

## 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 township board 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 Township 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 Township 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.

An affidavit is sworn statement. For your convenience, the Township has provided an Affidavit of Indigence for the waiver of FOIA fees on the back of the Township FOIA Request Form, which is available on the Township's website: [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www._____).

### 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.

## 6. 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 Township Board by filing a written appeal of the denial with the office of the Township Supervisor (*or "clerk" or "FOIA Coordinator," etc.*).

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 Township FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal a Denial of Records), which is available on the Township's website: [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www._____).

Within 10 business days of receiving the appeal the Township Board 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 Township Board, you may file a civil action in \_\_\_\_\_ County Circuit Court within 180 days after the Township's 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 Township 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 Township to process your FOIA request exceeds the amount permitted by state law, you must first appeal to the Township Board by filing a written appeal for a fee reduction to the office of the Township Supervisor (*or "clerk" or "FOIA Coordinator," etc.*).

The appeal must specifically state the word "appeal" and identify how the required fee exceeds the amount permitted. You may use the Township FOIA Appeal Form (To Appeal an Excess Fee), which is available at the Township Hall and on the Township's website: [www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www._____).

Within 10 business days after receiving the appeal, the Township Board 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 Township Board will respond to the written appeal.

Within 45 days after receiving notice of the Township Board's determination of the processing fee appeal, you may commence a civil action in \_\_\_\_\_ 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 Township acted arbitrarily and capriciously by charging an excessive fee, court may also award you punitive damages in the amount of \$500.