

## Process for Handling Requests for Information under the Public Records Act

### **PROCESS**

Each Department of General Services (DGS) division shall designate a Public Records Officer. The Public Records Officer shall attend all mandatory training conducted by the DGS Office of Legal Services. Training documents for the GovQA system can be found [here](#) (DGS employees only).

When DGS receives a request for records in any format, (written, oral, or within GovQA) it should be routed to the Public Records Officer of the program that received the request. The Public Records Officer shall perform a preliminary review to determine whether the request needs to be routed to another program's Public Records Officer. The Public Records Officer of the division that may have the records is also responsible for logging the Public Records Act (PRA) request in GovQA, or appropriately rerouting the request within GovQA if it falls outside of their division.

If the request is from a member of the news media or if more than one DGS division may have the records, the Public Records Officer must immediately notify the Office of Public Affairs (OPA), which will coordinate DGS' response. The DGS divisions shall have the primary responsibility for locating and preparing documents for production, including making required redactions and identifying exemptions from disclosure. Do not provide records to OPA that are not ready to be released. Divisions should also respond to OPA as soon as a determination on responsive documents is made, and not expect OPA to monitor them and reach out on the due date. Divisions may consult their DGS Office of Legal Services (OLS) attorney and/or the DGS Privacy Officer if there are questions as to whether a specific document contains information exempt from disclosure. Divisions should update OPA if they believe some documents responsive to multidivisional requests may be exempt.

If the requestor is not a member of the news media and other DGS divisions do not need to be searched, the Public Records Officer for the subject division shall log the request, commence the search for responsive documents and respond to requestors.

A written response to the requester is required to fulfill a PRA request. If the request is made orally, the Public Records Officer should memorialize the oral request in writing in the form of a confirmation email or letter of acknowledgement to the requestor. The Public Records Officer shall also log the request into GovQA.

Within 10 calendar days of the receipt of a request for records, the Public Records Officer shall inform the requestor, in writing, whether we have in whole or in part, copies of disclosable public records or not, and produce records by

the 10 days, if possible, or provide an estimated date the records will be available.

The Public Records Officer may extend the 10-day time limit by no more than 14 calendar days if one or more of the circumstances below exist. The extension letter shall set forth one or more of these reasons for the extension and the date upon which the determination will be provided:

1. Facilities separate from the office processing the request will need to be searched, collected and reviewed.
2. A very large amount of records will need to be searched, collected and reviewed.
3. It is necessary to consult with another agency that has substantial interest in the nature of the documents requested.
4. Data will need to be compiled or a computer report will need to be constructed in order to comply with the request.

Once responsive documents are identified, the DGS division(s) shall carefully review and redact any exempt information. Exempt information includes, but is not limited to: personally identifiable information (e.g., Social Security number, California driver license number/ID, and home address), and attorney-client communications. For additional exemptions, see Government Code Sections 7920.505 through 7922.540(a). If you have questions regarding exemptions, contact your division's OLS attorney. OPA is not responsible for determining exemptions for multidivisional requests. Each division should work with their assigned attorney before sending responsive documents to OPA.

Divisions shall make all efforts to provide responsive documents in electronic format. For responsive documents that cannot be made electronic, public records are to be produced upon payment of the direct copy costs of \$0.10 per page. If the total cost is less than \$25.00, do not charge for the copies. The responding DGS division shall maintain a complete copy of all communications with the requestor, including a complete copy of the record production, within the GovQA system. The PRA request, response(s) and records provided shall be retained in accordance with the program's records retention schedule. The Public Records Officer shall update GovQA to reflect completion.

## **RESOURCES**

[Administrative Order \(AO\) 19-01 Requests for Information under the Public Records Act](#)

[DGS Public Record Inspection Guidelines](#)

[Request for Public Records on DGS internet page](#)

[DGS Privacy Policy PP-01 - Limiting Personal Information Collection](#) [DGS Privacy](#)

[Policy PP-02 - Security Safeguards](#)

[DGS Privacy Policy PP-03 – Limiting Use and Disclosure](#)

[DGS Administrative Order 16-01 Privacy Policy Statement](#)