



CHAFFEE HOUSING

AUTHORITY

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OPEN RECORDS POLICY

Revised and Adopted August 2, 2023

1. Purpose. The policy of the Chaffee Housing Authority (the "CHA") is that the decision-making process is a matter of public business and may not be conducted in secret. All public records shall be open for inspection by any person at reasonable times, except as otherwise provided by law.

2. Authority. The CHA enacts this Policy under the following authority: the Colorado Open Records Act, C.R.S. § 24-72-200.1, *et seq.*, as amended ("CORA"); the Colorado Sunshine Law, C.R.S. § 24-6-401, *et seq.*, as amended; and *Glenwood Post v. City of Glenwood Springs*, 731 P.2d 761 (Colo. App. 1986).

3. Definitions.

A. *Correspondence*: A communication that is sent to or received by one or more specifically identified individuals and that is or can be produced in written form, including without limitation communications sent via electronic mail, private courier, U.S. mail, modem or computer.

B. *Custodian of Records*: The individual who shall be responsible for compiling documents, scheduling appointments for inspection, and for responding to any such public records request. The Executive Director is the Custodian of Records for the CHA.

C. *Electronic Mail*: An electronic message that is transmitted between two or more computers or electronic terminals, whether or not the message is converted to hard copy format after receipt and whether or not the message is viewed upon transmission or stored for later retrieval. E-mail includes electronic messages that are transmitted through a local, regional or global computer network.

D. *Work Product*: All advisory or deliberative materials assembled for the benefit of elected officials, which materials express an opinion or are deliberative in nature and are communicated for the purpose of assisting such elected officials in reaching a decision within the scope of their authority. Such materials include without limitation: (a) Notes and memoranda that relate to or serve as background information for such decisions; and (b) Preliminary drafts and discussion copies of documents that express a decision by an elected official. "Work product" also includes a request by a CHA official for the preparation of such opinion or deliberative materials. For example, if the Executive Director requests in writing that staff prepare material to assist the Board of Directors in a decision-making process, the written request shall also be considered "work product."

4. Protected Records. Certain records are protected under law from public inspection under CORA, including without limitation the following:

- Personnel files
- Ongoing investigations by law enforcement authorities
- Victim/witness information
- Social security numbers
- Juvenile criminal records

- Work product
- Correspondence sent to or received from the CHA's legal counsel
- Individual medical, mental health, sociological and scholastic achievement data
- Letters of reference
- Trade secrets
- Confidential commercial or financial data
- Names, addresses, telephone numbers, and personal financial information of past or present users of public utilities, facilities, or recreational or cultural services
- Records of sexual harassment complaints and investigations

5. E-mail. The CHA shall make all e-mail that constitutes a public record and is not protected from disclosure under CORA available for public inspection for a reasonable fee established by this Policy. E-mail correspondence of CHA staff may be a public record under CORA and therefore may be subject to public inspection. Exceptions to inspection may include e-mail which is covered by the attorney-client privilege, work product privilege or other privilege recognized by Colorado law.

6. Retention of Documents. All documents which constitute public records other than e-mail shall be retained in accordance with the Records Retention Schedule established by the Colorado State Archives. At the request of the CHA's General Counsel, the Custodian of Records may retain certain records after the retention period expires if those records are relevant to pending or imminent litigation involving the CHA.

7. Inspection.

A. *General*. Public records shall be open for inspection by any person at reasonable times, subject to the exceptions found in CORA. All public records shall be inspected at CHA's offices.

B. *Request Required*. A request to inspect public records must be written and submitted on the CHA's Records Request Form (attached hereto as Exhibit A), and sufficiently specific in scope to enable the Custodian of Records to identify the information desired. Requests for inspection of e-mail shall include the sender's name, the recipient's name and the approximate date and time of the transmission. If the Custodian of Records receives a request to inspect public records that is ambiguous or lacks sufficient specificity to enable the Custodian of Records to locate the records, the Custodian of Records shall, within 3 working days, notify the requesting party in writing of the deficiencies in the request. Any clarified request shall be considered a new request for purposes of this Policy and CORA.

C. *Review and Response*. Upon receipt of a request for inspection of public records, the Custodian of Records shall review the request and determine whether the requested records are voluminous, in active use, or otherwise not readily available. If so, the Custodian of Records, within 3 business days, shall notify the requesting party in writing that the documents will be produced for inspection within 7 additional business days, pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-72-

203(3). The notice shall state the reason(s) why the requested records are not readily available. Notwithstanding the foregoing, pursuant to *Citizens Progressive Alliance v. Southwestern Water Conservation District*, 97 P.3d 308 (Colo. App. 2004), if it is physically impossible for the Custodian of Records to comply with a request for public records within the time periods established by CORA, the Custodian of Records shall comply with the request as soon as physically possible.

D. *Making Records Available.* Public records subject to disclosure may be available for inspection as follows:

- In-person inspection may be requested by appointment, during regular business hours. If the requesting party seeks in-person inspection, the CHA shall retain control of the records at all times and a CHA employee shall be present and supervise the review. With permission, photographs may be taken and the requesting party can bring a duplicating machine, so records are not damaged and business operations are not disrupted;
- Paper copies by mail or pick-up
- Faxed copies; or
- Electronic copies by e-mail or an external hard drive provided by the CHA. If a requesting party seeks documents in a digital format, the CHA will comply with the following guidelines:
 - o If the digital format of the record is searchable, but not sortable, the Custodian of Records shall provide a copy in a searchable format.
 - o If the digital format of the public record is sortable, then the Custodian of Records shall provide a copy in a sortable format (such as Excel or a comma-separated values ("CSV") format).
 - o If a record is stored by a Custodian of Records in a digital format that is not searchable or sortable (such as a scanned or saved pdf), the Custodian of Records is not required to convert the record to a searchable or sortable format, but may provide the record in the digital format in which it is stored.
 - o If the record is searchable or sortable the Custodian of Records does not have to provide records in these formats if: (a) it is not technically or practically feasible after making reasonable inquiries to permanently remove information permitted to be withheld; (b) it is not technologically or practically feasible to provide a copy of the record in searchable or sortable format; or (c) the Custodian of Records would be required to purchase software or create additional programming or functionality of its existing software to remove information.
 - o If the Custodian of Records is not able to comply with a request for a public record in a requested format, the Custodian of Records shall produce the record in an alternative format and shall provide a written declaration as to the reason(s) for not being able to provide the information in the requested format.

E. *General Counsel.* Any of the notices required herein may be issued by the CHA's General Counsel in lieu of the Custodian of Records. By written notice, the General Counsel may further require that any requesting party contact the General Counsel rather than the Custodian of Records.

8. Fees.

A. *Copies, Printouts or Photographs.* Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-72-205(5)(a), the CHA shall charge a fee not to exceed \$0.25 per standard page for any copy of a public record or a fee not to exceed the actual cost of providing a copy, printout or photograph of a public record which is in a format other than a standard page. For purposes of this Policy, a black and white copy made on a single sheet of letter or legal sized white paper shall constitute a "standard page."

B. *Research and Retrieval Time.* Pursuant to C.R.S. § 24-72-205(6)(a), the first hour of research and retrieval time shall be free of charge; however, the CHA reserves the right to charge a fee of \$33.58 per hour for any additional staff time devoted to researching and retrieving the requested information. Anyone submitting a request for electronically stored public records shall remit a deposit equal to 50% of the estimated costs before the Custodian of Records commences the requested search.

C. *Postage/Courier Fees.* If the Custodian of Records transmits records by regular mail or courier service, the requesting party shall be responsible for the cost of postage or courier fees.

D. *Electronic Transmission Fees.* The Custodian of Records may not charge transmission fees to the requesting party for transmitting public records via e-mail. If the requesting party can be provided with documents in electronic format that cannot be altered, such as a pdf, documents may be provided to the requesting party on a flash drive or disc furnished by the CHA, with the actual cost thereof to be reimbursed by the requesting party. The requesting party may be charged for staff time associated with research and retrieval of the requested records as provided herein.

This policy is hereby approved and adopted on this 2nd day of August, 2023.



Ashley Kappel, Executive Director/Custodian of Records