

# Open Records Act Request

## [Open Records Request Form](#)

As an instrumentality of the state of Georgia, Columbus State University is subject to the requirements of the Georgia Open Records Act (ORA). O.C.G.A. § 50-18-70 (2012). Although exceptions apply, ORA mandates open access of public records upon request and, when applicable, for a fee. Requests for records, regardless of whether they refer to the Open Records Act or whether the request is in writing, should be sent to or communicated immediately to Legal Affairs, Ethics and Compliance Division.

## Open Records Officer

Whitley Hall is the Open Records Officer for Columbus State University. In addition to the Open Records Request Form, open records requests can be sent directly to Mrs. Hall at the following address:

4225 University Avenue | Columbus, GA 31907 | [hall\\_whitley@columbusstate.edu](mailto:hall_whitley@columbusstate.edu) | 706-507-8904

## What to do when an employee receives an Open Records Request?

With some exceptions (such as requests for incident reports received by the Columbus State Police Department), requests received by university employees for records should be immediately forwarded to the attention of Whitley Hall, the University's Open Records Officer. Do not hesitate to inform anyone inquiring about access to university records that they should contact Mrs. Hall for answers to any questions or concerns they may have.

## Protocol for Handling Open Records Requests

Columbus State University is committed to providing customer-friendly service when responding to requests for public information. Open records requests can be conveniently submitted by clicking on the Open Records Request Form. Requests submitted via the Request Form are routed directly to OLAEC, the official and designated office for responding to open record requests.

## Response Requirements

The university has three (3) days in which to respond to open record requests by either producing the requested records when records are readily available or outlining the time frame in which it will respond to the request when additional time is necessary for search and review of the requested documents. Accordingly, university departments must work closely with OLAEC to ensure the university responds timely to the request, particularly when the search, review and potential production of documents might result involve the expenditure of significant university resources.

## Costs to Fulfill Requests

Under the Open Records Act, the university has the right to assess a reasonable charge for the search and retrieval of documents. The rate that can be charged is the salary of the lowest-paid full-time employee, who, in the discretion of OLAEC, has the necessary skill and training to respond to the request. There is no charge for the first 15 minutes of the retrieval time. If copies are requested, the requester shall be charged twenty-five (.25) cents per page. OLAEC reserves the right to waive some or all of the costs based on the specifics of the request. A prior waiver of fees does not guarantee waiver of fees for subsequent requests.

## Exemptions

ORA contains a number of exemptions which bar certain information and records from disclosure. OLAEC is responsible for assessing whether certain exemptions under ORA will apply to a specific request.