



Village of North Baltimore Public Records Request Policy

Effective Date: April 9th, 2025

Section 1 - Purpose

The Village of North Baltimore is committed to ensuring transparency and providing prompt, reasonable access to public records in compliance with Ohio Revised Code (ORC) 149.43 and all applicable state laws, including House Bill 315 (effective April 3, 2025) and House Bill 265 (effective April 9, 2025). This policy establishes procedures for requesting public records, submission methods, applicable costs, and other statutory provisions governing access.

~~House Bill 315, effective April 3, 2025. This policy outlines the procedures for requesting public records, including submission methods, associated costs, and circumstances under which fees may be waived.~~

Section 2 - Policy Overview

Public records are defined under ORC 149.43 to include as documents, files, electronic data, or other materials created or received by the Village that serve to document its organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other official activities. Such records must be promptly prepared and made available for inspection and copying, subject to specific exemptions provided under Ohio law.

~~Public records are defined and governed under ORC 149.43, which provides for open inspection and reproduction of public records, subject to certain exceptions provided under Ohio law.~~

Section 3 - Inspection of Public Records

• Inspection of public records is free of charge during regular business hours, except for records requiring review or redaction, for which fees may apply.

• Law enforcement video or audio recordings requiring review, redaction, or editing may incur labor and material costs as authorized under HB 315 (up to \$75/hour, capped at \$750 per request).

• Appointments are required to ensure record availability and appropriate staff assistance.

• Records will be made available promptly per ORC 149.43(B)(1), with reasonable efforts to fulfill requests in a timely manner.

• Requesters may not use personal devices to photograph, scan, or video record public records

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during inspection. All inspections must occur under staff supervision to ensure proper care and security of the records.

~~Inspection is free of charge during regular business hours.~~

- ~~• Appointments are required to review records to ensure availability and proper assistance.~~
- ~~• Records will be made available promptly as required by ORC 149.43(B)(1), with reasonable efforts to satisfy requests in a timely manner.~~

Section 4 - Public Records Request Process

While a Public Records Request Form is available for accuracy and efficiency, under ORC 149.43:

- Requests do not have to be in writing.
- Requests may be submitted anonymously.

If fees apply, payment must be received before records requiring prepayment are released.

~~While a Public Records Request Form is available to ensure accuracy and efficiency, the form is not required under ORC 149.43(B)(5). Requests may be submitted anonymously and do not need to be in writing. No request will be denied due to anonymity or lack of a written form.~~

~~If payment is required, anonymous requesters may submit cash by mail or in person.~~

Submission Options:

- In Person/Mail: Village Administrator, 205 N Main St, North Baltimore, OH 45872
- Email: Nbadmin@northbaltimore.net

Request Forms Available At:

- Village Office: 205 N Main St, North Baltimore, OH 45872
- North Baltimore Police Department: 203 N Main St, North Baltimore, OH 45872
- Village Website: <https://www.northbaltimore.gov/org/>

Requests should include sufficient detail to allow reasonable identification and retrieval of records (ORC 149.43(B)(2)).

~~If using the form, the requester should provide sufficient detail to reasonably identify and retrieve the requested records, per ORC 149.43(B)(2).~~

Section 5 - Copying and Delivery Costs

- Standard Paper Copies – \$0.25 per page
- Flash Drive or other media – Actual cost of media
- Video/audio recordings – Labor charges allowed under HB 315 and actual material costs

Labor Fees for Law Enforcement Records (HB 315):

- Up to \$75/hour for processing, redaction, or editing
- Capped at \$750 per request
- No free access or fee waivers for individuals named in or involved in an incident

~~Public records are available upon payment of the actual cost of copying and delivery, in accordance with ORC 149.43(B)(6).~~

~~Fee Schedule:~~

- ~~• Standard Paper Copies — \$0.25 per page~~
- ~~• Records provided on alternative media (CD, DVD, flash drive, etc.) will be charged at the actual cost of materials.~~
- ~~• Video and/or audio recordings will incur labor charges allowed under HB 315 and ORC 149.43.~~

~~Section 6 - Prepayment Requirement:~~

~~For requests involving copying, delivery, labor, or redaction, an estimated cost will be provided before processing.~~

- ~~• Prepayment of estimated costs may be required prior to processing.~~
- ~~• If third-party redaction services are necessary, the actual cost will be charged to the requester.~~
- ~~• Accepted payment methods: Cash, check, or credit/debit card (during regular business hours).~~
- ~~• A \$25 prepayment is required for requests involving video/audio records, consistent with HB 315.~~
- ~~• If the actual cost exceeds the prepayment, the requester will pay the balance prior to release.~~
- ~~• If actual costs are lower than the prepayment, the unused balance will be refunded.~~

~~Labor and Additional Charges for Certain Requesters:~~

~~For individuals who are not directly involved in the incident, labor charges apply under HB 315:~~

- ~~• Labor Fee: Up to \$75 per hour, with a maximum labor charge of \$750 per request.~~

~~For individuals directly involved or named in the requested record, only material costs apply.~~

~~This applies to:~~

- ~~• Police reports where the requester is named.~~
- ~~• Incident reports involving the requester as a victim, witness, or involved party.~~
- ~~• Records requested by immediate family or legal representatives of deceased individuals directly referenced in the record.~~

Section 6 - Prepayment Requirement

For requests involving copying, delivery, labor, or redaction, an estimated cost will be provided before processing.

- Prepayment of estimated costs may be required prior to processing.
- If third-party redaction services are necessary, the actual cost will be charged to the requester.
- Accepted payment methods: Cash, check, or credit/debit card (during regular business hours).

~~Prepayment is required before processing, except where a waiver applies under Section 5. An estimated cost will be provided upon request submission.~~

~~For requests requiring legal review or third-party services, the requester will be notified in advance, and a non-refundable \$10 prepayment will apply. All prepayments are non-refundable regardless of the search outcome, per ORC 149.43(B)(6).~~

Accepted Payment Methods:

- Cash, Check, or Credit Card (during regular business hours at 205 N Main St).

Section 7 - Notification of Availability

Upon receipt of payment, records will be prepared promptly and made available for:

- In-person inspection during regular business hours
- Pickup at 205 N Main St, North Baltimore, OH 45872.
- Mail or electronic delivery, if applicable.

~~All in-person pickups must occur at 205 N Main St to maintain process efficiency.~~

Section 8 - Processing Time

Records will be provided within a reasonable period of time following receipt of prepayment, if required, in compliance with ORC 149.43(B)(1). Processing time will depend on request scope and complexity. Every effort will be made to fulfill requests promptly.

Section 9 – Incorporation of HB 315 (Effective April 3, 2025)

The Village complies with HB 315, which allows law enforcement agencies to recover labor and material costs associated with the production and redaction of video or audio records.

Section 10 – Additional Provisions under HB 265 (Effective April 9, 2025)

- Vexatious Public Records Litigators: Individuals designated by a court under RC 2323.52 as vexatious public records litigators must obtain court approval before making new requests. Identification may be required if such a designation is suspected.
- Exemptions for Public Service Workers: Certain records of designated current or qualifying former public service workers (e.g., police, firefighters, EMTs, OSR-trained staff) are exempt from disclosure, except to verified journalists.
- Complaint and Cure Requirement: Before initiating a lawsuit under ORC 149.43(C), a requester must first submit a written complaint to the Village and allow three (3) business days for resolution. Any subsequent lawsuit must include a written affirmation that this step was taken.

~~Section 9 – Incorporation of House Bill 315 (Effective April 3, 2025)~~

~~The Village of North Baltimore will comply with new provisions under HB 315, including:~~

- ~~• Allowing law enforcement agencies to recover labor costs related to processing video records.~~
- ~~• Updates to public records handling procedures for local governments, consistent with ORC 149.43.~~

Section 110 - Acknowledgment of Compliance

This policy affirms the Village of North Baltimore's dedication to transparency, efficiency, and full compliance with Ohio public records laws, including ORC 149.43, HB 315, and HB 265. The Village values the trust of its residents and remains committed to fair and reasonable public record access.

~~This policy affirms the Village of North Baltimore's commitment to transparency, efficiency, and compliance with ORC 149.43 and all relevant Ohio public records laws. The Village values the trust of its residents and remains dedicated to fair and reasonable public record access.~~