

Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Board Policy for access to data by members of the public

Right to access public data

The Minnesota Campaign Finance and Public Disclosure Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 10A, requires the Board to collect information related to campaign finance, lobbying, and the financial interests of public officials and to make the reports and statements filed with it available for public inspection. In addition, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13, presumes that all government data is public unless a state or federal law says the data is not public. Government data means all recorded information that a government entity has, including paper, email, and electronic records.

To make it easier for members of the public to access the information collected by the Board, the Board publishes information from the reports and statements filed with it on the Board's website. Members of the public also have the right to look at, free of charge, all public information that the Board has in its possession. Members of the public have the right to get copies of the public information but the Board is allowed to charge for those copies. Members of the public have the right to look at the information, free of charge, before deciding to ask for copies.

Selling information on reports and statements or using that information for commercial purposes

Although the public has the right to access the information on reports and statements filed with the Board, that information, other than information on reports filed by lobbyists and principals, may not be sold or used by any individual or association for commercial purposes. Purposes related to elections, political activities, or law enforcement are not commercial purposes. Violations of this provision are subject to a civil penalty of up to \$1,000 and possible criminal charges.

How to make a data request

There is a data request form on page 5 but you are not required to use that form. Your data request, however, must be in writing. The request should be addressed to the Board's responsible authority, Gary Goldsmith. His contact information is listed on page 3. You may submit the request by mail, email, fax, or in-person delivery.

Your data request should include the following information:

- You are making a request for public data under the Government Data Practices Act, Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13;
- Whether you would like to inspect the data, have copies of the data, or both; and
- A clear description of the data you would like to inspect or have copied.

The Board cannot require you, as a member of the public, to identify yourself or explain the reason for your data request. If you request information from reports and statements filed with

the Board, other than information on reports filed by lobbyist and principals, the Board will ask you to acknowledge that you, and any association affiliated with you, will not sell that information or use it for commercial purposes.

Also, depending on how you want to receive the requested information, the Board may need some information about you to deliver the requested information to you. If you choose not to give any identifying information, the Board will provide you with contact information so you may contact the Board to check on the status of your request. Also, please remember that if we do not understand your request and have no way to contact you, we will not be able to begin processing your request.

How the Board responds to a data request

After receiving your request, the Board will begin to process it.

If it is not clear what data you are requesting, we will ask you for clarification.

If we do not have the data, we will let you know as soon as reasonably possible.

If we have the data, but the data is not public, we will notify you as soon as reasonably possible and state which specific law says the data is not public.

If we have the data, and the data is public, we will respond to your request appropriately and promptly, within a reasonable amount of time by doing one of the following:

- Arranging a date, time, and place for you to inspect the data, for free, if your request is to look at the data, or

- Determining whether the data you have requested can be provided to you free of charge under the Board's photocopy policy.

The Board's photocopy policy is on page 4.

If there is no charge for the data, we will provide you with copies of the data as soon as reasonably possible. You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail or fax them to you. We will provide electronic copies (such as email or CD-ROM) upon request if we keep the data in electronic format.

If there is a charge for the data, we will notify you of the cost and ask you to prepay those charges before we proceed with your request. After we receive your payment, we will provide you with the data as soon as reasonably possible. You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail or fax them to you. We will provide electronic copies (such as email or CD-ROM) upon request if we keep the data in electronic format.

If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms), we will give you an explanation upon request.

The Government Data Practices Act does not require us to create or collect new data in response to a data request if we do not already have the data, or to provide data in a specific form or arrangement if we do not keep the data in that form or arrangement (for example, if the data you request is on paper only, we are not required to create electronic documents to respond to your request). If we agree to create data in response to your request, we will work with you on the details of your request, including cost and response time.

In addition, we are not required under the Government Data Practices Act to respond to questions that are not specific requests for data.

Requests for summary data

Summary data is statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data on individuals. The preparation of summary data is not a means to gain access to private or confidential data. Although the Board has very little private or confidential data on individuals, we will prepare summary data if you request it and prepay the cost of creating the summary data.

Upon receiving your written request, we will respond within ten business days with the data or details of when the data will be ready and how much we will charge.

Data Practices Contacts

Responsible authority

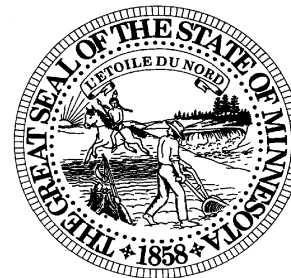
Gary Goldsmith
190 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55113
(651) 539-1190
Fax: (651) 539-1196
Gary.goldsmith@state.mn.us

Data practices compliance official

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190 Centennial Office Building
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Minnesota

*Campaign Finance and
Public Disclosure Board*



Date: December 16, 2010

To: Staff and interested persons

From: Gary Goldsmith, Executive Director

Telephone: 651-296-1721

Re: Photocopy charges

Effective immediately, the Board's policy regarding photocopy costs is as set forth below.

1. Typically the requester will mark pages for copying and staff will do the actual copying. This procedure may be modified by staff if appropriate to facilitate office operations.
2. Complainants, respondents, and subjects of a Board investigation will not be charged for copies from a file related to them.
3. Candidates, political committees or funds and party units will not be charged for copies from their own files.
4. Any other subject of data in Board files will not be charged for copies of data about that subject.
5. For all others, there will be no charge for the first 25 copies made.
6. For persons obtaining more than 25 copies the charge will be 20 cents per page for pages in excess of 25 pages.
7. A two-sided copy is counted as two copies.
8. There will be no charge for documents that are scanned and emailed to a requester who is the subject of the data or a complainant in the subject complaint.
9. There will be no charge for the first 25 pages of documents that are scanned and emailed to any requester.
10. For situations not covered in this policy, such as scans of more than 25 pages, see the Executive Director or the Assistant Executive Director.

Data Request Form

Request date:

I am requesting access to data in the following way:

- Inspection
- Copies
- Both inspection and copies

There is no charge for the first 25 copies made. If your request involves more than 25 copies, there will be a charge of 20 cents per page that must be prepaid before we will make the copies for you. There are some exceptions to this charge, however, that are specified in the Board's photocopy policy located on page 4 of this document.

Return this form to:

Gary Goldsmith
190 Centennial Office Building
658 Cedar St.
St. Paul, MN 55113
(651) 539-1190
Fax: (651) 539-1196
Gary.goldsmith@state.mn.us

We will respond to your request as soon as reasonably possible.

Your name:

Your address:

Your phone number:

Your email address:

Note: You do not have to provide any contact information. If you want us to mail/email you copies of data, however, we will need some type of contact information. In addition, if we do not understand your request and need to get clarification from you, without contact information we will not be able to begin processing your request until you contact us.

Describe the data you are requesting as specifically as possible.