

STATE AUDITOR'S OFFICE STUDY ON PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUESTS: PUBLIC RECORDS ACT REQUEST DATA COLLECTION

Additional Questions Received to Date, November 30, 2015

GENERAL QUESTIONS

Questions about participating in the survey

Q1: Should Washington risk pools or interlocal cooperative agreements public entities complete the survey?

A: If your entity is subject to the Public Records Act, please complete the survey. We strongly encourage all state and local government entities subject to the Public Records Act to complete this survey so we can provide the Legislature and other stakeholders with a comprehensive picture of the impact of public records requests on public entities across Washington.

Q2: Should Medical Examiner's Offices of counties be included in the survey as an agency or as a subpart of a responding agency?

A: Each county (agency) should determine the extent to which the survey is applicable to various offices or subparts within that agency. Medical Examiner's Offices may receive public records requests on occasion. Depending on their procedure for responding, requests might be appropriately counted at the Medical Examiner's Office or the agency level. It is likely that not all Medical Examiner's Offices process public records requests in exactly the same manner. Each county and Medical Examiner's Office should determine and coordinate how best to respond to the survey.

Q3: Should Associate Development Organizations (ADO) be included in the survey?

A: It is our understanding, based on RCW 43.330.080, that the Washington State Department of Commerce contracts with county-designated ADOs to increase the support for and coordination of community and economic development services in communities or regional areas.

If an ADO receives and responds to Public Records Act requests, that ADO should complete the survey. It may be that not all ADOs process Public Records Act (PRA) requests in the same manner, so the answer to your question will depend on the ADO at issue, whether that ADO receives and responds to PRA requests, and how the ADO responds to PRA requests. Please contact us at PRRStudy@berkconsulting.com if you would like to discuss your particular situation.

SECTION D: COSTS ASSOCIATED WITH PUBLIC RECORDS REQUESTS

Q4: Can you please tell me what is covered under "overhead costs"?

A: We are counting the following as overhead:

- Costs other than (1) direct wages and benefits of staff involved with responding to public records requests, and (2) direct supplies and services related to responding to public records requests. This

would include facility costs to house these employees, utilities, supplies, information technology, building maintenance and other costs that support these employees.

- Costs of central services or support functions shared across subparts of entities (i.e., departments, offices, units, etc.). This may include accounting, human resources, payroll, information technology, and janitorial services. Overhead costs include the salaries, wages and benefits of the employees who work in these departments, as well as utilities, supplies, information technology, building maintenance and other costs that support these employees.

You can use an estimated percentage of overhead that could be applied to personnel costs to get “fully loaded” costs of staff involved with responding to public records requests. It may be helpful to refer to the cost estimation spreadsheet – it is linked in the survey or we can also e-mail you a copy upon request.

SECTION E: CAPITAL OR ONE-TIME EXPENDITURES

Question E1

Q5: Many state agencies subscribe to Veritas Vault through WATech. They pay a per GB fee to WATech who then pays Veritas. Should subscribing state agencies count these costs in survey question E1?

A: Please do not include these costs in Survey Question E1 because the subscription is not a one-time cost to the agency. If the SAO decides to do a second phase to the current study or a separate study on public records requests, we may follow up with WATech regarding shared records management services to capture trends in the volume of public records managed by state agencies and related storage costs.