

# HOW TO

## Get a government record in DC

FOIA, also known as the Freedom of Information Act is a District of Columbia law that gives the public the right to access information from the DC government.

Under FOIA, DC Agencies must release information that is requested, unless that information is protected from disclosure.

### HOW TO WRITE YOUR REQUEST

Most agencies ask that you submit your request electronically to [foia-dc.gov](http://foia-dc.gov)  
But, for the D.C. Council,

you must email the request to [vnadal@dccouncil.us](mailto:vnadal@dccouncil.us) and [dguo@dccouncil.us](mailto:dguo@dccouncil.us) or send it via postal mail to:

COUNCIL FOIA OFFICERS,

Valerie Nadal, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Council of the District of Columbia

David Guo, Assistant General Counsel, Office of the General Counsel, Council of the District of Columbia

John A. Wilson Building,

1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 4,

Washington, DC 20004

Tel: (202) 724-8026

### SAMPLE EMAIL REQUEST

Dear [Name of FOIA Officer]:  
I am making a FOIA request for an inspection report number 12345, made by the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs, at 123 Main Street, NW, Washington, DC, on or about June 1, 2019. I am requesting the full report and the photographs (exhibits) attached to the report. I am asking for a waiver of fees in the public interest, as I am representing my Homeowner's Association.

Sincerely,  
Jane Resident  
[janeresident@gmail.com](mailto:janeresident@gmail.com)  
Mobile: 202-555-8888

### TIP #1: USE THIS LANGUAGE

To the extent [the agency] determines that any of the requested records are covered by non-mandatory exemptions (i.e., "may" but not "must" be withheld), I ask that you consider exercising your discretion to release the records, in accordance with the pro-disclosure purpose of the statute.

To the extent any of the requested records contain both exempt and non-exempt information, I trust that any "reasonably segregable" portions will be provided, with the reasons for each deletion noted on the record, in accordance with D.C. Code § 2-534(b).

### HELP! WHAT DO I DO?

I waited 15 days as the law required, and then the agency turned me down or asked me for a hefty fee.



Find out what the hang up is and if you can negotiate or narrow request.



Ask for everything electronically, and flash that flash drive.



Offer to sit down and review documents in their office.



Ask for itemized cost of fulfilling request and explanation of each item.



Contact D.C. Office of Open Government for help:  
Telephone: (202) 481-3411  
Email: [opengovoffice@dc.gov](mailto:opengovoffice@dc.gov)

QUESTIONS? CONTACT [DIGGINGINTODC@GMAIL.COM](mailto:DIGGINGINTODC@GMAIL.COM)  
WANT TO LEARN MORE? VISIT [DCOGC.ORG](http://DCOGC.ORG)