

# **Guide for Members of the Public Requesting Information**

**City of Watertown, MN**

This document is required by Minnesota Statutes, Section 13.025, Subdivision 2

## **Right to Access Public Data**

The Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law says the data are not public. Government data is a term that means all recorded information a government entity has, including paper, email, CD-ROMs, photographs, etc.

The Data Practices Act also provides that the City of Watertown must keep all government data in a way that makes it easy for you, as a member of the public, to access public data. You have the right to look at (inspect), free of charge, all public data that we keep. You also have the right to get copies of public data. The Data Practices Act allows us to charge for copies. You have the right to look at data, free of charge, before deciding to request copies.

## **How to Make a Data Request**

To look at data or request copies of data that the City of Watertown keeps, make a written data request. You may make your written request by filling in the Data Disclosure Request form – on Page 5. This form may be returned to City Hall in person at 309 Lewis Ave. S., by mail (PO Box 279, Watertown, MN 55388), by fax (952-955-2695), or by e-mail (info@ci.watertown.mn.us).

The City of Watertown cannot require you, as a member of the public, to identify yourself or explain the reason for your data request. However, depending on how you want us to process your request (if, for example, you want us to mail you copies of data), we may need some information about you. If you choose not to give us any identifying information, we will provide you with contact information so you may check on the status of your request. In addition, please keep in mind that if we do not understand your request and have no way to contact you, we will not be able to begin processing your request.

## **How We Respond to a Data Request**

Upon receiving your written request, we will work to process it.

- If we do not have the data, we will notify you in writing as soon as reasonably possible.
- If we have the data, but the data are not public, we will notify you in writing as soon as reasonably possible and state which specific law says the data are not public.
- If we have the data, and the data are public, we will respond to your request appropriately and promptly, within a reasonable amount of time by doing one of the following:
  - arrange a date, time, and place to inspect data, for free, if your request is to look at the data, or
  - provide you with copies of the data as soon as reasonably possible. You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail or fax them to you. If you want us to send you the copies, you will need to provide us with an address or fax number. We will provide electronic copies (such as email or CD-ROM) upon request if we keep the data in electronic format. Information about copy charges is on Page 4.

If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms), please let us know. We will give you an explanation if you ask.

The Data Practices Act does not require us to create or collect new data in response to a data request if we do not already have the data, or to provide data in a specific form or arrangement if we do not keep the data in that form or arrangement. (For example, if the data you request are on paper only, we are not required to create electronic documents to respond to your request.)

In addition, the Data Practices Act does not require us to answer questions that are not requests for data.

### **Requests for Summary Data**

Summary data are statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data on individuals. The preparation of summary data is not a means to gain access to private or confidential data. The City of Watertown will prepare summary data if you make your request in writing and pay for the cost of creating the data. Upon receiving your written request – you may use the data request form. We will respond within 10 business days with the data or details of when the data will be ready and how much we will charge.

### **Data Practices Contacts**

## **City of Watertown, MN**

#### **Responsible Authority**

Shane Fineran  
City Administrator  
309 Lewis Ave. S.  
PO Box 279  
Watertown, MN 55388  
(952) 955-2690  
(952) 955-2695 – Fax  
sfineran@ci.watertown.mn.us

## **Copy Costs – Members of the Public**

### **City of Watertown, MN**

The City of Watertown charges members of the public for copies of government data. These charges are authorized under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.03, subdivision 3(c).

Letter or legal size paper copies cost 25¢ for a one-sided copy, or 50¢ for a two-sided copy. Color copies are 50 cents for one-sided copy or \$1.00 for two-sided copy. You must pay for the copies before we give them to you. The City of Watertown will not charge for items sent electronically if they can be easily retrieved from the City's server and attached to an e-mail.

#### **Most Other Types of Copies – Actual Cost**

The charge for most other types of copies, when a charge is not set by statute or rule, is the actual cost of searching for and retrieving the data, and making the copies or electronically transmitting the data (e.g. sending the data by email).

In determining the actual cost of making copies, we factor in employee time, the cost of the materials onto which we are copying the data (paper, CD, DVD, etc.), and mailing costs (if any). If your request is for copies of data that we cannot reproduce ourselves, such as photographs, we will charge you the actual cost we must pay an outside vendor for the copies.

The cost of employee time to search for data, retrieve data, and make copies is \$50.00 per hour. If, because of the subject matter of your request, we find it necessary for a higher-paid employee to search for and retrieve the data, we will calculate the search and retrieval portion of the copy charge at the higher salary/wage.

## CITY OF WATERTOWN DATA DISCLOSURE REQUEST

A. Completed by Requester:

**The following information is required to determine if the requested data are public or not public. If the data are not public, additional information may be requested to determine if you may have access to the data.**

DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA REQUESTED	DATE REQUESTED

You are being asked to supply the following information that may be private or confidential data about yourself. The data will be used by this department and those employees whose job reasonably requires access to the data to determine if you have the right to access the requested data. The contact information will be used to let you know when the requested data are available. Refusal to supply the information may result in a delay of the availability of the requested data. If you refuse to supply the information then it is your responsibility to contact the necessary department to determine the status of the request.

REQUESTER NAME (Last, First, Middle)	
STREET ADDRESS:	PHONE NUMBER:
CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE	SIGNATURE:

B. Completed by Department:

DEPARTMENT NAME:	HANDLED BY:
INFORMATION CLASSIFIED AS: PUBLIC           NONPUBLIC PRIVATE          PROTECTED NONPUBLIC CONFIDENTIAL	ACTION: APPROVED APPROVED IN PART (EXPLAIN) DENIED (EXPLAIN BELOW)
REMARKS OR BASIS FOR DENIAL INCLUDING STATUTE SECTION:	
PHOTOCOPYING CHARGES: If there is no charge leave blank.  _____ Pages x _____ = _____	IDENTITY VERIFIED FOR PRIVATE DATA: Driver's License, State ID <input type="checkbox"/> Comparison/Signature on File <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (Attach copy of identification used)
Authorized Signature:	Date: