

# ***Texas Public Information Act***

## **General Information**

### **What is the *Texas Public Information Act*?**

The *Texas Public Information Act* is a series of laws incorporated into the Texas Governmental Code that serve to ensure the public has access to information held by the state government.

### **To what TWU officer must a public information (open records) request be directed?**

A written public information (open records) request should be forwarded to the TWU Office of the General Counsel for handling. The *Public Information Act* does not require that the public direct its public information (open records) requests to any specific TWU employee or officer, except in the case of faxed and e-mail requests.

The deadlines involved in handling open records requests are not put on hold merely because the wrong TWU staff member received the request.

<b>For U.S. Mail Delivery:</b>  Texas Woman's University Office of the General Counsel P. O. Box 425497 Denton, Texas 76204	<b>For Hand-Delivery:</b>  Office of the General Counsel 304 Administration Dr., ACT 14 <sup>th</sup> Floor Denton, Texas 76204
<b>For Fax Delivery:</b>  940/898-3244	<b>For Electronic Mail Delivery:</b>  <a href="mailto:openrecordsrequest@twu.edu">openrecordsrequest@twu.edu</a>
<b>Link to the Form:</b>  <a href="http://www.twu.edu/downloads/general-counsel/Open_Records_Request_Form.doc">http://www.twu.edu/downloads/general-counsel/Open_Records_Request_Form.doc</a>	

### **How much time does TWU have to comply with a Public Information (Open Records) Request?**

TWU must “promptly” produce the public information.

The Act states that all requests must be handled with good faith and must be accomplished within a reasonable time period.

Generally, the Act requires copies of public information to be produced *within ten (10) days* upon receipt of the written request.

If it will take TWU longer than ten (10) business days to produce the records, TWU must certify that fact in writing to the requestor.

In the notice, TWU must indicate a set date and hour within a reasonable time that the information will be made available for inspection or duplication (§552.221).

## **What types of records fall under the Public Information Act?**

Public records include any information that is collected, assembled, or maintained ... by or for TWU or if TWU owns the information or has a right of access to it.

The Act applies to records regardless of their format. It includes information that is maintained in paper, tape, microfilm, video, electronic data held in computer memory, as well as other mediums specified under law.

### **Records include:**

#### General TWU Business Records:

- A completed report, audit, evaluation, or investigation ...
- Information in an account, voucher, or contract relating to the receipt or expenditure of public funds ...
- A policy statement or interpretation that has been adopted or issued ...
- Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public ...

#### Faculty/Staff Employee Records:

- The name, sex, ethnicity, salary, title, and dates of employment of each employee.
- Information about public employees' job performance or the reasons for their dismissal, demotion, promotion, or resignation.

#### Some Education Records...

## **Is there any information maintained by TWU that is Non-Public Information?**

Some of the information maintained by TWU may contain information that is not public, such as the following:

- student information/records
- medical information/records
- social security numbers, home addresses and telephone numbers
- driver's license and motor vehicle information
- attorney-client communications
- documents made confidential by statute (other law)
- documents claimed to be proprietary by a third party (trade secret information)
- personal financial information (credit card and bank account #s)

However, for some records, TWU must request permission from the Office of the Attorney General (OAG) to withhold certain information. Time is of the essence. Departments seeking to withhold requested information must notify the TWU Office of the General Counsel as soon as possible.

OGC must request an AG Ruling within ten (10) business days from the date that the request is received.

## **How much does it cost to obtain copies of TWU records?**

Charges for copies of public information are set by the Office of the Attorney General.

**Who can I contact with questions about the *Texas Public Information Act*?**

The Office of Compliance and General Counsel  
940.898.3250  
[openrecordsrequest@twu.edu](mailto:openrecordsrequest@twu.edu)

or

The Texas Attorney General Open Government Hotline  
877-OPEN-TEX (877-673-6839)