

**PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY
FOR
Town of Coopertown
November 21, 2025**

PURSUANT TO Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(g), the following Public Records Policy for Town of Coopertown is hereby adopted by the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to provide economical and efficient access to public records as provided under the Tennessee Public Records Act (TPRA) in Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-501 et seq.

The TPRA provides that all state, county, and municipal records shall, at all times, during business hours, be open for inspection to any citizen of this State and those in charge of the records and shall refuse such right of inspection to any citizen, unless otherwise provided by state law. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(2)(A). Accordingly, the public records of Town of Coopertown are presumed to be open for inspection unless otherwise provided by law.

Personnel of the Town of Coopertown shall timely and efficiently provide access and assistance to persons requesting to view or receive copies of public records. No provisions of this Policy shall be used to hinder access to open public records. However, the integrity and organization of public records, as well as the efficient and safe operation of the Town of Coopertown, shall be protected as provided by current law. Concerns about this Policy shall be addressed to the Public Records Request Coordinator for the Town of Coopertown or to the Tennessee Office of Open Records Council ("OORC").

This Policy is available for inspection and duplication in the office of the Town of Coopertown City Hall. Additionally, this Policy is posted online at www.coopertowntn.org. This policy shall be reviewed periodically as needed.

This Policy shall be applied consistently throughout the various offices, departments, and/or divisions of Town of Coopertown.

I. Definitions

- A. Records Custodian: The office, official or employee lawfully responsible for the direct custody and care of a public record. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(1)(C). The Records Custodian is not necessarily the original preparer or receiver of the record.
- B. Public Records: All documents, papers, letters, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material in connection with the transaction of official business by any governmental agency. See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(1)(A).
- C. Public Records Request Coordinator: The individual, or individuals, designated in Section III, A.3 of this Policy who has, or have, the responsibility to ensure public record requests are routed to the appropriate Records Custodian and are fulfilled in accordance with the TPRA.

See Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(a)(1)(B). The Public Records Request Coordinator may also be a Records Custodian.

- D. Requestor: A person seeking access to a public record, whether it is for inspection or duplication.

II. Requesting Access to Public Records

- A. Public records requests shall be made to the Public Records Request Coordinator (“PRRC”) or their designee. You may find a copy of our Public Records Request Form A on our website www.coopertowntn.org under City Hall.
- B. Requests for inspection only cannot be required to be made in writing. The PRRC should request a mailing or email address from the requestor for providing any written communication required in the TPRA.
- C. Requests for inspection may be made orally or in writing using the attached Public Records Request form at Coopertown City Hall, 5153 Burgess Gower Rd., Coopertown, TN 37172 or by phone by calling 615-382-4470.
- D. Requests for copies or requests for inspection shall be made orally or in writing by using the attached Public Records Request form downloaded at www.coopertowntn.org under City Hall, Public Records Request, or in person at Coopertown City Hall, 5153 Burgess Gower Rd., Coopertown, TN 37172.
- E. Proof of Tennessee citizenship by presentation of a valid Tennessee driver’s license (or a state issued picture ID) is required as a condition to inspect or receive copies of public records, unless an out-of-state Agency is requesting a personnel file for a former employee who is applying for a job with the Requestor’s Agency.

III. Responding to Public Records Requests

A. Public Record Request Coordinator

1. The PRRC shall review public records requests and make an initial determination of the following:
 - a. If the requestor provided evidence of Tennessee citizenship;
 - b. If the records requested are described with sufficient specificity to identify them; and,
 - c. If the Governmental Entity is the custodian of the records

2. The PRRC shall acknowledge receipt of the request and take any of the following appropriate action(s).
 - a. Advise the requestor of this Policy and the elections made regarding:
 - i. Proof of Tennessee citizenship;
 - ii. Form(s) required for copies;
 - iii. Fees (and labor threshold and waivers, if applicable); and,
 - iv. Aggregation of multiple or frequent requests
 - b. If appropriate, deny the request in writing, providing the appropriate ground such as one of the following:
 - i. The requestor is not, or has not presented evidence of being, a Tennessee Citizen, unless an out-of-state Agency is requesting a personnel file for a former employee who is applying for a job with the Requestor's Agency;
 - ii. The request lacks specificity. (Offer to assist in clarification);
 - iii. An exception makes the records not subject to disclosure under the TPRA. (Provide the exception in written denial);
 - iv. The Governmental Entity is not the custodian of the requested records; or,
 - v. The records do not exist.
 - c. If appropriate, contact the requestor to see if the request can be narrowed.
 - d. Forward the Public Records Request to the appropriate Records Custodian in the Town of Coopertown.
 - e. If requested records are in the custody of a different governmental entity, and the PRRC knows the correct governmental entity, advise the requestor of the correct governmental entity and PRRC for that entity if known.
3. The designated PRRC(s) is (are):
 - a. Position: City Recorder or Designee
 - b. Contact information: Town of Coopertown City Hall, 5153 Burgess Gower Rd., Coopertown, TN 37172, Phone 615-382-4470 email: recorder@coopertowntn.org, or Fax: 615-382-4439

4. The PRRC(S) shall report to the governing authority on an annual basis about the Governmental Entity's compliance with the TPRA pursuant to this Policy and shall make recommendations, if any, for improvement or changes to this Policy.

B. Records Custodian

1. Upon receiving a public records request, a Records Custodian shall promptly make requested public records available in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503. If the Records Custodian is uncertain that an applicable exemption applies, the Records Custodian may consult with the PRRC, council, or the OORC.
2. If not practicable to promptly provide requested records because additional time is necessary to determine whether the requested records exist; to search for, retrieve, or otherwise gain access to records; to determine whether the records are open; to redact records; or for other similar reasons, then a Records Custodian shall within seven (7) business days from the Records Custodian's receipt of the request, send the requestor a completed Public Records Request Response Form which is attached as Form B.

Based on the form developed by the OORC.

3. If a Records Custodian denies a public record request, he or she shall deny the request in writing as provided in Section III.A.2.b using the Public Records Request Response Form B.
4. If a Records Custodian reasonably determines production of records should be regimented because the records request is for a large volume of records, or additional time necessary to prepare the records for access, the Records Custodian shall use the Public Records Request Response Form B to notify the requestor that production of the records will be in segments and that a records production schedule will be provided as expediently as practicable. If appropriate, the Records Custodian should contact the requestor to see if the request can be narrowed.
5. If a Records Custodian discovers records responsive to a records request where omitted, the Records Custodian should contact the requestor concerning the omission and produce the records as quickly as practicable.

C. Redaction

1. If a record contains confidential information or information that is not open for public inspection, the Records Custodian shall prepare a redacted copy prior to providing access. If questions arise concerning redaction, the Records Custodian should coordinate with the counsel or other appropriate parties regarding review and redaction of records. The Records Custodian and the PRRC may also consult with the OORC.

2. Whenever a redacted record is provided, a Records Custodian should provide the requestor with the basis for redaction. The basis given for redaction shall be general in nature and not disclose confidential information.

IV. Inspection of Records

- A. There shall be no charge for inspection of open records.
- B. The location for inspection of records within the offices of the Town of Coopertown should be determined by either the PRRC or the Records Custodian.
- C. Under reasonable circumstances, the PRRC or a Records Custodian may require an appointment for inspection of records.
- D. A requestor will not be allowed to make copies of records with personal equipment.
- E. The requestor will be supervised by a Town employee while inspecting records.

V. Copies of Records

- A. A records custodian shall promptly respond to a public records request for copies in the most economic and efficient manner practicable.
- B. Copies will be available for pick up at a location specified by the Records Custodian.
- C. Upon payment for postage, copies will be delivered to the requestor's home address by the United States Postal Service.
- D. A requestor will not be allowed to make copies of records with personal equipment.

VI. Fees and Charges and Procedures for Billing and Payment

- A. Fees and charges for copies of public records should not be used to hinder access to public records.
- B. Records Custodians shall provide requestors with an itemized estimate of the charges (using Form B) prior to producing copies of records and may require pre-payment of such charges before producing requested records.
- C. There will be no fees waived for copies or labor.
- D. Fees and charges for copies are as follows:

1. \$0.15 per page for letter-and-legal size Black and White copies
 2. \$0.50 per page for letter-size and legal-size Color copies
 3. Labor when time exceeds one (1) hour, \$25.00 per hour
 4. If an outside vendor is used, the actual costs assessed by the vendor
 5. There is no charge for document(s) reproduced on a thumb drive, provided that the thumb drive is new in an unopened package furnished by the requestor.
- E. Payment is to be made in cash, money order, or personal check payable to the Town of Coopertown, and presented to the Records Custodian.
- F. Payment in advance will be required when costs are estimated to exceed \$20.00.
- G. Aggregation of Frequent and Multiple Requests
1. Town of Coopertown will aggregate Public Record Requests in accordance with the Frequent and Multiple Request Policy promulgated by the OORC when more than four (4) requests are received within a calendar month (either from a single individual or a group of individuals deemed working in concert).
 2. When Aggregating
 - a. The level at which record requests will be aggregated is four (4) within a calendar month (whether by agency, entity, department, office or otherwise).
 - b. The PRRC is responsible for making the determination that a group of individuals are working in concert. The PRRC or the Records Custodian must inform the individual(s) that they have been deemed to be working in concert and that they have the right to appeal the decision to the OORC.
 - c. Routinely released and readily accessible records excluded from the aggregation include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Monthly meeting minutes