

Public Data Practices Request Policy

Right to access public data

The [Minnesota Government Data Practices Act](#) (MGDPA) presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law says the data are not public. Government data is a term that means all recorded information a government entity has, including paper, email, flash drives, CDs, DVDs, photographs, etc.

The MGDPA also requires that a government entity, in this case Ramsey County, keep all government data in a way that makes it easy for you, as a member of the public, to access public data. You have the right to look at (inspect), free of charge, all public data that we keep. You also have the right to get copies of public data. The Government Data Practices Act allows us to charge for copies. You have the right to look at data, free of charge, before deciding to request copies.

How to make a public data request

You can look at data or request copies of data that Ramsey County keeps. Make your request for data by completing the Data Request Form available on the [Ramsey County website](#).

If you choose not to use the online Data Request Form, your request can be mailed to:
Ramsey County
Data Practices
90 Plato Blvd West
Saint Paul, MN 55107

Your request should include the following information:

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

Ramsey County cannot require you, as a member of the public, to identify yourself or explain the reason for your data request. However, depending on how you want us to process your request (for example, if you want us to mail you copies of data), we may need some information about you. If you choose not to give us any identifying information, we will provide you with contact information so you may check on the status of your request. Please keep in mind 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 we respond to a public data request

Upon receiving your request, we will work to process the request as follows:

- 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 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 specify which law classifies the data as not public.
- If we have the data, and the data are public, we will respond to your request appropriately and promptly, within a reasonable amount of time by doing one of the following:
 - Arrange a date, time, and place to inspect data, for free, if your request is to look at the data, or
 - Provide you with copies of the data as soon as reasonably possible. You may choose to pick up your copies, or we will mail them to you. We will provide electronic copies upon request if we keep the data in electronic format.

Information about copy charges is on pages 4 and 5. If necessary, we will provide notice to you about requirements to prepay for copies of the data.

If you do not understand some of the data (technical terminology, abbreviations, or acronyms), please let us know. We will give you an explanation if you ask.

The MGDPA 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 are 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 MGDPA to respond to questions that are not specific requests for data.

Requests for summary data

Summary data are 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.

Upon receiving your 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. We will prepare the summary data provided that the requesting person prepays for the cost of creating the summary data.

Data Practices Responsible Authority Designees

County General

Deanna Pesik, Responsible Authority Designee and Compliance Official
15 W. Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102
datarequests@co.ramsey.mn.us

Social Services and Financial Assistance Services

Deb Trudeau, Responsible Authority Designee and Compliance Official
160 E. Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55101
debra.trudeau@co.ramsey.mn.us

County Attorney

Lindsey Millard, Responsible Authority Designee and Compliance Official
121 7th Place East, #4500
Saint Paul, MN 55101
lindsey.millard@co.ramsey.mn.us

Sheriff

Roy Robbins, Commander, Responsible Authority Designee and Compliance Official
425 Grove Street
Saint Paul, MN 55101
roy.robbins@co.ramsey.mn.us

Ramsey County Commissioners

Individual Commissioner
Ramsey County Courthouse, Room 220
15 W. Kellogg Boulevard
Saint Paul, MN 55102
Office contact information available on the [Ramsey County website](#)

Costs/Fees

Inspection of data at no charge

A fee may not be charged for inspection of government data. This includes situations where:

- a. Ramsey County displays computerized data on a terminal or prints a copy of the requested data in order for the requestor to inspect the data;
- b. A person wishes to visually inspect a paper document or data kept in any other medium that may be inspected visually; or
- c. A person requests access to electronic data via her/his own computer equipment, and possibly prints copies or downloads data on her/his own equipment.

Fees for copies of data

- **Members of the public**

If the request is for 100 pages or fewer of black and white paper copies, the maximum allowable charge is 25 cents per page, or 50 cents for a two-sided copy. This charge is a flat rate and Ramsey County cannot add on any additional charges, such as cost of mailing or paper.

If the request is for more than 100 pages of paper copies or another type of media (photographs, video, flash drive, CD, DVD, etc.), Ramsey County may charge the actual cost for an employee to search for and retrieve the data and to make copies (paper or electronic).

- **Data subjects**

Ramsey County may charge the data subject, or a data subject's parent/guardian, the actual cost for an employee to make paper copies or to print copies of electronically stored data. Ramsey County may not charge a data subject, or a data subject's parent/guardian, any fee for searching for and retrieving data. Ramsey County may require the data subject to prepay the cost for copies of data.

Establishing actual costs

The following items can be included in calculating actual costs:

- Cost of media (paper, CD ROMs, DVDs, etc.).
- Mailing costs.
- Employee time to prepare copies (*employee time must be calculated based on wages/salary of the lowest-paid entity employee who could complete the task*).
- Costs of reproduction that cannot be done by the entity, such as photographs.
- Employee time to search and retrieve data (*this only applies for data requests from members of the public, including public data and summary data*)

The following items cannot be included in calculating actual costs:

- Employee time to search and retrieve data (*this only applies when the requestor is the data subject, or the data subject's parent/guardian*).
- Employee time to separate public from not public data.
- Operating expenses of copier, such as electricity, depreciation, maintenance, etc.

- Costs not related to copying, such as preparing invoice, cover sheet, etc.
- Returning data to off-site storage.
- Sorting, reviewing or verifying accuracy if not necessary for copying.
- Sales tax.
- Accounting functions.
- Costs related to inspection.
- Employee time to provide information about the data to the requester (i.e., explain content and meaning of data).
- Costs incurred because data are not maintained in a manner that makes them easily accessible for convenient use.

Revision History

- *Updated: Dec. 23, 2020*
- *Updated: March 18, 2019*
- *Approved: November 1, 2016*