

# WARREN HOUSING AUTHORITY

## Access to Public Records Policy

As a Public Agency, the Warren Housing Authority (WHA) is subject to the federal Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. sub-sections 552, the State of Rhode Island General Laws Title 38, Chapter – 2, and the Access to Public Records Act (Open Records Law) as amended. “Every person having custody of any public record shall, at reasonable times and without unreasonable delay, permit it, or any segregable portion of a record which is an independent public record, to be inspected and examined by any person, under his supervision, and shall furnish one copy thereof upon payment of a reasonable fee.”

### **What is a public record?**

Public records include all books, papers, maps, photographs, recorded tapes, financial statements, statistical tabulations, or other documentary materials or data regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any officer or employee of the Warren Housing Authority, unless such materials or data fall within the following exemptions:

1. Specific laws that make certain records non-public;
2. If there is a legitimate public interest in an agency’s personnel rules and practices, records relating to them are public. This exemption applies only to matter in which the public could not reasonably be expected to an interest;
3. Personnel and medical files relating to a specific individual are private and may not be released to the public. Other information relating to a specific individual may be denied to the public if public access would be an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy;
4. Documents relating to policy positions being developed by an agency are exempt from disclosure;
5. Personal materials prepared by a government employee, which are not part of government files, are private and may not be seen by the public;
6. Records made by police or other officials are non-public if their disclosure would interfere with effective law enforcement; See R.I.G.L. 38-2-2(4)(D).
7. Information that is required to be submitted to the government or that is submitted in order to get a government contract is public. Trade secrets and commercial and financial information voluntarily provided to the government to help in policy development are not public if the government promises the provider that such information will be kept confidential;
8. Proposals and bids submitted to Authority are non-public until the time for submitting them has expired, at which point they become public. Internal Authority documents concerning review of proposals and bids are non-public until the Authority enters into contract negotiations or a contract with a particular person, at which point they become public;

### **How do I obtain public records from the WHA?**

Please submit a Public Records Request Form to:

Warren Housing Authority  
20 Libby Lane  
Warren, RI 02885  
ATTN: Public Records Request

***Public Records Request Forms are available in the Warren Housing Authority Office and on the Warren Housing Authority Website.***

# WARREN HOUSING AUTHORITY

## **When will I receive my completed request?**

The Housing Authority will respond to all requests within ten (10) business days, however, for “good cause,” the Authority may take up to thirty (30) business days to respond to a request. Any denial of records will include the specific reason for the denial and indicate the procedures for appealing the decision. The Authority’s failure to respond to a request within ten (10) business days is considered a denial.

## **How much does a public records request cost?**

Payment is due by the time of receiving the documents requested, and consists of a fee of fifteen (.15) cents a page for copying records, and fifteen (\$15.00) dollars per hour for the search or retrieval of documents after the first hour. If the documents produced prove to be voluminous in nature, the Warren Housing Authority may ask the requestor to come to the office at 20 Libby Lane to review those documents which are responsive to the request. At that time, the requestor may select documents for copying and arrangements will be made to have the documents copied according to the fee schedule indicated.