



Title: Open Records Policy

1. Purpose: To assure prompt and equitable service to citizens requesting access to public records, in accordance with the requirements of the Colorado Open Records Act, C.R.S. § 24-72-201, et seq.

2. Applicability: This policy applies to all County departments and offices under the authority of the Elbert County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). Adoption of this or similar policy by other elected offices is encouraged. This policy does not apply to criminal justice records or public records maintained by appointed or elected officials unless adopted by said appointed or elected officials.

3. Proponent: County Attorney

4. General Information: In keeping with the BOCC belief that openness and transparency requires that the business of County Government should be accessible to effective public review, this policy describes our implementation of the Colorado Open Records Act, C.R.S. § 24-72-201, et seq. ("CORA"). Therefore, most records are public and open for inspection. Elbert County's elected officials are the official custodians of records maintained within their respective offices. This policy pertains to all County Offices and Departments, *except* for the Sheriff's Office. This document is subject to modifications to CORA, or other State Statutes, which shall supersede any conflicting provisions in this document. Generally, and unless extenuating circumstances exist, properly requested records will be responded to within three working days.

5. Policy:

a. Access to Records. The CORA guarantees that the public has access to the records of government bodies at all levels in Colorado. Most records are public and open for inspection. Elbert County's elected officials and department heads are the official custodians of records maintained within their respective offices and departments.

(1) Public records. Public records are defined as "all writings made, maintained, or kept by the state or any agency, institution, or political subdivision for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law or administrative rule or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds." C.R.S. § 24-72-202(6). Criminal justice records are not included in this definition.

(2) Writings. Writings are further defined to include "all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics. Writings include digitally stored data, including without limitation electronic mail messages, but does not include computer software." C.R.S. § 24-72-202(7).

(3) General Information and Interpretation of Records. While the CORA does not require that any new public record be produced in response to a request, the County recognizes that altering a public record to remove information that can't be disclosed under CORA will not constitute the creation of a new record, nor does it require the County to interpret the meaning of documents provided in response to a request. However, the BOCC does expect that reasonable requests for assistance to better understand our county and its operations made by citizens will be addressed. Such requests, however, cannot be allowed to unduly disrupt the day-to-day activities of that specific office or department.

(4) Restricted Records. Records that are prohibited from disclosure under CORA or other statute(s) cannot be made available to the public. The County may also withhold certain private and/or financial information about individuals that will not be released except upon the approval of that individual.



ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Open Records Policy

b. Records Custodian. The custodian of records for Elbert County is as designated by each department head or elected official.

c. Physical Review of Public Records. Citizens may request to physically review publicly available county documents. The Custodian of Records and/or responding parties may set the location where the records may be viewed for inspection by the requestor. In no event shall a requestor remove records or add records to those provided for inspection, nor will photography or scanning be allowed of such records, unless such is being conducted by the Custodian of Records and/or responding parties on behalf of the County. Should the requestor desire to obtain copies of the records, the request shall notify the Custodian of Records and copies will be made at the rates set forth in the section entitled Applicable Fees.

(1) In order to protect the integrity of original public records, citizens may:

(a) Be supervised by a County employee within the area where the records are stored and/or maintained;

(b) Be required to review records in a designated area or be asked to schedule for a particular time of day in order to not unduly disrupt the day-to-day activities of that specific office or department;

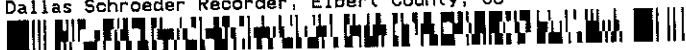
(c) Be required to submit the request in writing if the records custodian believes it is reasonable and appropriate based on the specific and unique circumstances of the request or will help us to better serve your needs for identifying the records you are requesting.

(2) Records that are prohibited from inspection under CORA and other statute(s) shall not be made available for public inspection. The denial of inspection shall be specific and based on reasons provided under CORA as listed in C.R.S. 24-72-204.

(d) Requests for Records.

(1) Citizen Request Procedures.

(a) To request public records, individuals may contact Elbert County Administrative Offices at 303-621-3138 to obtain the County's records request form, or download the request form from the County website. The County has determined that the use of an official request form to be used by the individual is necessary for the efficient handling of such public records requests. Completed request forms must be legible, with the records request form completely filled out and include the individual's full name, address, and contact information including phone number, email address, and the signature of the requesting party. In the event the requested documents are "confidential" under C.R.S. § 24-72-204(3.5) or may only be provided to a "person in interest" as that term is defined in C.R.S. § 24-72-202(4) as determined by the County Attorney, the custodian shall require the person requesting the information to pick the documents up in person and produce a valid Colorado driver's license or identification card and any other information required by CORA in order to obtain such documents. Because of the complexity of CORA, it is not possible to give an exhaustive list all of the categories of documents which may be "confidential" or may only be made available to a



ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Open Records Policy

“person in interest.” Therefore, applicants are encouraged to review CORA, including but not limited to, C.R.S. §§ 24-72-204(3)(a), (7) and (8), to properly determine whether documents may be made available to individuals other than the person in interest.

(b) Individuals requesting documents may do so electronically. Electronic requests must contain a copy of the records request form completely filled out and include the individual’s full name, address, and contact information including phone number, email address, and signature of the requesting party. Such electronic requests must be sent to openrecords@elebertcounty-co.gov. Any electronic request made outside the normal work hours will be deemed submitted at 9:00 am the following work day. In the event the requested documents are “confidential” under C.R.S. § 24-72-204(3.5) or may only be provided to a “person in interest” as that term is defined in C.R.S. § 24-72-202(4) as determined by the County Attorney, the custodian shall require the person requesting the information to pick the documents up in person and produce a valid Colorado driver’s license or identification card and any other information required by CORA in order to obtain such documents. Because of the complexity of CORA, it is not possible to give an exhaustive list all of the categories of documents which may be “confidential” or may only be made available to a “person in interest.” Therefore, applicants are encouraged to review CORA, including but not limited to, C.R.S. §§ 24-72-204(3)(a), (7) and (8), to properly determine whether documents may be made available to individuals other than the person in interest.

(1) Elbert County will respond to requests made pursuant to the Colorado Open Records laws within three working days of the date of receipt of the records request unless criteria exists for an extension of that time or such request is voluminous. The Custodian of Records shall set a date and time when the records will be available for inspection.

(2) Response to Requests for Records.

(3) The period of providing requested records for inspection may be extend up to ten days if the County determines that one of the following conditions exists and states such condition in writing to the requestor within the first three working days that the request was received:

(a) A broadly stated request is made that encompasses all or substantially all of a large category of records and the request is without sufficient specificity to allow the custodian reasonably to prepare or gather the records within the three-day period; or

(b) A broadly stated request is made that encompasses all or substantially all of a large category of records and the agency is unable to prepare or gather the records within the three-day period because:

1) The custodian or department needs to devote all or substantially all of its resources to meeting an impending deadline or period of peak demand that is either unique or not predicted to recur more frequently than once a month; or



ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Open Records Policy

2) A request involves such a large volume of records that the custodian cannot reasonably prepare or gather records within the three-day period without substantially interfering with the custodian's obligation to perform his or her other public service responsibilities.

3) If the public records requested are not in the custody or control of the Custodian of Records or the County, but has knowledge that another entity subject to Colorado Open Records Law is in possession, the party responding to the request to the Custodian of Record for that entity shall notify the requestor of this fact in writing.

4) An attorney should review all open records requests. The County Attorney is available to Department Heads and Elected Officials for review of each department's records requests. The County Attorney shall also review all open records requests for the BOCC unless otherwise reviewed by an attorney.

d. Format and Media for Delivery of Records.

(1) If the public record requested is stored in "sortable" or "searchable" formats, the County will provide the record in this format if requested. However, the County may refuse any request requiring data manipulation on the basis that CORA does not require manipulation.

(2) Responses to requests will be made via email of attached documents if possible in order to reduce expenditure of County resources and reduce costs to citizens.

(3) If records requested exceed 5MB of data, citizens will be provided the information requested on a USB Thumb Drive (USB) or alternative method provided by the County at the cost indicated below. In order to preserve the security of the County data network, under no circumstances shall a memory device or other media not authorized by the County I/T Department be used to transfer data to a citizen.

(4) If requested, paper copies of records will be provided and fees will be charged in accordance with the paragraph below.

e. Applicable Fees.

(1) Costs for standard photocopies will not exceed the limit set by CORA (currently \$1.25 per page) unless actual costs exceed that amount. Current amounts are as follows:

- (a) Copies (legal or letter) .25 per page
- (b) Color Copies 1.00 per page
- (c) Copies of Meetings (CD/USB) 5.00 per CD/USB
- (d) Copies of Meeting Minutes 1.00 per page
- (e) Applicable fees incurred from a third party (i.e., outside vendor).
- (f) USB drive or other media distribution method (\$5.00 for USB drive, or the cost of alternative distribution method)
- (g) Staff search and/or administrative fee associated with fulfilling a request (\$30.00/hr after one hour's time has been surpassed)



ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Open Records Policy

(h) Specialized equipment, technology, or other resources needed to fulfill a request (\$ the cost associated with procuring the equipment, technology, or other resources) should such accommodation be reasonable and not impose undue burden to the County.

(2) Elbert County seeks to meet public information requests in the most economical fashion possible. When applicable, an estimated cost of the requested information may be provided when requesting a substantial number of copies or research time by the Custodian is required. In the event research or retrieval of records is required, the fee for researching and retrieving requested information shall be \$30.00 per hour for employee time utilized (but there will be no charge for the first hour of time expended in connection for the research and retrieval of public records by a County employee), or the cost associated with any labor and fees required for an outside entity to complete such a request. The requestor may be required to pay all or a portion of the estimated cost before compilation of the information is performed.

f. Web Accessible Information. A great deal of information concerning Elbert County is available on the County web site, www.elbertcounty-co.gov. This information may help formulate an open records request or may provide the information being sought.

g. Periodic Review of Public Record Requests. On a quarterly basis, the Custodian of Records will review all requests made for records in order to identify such records which may be appropriate for regular publication on the County website in an effort to preemptively provide requested records. This will ensure that records of high interest to our citizens are easily available and reduce the workload associated with responding to individual requests for records.

h. Custodian of Records Contact Information.

- (1) Telephone: 303-621-3126
- (2) Physical Address: 215 Comanche Street, Kiowa, Colorado
- (3) Mailing Address: PO Box 07, Kiowa, Colorado 80117
- (4) Email Address: openrecords@elbertcounty-co.gov

6. References.

- a. Colorado Revised Statutes 24-72-201 et Seq, *Colorado Open Records Act*
- a. Colorado Revised Statutes 24-72-301 et seq, *Criminal Justice Records*
- b. Policy B-00, *Policy on Transparency in Local Government*.
- c. Policy B-03, *County Document Archives Policy*

7. **Adopted** April 10, 2019. This policy supersedes all prior policies on these matters in their entirety.

8. **Reservation of Authority:** The Board of County Commissioners reserves the right to alter, amend, add to, and/or revoke all or part of this policy at any time.

ADOPTED BY MOTION ON THE 10th DAY OF APRIL, 2018.



ELBERT COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Open Records Policy



CHRIS RICHARDSON, CHAIRMAN

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RICK PETTITT, VICE CHAIRMAN

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GRANT THAYER, COMMISSIONER

AYE

ATTEST: DALLAS SCHROEDER
COUNTY CLERK

BY: Amandawmoose
CLERK TO THE BOARD

