

Data Practices Policy Guide for Requesting Information about You

Freeborn County

This document also discusses your rights when government entities collect and keep information about you. Minnesota Statutes, Section 13.05, Subdivision 8, requires us to have this document.

Adopted, January 4, 2011

Data about You

The Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) says that data subjects have certain rights related to a government entity collecting, creating and keeping government data about them. You are the subject of data when you can be identified from the data. Government data is a term that means all recorded information a government entity has, including paper, email, CD-ROMs, photographs etc.

Classification of Data about You

The Data Practices Act presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law says that the data are not public. Data about you are classified by state law as public, private or confidential. See below for some examples:

Public data: We must give public data to anyone who asks; it does not matter who is asking for the data or why. The following is an example of public data about you: if you are an employee of a government entity, the fact that you work for the entity, and your job title and bargaining unit is public.

Private data: We cannot give private data to the general public but you have access when the data are about you. The following is an example of private data about you: your social security number. We can share your private data with you, with someone who has your permission, with Freeborn County staff who need the data to do their work and as permitted by law or court order.

Confidential data: Confidential data have the most protection. Neither the public nor you can get access even when the confidential data are about you. The following is an example of confidential data about you: if you register a complaint with a government entity concerning violations of state laws or local ordinances concerning the use of real property, your identity is confidential. We can share confidential data about you with Freeborn County staff who need the data to do their work and to others as permitted by law or court order. We cannot give you access to confidential data.

Your Rights Under the Data Practices Act

Freeborn County must keep all government data in a way that makes it easy for you to access data about you. Also, we can collect and keep only those data about you that we need for administering and managing programs that are permitted by law. As a data subject, you have the following rights.

Your Access to Your Data: You have the right to look at (inspect), free of charge, public and private data that we keep about you. You also have the right to get copies of public and private data about you. The Data Practices Act allows us to charge for

copies. You have the right to look at data, free of charge, before deciding to request copies.

Also, if you ask, we will tell you whether we keep data about you and whether the data are public, private or confidential.

As a parent, you have the right to look at and get copies of public and private data about your minor children (under the age of 18). As a legally appointed guardian, you have the right to look at and get copies of public and private data about an individual for whom you are appointed guardian.

Minors have the right to ask Freeborn County not to give data about them to their parent or guardian. If you are a minor, we will tell you that you have this right. We may ask you to put your request in writing and to include the reasons that we should deny your parents access to the data. We will make the final decision about your request based on your best interests. NOTE: Minors do not have this right if the data in question are educational data maintained by an educational agency or institution.

When We Collect Data from You: When we ask you to provide data about yourself that are not public, we must give you a notice. The notice is sometimes called a Tennessee warning. The notice controls what we do with the data that we collect from you. Usually, we can use and release the data only in the ways described in the notice.

We will ask for your written permission if we need to use or release private data about you in a different way or if you ask us to release the data to another person. This permission is called *informed consent*. If you want us to release data to another person, you must use the consent form we provide.

Protecting your Data: The Data Practices Acts requires us to protect your data. We have established appropriate safeguards to ensure that your data are safe.

When your Data are Inaccurate and/or Incomplete: You have the right to challenge the accuracy and/or completeness of public and private data about you. You also have the right to appeal our decision. If you are a minor, your parent or guardian has the right to challenge data about you.

How to Make a Request for Your Data

To look at data, or request copies of data that Freeborn County keeps about you, your minor children or an individual for whom you have been appointed legal guardian, make a written request. Make your request for data to the appropriate individual listed in the Data Practices Contacts document (Appendix A). You may make your written request by mail or in person using the data request form (Appendix C).

If you choose not to use the Data Request form, your written request should include:

- that you are making a request, under the Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) as a data subject for data about you;
- whether you would like to inspect the data, have copies of the data or both;
- a clear description of the data you would like to inspect or have copied; and
- identifying information that proves you are the data subject, or data subject's parent/guardian.

Freeborn County requires proof of your identity before we can respond to your request for data. If you are requesting data about your minor child, you must show that you are the minor's parent. If you are a guardian, you must show legal documentation of your guardianship. Please see the Standards for Verifying Identity document located in Appendix C.

How We Respond to a Data Request

Once you make your written request, we will work to process your request. If it is not clear what data you are requesting, we will ask you for clarification.

- If we do not have the data, we will notify you in writing within 10 business days.
- If we have the data, but the data are confidential or private data that are not about you, we will notify you in writing within 10 business days and state which specific laws say you cannot access the data.
- If we have the data and the data are public or private data about you we will respond to your request within 10 business days by doing one of the following:
 - arrange a date, time and place to inspect the data, for free, if your request is to look at the data, or
 - provide you with copies of the data within 10 business days. You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail or fax them to you. We will provide electronic copies (such as email or CD-ROM) upon request if we keep the data in electronic format. Information about copy charges is in Appendix B. We will also arrange for you to pre-pay for the copies.

After we have provided you with access to data about you, we do not have to show you the data again for 6 months unless there is a dispute or we collect or create new data about you.

If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations or acronyms), please let us know. We will give you an explanation if you ask.

The Data Practices Act does not require us to create or collect new data in response to a data request if we do not already have the data, or to provide data in a specific form or arrangement if we do not keep the data in that form or arrangement. (For example, if the data you request are on paper only, we are not required to create electronic documents to respond to your request.) If we agree to create data in response to your request, we will work with you on the details of your request, including cost and response time.

In addition, we are not required under the Data Practices Act to respond to questions that are not requests for data.

Minnesota Statutes, Section 13.05, Subdivision 8 requires us to have this document.