

Cleveland Municipal Court Public Records Request Policy

Mission Statement

It is the intent and policy of Cleveland Municipal Court (“CMC”) to at all times provide public access to non-exempt case documents and administrative documents, in accordance with the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio, enumerated in rules 44 through 47 (commonly referred to as the “Public Access Rules.”)

Public Records

A “case document” is defined to include any document submitted to a court or filed with a clerk in a judicial action or proceeding. Specific examples include exhibits, pleadings, motions, orders, judgments, journals, dockets and indices. Sup.R.44(C)(1).

An “administrative document” is defined as any document received, or maintained by a court that serves to record administrative, fiscal, personnel, or management functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, organization, or other activities of the court. Sup.R.44(G)(1).

If the requested record meets the definition of case document or administrative document and is not exempt from disclosure, there is a presumption of public access and the record shall be provided. Please see the non-exhaustive list of exempted disclosures below.

All public records shall be organized and maintained so that they are available for inspection and copying, during normal business hours, in accordance with the CMC’s record retention policy. CMC’s retention schedule is available on the 11th floor of the Justice Center in the Administration Department.

Record Requests

A records request in writing is not required, nor does the requester need to provide his or her identity or intended use of the public record. If CMC withholds, redacts, or otherwise denies the requested records or any portion thereof, an explanation shall be provided. If the initial request was made in writing, the explanation shall also be provided in writing.

All requests, whether written or oral, must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If the request is ambiguous or overly broad, the request may be denied. However, CMC shall inform the requester of the manner in which the records are maintained and accessed, so that the request may be revised.

Response Timeframe

Public records shall be made available for inspection promptly and within a reasonable period of time. “Prompt” and “reasonable” take into account the volume of records requested, the proximity of the location where the records are stored, and the necessity for any legal review and/or redaction of the records requested. If it is determined that legal review is necessary, the requester will be notified and directed to the Cleveland Public Records Center.

If the request is routine, it will be processed as soon as practicable. Routine requests include, but are not limited to, personnel rosters, salary information, meeting minutes, budget and financials, and case docket information.

Copying and Mailing Costs

The Court may charge the actual costs of making copies of records, postage and mailing supplies if delivered. The requester may choose the medium of delivery, whether paper or electronic if feasible.

As of August 2024, the Court's current costs are as follows:

5 cents per page of paper copy	\$1.00 per 5x7 photograph
\$2.50 per CD	\$2.00 per 8x10 photograph
\$3.50 per DVD	Flash drives vary depending on the size

If an outside duplication service is requested, all charges from the service are passed to the requester.

Examples of documents exempted from public access:

1. A document exempt from disclosure under state, federal or common law.
2. Personal identifiers.
3. Documents restricted by court order.
4. Certain records related to juveniles.
5. Notes, drafts, research, etc. of judicial officers.
6. Certain security information.
7. Test questions, or other material related to employment examinations.
8. Computer programs or software.
9. Secure information obtained from the Ohio Courts Network or LEADS reports.