HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES OF SOUTHWEST WASHINGTON
PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Public Records Request Policy is to provide guidance to housing authority employees on how to coordinate a public records request from any person or entity making that request and ensure all requests comply with RCW 42.56, Washington Statutes, as may be amended, also known as the Washington “Public Records Act.”

In carrying out its responsibilities under the Washington Public Records Act (RCW 42.56), The Housing Authority of the City of Longview, Washington (dba Housing Opportunities of SW Washington) will be guided by the provisions of the act describing its purposes and interpretation.

AGENCY DESCRIPTION

The Housing Authority of the City of Longview (dba Housing Opportunities of SW Washington) (HOSWWA) is a public housing authority providing low-rent public housing, Section 8 Housing Choice Vouchers, Veterans Integration Program, and other affordable housing and related programs in four county area. The main office site is located at 820 11th Avenue, Longview, WA. 98632.

PUBLIC RECORDS OFFICER

The Chief Executive Officer of HOSWWA shall designate a Public Records Officer.

Requests for Public Records of the HOSWWA, or those seeking assistance in making such a request should contact:

Christina M. Pegg, C.E.O.
The Housing Authority of the City of Longview (dba Housing Opportunities of SW Washington)
820 11th Avenue
Longview, WA. 98632
Telephone: (360) 423-0140
FAX:
E-MAIL:

Information is also available at the Housing Authority of the City of Longview (dba HOSWWA) web site at: www.longviewha.org

The public records officer will oversee compliance with the Public Records Act and ensure all requests are processed, but another HOSWWA staff member may process the request.
POLICY

This policy is to provide guidelines and overall general procedures for requests made to the housing authority. All housing authority employees shall be familiar with this policy and its requirements. Either the CEO or his/her designee shall be designated as the Public Records Officer (PRO) and that person shall be responsible for receiving, tracking and responding to all public records requests submitted to the housing authority, regardless of which department or section of the housing authority that receives the request and/or which department or section of the housing authority that information is required from to fulfill the public records request. All department heads will assist the PRO to fulfill a public records request in any manner deemed necessary by the PRO. The PRO shall determine what public records are available to be requested and what sensitive or exempted information those records may contain must be redacted. The PRO, Board of Commissioners, and staff shall receive public records training and shall be responsible for compliance with the Public Records Act in accordance with RCW 42.56, as may be amended.

PUBLIC RECORD DEFINED

“Public Record” (RCW 42.17) can be any writing “regardless of physical form or characteristics.” All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, films, sound recordings, data processing software, or other materials or means of transmission, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or in connection with the transaction of official business by any agency. An e-mail is”writing.” A true determining factor for a public record as those records that “perpetuate, communicate, or formalize knowledge.”

PROCEDURES

Making a request for public records
When any housing authority employee receives a public records request, the following procedures will apply:
Making a request for public records: HOSWWA Request Form:
   a. Name and address of the requestor
   b. Date of the request
   c. Whether the requestor wants copies, or wants to inspect the requested records
   d. A detailed description of the public record requested.
   e. Signature

Processing of public records request
Notify the PRO of the public records request and provide a copy of any written request and completed Public Records Request Form (Exhibit A.) Notification of the PRO should be done as soon as possible but not later than the next business day after receipt.

The PRO will process requests in the most efficient manner as the Public Records Officer deems appropriate. Within five (5) business days of receiving a request, the PRO will either (A) provide the record; (B) acknowledge that the request has been received and provide a reasonable time estimate it will need to respond to the request; (C) deny the request. Additional time to respond may be based on the need to clarify the intent of the request, to locate and assemble the records, to notify third
parties or agencies affected by the request and provide such parties/agencies with the opportunity to seek court order preventing disclosure where appropriate, and/or to determine whether any of the information requested is exempt from disclosure. If the requestor fails to clarify an unclear request within 15 days, the housing authority will treat the request as having been withdrawn. RCW 42.56.520

AVAILABILITY OF PUBLIC RECORDS

Public records are available for inspection and copying during normal business hours of the HOSWWA Monday thru Thursday, 10:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., excluding legal holidays. Records must be inspected at the 820 11th Avenue office.

Inspection will be denied and the records withdrawn by the Public Records Officer if the requestor, when reviewing the records, acts in a manner which will damage or substantially disorganize the records or interfere with other essential functions of the HOSWWA

EXEMPTIONS

The Public Records Act provides that a number of types of documents are exempt from public inspection and copying. In addition, documents are exempt from disclosure if any “other statute” exempts or prohibits disclosure. Requestors should be aware of exemptions, outside the Public Records Act, that restrict the availability of some documents held by the HOSWWA for inspection and copying. These exemptions are described in Appendix B.

The HOSWWA is prohibited by statute from disclosing lists of individuals for commercial purposes.

COSTS OF PROVIDING COPIES OF PUBLIC RECORDS

There is no fee for inspecting public records. For records request requiring copies of documents, the requestor will pay the appropriate reproduction and mailing costs. The Public Records Officer may elect to waive these fees.

Reproduction Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black and White Copies (per side)</td>
<td>$0.15 per page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color Copies (8 ½ x 11)</td>
<td>$0.20 per page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scanning &amp; PDF’s (to supply electronic copies)</td>
<td>$0.10 per page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Electronic Documents</td>
<td>$24.00 per hour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CD-ROM or DVD
$1.00 per disc, not inclusive of scanning, PDF, or electronic document transfer fees

Mailing
Actual cost of postage and mailing materials

Other Media
Actual cost of production

For large reproduction requests, an outside vendor may be used and requestor will be billed for actual costs.

For larger requests, HOSWWA may require a deposit of up to ten percent of the estimated costs of copying all the records. The public records officer or designee may also require the payment of the remainder of the copying costs before providing all the records, or the payment of the costs of copying an installment before providing that installment.

Payment
Payment may be made by cash, check, or money order to the Housing Opportunities of SW Washington.

REVIEW OF DENIALS OF PUBLIC RECORDS

Petition for Internal Administrative Review of Denial Access
Any person who objects to the initial denial or partial denial of a records request may petition in writing (including e-mail) to the public records officer for a review of that decision. The petition should include a copy of or reasonably identify the written statement by the public records officer or designee denying the request.

Consideration of Petition for Review
The public records officer shall promptly provide the petition and any other relevant information to the CEO of the HOSWW or designee. That person will immediately consider the petition and either affirm or reverse the denial within two business days following the HOSWWA’s receipt of the petition, or within such other time as the HOSWWA and the requestor mutually agree to.

DISCLAIMER OF LIABILITY

Neither the Housing Opportunities of SW Washington nor any officer, employee, official, or custodian shall be liable, nor shall cause of action exist, for any loss or damage based upon release of Public Records if the person releasing the records acted in good faith in attempting to comply with this policy.

This policy is not intended to expand or restrict the rights of disclosure or privacy as they exist under state and federal law. Despite the use of any mandatory terms such as “shall,” nothing in this policy is intended to impose mandatory on the Housing Opportunities of SW Washington beyond those imposed by state and federal law.
Appendix A
Public Records Request Form

HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES OF SW WA.
REQUEST FOR PUBLIC RECORDS

Submit Request to: Public Records Officer
820 11th Avenue
Longview, WA. 98632
Phone: (360) 423-0140
FAX: (360) 425-9930
E-MAIL: www.longviewwa.org

REQUESTOR'S NAME: ________________________________
COMPANY: ________________________________________
STREET ADDRESS: __________________________________
CITY: __________ STATE: _______ ZIP: __________
TELEPHONE: ______________________________________
EMAIL: __________________________________________

CHECK ONE:
□ Please make records available for review only.
□ Please provide copies and applicable reproduction fee.

Please describe the records you are requesting and any additional Information that will help us locate them for you, e.g. dates, etc.
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

I understand that there may be charges for duplication of these specific records. A minimum of $0.15 per page for standard photocopies will be charged to the requestor. If requestor asks agency to mail copies, the actual cost of postage and the shipping container will be charged.

I certify that any lists of individuals obtained through this request for public records will not be used for commercial purposes. (RCW 42.56.070)

I understand that pursuant to RCW 42.56.520 the agency will respond within five (5) business days, either by providing the information requested, providing a reasonable estimate as to when the records will be available, or by denying the request. Five day response begins one working day after receipt of request.

SIGNATURE: ______________________________________

FOR STAFF USE ONLY
Please complete pertinent information and forward original to Public Records Officer

DATE RECEIVED: ________________
RECEIVED BY: __________________
FORWARD ORIGINAL TO: P.R.O.
Public Records Officer
REQUEST NO: __________________
RESPOND BY DATE: ______________
COMMENTS: ____________________
# OF PAGES: ____________________
COST: _________________________
RESPONSE DATE: ______________

There is no fee for inspecting public records. The Housing Opportunities of SW WA. charges $0.20 per page for a color photocopy of a record selected by a requestor. Before beginning to make copies the P.R.O. may require a deposit of up to ten percent. The P.R.O. may also require the payment of the remainder of the copying costs before providing all the records. The Housing Opportunities of SW WA. does not charge sales tax when it makes copies of public records. Cash, check, money order accepted forms of payment.