

TOWN OF CANTON FREEDOM OF INFORMATION POLICY

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide clarification and guidance regarding Freedom of Information requests from members of the public. Except as otherwise provided by federal law or by state statute, the Freedom of Information Act, Connecticut General Statutes Chapter 14, guarantees public access to all public records maintained or kept on file by the municipality.

II. Policy

The goal of the Town of Canton is to courteously and promptly provide requested information in compliance with the law. Public records maintained in the office of the Town Clerk are available for public inspection during regular business hours. Certain records such as payroll records, employment records, vital statistics and other documents that contain confidential and personal information, including Social Security numbers and personal bank account information, are not open for public inspection. Full or limited access to these records **may** be available in accordance with the disclosure requirements established in the statutes. Any concern regarding whether a particular item may be disclosed should be promptly addressed to the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, and possibly then referred to the town attorney. Payment for copies of documents may be made as itemized on the Freedom of Information fee schedule of the Town of Canton. The Town of Canton's Freedom of Information Request Form should be completed for any document not readily available for public inspection in the office of the Town Clerk. These forms are available in the office of the Town Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer. Completed FOI requests will be promptly forwarded to the appropriate department(s). The appropriate department will respond to the requester within four business days either by providing the material, denying the request, asking for clarification of the request if needed, or if the requested material is voluminous or other difficulty is encountered, by establishing a reasonable date upon which the documents will be made available. When copies are not requested, individual departments may arrange (with the applicant) for public inspection of requested information subject to disclosure per statute.

Payment must be received prior to the release of the documents. Fees will be waived if the applicant is receiving public assistance or can show an inability to pay due to indigence. The Town of Canton has no legal obligation to, and will not perform analytical work, studies, investigations, calculations or program reviews, or create any document in response to a Freedom of Information request. If the requested information exists in the form of a document and is not in draft form, it will be provided, but documents exempted by law from release or availability to the public per, for example, C.G. S. § 1-210(b), will not be released or made available. Again, in questionable instances, consultation should be made with the Chief Administrative Officer, who may refer the matter to the town attorney.

Process

- (1) Freedom of Information Request forms may be filed in the office of the Town Clerk.
- (2) Requests will be promptly disseminate to the appropriate department(s).

- (3) Any questions regarding the legality of disclosure must be promptly addressed to the Chief Administrative Officer for possible consultation with the town attorney.
- (4) Within four business days the department shall provide the information, issue a letter to the requestor denying the request, ask for further clarification or inform the requestor of a reasonable date when the information will be available.
- (5) If no copy is requested, records subject to disclosure requirements as established in the statutes may be inspected upon arrangements made with the individual department.

