

Freeborn County Data Practices Policy For the Public

Minnesota Statutes, sections 13.025 and 13.03 require this policy.



Adopted by the
Freeborn County Board of Commissioners
July 19, 2022

Your Right to See Public Data

The Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law says the data are not public. Government data means all recorded information a government entity has, including paper, email, flash drives, CDs, DVDs, photographs, etc.

The law also says that Freeborn County must keep all government data in a way that makes it easy for you to access public data. You have the right to look at (inspect), free of charge, all public data that we keep. You also have the right to get copies of public data. 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.

How to Request Public Data

You can ask to look at (inspect) data at our offices, or ask for copies of public data that we keep. Make a written request for the data to the appropriate person listed in the Data Practices Contacts document attached as Appendix A. You may make the written request for data by mail, email, or in person using the data request form attached as Appendix C.

If you do not use the data request form, your request should:

- Say that you are making a request for public data under the Government Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13).
- Include whether you would like to inspect the data, have copies of the data, or both.
- Provide a clear description of the data you would like to inspect or have copied.

You are not required to identify yourself or explain the reason for your data request. However, you may need to provide us with some personal information for practical reasons (for example: if you want us to mail copies to you, you need to provide us with an address or P.O Box). If we do not understand your request and have no way to contact you, we cannot respond to your request.

How We Will Respond to Your Data Request

Upon receiving your request, we will review it.

- We may ask you to clarify what data you are requesting. If we do not have the data, we will notify you in writing as soon as reasonably possible .
- If we have the data, but we are not allowed to give it to you, we will tell you as soon as reasonably possible and identify the law that prevents us from providing the data.

- If we have the data, and the data are public, we will respond to your request appropriately and promptly, within a reasonable amount of time by doing one of the following:
 - Arrange a date, time, and place for you to inspect the data at our offices; or
 - You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail or email them to you. We will provide electronic copies (such as email or CD-ROM) upon request, if we keep the data in that format and we can reasonably make a copy. We will also arrange for you to pre-pay for the copies.
 - Response time may be impacted by the size and/or complexity of your request, and also by the number of requests you make in a given period of time.

Following our response, if you do not arrange within ten days to inspect the data or pay for the copies, we will conclude that you no longer want the data and will consider your request closed. If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms), please tell the person who provided the data to you. 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, 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.

We are also not required to respond to questions that are not about your data requests, or requests for government data.

Requests for Summary Data

Summary data are statistical records or reports created by removing identifying information about individuals from entirely private or confidential data. The preparation of summary data is not a means to gain access to private or confidential data on individuals. Freeborn County will prepare summary data if you request it in writing and pre-pay for the cost of creating the data. Upon receiving your written request, we will respond within ten business days with the data or details on when the data will be ready and how much we will charge.