Public Records

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Under Vermont's Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320(opens in a new tab), any person has the right to request inspection or copying of a public record from government agencies, including municipalities. The definition of a "public record" is very broad and includes "any written or recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristics," which is produced or acquired in the course of municipal business. 1 V.S.A. § 317(b)(opens in a new tab).

Municipal officials must comply with the act's legal requirements. Review our Public Records Act FAQs and a Model Public Records Policy to help clarify definitions, timelines, how to "promptly" respond, and where to find important information about exemptions and retention requirements.

Transparency is an essential element of open and democratic government. In Vermont, the primary means of providing transparency are the Public Records Act, 1 V.S.A. §§ 315-320(opens in a new tab), and the Open Meeting Law, 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314 (opens in a new tab). These laws implement the command of Chapter I, Article 6 of the Vermont Constitution that officers of government are "trustees and servants" of the people and are "at all times, in a legal way, accountable to them."

The Vermont State Archives and Records Administration (VSARA) is the source for information on records management, including general records schedules (retention and disposition), archiving, storage requirements, digital records management. They also offer training and support for record keepers.

Disclaimer: This resource was created by Municipal Assistance Center attorneys but it is only intended to provide information and it does **NOT** constitute legal advice. Readers with specific legal questions are encouraged to contact an attorney. The use or downloading of this resource does **NOT** create an attorney-client relationship and will not be treated in a confidential manner.

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Ask a Question(opens in a new tab)

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