

PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY
FOR
METROPOLITAN LYNCHBURG/MOORE COUNTY

Pursuant to Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(g), the following Public Records Policy for **Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County** is hereby adopted by **Metro Council** 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, which for public hospitals shall be during the business hours of their administrative offices, be open for personal inspection by any citizen of this state, and those in charge of the records shall not 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 **Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County** are presumed to be open for inspection unless otherwise provided by law.

Personnel of **Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County** 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 **Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County**, shall be protected as provided by current law. Concerns about this Policy should be addressed to the Public Records Request Coordinator for **Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County** or to the Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel ("OORC").

This Policy is available for inspection and duplication in the office of County Clerk. This Policy shall be reviewed every two (2) years.

This Policy shall be applied consistently throughout the various offices, departments, and/or divisions of **Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County**.

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, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance or 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 record requests shall be made to the **Department Head** or his/her designee [or via online submission] in order to ensure public record requests are routed to the appropriate records custodian and fulfilled in a timely manner.
- B. Requests for inspection only cannot be required to be made in writing. The **Department Head** should request a mailing [or email] address from the requestor for providing any written communication required under the TPRA.
- C. Requests for inspection may be made orally or in writing [using the attached Form ___] at Metro Moore County Archives located at 241 Main St., Lynchburg, TN 37352 or by phone at 931-759-7068.
- D. Requests for copies, or requests for inspection and copies, shall [may] be made in writing [using the attached Form ___] at [physical location and mailing address for the request to be made]. *[If a form is required for copies, ensure it is attached to the policy as this is now required by Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503(g).]*
- E. Proof of Tennessee citizenship by presentation of a valid Tennessee driver's license (or alternative acceptable form of ID) is [not] required as a condition to inspect or receive copies of public records.
- F. *[If appropriate, describe where public notices, meeting documents, and frequently requested records are posted and readily available; describe any directive regarding posting of records online.]*

III. Responding to Public Records Requests

A. Public Record Request Coordinator

1. The PRRC shall review public record requests and make an initial determination of the following:
 - a. If the requestor provided evidence of Tennessee citizenship *(if required)*;
 - 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 (*if proof of citizenship is required*).
 - ii. The request lacks specificity. (Offer to assist in clarification)
 - iii. An exemption makes the record not subject to disclosure under the TPRA. (Provide the exemption in written denial)
 - iv. The Governmental Entity is not the custodian of the requested records.
 - v. The records do not exist.
 - c. If appropriate, contact the requestor to see if the request can be narrowed.
 - d. Forward the records request to the appropriate records custodian in [Name of the Governmental Entity].
 - 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. Name or title: **Department of Moore County Archives**
 - b. Contact information: *Metro Moore County Archives located at 241 Main St (office location), mail to (P. O. Box 206) Lynchburg, TN 37352. Office Number 931-759-7068 Fax Number 931-759-6394*
4. The **Department Head** shall report to the governing authority every two (2) years 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 or **Department Head** shall promptly make requested public records available in accordance with Tenn. Code Ann. § 10-7-503. If the records custodian or Department Head is uncertain that an applicable exemption applies, the custodian may consult with the **Department Head**, counsel, 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 ___, based on the form developed by the OORC.

3. If the Department Head 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.
4. If the Department Head reasonably determines production of records should be segmented because the records request is for a large volume of records, or additional time is necessary to prepare the records for access, the records custodian shall use the Public Records Request Response Form to notify the requestor that production of the records will be in segments and that a records production schedule will be provided as expeditiously as practicable. If appropriate, the records custodian should contact the requestor to see if the request can be narrowed.
5. If the Department Head discovers records responsive to a records request were 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 Department Head shall prepare a redacted copy prior to providing access. If questions arise concerning redaction, the Department Head should coordinate with counsel or other appropriate parties regarding review and redaction of records. The Department Head may also consult with the OORC or with the Office of Attorney General and Reporter].
2. Whenever a redacted record is provided, the Department Head 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 public records.
- B. The location for inspection of records within the offices of Metropolitan Lynchburg/Moore County should be determined by Mayor or the Department Head.
- C. Under reasonable circumstances, the Department Head may require an appointment for inspection or may require inspection of records at an alternate location.

V. **Copies of Records**

- A. The Department Head shall promptly respond to a public record request for copies in the most economic and efficient manner practicable.
- B. Copies will be available for pickup at a location specified by the Department Head.
- C. A requestor will be allowed to make copies of records with personal equipment. Only within the designated area where documents are stored or with supervision of the Department Head.

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. Fees and charges for copies are as follows:.

1. \$0.50 per page for letter- and legal-size color copies.
2. \$0.25 per copy for the other public records.
3. \$5.00 research fee to include the postage