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www.lakeorion.org

VILLAGE OF LAKE ORION PUBLIC SUMMARY OF FOIA PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

It is the public policy of this state that all persons except those persons incarcerated in state or local correctional facilities are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts of those who represent them as public officials and public employees. The people shall be informed so that they may fully participate in the democratic process.

Consistent with Public Act 563 of 2014 amending the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), Public Act 442 of 1976, the following is the Written Public Summary of the Village's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines relevant to the general public.

This is only a summary of the Village of Lake Orion's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines. For more details and information, copies of the Village of Lake Orion's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines are available at no charge at any Village office and on the Village's website: www.lakeorion.org/clerk/page/clerks-forms-applications.

1. How do I submit a FOIA request to the Village of Lake Orion?

- A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable the Village to find it.
- Please include the words "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the request to assist the Village in providing a prompt response.
- Requests to inspect or obtain copies of public records prepared, owned, used, possessed or retained by the Village of Lake Orion must be submitted in writing.
- No specific form of submitting a written request is required. However, a FOIA Request form for your use and convenience is available on the Village's website at www.lakeorion.org/clerk/page/clerks-forms-applications
- Written requests can be made in person or by delivery in person or by mail to the Village Administrative offices located at 21 E. Church Street, Lake Orion, MI.

- Requests can also be made by facsimile (248-693-5874). To ensure prompt response, faxed request should contain the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" on the first/cover page.
- A request may also be submitted by e-mail to villageadmin@lakeorion.org to ensure a prompt response, e-mail requests should contain the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the subject line.

2. What kind of response can I expect to my request?

- Within 5 business days of receipt of a FOIA request, the Village will issue a response. If a request is received by facsimile or e-mail the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day. The Village will respond to your request in one of the following ways:
 - Grant the request.
 - Issue a written notice denying the request.
 - Grant the request in part and issue a written notice denying in part the request.
 - Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the Village needs an additional 10 business days to respond.
 - Issue a written notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on the Village's website.
- If the request is granted, or granted in part, the Village will ask that payment be made for the allowable fees associated with responding to the request before the public record is made available.
- If the cost of processing the request is expected to exceed \$50, or if you have not paid for a previously granted request, the Village will require a deposit before processing the request.

3. What are the Village's fee deposit requirements?

- If the Village has made a good faith calculation that the total fee for processing the request exceeds \$50.00, the Village will require that you provide a deposit in the amount of 50% of the total estimated fee. When the Village requests the deposit, it will provide you a nonbinding best-efforts estimate of how long it will take to process the request following receipt by the Village of your deposit.
- If the Village receives a request from a person who has not paid the Village for copies of public records made in fulfillment of a previously granted written request, the Village will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before it begins to search for, compile, or make available the public record for any subsequent written request when all of the following conditions exist:
 - The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;

- The public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the Village's possession;
 - The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the time frame estimated by the Village to provide the records;
 - 90 days have passed since the Village notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing;
 - The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the Village; and
 - The Village has calculated an estimated detailed itemization that is the basis for the current written request's increased fee deposit.
- The Village will not require the 100% estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:
- The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the Village;
 - The Village is subsequently paid in full for all applicable prior written requests; or
 - 365 days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to the Village.

4. How does the Village calculate FOIA processing fees?

- The Michigan FOIA statute permits the Village to assess and collect a fee for six designated processing components. The Village may charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:
- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to nonpaper physical media or through the internet.
 - Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Village. Anything over 15 minutes will be deemed to result in an unreasonably high cost to the Village.
 - Labor costs associated with a review of a record to separate and delete information exempt from disclosure of information which is disclosed, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Village
 - The cost of computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media when the requester asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include copies of records already on the Village's website if you ask for the Village to make copies.
 - The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor.

- **Labor Costs**

- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments with all partial time increments rounded down. If the time involved is less than 15 minutes, there will be no charge, unless it's for a copy of a police report which incurs a \$5.00 fee.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid Village employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually performs work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits. The Village may add up to 50% of the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits, but in no case may it exceed the actual cost of fringe benefits.
- Overtime wages will not be included in labor costs unless agreed to by the requestor; overtime costs will not be used to calculate the fringe benefit cost.
- Contracted labor costs will be charged at a rate equal to six times the state minimum hourly wage.

- A labor cost will not be charged for the search, examination, review and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the Village. Costs are unreasonably high when they are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the Village's usual FOIA request, because of the nature of the request in the particular instance. Anything greater than 15 minutes is considered to result in an unreasonably high cost to the Village. The Village must specifically identify the nature of the unreasonably high costs in writing.

- **Copying and Duplication**

- *Non-paper Physical Media*

- The cost for records provided on non-paper physical media, such as computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media.
- This cost will only be assessed if the Village has the technological capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-paper physical media format.

➤ **Paper Copies**

- Paper copies of public records made on standard letter (8 ½ x 11) or legal (8 ½ x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$.25 per sheet of paper (single sided) or \$.35 (double sided). Copies for non-standard sized sheets of paper will reflect the actual cost of reproduction.
- The Village may provide records using double-sided printing, if cost-saving and available.
- Copies for non-standard sized sheets of paper will reflect the actual cost of reproduction

➤ **Mailing Costs**

- The cost to mail public records will use a reasonably economical and justified means.
- The Village may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- No cost will be made for expedited shipping or insurance unless requested.

5. How do I qualify for an indigent discount fee?

- The cost of the search for and copying of a public record may be waived or reduced if in the sole judgment of the FOIA Coordinator a waiver or reduced fee is in the public interest because it can be considered as primarily benefitting the general public. The Village Council may identify specific records or types of records it deems should be made available for no charge or at a reduced cost.
- The Village will waive the first \$20.00 of the processing fee for a request if you submit an affidavit stating that you are:
 - Indigent and receiving specific public assistance; or
 - If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence
- You are **not** eligible to receive the \$20.00 waiver if you:
 - Have previously received discounted copies of public records from the Village twice during the calendar year; or
 - Are requesting information on behalf of other persons who are offering or providing payment to you to make the request.

- An affidavit is a sworn statement. For your convenience the Village has provided an Affidavit of Indigence form for the waiver of FOIA fees on the back of the Village's FOIA Form, which is available on the Village's website: www.lakeorion.org/clerk/page/clerks-forms-applications.
- The Village will waive the fee for nonprofit organization which meets all of the following conditions:
 - The organization is designated by the State under federal law to carry out activities under the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act;
 - The request is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients;
 - The request is made for a reason wholly consistent with the provisions of federal law under Section 931 of the Mental Health Code; and
 - The request is accompanied by documentation of the organization's designation by the State

6. May a nonprofit organization receive a discount on the fee?

- A nonprofit organization advocating for developmentally disabled or mentally ill individuals that is formally designated by the state to carry out activities under Subtitle C of the Federal Development Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Mental Illness Act, Public Law 99-319, may receive a \$20.00 discount if the request meets all of the following requirements in the Act:
 - Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
 - Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under Section 931 of the Mental Health Code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
 - Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

7. How may I challenge the denial of a public record or an excessive fee?

- Appeal of a Denial of a Public Record
 - If you believe that all or a portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, you may file an appeal of the denial with the Village Council.

- The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal" and identify the reason or reasons you are seeking a reversal of the denial.
- Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the Village Council President will respond in writing by:
 - Reversing the disclosure denial;
 - Upholding the disclosure denial; or
 - Reversing the disclosure denial in part and uphold the disclosure denial in part.
- Whether or not you submitted an appeal of a denial to the Village Council, you may file a civil action in Oakland County Circuit Court within 180 days after the Village's final determination to deny your request. Should you prevail in the civil action the court will award you reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the Village acted arbitrarily and capriciously in refusing to disclose or provide a public record, the court shall award you damages in the amount of \$1000.00

- Appeal of an Excessive FOIA Processing Fee

- If you believe that the fee charged by the Village to process your FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law, you must first submit a written appeal for a fee reduction to the Village Council. The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal" and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted.
- Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the Village Council President will respond in writing by:
 - Waiving the fee;
 - Reducing the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee;
 - Upholding the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or
 - Issuing a notice detailing the reason or reasons for extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Village Council President will respond to the written appeal.
- Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Village Council President determination of the processing fee appeal, you may commence a civil action in Oakland County Circuit Court for a fee reduction. If you prevail in the civil action by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may award all or appropriate amount of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the Village acted arbitrarily and capriciously by charging an excessive fee. The court may also award you punitive damages in the amount of \$500.00.