) or a notice to the Recurrent Requester that the Request is unduly burdensome and extending an opportunity to the Recurrent Requester to reduce the Request to manageable proportions.
4. Chronologically Maintained Arrest Reports. For completed Requests for chronologically maintained arrest and criminal history information, the Park District will respond within 72 hours after the later to occur of (a) the arrest that is the subject of the Request and (b) the time of receipt of the Request.
5. Extension of Time
  - a. If the FOIA Officer determines that additional time is needed and allowed under the Act to respond to a Request, then the FOIA Officer, using a Notice of Extension form attached to these Rules or a similar written form, will notify

the Requester within the applicable Response Time of the determination, of the reasons requiring the extension, and of the length of the extension (which may not exceed five additional Business Days). The FOIA Officer may not issue a Notice of Extension for Requests Made for Commercial Purposes.

- b. The Requester and the Park District, using an Extension Agreement form attached to these Rules or a similar written form, may agree in writing to extend the time for compliance beyond the required five days for a period to be mutually determined. In his or her discretion, the FOIA Officer may deliver to the Requester a Request for Extension Agreement form and an Extension Agreement form. The FOIA Officer is authorized to execute, in his or her discretion, an Extension Agreement after it has been executed by the Requester. The FOIA Officer must respond to the Request within the applicable Response Time, unless and until the Requester and the Park District have executed the Extension Agreement.

## **B. Disclosure of Public Records**

1. Notice of Approval. If the FOIA Officer determines that the Act requires disclosure of all or any part or portion of the requested public records, then the FOIA Officer will notify the Requester in writing of his or her determination, using the Response to Request for Public Records form attached to these Rules or a similar written form.
2. Approval of Requests Made for Commercial Purposes or by Recurrent Requesters. If the Request is a Request Made for Commercial Purposes or is made by a Recurrent Requester, and the requested records are not immediately available for inspection or pick-up, then the Response to Request for Public Records will specify a reasonable date on which the requested records will be available for inspection or pick-up, based on the size and complexity of the Request.
3. Search of Files and Use of Equipment. Except as otherwise specifically authorized by the FOIA Officer, only Park District employees, the Park District Attorney, and Park District contractors are permitted to search Park District files, records, or storage areas, or to use Park District equipment in connection with any Request.
4. Removal of Original Records. Original public records may not be removed from any Park District building at any time, except as authorized by the Park District Executive Director.
5. Inspection of Public Records. Public records approved by the FOIA Officer for disclosure may be inspected, or copies of public records obtained, during Business Hours at the Park District Headquarters or another location designated by the FOIA Officer. Requesters must make an appointment with the FOIA Officer for a date and time to inspect such public records.
6. Copies of Public Records. Copies of public records approved by the FOIA Officer for disclosure may be obtained during Business Hours at the Park District Headquarters or another location designated by the FOIA Officer, so long as the Requester had requested copies and has paid all applicable fees.

7. Mailing of Requested Public Records. Copies of public records will be sent to the Requester via United States mail, facsimile or electronic mail only if the FOIA Officer reasonably determines that it is unduly burdensome for the Requester to arrange for inspection of the original public records, or for pick up of copies of the public records, at the Park District Headquarters.
8. Audio and Video Recordings. Requests for reproduction of any public records that are audio or video recordings will be honored in accordance with the provisions of the Act, the Illinois Open Meetings Act, any other applicable State, federal, and local laws and regulations, and these Rules.
9. Records Maintained in Electronic Format. If the requested public records are maintained by the Park District in an electronic format, then the Park District will reproduce copies of the requested public records in the electronic format specified by the Requester, if feasible. The Park District may charge the Requester the actual cost of the medium necessary for that format.
10. Payment of Fees. The Requester must pay all copying, certification, and postage fees in advance of receiving copies of any public records.
11. Acknowledgment of Inspection. When the copies of the requested public records have been delivered or inspected, the FOIA Officer and the Requester must acknowledge delivery or inspection by execution of the Acknowledgment of Inspection form attached to these Rules or a similar written form.

### **C. Categorical Requests**

1. Notice to Meet and Confer. If the FOIA Officer determines that a Request for all records falling within a category will unduly burden the Park District, and that the burden to the Park District outweighs the public interest in production of the public records sought, then the FOIA Officer, using a Notice to Meet and Confer form attached to these Rules or a similar written form, will notify the Requester in writing of the determination, of the reasons supporting the determination, and of the right of the Requester to meet with the FOIA Officer in an effort to narrow the Request.
2. Failure to Respond by Park District. The FOIA Officer may not determine that a Request is unduly burdensome, nor issue a Notice for Meeting, if the Park District has previously failed to respond to that Request within the applicable Response Time.
3. Agreement to Narrow Request. If the Requester agrees to meet and confer with the FOIA Officer regarding the Request, then the FOIA Officer will respond to the Request, or to the Request as narrowed at the meeting, within the applicable Response Time, calculated as beginning on the next Business Day after adjournment of the meeting. That response may take any form specified in this Section III. If the Requester agrees to narrow the scope of the Request, the FOIA Officer will deliver an Acknowledgment of Narrowed Request to the Requester at the conclusion of the meeting, using the form attached to these Rules or a similar written form.

4. Failure to Meet and Confer. If the Requester does not agree to meet and confer with the FOIA Officer regarding the Request, then the FOIA Officer will deny the Request on the fifth Business Day after the date of the Notice to Meet and Confer, using the Response to Request For Public Records form attached to these Rules or a similar written form.

#### **D. Denial**

1. Procedure for Denials. If the FOIA Officer determines that all, or some, or a portion of any requested public records are not subject to disclosure under any other provision of the Act or under these Rules, then the FOIA Officer must deliver a notice to the Requester, using the Response to Request for Public Records form attached to these Rules or a similar written form.
2. Contents of Denials. Each Response to Request for Public Records form must set forth all of the grounds and reasons for the denial, and must notify the Requester of his or her rights to seek review of the denial by the Public Access Counselor and to seek judicial review under Section 11 of the Act.
3. Denials in Writing. Except as otherwise provided by the Act, all denials of Requests will be in writing.
4. Cooperation with Public Access Counselor. If the Public Access Counselor determines that further inquiry into any denied Request is warranted, the FOIA Officer will comply with the requests and directives of the Public Access Counselor, or seek appropriate review of those requests or directives, in accordance with the Act.

#### **E. No Obligation to Create New Records**

Except as provided in Section V of these Rules, the Act and these Rules do not require the Park District, in the course of responding to Requests, to create records that the Park District does not already maintain in record form.

#### **F. No Obligation to Interpret or Advise**

Neither the Act nor these Rules require the Park District to interpret, or advise Requesters as to the meaning or significance of, any public records.

### **IV. FEES**

#### **A. Fees Established**

1. Fees for Copying, Certifying, and Mailing of Records. Unless fees are waived or reduced under Subsection IV.C of these Rules, each Requester must pay fees for copying, certifying, and mailing of public records, as established by the Act or the Park District.

If the requested records are of a type not listed by the Park District, or when the services of an outside vendor are required to copy any public record that are not 8½

x 11 or 8½ x 14 inches, Black and White, then the fees charged for copying the records will be the actual charges incurred by the Park District, and the fees stated in the Annual Fee Ordinance. The fees stated in the Annual Fee Ordinance will also not apply if the fee for the requested records is otherwise fixed by statute. If the requested records are produced on an electronic medium, then the Requester must pay the actual cost of the medium.

The Park District has determined that the fees are no more than necessary to reimburse the Park District for the actual cost of reproducing, certifying, and mailing public records requested pursuant to the Act and these Rules.

2. Fees for Searching and Retrieving Records Requested for Commercial Purposes. Pursuant to Section 6(f) of the Act, in addition to any fees that must be paid pursuant to Paragraph IV.A.1. of these Rules, a Requester who submits a Request for a Commercial Purpose must pay to the Park District \$10.00 for each hour over eight hours spent by Park District personnel to search for or retrieve requested public records. In addition, the Commercial Requester must pay the actual charges incurred by the Park District to retrieve and transport public records from any third-party, off-site storage facility that the Park District may use to store public records.

#### **B. Method and Time of Payment**

Payment of all required fees must be made in cash, by cashier's or certified check, or by money order prior to the examination, copying, certification or mailing of any public record.

#### **C. Waiver of Fees**

The fees provided in Subsection IV.A of these Rules may be waived or reduced by the FOIA Officer if the Requester includes in the Request the specific purpose of the Request and establishes to the reasonable satisfaction of the FOIA Officer that a fee waiver or reduction is in the public interest. A request for a fee waiver or reduction must be indicated in the Request at the time the Request is filed. A subsequent request will not be considered.

A fee waiver or reduction will be considered to be in the public interest only if the principal purpose of the Request is to disseminate information regarding the public health, safety, and welfare or the legal rights of the general public. No fee waiver will be granted if the Request is for the principal purpose of personal or commercial benefit to the Requester. The FOIA Officer may consider the number of requested public records and the cost and necessity of copying them in setting the fee waiver or reduction amount.

#### **D. Waiver for Failure to Respond**

If the FOIA Officer does not respond to a Request properly submitted pursuant to Section II of these Rules within the applicable Response Time, then the Park District will not require the payment of fees for any copies of records produced in response to that Request.

## **V. PARK DISTRICT OBLIGATIONS**

### **A. Organizational Description**

The FOIA Officer, at least once each fiscal year, will produce and make available for inspection, copying, and mailing to any person requesting it, a brief description of the Park District. The description must identify and describe the membership of the Park District's Board of Commissioners and of all of its standing and special committees and other advisory bodies and also must include:

- a short summary of the Park District's purpose,
- a block diagram of the Park District's functional subdivisions,
- the approximate number of the Park District's full and part-time employees,
- the total amount of the Park District's operating budget, and
- the number and location of each of the Park District's offices.

The FOIA Officer must post the description required pursuant to this Subsection V.A to the website.

### **B. Index of Public Records**

The FOIA Officer must create, maintain current, and make available for inspection, copying, and mailing, a current index of all types or categories of public records prepared or received, and maintained, by the Park District after July 1, 1984. The index must be reasonably detailed in order to aid persons in obtaining access to the public records of the Park District.

### **C. Records Stored by Electronic Data Processing**

The FOIA Officer must prepare and furnish, to any person requesting it, a description of the manner in which public records of the Park District stored by means of electronic data processing may be obtained in a form comprehensible to persons lacking knowledge of computer language or printout format.

### **D. Summary of Procedures**

The FOIA Officer must create, maintain current, and make available for inspection, copying, and mailing, a brief summary of the procedures established by these Rules. If the Park District maintains a website, then the FOIA Officer must post the summary required pursuant to this Subsection V.D to the website.

### **E. Posting and Mailing of Information**

The FOIA Officer must keep posted at the Park District Headquarters, and will mail to any person making a request therefor, copies of the Organizational Description prepared pursuant to Subsection V.A of these Rules, the Index of Public Records prepared pursuant

to Subsection V.B of these Rules, and the Summary of Procedures prepared pursuant to Subsection V.D of these Rules.

**F. Filing of Response to Request for Public Records Forms**

The FOIA Officer must retain copies of all Response to Request for Public Records forms that include a denial or partial denial in a single file at the Park District Headquarters that is open to the public and indexed according to the type of exemption asserted and, to the extent that categorization is feasible, the type of records requested.