

# **Saint Louis County Department of Revenue**

## **Information Request Policy**

**Effective January 2013**

### **Policy Statement**

It is the policy of the St. Louis County Department of Revenue that all public meetings, records and votes be open to the public unless closed pursuant to the provisions of Section 114.020 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County.

### **Scope**

This policy addresses those information requests outside the normal day-to-day course of business or those inquiries that can be answered readily from available systems or reports. It covers requests that require otherwise productive resources to identify, collect and report ad hoc information.

### **Objective**

This policy establishes the principles and guidelines for responding to the growing demand for data. It attempts to standardize our responses in order to be reasonable, fair, open and objective to all ad hoc inquiries. For those requests not specifically anticipated, it provides the framework to formulate an appropriate response.

Given the scarce resources available for ad hoc information requests, the policy also establishes guidelines for prioritizing requests from various constituents under various circumstances.

Finally, the policy delineates the processes and procedures that will ensure conformity to the principles and intent of the policy and Chapter 114 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County.

### **Data Request Response**

The Department of Revenue will make available any public record, unless closed pursuant to Section 114.020 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County. The following table outlines the type of requests normally received, our typical response, relative priority, and the normal cost basis.

<b>Type of Request <sup>(1)</sup></b>	<b>Response Policy <sup>(2)</sup></b>	<b>Priority <sup>(3)</sup></b>	<b>Cost Basis <sup>(4)</sup></b>
Legal Discovery	As directed by the County Counselor's office; if timeframe appears unreasonable, consult immediately with attorney working on the case.	1	There is no charge unless request represents an undue burden and the parties agree or the court grants relief.
Subpoena	Any must be honored in the timeframe stipulated, unless agreed otherwise by the requesting attorney. The requesting attorney may be asked to modify his request if the information requested is not readily or easily available, but ultimately we are obligated to respond to the subpoena unless relief is approved by the issuer of the subpoena or by the court.	1	There is no charge, unless request represents an undue burden and the parties agree or the court grants relief.
Sunshine Law	Any request for records must be responded to in accordance with Section 114.060 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County. Whether the information requested is provided or not will depend on the specific request. A response is required within three days either providing the information, indicating when the information may be expected, or detailing why the information will not be provided.	2	Prices are stipulated by the Sunshine law and Section 114.070 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County.
Government Office/Agency	Any request for data not covered by existing reports or online systems must be documented and prioritized with other pending requests. Priority will be set by the immediacy of need and the authority of the office.	2	No charge, unless request creates undue burden and is not statutorily required.
Taxing Authority	Any request for data not covered by the various regularly scheduled Taxing	2	New report development or data requests will be charged actual production costs, unless it is

	Authority reports must be submitted in writing, preferably on the Data Request form posted on the Taxing Authority website. Requests will be prioritized and addressed as time permits. Priority will be given to requests with the broadest applicability and to Districts with the least recent requests.		determined to be a report with enough future demand to amortize its cost over future requests. There is no charge for any report that is –or has become—a regularly scheduled report.
Media	Any request for information beyond what is provided in news releases, during interviews, or from publicly available reports should be treated as a request under the Sunshine Law (whether or not submitted in writing) and responded to with the same attention and timeliness.	2	Prices are stipulated by the Sunshine law and Section 114.070 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County. The Director may waive or reduce such costs if he determines that such waiver or reduction is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of St. Louis County and is not primarily in the commercial interest of the requester.

- (1) Type of Request: Indicates the form and/or source of the request; where a particular request could fall under more than one category (e.g. taxing authority submitting a Sunshine request) the higher priority category governs the response.
- (2) Response Policy: Describes our typical response to this type of request.
- (3) Priority: Attempts to provide guidelines for allocating resources that may be available to work on ad hoc requests; the priority codes used can be described qualitatively as:

1	Legal obligations represented by a court order or other judgment; must be responded to in the appropriate timeframe, maintaining communication with the legal department, particularly regarding delays or extenuating circumstances
2	Obligations to produce information with due diligence, but without specific time deadline; however, response <u>is</u> required within three days regarding our disposition of the request.

- (4) Cost Basis: Indicates if and how we would charge for producing the requested information.

## **Administration**

Diligent adherence to the policy and Chapter 114 of the Revised Ordinances of St. Louis County provides an objective standard for communicating our response to constituents. Consequently, all requests for information will be tracked to assure consistent and timely responses.

## **Responsibilities**

The Public Information Coordinator acts as Custodian of Records for official Sunshine Law requests. Based on the information provided by the relevant division personnel, the PIC will draft a reply and track the delivery of reports, documents or other information.

The County Counselor's Office handles all communication regarding any Discovery Request or Subpoena relative to any suit in which the County or its representative is a named party. Any subpoena to provide routine department documents or records may be handled directly by the Division Managers or PIC.

## **Request Process**

All requests should receive an acknowledgement within three days.

No outside person or agency may have access to original documents without supervision.

## **Data & Information Request Pricing Table**

Unless otherwise stipulated by statute or ordinance, the following table indicates the charges for various data and document requests from the Department of Revenue/Assessor's Office.

For comparative purposes, this table includes day-to-day charges not typically covered by this Data Request Policy. **The charges are per record.**

For example: If you order property record cards for two different properties, each with three pages, you will encounter charges for two separate documents, totaling \$2.40.

<b>Product</b>	<b>Price</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Paper copy of currently available bill, receipt, property record, report, file documents or recorded documents	<u>Up to 25 pages:</u> \$1.00 for first page and \$.10 each additional page. <u>Over 25 pages:</u> Actual time at current standard rate plus \$.10 per page	Applies to any 'on hand' documents whether available by computer or hard file.
Paper copy of archived documents or files	<u>Up to 4 files:</u> \$4.00 for first page; \$.10 each additional page. <u>More than 4 files:</u> Actual time at current standard rate plus \$.10 per page	Applies to any documents that are not immediately accessible, requiring physical retrieval from storage or archive files.

Product	Price	Comment
Electronically provided documents – via email or CD/DVD	Hourly rate for staff time, plus cost of the disk, tape, or other medium used for duplication. If programming is required beyond the customary and usual level to comply with a request for records, the price will include the actual costs of such programming.	Files will be delivered in either PDF or CSV format. CSV is recognized by Microsoft Excel and most other common data processing software. Delivery will be based on the actual time required to fulfill the request and availability of computer resources.
Recorded documents	Prices set by statute for Recorder of Deeds	

**Large Records Requests**

Large records requests are subject to availability of resources and are filled as time allows.

**Payment**

All requests totaling over \$30.00 must be accompanied by a down payment of half of the price estimated before work on the request will start.