

Handout to Members of the Public

Your Rights as a Member of the Public to Access Government Data

The Data Practices Act (Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13) presumes that all government data are public (can be seen by anyone) unless there is a state or federal law that classifies the data as *not public*. Government data is a term that means all recorded information a government entity has, regardless of its physical form: paper, electronic, etc.

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act gives you, and all other members of the public, the right to see and have copies of *public data* that the MPRB keeps. The law controls how we keep government data and what we tell you when you ask to see the data that we have.

How to Make a Data Request

To look at data or request copies of data that the MPRB keeps, make a written request using the Request for Public Data Form available on the Park Board website under Operational Procedures, at the Customer Service counter and in the Board book at each meeting. Completed request forms will be accepted by mail, fax, email, or in person to the Customer Service counter.

You can make a request or review data maintained by MPRB during normal MPRB business hours of 8:00a.m. to 4:30p.m., Monday through Friday excepting legal holidays.

In your request, state a clear description of the data you would like to inspect or have copied. If we are not sure exactly what information you are requesting, we will ask you, but you don't have to tell us who you are or explain why you are asking for the data.

All requests are renewable after 30 days. To renew a request notify the MPRB in writing by completing the Request for Public Data Form.

How we respond to a Data Request

Upon receiving your completed data practices request form, we will work to process it.

If we do not have the data, we will notify you as soon as reasonably possible. If we have the data, but the data are not public, we will notify you as soon as reasonably possible and state the specific law that classifies the data as not public. If we have the public data, we will respond to your request within a reasonable amount of time.

You have the right to have public data explained.

If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms) please contact the MPRB Responsible Authority and ask for explanation. We will give you an explanation if you ask.

We don't have to give you data we don't keep.

If we don't have the data you are asking for, we will tell you. We do not collect or create data for you in order to respond to your request.

We may not have to give you public data in the form you want.

If we have the data you're asking for, but we don't keep the data in the form you want, we may not be able to give you the data in that form. If we can't put the data in the form you want, you may have the data in our format and convert it to the form you want. If we can put the data in the form you want, we will let you know approximately how long it will take and what it will cost. You can then decide if you want the information in that form.

We cannot charge you a fee for looking at public data.

You have the right to look at (inspect) at no cost, all public data the MPRB keeps.

We can't charge you a fee for separating public data from data that are not public.

You have the right to have copies of the public data we keep.

You have the right to have a copy of any data that you have a right to see. This includes the right to have copies of all or parts of specific documents, files, records, data bases, or types of data that we keep. If you ask for the copies in electronic form, and we keep the data in electronic form, we will give you the data in electronic form.

Once we have your request, we will provide the copies you asked for as soon as is reasonably possible, depending on how many copies you are requesting and how many staff we have available to respond to your request.

We have the right to charge you a reasonable fee for providing copies.

We will charge you a fee for making copies of the data you request. If you ask that the copies be mailed or faxed to you, the fee will include postage or long distance charges if applicable. If you request a certified copy of a document, we will charge you to certify the document.

If you are requesting copies of data that have commercial value, we will charge you a fee in addition to the fee for the copies.

We may require payment in advance.

You have the right to know why you can't see or get copies of data that are not public.

If the information you ask for is not public data, we will tell you that when you make your request, or we will notify you in writing as soon as possible. We also will tell you which specific law makes the information not public. We will put this information in writing for you if you request that we do so.

You have the right to see and have copies of summary data.

Summary data are statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data on individuals. We will prepare summary data for you if you submit a Request for Public Data form, and pay for the cost of creating the data.

We require prepayment for summary data requests. When we receive your request, we will contact you to make arrangements to prepare the summary data.

We will let you or someone else prepare the summary data if:

- you explain in your request why you want to prepare the data;
- you agree not to release any of the private or confidential data used to prepare the summary data; and
- we determine that giving you access to private and confidential data will not compromise those data.

Responsible Authority

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Data Practices Compliance Official

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