

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT POLICY

The California Public Records Act (“PRA”) is the basic law providing public access to government information and records in California. The fundamental guiding principle of the law is that government records should be disclosed unless there is a specific reason not to. This principle often requires a balance between the goals of preventing secrecy and protecting individual privacy.

Public records include any existing, identifiable “writings” concerning the public’s business, as defined by law. Examples of “writings” include letters, printouts, emails, reports, deeds, contracts, photos, electronic data, and videos.

Generally, any member of the public (persons and entities) can inspect or copy records subject to the PRA. Federal, state, and local public agencies, and their employees and agents, are usually not members of the public for purposes of the PRA.

Timing is crucial when it comes to PRA requests. The California Housing Finance Agency (“CalHFA” or “Agency”) has only 10 calendar days to respond and acknowledge receipt of a PRA request. While we do not necessarily have to provide information and documents within the 10 days, we do have to respond. This time is counted from the date the request is received by anyone in the Agency.

PRA requests do not have to be in writing. They could be phone calls or requests made in person. We cannot require the requestor to give us the reason for the request.

Sometimes the information requested must be kept confidential and we will decide not to release it, under certain exceptions or exemptions to the PRA. Examples include information or documents relating to pending litigation, some personnel records, correspondence with the Governor’s office, and documents that would be exempt from disclosure in a court action (like attorney-client privileged documents).

We must also sometimes coordinate our responses with other state agencies or offices.

All PRA requests should be immediately forwarded to the CalHFA Office of General Counsel, Attention: Public Records Coordinator. The Public Records Coordinator is specially trained to spot PRA issues, and will respond to all PRA requests.

Not all requests for information or documents are PRA requests. For example, very general requests for information are probably not PRA requests, and the Public Records Coordinator may refer these types of requests to the CalHFA Marketing Division. In addition, requests from the media may or may not be PRA requests, and the Public Records Coordinator will also determine how to process these requests.

More focused, specific requests usually are PRA requests, and these must be referred to the Public Records Coordinator immediately.

Any questions concerning the PRA can be directed to the Public Records Coordinator.

Revision History

Revision	Date of Release	Owner	Summary of Changes
Initial Release	July 01, 2004	General Counsel	New Policy
Revision	June 19, 2015	Privacy Program Coordinator	Updated processing procedures

143832-2 MDM