



VILLAGE OF GRASS LAKE

Public Summary of FOIA Procedures and Guidelines.

Consistent with Public Act 563 of 2014 amending the Michigan Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), the following is the Written Public Summary of the Village of Grass Lake's FOIA Procedures and Guidelines relevant to the general public.

This is only a summary of the Village of Grass Lake FOIA Procedures and Guidelines. For more details and information, copies of the Village of Grass Lake FOIA Procedures and Guidelines are available at no charge at the Village of Grass Lake Office and on the Village of Grass Lake website: www.villageofgrasslake.com.

1. How do I submit a FOIA request to the Village?

- A request must sufficiently describe a public record so as to enable the Village of Grass Lake to find it.
- Please include the words "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the request to assist the Village of Grass Lake in providing a prompt response.
- Requests to inspect or obtain copies of public records prepared, owned, used, possessed or retained by the Village of Grass Lake may be submitted on the Village of Grass Lake [FOIA Request Form](#).
- Any verbal request will be documented by the Village of Grass Lake on the Village of Grass Lake FOIA Request Form.
- A FOIA Request Form and other FOIA-related forms are available for your use and convenience on the Village of Grass Lake website at www.villageofgrasslake.com, and at the Village of Grass Lake Office at 119 North Lake Street, in the Village of Grass Lake.
- Written requests may be delivered to the Village of Grass Lake Office in person at 119 North Lake Street, or, by mail to: Village of Grass Lake Clerk, P.O. Box 737, Grass Lake, Michigan 49240
- Request forms may be faxed to: (517) 522-8120. To ensure a prompt response, faxed requests should contain the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" on the first/cover page.
- Requests forms may be emailed to: j.keener@villageofgrasslake.com to ensure a prompt response, email requests should contain the term "FOIA" or "FOIA Request" in the subject line.

2. What kind of response can I expect to my request?

- Within 5 business days after receiving a FOIA request the Village of Grass Lake will issue a response. If a request is received by fax or email, the request is deemed to have been received on the following business day. The Village will respond to your request in one of the following ways:

- Grant the request,
- Issue a written notice denying the request,
- Grant the request in part and issue a written notice denying in part the request,
- Issue a notice indicating that due to the nature of the request the Village of Grass Lake needs an additional 10 business days to respond, or
- Issue a written notice indicating that the public record requested is available at no charge on the Village of Grass Lake website
- If the request is granted, or granted in part, the Village of Grass Lake will ask that payment be made for the allowable fees associated with responding to the request before the public record is made available.
- If the cost of processing the request is expected to exceed \$50, or if you have not paid for a previously granted request, the Village of Grass Lake will require a deposit before processing the request.

3. What are the Village of Grass Lake deposit requirements?

- If the Village of Grass Lake has made a good faith calculation that the total fee for processing the request will exceed \$50.00, the Village of Grass Lake will require that you provide a deposit in the amount of 50% of the total estimated fee. When the Village of Grass Lake requests the deposit, it will provide you a non-binding best efforts estimate of how long it will take to process the request after you have paid your deposit.
- If the Village of Grass Lake receives a request from a person who has not paid the Village of Grass Lake for copies of public records made in fulfillment of a previously granted written request, the Village of Grass Lake will require a deposit of 100% of the estimated processing fee before it begins to search for the public record for any subsequent written request when all of the following conditions exist:
 - The final fee for the prior written request is not more than 105% of the estimated fee;
 - The public records made available contained the information sought in the prior written request and remain in the Village of Grass Lake possession;
 - The public records were made available to the individual, subject to payment, within the best effort time frame estimated by the Village of Grass Lake to provide the records;
 - Ninety (90) days have passed since the Village of Grass Lake notified the individual in writing that the public records were available for pickup or mailing;
 - The individual is unable to show proof of prior payment to the Village of Grass Lake; and
 - The Village of Grass Lake has calculated an estimated detailed itemization that is the basis for the current written request's increased fee deposit.
- The Village of Grass Lake will not require the 100% estimated fee deposit if any of the following apply:

- The person making the request is able to show proof of prior payment in full to the Village of Grass Lake;
- The Village of Grass Lake is subsequently paid in full for all applicable prior written requests; or
- Three hundred sixty five (365) days have passed since the person made the request for which full payment was not remitted to the Village of Grass Lake.

4. How does the Village of Grass Lake calculate FOIA processing fees?

The Michigan FOIA statute permits the Village of Grass Lake to charge for the following costs associated with processing a request:

- Labor costs associated with copying or duplication, which includes making paper copies, making digital copies, or transferring digital public records to non-paper physical media or through the internet.
 - Labor costs associated with searching for, locating and examining a requested public record, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Village of Grass Lake.
 - Labor costs associated with a review of a record to separate and delete information exempt from disclosure, when failure to charge a fee will result in unreasonably high costs to the Village of Grass Lake.
- The cost of copying or duplication, not including labor, of paper copies of public records. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the Village of Grass Lake website if you ask for the Village of Grass Lake to make copies.
- The cost of computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media when the requester asks for records in non-paper physical media. This may include the cost for copies of records already on the Village of Grass Lake website if you ask for the Village of Grass Lake to make copies.
- The cost to mail or send a public record to a requestor. Labor Costs
- All labor costs will be estimated and charged in 15-minute increments, with all partial time increments rounded down. If the time involved is less than 15 minutes, there will be no charge.
- Labor costs will be charged at the hourly wage of the lowest-paid Village of Grass Lake employee capable of doing the work in the specific fee category, regardless of who actually performs work.
- Labor costs will also include a charge to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits. The Village of Grass Lake may add up to 50% to the applicable labor charge amount to cover or partially cover the cost of fringe benefits, but in no case may it exceed the actual cost of fringe benefits.
- Overtime wages will not be included in labor costs unless agreed to by the requestor; overtime costs will not be used to calculate the fringe benefit cost.
- Contracted labor costs will be charged at the hourly rate of \$48.90 (6 times the state minimum hourly wage)

A labor cost will not be charged for the search, examination, review and the deletion and separation of exempt from nonexempt information unless failure to charge a fee would result in unreasonably high costs to the Village of Grass Lake. Costs are unreasonably high when they are excessive and beyond the normal or usual amount for those services compared to the Village of Grass Lake usual FOIA requests, because of the nature of the request in the particular instance. The Village of Grass Lake must specifically identify the nature of the unreasonably high costs in writing.

Copying and Duplication

- The Village of Grass Lake must use the most economical method for making copies of public records, including using double-sided printing, if cost-saving and available.

Non-paper Copies On Physical Media

- The cost for records provided on non-paper physical media, such as computer discs, computer tapes or other digital or similar media will be at the actual and most reasonably economical cost for the non-paper media.
- This cost will be charged only if the Village of Grass Lake has the technological capability necessary to provide the public record in the requested non-paper physical media format. Paper Copies Paper copies of public records made on standard letter (8-1/2 x 11) or legal (8-1/2 x 14) sized paper will not exceed \$.10 per sheet of paper.
- Copies for non-standard sized sheets of paper will reflect the actual cost of reproduction. Mailing Costs
- The cost to mail public records will use a reasonably economical and justified means.
- The Village of Grass Lake may charge for the least expensive form of postal delivery confirmation.
- No cost will be made for expedited shipping or insurance unless you request it

Waiver of Fees

- The cost of the search for and copying of a public record may be waived or reduced if in the sole judgment of the FOIA Coordinator a waiver or reduced fee is in the public interest because it can be considered as primarily benefitting the general public. The Village of Grass Lake Council may identify specific records or types of records it deems should be made available for no charge or at a reduced cost.

5. How do I qualify for an indigence discount on the fee?

The Village of Grass Lake will discount the first \$20.00 of fees for a request if you submit an affidavit stating that you are:

- Indigent and receiving specific public assistance; or
- If not receiving public assistance, stating facts demonstrating an inability to pay because of indigence.

You are not eligible to receive the \$20.00 discount if you:

- Have previously received discounted copies of public records from the Village of Grass Lake twice during the calendar year; or

- Are requesting information on behalf of other persons who are offering or providing payment to you to make the request.

6. May a nonprofit organization receive a discount on the fee?

A nonprofit organization advocating for developmentally disabled or mentally ill individuals that is formally designated by the state to carry out activities under subtitle C of the federal developmental disabilities assistance and bill of rights act of 2000, Public Law 106-402, and the protection and advocacy for individuals with mental illness act, Public Law 99-319, may receive a \$20.00 discount if the request meets all of the following requirements in the Act:

- Is made directly on behalf of the organization or its clients.
- Is made for a reason wholly consistent with the mission and provisions of those laws under section 931 of the mental health code, 1974 PA 258, MCL 330.1931.
- Is accompanied by documentation of its designation by the state, if requested by the public body.

7. How may I challenge the denial of a public record or an excessive fee?

Appeal of a Denial of a Public Record

If you believe that all or a portion of a public record has not been disclosed or has been improperly exempted from disclosure, you may appeal to the Village of Grass Lake Council by filing a written appeal of the denial with the office of the Village of Grass Lake Manager.

The appeal must be in writing, specifically state the word "appeal," and identify the reason or reasons you are seeking a reversal of the denial. You may use the Village of Grass Lake FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal a Denial of Records), which is available on the Village of Grass Lake website: www.villageofgrasslake.com

The Village of Grass Lake Council is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Village of Grass Lake Council meeting following submission of the written appeal. Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the Village of Grass Lake Council will respond in writing by:

- Reversing the disclosure denial;
- Upholding the disclosure denial; or
- Reverse the disclosure denial in part and uphold the disclosure denial in part.

Whether or not you submitted an appeal of a denial to the Village of Grass Lake Council, you may file a civil action in Jackson County Circuit Court within 180 days after the Village of Grass Lake final determination to deny your request. If you prevail in the civil action the court will award you reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the Village of Grass Lake acted arbitrarily and capriciously in refusing to disclose or provide a public record, the court shall award you damages in the amount of \$ 1,000.

Appeal of an Excess FOIA Processing Fee

If you believe that the fee charged by the Village of Grass Lake to process your FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law, you must first appeal to the Village of Grass Lake Council by filing a written appeal for a fee reduction to the office of the Village of Grass Lake Manager.

The appeal must specifically state the word "appeal" and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted. You may use the Village of Grass Lake FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal an Excess Fee), which is available at the Village Hall and on the Village's website: www.villageofgrasslake.com.

The Village of Grass Lake Council is not considered to have received a written appeal until the first regularly scheduled Village of Grass Lake Council meeting following submission of the written appeal. Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the Village of Grass Lake Council will respond in writing by:

- Waiving the fee;
- Reducing the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the remaining fee;
- Upholding the fee and issue a written determination indicating the specific basis that supports the required fee; or
- Issuing a notice detailing the reason or reasons for extending for not more than 10 business days the period during which the Village Council will respond to the written appeal.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Village of Grass Lake Council's determination of the processing fee appeal, you may commence a civil action in Jackson County Circuit Court for a fee reduction. If you prevail in the civil action by receiving a reduction of 50% or more of the total fee, the court may award all or appropriate amount of reasonable attorneys' fees, costs and disbursements. If the court determines that the Village of Grass Lake acted arbitrarily and capriciously by charging an excessive fee, the court may also award you punitive damages in the amount of \$500.

Inspection of Records Public Inspection of Records

Upon receiving a verbal request to inspect Village of Grass Lake records, the Village of Grass Lake shall furnish the requesting person with a reasonable opportunity and reasonable facilities for inspection and examination of its public records.

A person shall be allowed to inspect public records during usual business hours, not less than four hours per day. The public does not have unlimited access to the Village of Grass Lake offices or facilities, and a person may be required to inspect records at a specified counter or table, and in view of Village of Grass Lake personnel.

Village of Grass Lake officials, appointees, staff or consultants/contractors assisting with inspection of public records shall inform any person inspecting records that only pencils, and no pens or ink, may be used to take notes.

In coordination with the official responsible for the records, the FOIA coordinator shall determine on a case-by-case basis when the Village of Grass Lake will provide copies of original records, to allow

for blacking out exempt information, to protect old or delicate original records, or because the original record is a digital file or database not available for public inspection.

The FOIA coordinator is responsible for identifying if records or information requested by the public is stored in digital files or e-mail, even if the public does not specifically request a digital file or e-mail.

A person cannot remove books, records or files from the place the Village of Grass Lake has provided for the inspection.

No documents shall be removed from the office of the custodian of those documents without permission of that custodian, except by court order, subpoena or for audit purposes. The official shall be given a receipt listing the records being removed. Documents may be removed from the office of the custodian of those documents with permission of that custodian to accommodate public inspection of those documents.

Copies May Be Required to Enable Public Inspection of Records

In coordination with the official responsible for the records, the FOIA coordinator will determine when the Village of Grass Lake will provide copies of original records, to allow for blacking out exempt information, to protect old or delicate original records, or because the original record is a digital file or database not available for public inspection.

A fee will be charged for copies made to enable public inspection of records, according to the Village of Grass Lake FOIA policy.