

**Document Code No.:** INF-17-5-EP  
**Title:** Public Records Act Charging Policy  
**Affected Agencies:** Executive Branch Departments  
**Authorities:** RCW 42.56; King County Code 2.12  
**Keywords:** Public Records, Public Records Act, RCW 42.56, Public Disclosure  
**Sponsoring Agency:** Department of Executive Services  
**Type of Action:** Adoption



**Executive signature:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Effective date:** 11/24/2025

**I. Purpose**

King County is committed to open and transparent government consistent with the requirements of the Washington State Public Records Act (RCW 42.56), which provides the public with broad rights of access to public records. This policy establishes requirements and guidance for charging fees for access to records. In doing so, this policy aims to provide equitable service to all public records requestors.

**Applicability and Audience**

This policy applies to Executive Branch Departments. The audience is all King County workforce members, the separately elected offices and branches of government, and the general public.

**II. Definitions**

“Customized service charges” means charges imposed under RCW 42.56.120(3) and chapter 2.12 KCC.

“Departmental Public Records Officer” means the person(s) responsible for processing public records requests received by Executive Branch departments.

“Executive Branch” means the Executive Branch “agency” as defined in KCC 2.12.005.

“Executive Branch Public Records Officer” means the person responsible for establishing Public Records Act procedures for the Executive Branch and advising Executive Branch departments on public records requests, responses, and best practices.

“Fees” means all charges for public records requests authorized under state law and King County Code, including RCW 42.56.120 and KCC 2.12.280, and RCW 42.56.240 and KCC 4A.680.020, as these provisions may be amended. See *a/s/o* Ord. 18949, § 3, 2019 (finding that calculating the actual costs of providing public records would be unduly burdensome, and to conduct such a study would interfere

with the county's other essential agency functions). Fees authorized under RCW 42.56.240 shall be assessed consistent with RCW 42.56.240(14)(e).

### **III. Policy**

1. **Imposition of Fees.** The Executive Branch shall impose fees on public records requests based on the fee schedule in effect on the date the request was submitted. Current fees are as follows:
  - a. Fifteen cents (\$0.15) per page for photocopies of public records, printed copies of electronic public records when requested by the person requesting records, or for the use of Executive Branch equipment to photocopy public records;
  - b. Ten cents (\$0.10) per page for public records scanned into an electronic format or for the use of Executive Branch equipment to scan the records;
  - c. Five cents (\$0.05) per each four (4) electronic files or attachment uploaded to email, cloud-based data storage service, or other means of electronic delivery;
  - d. Ten cents (\$0.10) per gigabyte for the transmission of public records in an electronic format or for the use of Executive Branch equipment to send the records electronically. The Executive Branch will take reasonable steps to provide the records in the most efficient manner available to the Executive Branch in its normal operations;
  - e. The actual cost of any digital storage media or device provided by the Executive Branch, the actual cost of any container or envelope used to mail the copies to the requestor, and the actual postage or delivery charge;
  - f. Eighty-four dollars and seventy cents (\$84.70) per hour of time spent reviewing and redacting body worn camera video; and
  - g. Customized service charges.
2. **Waiver.** The Executive Branch shall waive imposition of fees on public records requests except where a request meets one or more of the following criteria:
  - a. Number of potentially responsive pages exceeds one hundred (100);
  - b. Number of potentially responsive electronic files exceeds one thousand (1,000);
  - c. Size of potentially responsive electronic files exceeds one gigabyte (1 GB);
  - d. Number of locations or employees (records custodians) who manage potentially responsive records exceeds ten (10);
  - e. Redaction is required for video, audio, spreadsheets, or other non-text media files;
  - f. The request includes body worn camera video; or
  - g. Customized services charges apply.

For purposes of this determination, the count of potentially responsive pages or electronic files or the size of potentially responsive electronic records will include all requests submitted by the same requestor within the preceding six months.

- 3. Customized Service Charges.** A customized service charge will be imposed when the Executive Branch estimates that the request would require the use of information technology expertise to prepare data compilations, or provide customized electronic access services when such compilations and customized access services are not used by the Executive Branch for other Executive Branch purposes.
  - a. Customized service chargers may include, but are not limited to, the following:
    - (i) Specialized services to locate and access records, such as restoring archived or legacy software systems no longer used for Executive Branch operations or extracting metadata fields not normally used or produced that require specialized tools or scripts.
    - (ii) Providing customized access to database records, such as when access requires configuration of custom permissions, user roles, or secure portals not used for internal Executive Branch work.
    - (iii) Customized or specialty software to obtain, process, or identify records, such as where the request requires pattern searches or data mining across electronic records that require specialized tools or information technology expertise that are not part of the Executive Branch's standard operations.
    - (iv) Specialized redaction of information embedded in complex datasets, such as where particular software is needed to programmatically remove exempt fields.
    - (v) Segregating and delivering multimedia files that requires use of specialized editing or redaction tools that are not part of the Executive Branch's standard operations.
    - (vi) Peripheral storage devices, when the size of potentially responsive records exceeds the reasonable capacity of the Executive Branch's systems.
    - (vii) Specialized services to convert requested files to format useable for review or production.
  - b. Customized service charges will be imposed based on the best assessment of the actual cost of providing the specialized services, including any charges incurred by the Executive Branch from outside vendors for expertise, software, tools, or other services required to fulfill the request.
- 4. Advance Notice.** In addition to the posting of this policy online, before fees (including customized service charges) are imposed, the requestor will be

provided written notice, including the basis for the fees, a reasonable cost estimate, and any specialized services required. The requestor will be provided an opportunity to amend or withdraw the request to avoid or reduce any potential fees.

5. **Deposits, Payments, and Installments.** Pursuant to RCW 42.56.120(4) as amended, the Executive Branch may require a deposit of ten percent of the estimated fees, including any applicable customized service charges. If the Executive Branch makes a request available on a partial or installment basis, it may charge for each part of the request as it is provided. Records will be provided after full payment is received. For installment productions, each installment will be provided after the requester pays the fees associated with that installment. If an installment is not claimed or reviewed, the Executive Branch is not obligated to continue fulfilling the remainder of the request.
6. **Refunds.** Refunds will not be provided when a request is abandoned. For requests that are formally withdrawn, the Executive Branch will, upon request, issue a refund for any unused portion of the payment.
7. **Public Notice.** This policy and the current schedule of fees (as provided for under RCW 42.56.120(2)(b) as amended and KCC 2.12.280, and RCW 42.56.240 as amended and KCC 4A.680.020) will be posted on King County's website.

#### **IV. Implementation Plan**

- A. This policy becomes effective for the Executive Branch on the date that it is signed by the Executive. The policy will apply to all requests submitted on or after the effective date.
- B. The Executive Branch Public Records Program is responsible for implementation of this policy.
- C. The Executive Branch Public Records Officer is responsible for communicating this policy to the Executive Leadership Team, the Public Records Committee, and Departmental Public Records Officers.
- D. Departmental Public Records Officers are responsible for communicating this policy to the management structure within their respective departments and other appropriate parties.
- E. The Executive Branch Public Records Officer may adopt and implement procedures as appropriate to carry out this policy.

**V. Maintenance**

- A. This policy and appendices will be maintained by the Executive Branch Public Records Program or its successor agency.
- B. This policy will automatically expire five (5) years after its effective date. A new, revised, or renewed policy will be initiated by the Executive Branch Public Records Program or its successor agency prior to the expiration date.

**VI. Consequences for Noncompliance**

- A. Compliance failures may negatively impact the Executive Branch's workforce, operations, finance, or reputation.

**Appendices:**

[Public Records Act Compliance Policy](https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/executive-services/data-information-services/policies/aep/informationaep/inf1741ep)

<https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/executive-services/data-information-services/policies/aep/informationaep/inf1741ep>

[Public Records Officer Toolkit](https://kc1.sharepoint.com/sites/PRA/protk)

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