CITY OF EARLHAM

EARLHAM
Plant roots. See them grow.

CITY HALL

140 S CHESTNUT AVE
PO BOX 518
EARLHAM, IOWA 50072

Open Records Request Policy

1. Purpose

The City of Earlham is committed to transparency and public access to government records, in accordance with Iowa's Open Records Law (Iowa Code Chapter 22). This policy establishes procedures for requesting and accessing public records while ensuring compliance with applicable laws and protections.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all public records maintained by the City of Earlham, including records from City Hall, public works, law enforcement (as permitted by law), and other city departments.

3. Definition of Public Records

Public records include documents, correspondence, reports, and other materials, regardless of format, that are created, received, or maintained by the City of Earlham in connection with official city business. Some records may be exempt from disclosure under state or federal law.

4. How to Submit a Public Records Request

Requests for public records may be submitted to the City of Earlham through the following methods:

- **Email**: earlhamcityhall@earlhamiowa.org
- **Mail**: City of Earlham, Attn: City Clerk, PO Box 518, Earlham, IA 50072
- **In Person**: Earlham City Hall, 140 S Chestnut, Earlham, IA 50072
- **Phone (for general inquiries only)**: 515-758-2281

While verbal requests are permitted, written requests are preferred to ensure accuracy and timely processing.

5. Information Required in a Request

To facilitate processing, requests should include:

- **Requester's name and contact information**
- **A clear and specific description** of the records being requested
- **Preferred format** for receiving the records (electronic or paper copies)

6. Response Time

The City of Earlham will acknowledge receipt of a request within 10 business days and provide records as soon as reasonably possible. If additional time is required due to the volume of records, legal review, or record format, the requester will be notified of the estimated response time.

7. Fees and Payment

Fees may be charged to cover the actual costs of fulfilling a request, including:

- **Copies**: $1.00 for the first page/side and $.25 for each additional page/page for 8 ½" x 11"
- **Electronic Records**: Actual cost of retrieval and processing (no charge for first half hour)
- **Extensive Staff Time**: If significant staff time is required, a fee of **$21.00 per hour** may apply
- **Postage**: If records are mailed, actual postage costs will be charged

Requesters will receive an estimate of fees before processing begins. Payment must be received before records are released.

8. Exemptions

Certain records are exempt from public disclosure under Iowa law, including but not limited to:

- Personal information protected by privacy laws
- Confidential law enforcement records
- Attorney-client privileged communications
- Trade secrets and proprietary business records
- Records exempt under federal or state law

If a request is denied, the City will provide a written explanation citing the legal basis for the denial.

9. Appeals

If a requester believes their request was improperly denied, they may:

1. Request reconsideration from the **City Clerk**
2. File a complaint with the **Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB)**

10. Contact Information

For public records requests or questions, please contact:

City Clerk – City of Earlham
Jessica L. Visser
140 S Chestnut
515-758-2281
earlhamcityhall@earlhamiowa.org
www.earlhamiowa.org

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OPEN RECORDS REQUEST FORM

Date: _____

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____ **Email:** _____

Records requested to be examined/copied (please be very specific):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Although the records you are requesting are deemed "public record" under Iowa Law, you are hereby advised that your use of this information must comply with local, state, and federal laws, including but not limited to laws relating to privacy, harassment, discrimination, debt collection, libel, slander, and tort. Misuse of said information by you in violation of any law is exclusively your responsibility. The City of Earlham hereby denies any and all responsibility for how this information is used by you. If any third party makes a claim against the City of Earlham for misuse of this information attributable to you, the City of Earlham shall pursue all available legal remedies against you.

The undersigned acknowledges that he/she has read the above policy and understands and agrees to its terms.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Records Examination Supervision Fee: $_____ ($21.00/hour after first half hour)

Records Retrieval Fee: $_____ ($21.00/hour after first half hour)

Copy Fees: $_____ $1.00 for first page/side 8 ½ x 11" and $.25 each additional page

Postage & Handling Fees: $_____ (applicable rate for packaging & postage)

Date Paid: _____ **Check [ ] #**_____ **Cash [ ]** **Staff Initials** _____