

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

Date Adopted: 3/13/17  
Minute Book: 40 Page: 116

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**POLICY:** To establish a procedure for the county for providing copies of records requested.

**PROCEDURE:** In response to a valid public records request pursuant to ALA. CODE § 36-12-40, the following procedure is adopted for handling records requests:

- (A) Every citizen seeking to inspect or make copies of public writings shall complete and submit a Houston County Public Records Request Form, a copy of which is attached below. For records already governed by separate federal statute, state statute, or local act, the law for those records shall be followed.

When a public inspection of records is requested, a custodian of those records will oversee inspection, retrieval, and re-filing. Appointments must be scheduled in advance. A labor charge will be imposed as set out below. Charges for requests are based upon the hourly base rate of pay for the employee of the applicable department who can respond to the request and the hourly base rate of pay for a custodian of those records to oversee retrieval, research, duplication, preparation, and re-filing of those records, multiplied by the actual time worked, and is computed on the basis of quarter hours, rounded up. The standard rate of copies shall be \$0.25 per page plus expenses incurred in providing public writings, including retrieval, research, duplication, preparation, and re-filing time of the public writings. Labor charges are in addition to the per page cost specified above and are due and payable even if no records responsive to the request are located, or in the event the requested records are subsequently determined to be exempt from disclosure.

The Office of the County Administrator will provide the requestor with an estimate of costs. A deposit in the amount of the estimated cost will be required when the Office of the County Administrator determines that more than one (1) hour of staff time will be needed to respond to a request. If the final cost is less than the deposit, the difference will be refunded; if greater, the additional cost must be paid prior to delivery or review of the records. Deposits and final costs for records may be paid by cash, check, cashier check, or money order. Credit and debit cards are not accepted. If payment is made by cash, the exact amount is required; picture ID is required for payment by check.

- (B) Instead of the costs stated above and the form requirements provided in this policy, the judge of probate may elect to charge a flat fee of \$1.00 or more for copies of documents on record with the probate department, and the revenue commissioner may elect to charge a flat fee of \$1.00 or more for copies of documents on record with the revenue department.

**HOUSTON COUNTY PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST FORM**

**DATE** \_\_\_\_\_ **TIME** \_\_\_\_\_ **RECEIVED BY** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Initials)

**THE FOLLOWING MUST BE COMPLETED**

**RECORDS REQUESTED:**

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**NAME** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Print Legibly)

**ADDRESS** \_\_\_\_\_ **CITY/ZIP** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your stated interest in the Records Requested:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**COSTS:** The County is permitted by law to recoup reasonable costs incurred in providing public records which can include retrieval, research, duplication, and preparation time.

**INSPECTION OF PUBLIC RECORDS:** When a public inspection of records is requested, a custodian of those records will oversee inspection, retrieval, and re-filing. Appointments must be scheduled in advance. A labor charge will be imposed as set out herein.

**MATERIALS:** The cost of copies sized 8.5x11 or 8.5x14 inches is \$0.25 per page. Fees are due whether the records are provided by paper or by PDF file.

**LABOR:** Charges for requests are based upon the hourly base rate of pay for the employee of the applicable department who can respond to the request and the hourly base rate of pay for a custodian of those records to oversee inspection, retrieval, and re-filing of those records, multiplied by the actual time worked, and is computed on the basis of quarter hours, rounded up. Labor charges are in addition to the per page cost specified above and are due and payable even if no records responsive to the request are located, or in the event the requested records are subsequently determined to be exempt from disclosure.

**DEPOSIT:** The Office of the County Administrator Houston County, Alabama will provide the requestor listed above with an estimate of costs. A deposit in the amount of the estimated cost will be required when the Office of the County Administrator determines that more than one (1) hour of staff time will be needed to respond to a request. If the final cost is less than the deposit, the difference will be refunded; if greater, the additional cost must be paid prior to delivery or review of the records.

**FORM OF PAYMENT:** Deposits and final costs for records may be paid by cash, check, cashier check, or money order. Credit and debit cards are not accepted. If payment is made by cash, the exact amount is required; picture ID is required for payment by check.