

PRA – AGENCY OBLIGATIONS: A STARTING POINT

Checklist FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



The Public Records Act (PRA) establishes basic procedural requirements that each agency must adopt. Use this checklist as a start for PRA compliance. For more information and resources visit mrsc.org/prs.

REQUIREMENT	COMPLETED
<p>Assign and Publicly Identify a Public Records Officer (PRO)</p> <p>Post the PRO’s contact information at the agency’s place of business, on the agency’s website (if any), and in any relevant publications (RCW 42.56.580).</p>	
<p>Adopt a Local Public Records Act Policy</p> <p>The local PRA policy should outline reasonable regulations for the agency’s handling of public records requests, such as the agency’s response process when it receives a records request. The policy must be prominently displayed (RCW 42.56.040).</p>	
<p>Publish a List of Exemptions and Prohibitions Found Outside the PRA</p> <p>Publish a list of exemptions and prohibitions to disclosure other than those listed in the PRA (RCW 42.56.070). For a list created by the Code Revisor of other Washington exemptions and prohibitions, see the Sunshine Committee webpage. For a list of other federal exemptions and prohibitions, see Appendix C of MRSC’s PRA publication.</p>	
<p>Maintain an Index of Public Records</p> <p>Maintain a current index of many types of agency records unless to do so would be unduly burdensome for the agency. If it’s unduly burdensome, the agency must adopt a formal order specifying the reasons why and the extent to which compliance would unduly burden or interfere with agency operations (RCW 42.56.070).</p>	
<p>Adopt a PRA Fee Schedule</p> <p>After a public hearing, establish fees for PRA costs, including costs for hard copies, electronic copies, and mailing costs. If determining actual costs would be unduly burdensome, the agency can adopt the statutory schedule (RCW 42.56.070 and RCW 42.56.120).</p>	
<p>Provide for a Review Procedure for any Denial of Records</p> <p>An agency must provide for review of a denial to inspect records. The review can be conducted by the PRO’s supervisor, the agency’s attorney, or any individual designated by the agency. Review is deemed complete two business days after the initial denial (RCW 42.56.520). Review is not a prerequisite for filing a lawsuit under RCW 42.56.550.</p>	
<p>PRA Training Requirements</p> <p>Every local elected official and every local government PRO must receive records training (PRA training concerning chapter 42.56 RCW and records retention training concerning chapter 40.14 RCW).</p> <p>This training must be completed no later than 90 days after elected officials and PROs take their oath of office or assume their duties. They must also receive “refresher” training at intervals of no more than four years (RCW 42.56.150 and RCW 42.56.152).</p>	

DISCLAIMER: This checklist is meant to provide summary information on basic procedural requirements of the PRA; the checklist is not intended to be regarded as specific legal advice. Consult with your agency’s attorney for guidance on specific situations.