

**POLICY FOR OPEN RECORDS REQUEST TO HOUSTON COUNTY, ALABAMA**

Date Adopted: 10/15/24

Minute Book: 46 Page 127

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**POLICY:** To establish a policy for Houston County regarding requests for open records.

**PROCEDURE:**

It is the policy of the Houston County Commission ("Commission") to comply with Alabama's Open Records Act, as amended by Ala. Act No. 2024-278, effective October 1, 2024 ("Open Records Act"), to allow Alabama residents, as defined below, to inspect and take a copy of public records within the custody and control of the Commission, subject to the payment of reasonable fees, and to appropriate protections for private, confidential, privileged, and other nonpublic information. An Alabama resident requesting to inspect and take a copy of a public record (a "Requester") is required to comply with the procedures set forth below.

**ALABAMA RESIDENT:** For purposes of this policy, the term "Alabama Resident" shall have the same meaning as the term "Resident" under Ala. Code § 36-12-43, as amended, which states in pertinent part, that a "Resident" is an individual who is permanently domiciled in Alabama with an expectation to remain in Alabama as demonstrated by reasonable proof of residency such as, but not limited to, an Alabama driver license or voter registration.

**SUBMISSION OF REQUEST/PROOF OF RESIDENCY:** All requests to inspect and take a copy of public records ("Public Records Requests") must be submitted using the Commission's "Standard Public Records Request Form," a copy of which is attached to these procedures. The request must be accompanied by proof that the Requestor is an Alabama Resident. All Public Records Request and required documentation must be submitted in person, by the Requestor, at the following location, and to the below named public officer ("Public Officer"):

County Chief Administrative Officer

Houston County Commission

462 North Oates Street

Dothan, AL 36303

**PLEASE NOTE, DUE TO CYBER SECURITY AND SAFETY CONCERNS, THE COMMISSION WILL NOT RESPOND BY WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OR OTHERWISE TO ANY REQUESTS OR INQUIRIES REGARDING PUBLIC RECORDS THAT ARE SUBMITTED VIA UNSOLICITED EMAILS OR OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS.**

**AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT COMPLIANCE:** The Commission will provide effective communication as needed to ensure access to public records within its custody and control pursuant to the requirements of law and this policy.

**DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS REQUESTED:** In order to be able to respond to the requests, Public Records Requests must specifically and discretely identify the requested public record. The Public Officer is not obligated to respond to a request that is vague, ambiguous, overly broad, or unreasonable in scope, nor is the Public Officer obligated to respond to a request that seeks records that do not exist or materials that are not public records. The Public Officer is not obligated to respond to a Public Records Request that is not made pursuant to these procedures.

**DATE OF RECEIPT:** A Public Records Request will be deemed received when received at the location described above by the Public Officer.

**REMITTANCE OF ADMINISTRATIVE FEES:** A Requester will be required to pay estimated reasonable administrative fees before the Requestor may receive any public records. Additionally, in the case of a time-intensive request, as defined by the Open Records Act, the Requestor shall pay the fee set by the Public Officer prior to the initiation of a search for records responsive to the Public Records Request. If the total fee associated with processing a Public Records Request is more than the original estimated fee, the Requestor must remit any additional amount before the requested records will be provided.

Fees may be submitted in person or via the United States Postal Service or other common carrier (e.g., FedEx). Payment must be in cash, or via money order or certified bank funds (e.g., cashier's check).

Fees that are remitted in person or by common carrier (other than the United States Postal Service) must be delivered to the following address:

County Chief Administrative Officer  
Houston County Commission  
462 North Oates Street  
Dothan, AL 36303

Fees remitted via the United States Postal Service must be addressed as follows:

Houston County Public Officer  
County Chief Administrative Officer

Mailing Address:  
Houston County Commission  
462 North Oates Street  
Dothan, AL 36303

**QUESTIONS:** Questions regarding the procedures described herein should be directed to the Houston County Commission Public Officer by calling 334-677-4743 or by forwarding your inquiry to the mailing address noted above.



## HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION - PROCEDURES FOR PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

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Houston County Commission

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**DATE OF RECEIPT:** A Public Records Request will be deemed received when received at the location described above by the Public Officer.

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Fees may be submitted in person or via the United States Postal Service or other common carrier (e.g., FedEx). Payment must be in cash, or via money order or certified bank funds (e.g., cashier's check).

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462 North Oates Street  
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County Chief Administrative Officer

Mailing Address:  
Houston County Commission  
462 North Oates Street  
Dothan, AL 36303

**QUESTIONS:** Questions regarding the procedures described herein should be directed to the Houston County Commission Public Officer by calling 334-677-4743 or by forwarding your inquiry to the mailing address noted above.



## **HOUSTON COUNTY COMMISSION**

### **PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM**

DATE REQUEST RECEIVED (TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY): \_\_\_\_\_

REQUEST NUMBER (TO BE COMPLETED BY COUNTY): \_\_\_\_\_

#### **REQUESTER'S CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone number (include area code): \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Street address (if different from mailing address): \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Government entity to which Request to Inspect Public Records is directed: \_\_\_\_\_

**DESCRIPTION OF RECORDS REQUESTED:** PLEASE NOTE - Be as specific as possible. The County's Public Officer is not obligated to respond to a request that is vague, ambiguous, overly broad, or unreasonable in scope, nor is the Public Officer obligated to respond to a request that seeks records that do not exist or materials that are not public records. Additionally, extensive requests for public records may increase the fees to cover the administrative cost of identifying and copying the requested records.

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**ADMINISTRATIVE FEES:** Payment of estimated administrative fees will be required before your request is fulfilled. Additionally, in the case of a time-intensive request, as defined by the Open Records Act, payment of the estimated administrative fees must be paid prior to the initiation of a search for records responsive to the request. You will be notified of any estimated administrative fees and the procedures for payment once your request has been evaluated by the County's Public Officer. The cost for copies sized 8.5x11 or 8.5x14 inches is \$0.25 per page. Labor charges are in addition to the per page cost and are based upon the hourly pay rate for the employee who can respond or gather the records in question.

**CERTIFICATION AND PROOF OF RESIDENCY:** By signing below and submitting this request, you certify that you are an Alabama resident with standing to make a request to inspect public records pursuant to Alabama law.

For purposes of this request, a resident is an individual who is permanently domiciled in Alabama with an expectation to remain in Alabama as demonstrated by reasonable proof of residency such, but not limited to, a valid Alabama driver license or voter registration. **Proof of residency will be required in conjunction with the submission of this request.**

**SUBMISSION OF REQUEST:** Requests to inspect records in the custody and control of the Houston County Commission must be submitted in person during regular business hours at the following location:

County Chief Administrative Officer

Houston County Commission

462 North Oates Street

Dothan, AL 36303

**PLEASE NOTE, DUE TO CYBER SECURITY AND SAFETY CONCERNS THE COMMISSION WILL NOT RESPOND BY WAY OF ACKNOWLEDGMENT OR OTHERWISE TO ANY REQUESTS OR INQUIRIES REGARDING PUBLIC RECORDS THAT ARE SUBMITTED VIA UNSOLICITED EMAILS OR OTHER ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATIONS.**

Signed and certified this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_\_\_\_.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Requester

**Below this line for Office Personnel**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Proof of Residency Type:** \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Received by Public Officer: \_\_\_\_\_

(Signature of Public Officer)