

**THURSTON COUNTY DISTRICT COURT
ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS REQUESTS
POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

POLICY STATEMENT

Thurston County District Court (the Court) will respond promptly to all requests for administrative records in accordance with General Rule 31.1, Access to Administrative Records. The Court handles administrative records requests consistent with the principles of open administration of justice and will make every effort to comply with the letter and spirit of GR 31.1.

DEFINITIONS

“Administrative records” are records that relate to the management, supervision or administration of the court. This does not include chambers records or case/court records.

“Case records” are records that relate to in court proceedings, including case files, dockets, calendars, judgment and sentence forms, orders, etc. They are also referred to as “court records” Public access to those is governed by GR 31.

PROCEDURES FOR REQUESTING ADMINISTRATIVE RECORDS

Public Records Officer

The Court designates the District Court Administrator as its public records officer. The public records officer is responsible for supervising and coordinating the court’s overall public records process in accordance with this policy, and may delegate tasks to appropriate court staff. The public records officer may be contacted as follows:

Thurston County District Court
2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Bldg. 3
Olympia, WA 98502-6045
Phone number: 360.786.5450
Fax number: 360.754.3359
Email address: thurstondistct@co.thurston.wa.us

Requests for Records

Requests for administrative records may be submitted in any of the following manners:

By mail: Public Records Officer
 Thurston County District Court
 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Bldg. 3
 Olympia, WA 98502-6045

By email: thurstondistct@co.thurston.wa.us

Delivery: Thurston County District Court
 2000 Lakeridge Drive SW, Bldg. 3
 Olympia, WA 98502

Receipt of Public Record Requests.

All public record requests must be addressed to the public records officer. Public record requests that are sent to other individuals will not be considered official public record requests and will not be subject to the timelines provided in any law, rule, or policy applicable to the request. Public records requests directed to other Thurston County staff may not be accepted. It is the responsibility of the requestor to provide the public record request to the public records officer.

Identity of Requestor

The person requesting a public record must provide his or her name and contact information. Requests that omit this information will not be processed.

If a request is made on behalf of an entity or other person, the requestor is required to provide all of the following information: the name of the other person or entity, the requestor's name, and the requestor's relationship with the other person or entity.

Providing Response to the Requestor

The public records officer will respond to the requestor within five court business days after receiving the request with an estimate of the time to complete and request and the anticipated fees to be paid. Both the timeline and fees are estimates and may later be revised. If so, the requestor will be informed at the earliest practical time. The requestor may also be contacted for clarification of the request.

The final response may be either of the following

- The responsive records and/or a statement explaining why any records or portions of records are being withheld;
- A denial of the request with an explanation for the denial.

The request will be closed if a response sent by mail or email to the requestor at the address provided in the request is returned or undeliverable and no other contact information has been provided or if the requestor does not pick up the documents within 30 days of notification.

Protecting Public Records.

Original public records shall not be removed from any county agency, except under the direction of the public records officer.

Electronic Records

Electronic records will be provided in a format specified by the requestor where practicable. The court does not warrant or in any way guarantee the accuracy or completeness of any public records that are sent electronically through the internet.

Records that require redaction or other manipulation may be provided in a format determined by the court and any corresponding fees may be imposed, including time for preparing redacted records.

Fees for Public Records. The court will charge a requestor for research time required to locate, obtain, or prepare the records at a rate of \$30 per hour for any request taking longer than one hour beginning with the second hour, and prorated in increments of 15 minutes. Additionally, a fee for photocopying or scanning of records will apply as stated below. The payment of estimated copying or production fees may be required by the court before

performing any work necessary to produce the records for the requestor. Payment will be accepted by check or money order. All fees must be paid before the documents will be delivered to the requestor.

Standard Fees:

- Fifteen cents (15¢) per page for standard, (8½ x 11), black and white copies.
- Thirty cents (30¢) per page for double sided copies.
- Ten cents (10¢) per page for scanned documents.
- Actual postage and shipping costs, including the cost of required containers.

Closing Withdrawn or Abandoned Public Records Requests.

The court may close, as completed, any public records request where the requestor failed to claim or review assembled records within thirty days of notification that the records are available for inspection or copying, or respond within 30 days to a request for clarification or other information needed to process a request.

Procedure for Review of Court Response

Any requestor who objects to their response may seek review by using the following procedure:

1. Internal review

- a. Requests for review must be in writing and include the requestor's name and address or email address, a copy of the public record request and a copy of the records officer's decision.
- b. Requests for review must be submitted to the court within 90 days after the response was completed. Requests for review are deemed untimely and will not be considered if they are submitted before the original request for records is closed or completed, or if they are submitted more than 90 days after closure or completion of the original request.
- c. Internal reviews will be conducted by the Presiding Judge, or by another judge that the Presiding Judge designates to conduct the review without a hearing.
- d. Internal reviews are administrative in nature and are not a court hearing.
- e. The internal review will be held within five business days of the date the request for review was received, if reasonably possible. If not reasonably possible, will be scheduled for review at the earliest practical date.

2. External Review

After an internal review is conducted, the requestor may seek external review under GR 31.1(d)(4). A request for external review must be submitted within 30 days of the issuance of the final decision of the internal review. There are two ways to seek external review.

- a. Civil Action. The requestor may use a judicial writ of mandamus, prohibition, or certiorari to file a civil action in superior court challenging the records decision.
- b. Informal Review by Visiting Judge or Other Outside Decision Maker. The requestor may request external review by a visiting judge. This request must be made in writing.