

Sample FOI Request Letter

As provided by the Illinois Press Association

Date
Name
Company Name (if applicable)
Address
Phone Number
Dear FOI Officer:

Pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.) and your agency's implementing regulations, I respectfully request access to [insert a specific, detailed description of the material you are seeking including names of reports, places or the period of time about which you are interest]. I believe these records are in the custody of [to the extent possible, identify the specific office/department/bureau where the records are located].

I am a representative of the news media employed by/affiliated with [name of company], and am requesting this information in that capacity for noncommercial purposes.

After the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies, which shall be provided without charge (5 ILCS 140/6), I am willing to pay up to a total of \$_____. Please inform me before my request is processed if you expect the duplication fee to exceed this amount.

OR;

As you know, the FOIA requires an agency to reduce or even waive duplication fees where the disclosure of the information is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of government. I believe the principal purpose of my request is to access and disseminate information regarding the health, safety, welfare and legal rights of the general public. I plan to use the requested information as the basis of an article on [identify the subject]. [Describe how your qualifications and the nature of the information you are requesting and the article to be published meet the fee waiver criteria described above.]

Therefore, I respectfully request a waiver of all duplication fees associated with this request. If you deny this request for a duplication fee waiver, I am willing to pay up to a total of \$_____, after the first 50 pages of black and white, letter or legal sized copies, which shall be provided without charge (5 ILCS 140/6). Please inform me before my request is processed if you expect the duplication fees to exceed this amount.

I believe that all of the information I have requested is subject to public disclosure pursuant the FOIA. However, if you decide to withhold all or part of the information requested, please send me a detailed statement of the reasons for this denial along with references to the specific exemptions of the FOIA you are claiming for each withheld document. I expect you to release all legally disclosable portions of otherwise exempt material.

Because I am making this request as a journalist and this information is of timely value, I would appreciate a response to my request within 5 working days as required by the Act.

Sincerely,
[SIGNATURE]

For a digital version of this sample letter, please go to:

http://illinoispress.org/images/stores/File/Access%20Laws/FOIA/sample_state_foi_request_letter.pdf