

About the Committee on Open Government

The Committee is responsible for overseeing and advising with regard to the Freedom of Information Law, the Open Meetings Law and the Personal Privacy Protection Law (*Public Officers Law, Articles 6, 7 and 6-A respectively*). **Staff of the Committee gives advice by telephone, email, written advisory opinions, and training classes conducted throughout the state. Advice is offered to the government, the public and the news media.**

The Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) pertains to the public's right to gain access to government records. See the FOIL Advisory Opinion Index. The Open Meetings Law (OML) concerns the public's right to attend meetings of public bodies. See the OML Advisory Opinion Index. Both statutes are based upon a presumption of access and, since their initial enactment, have undergone significant changes based largely upon recommendations made by the Committee.

A basic guide to the Freedom of Information and Open Meetings Laws, *Your Right to Know*, includes sample letters of request and appeal and is available on our Publications page.

The Personal Privacy Protection Law (PPPL), enacted in 1984, pertains to personal information collected and maintained by state agencies. State agencies are required to meet standards of fair information practices regarding the collection, maintenance, use and disclosure of personal information.

The Committee is required to submit a comprehensive annual report to the Governor and the Legislature describing the Committee's experience under each of the statutes and recommendations for improving them. See our latest Annual Report (pdf) .

The Committee and the laws it oversees have gained national and international recognition as models for other jurisdictions. Its work and experience have been shared with access professionals at international conferences, and it is represented through membership in the Council on Governmental Ethics Laws and participation on the Media Law Committee of the New York State Bar Association.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION: Rules and Regulations

RULES AND REGULATIONS PERTAINING TO THE PUBLIC INSPECTION, COPYING, AVAILABILITY, LOCATION AND NATURE OF SUCH [CITY/VILLAGE/TOWN] OF [NAME OF CITY/VILLAGE/TOWN] RECORDS AS ARE SUBJECT TO PUBLIC INSPECTION BY LAW

The [Governing Body] of the [City/Village/Town] of [name of City/Village/Town], duly convened in regular session, does hereby resolve as follows:

SECTION 1. Pursuant to, and in accordance with, the provisions of section 89 of the Public Officers Law and the Regulations of the New York State Committee on Open Government (promulgated on [date]) as amended, the [Governing Body] of the [City/Village/Town] of [name of City/Village/Town] hereby makes, establishes and adopts the following rules and regulations pertaining to the public inspection, copying, availability, location and nature of such [City/Village/Town] of [name of City/Village/Town] records as are subject to public inspection by law:

SECTION 2. Definitions. As used in this Resolution, unless the context requires otherwise:

- (a) “[City/Village/Town]” means the [City/Village/Town] of [name of City/Village/Town], a municipal corporation organized and existing under and by virtue of the laws of the State of New York and with offices and principal place of business at [address].
- (b) “[Governing Body]” means the [Governing Body] of the [City/Village/Town], with offices at [address].
- (c) “[Mayor/Supervisor]” means the [Mayor/Supervisor] of the [City/Village/Town], with offices at [address].
- (d) “[City/Village/Town] Clerk” means the [City/Village/Town] Clerk of the [City/Village/Town], with offices at [address].
- (e) “Regulations” means the Regulations promulgated by the Committee on Open Government on January 10, 1978 pursuant to the New York Freedom of Information Law as amended.

SECTION 3. Purpose and Scope.

- (a) The people’s right to know the process of government decision making and the documents and statistics leading to determination is basic to our society. Access to such information should not be thwarted by shrouding it with the cloak of secrecy or confidentiality.
- (b) These regulations provide information concerning the procedures by which records may be obtained from the [City/Village/Town].
- (c) [City/Village/Town] personnel shall furnish to the public the information and records required by the Freedom of Information Law, as well as records otherwise available by law.
- (d) Any conflicts among laws governing public access to records shall be construed favor of the widest possible availability of public records.

SECTION 4. Designation of records access officer.

(a) The [Governing Body] and the [Mayor/Supervisor] shall be responsible for insuring compliance with the regulations herein, and hereby designate the following persons as records access officers, who shall have the duty of coordinating [City/Village/Town] response to public requests for access to records:

[City/Village/Town] Clerk of the [City/Village/Town] of [name of City/Village/Town]
[address]

(b) Records access officers are responsible for insuring appropriate [City/Village/Town] response to public requests for access to records. However, this designation shall not be construed to prohibit officials who have in the past been authorized to make records or information available to the public from continuing to do so.

(c) Records access officers are responsible for assuring that [City/Village/Town] personnel:

1. Maintain a reasonably detailed current subject matter list.

2. Assist the requester in identifying requested records, if necessary, and when appropriate, indicate the manner in which the records are filed, retrieved or generated to assist persons in reasonably describing records.

3. Contact persons seeking records when a request is voluminous or when locating the records involves substantial effort, so that personnel may ascertain the nature of records of primary interest and attempt to reasonably reduce the volume of records requested.

4. Upon locating the records, take one of the following actions:

(i) Make records available for inspection; or

(ii) Deny access to the records in whole or in part and explain in writing the reasons therefor.

5. Upon request for copies of records:

(i) Make a copy available upon payment or offer to pay established fees, if any, in accordance with Section 10 or

(ii) Permit the requester to copy these records.

6. Upon request, certify that a record is a true copy, and

7. Upon failure to locate records, certify that:
 - (i) The [City/Village/Town] is not the legal custodian for such records, or
 - (ii) The records of which the [City/Village/Town] is a custodian cannot be found after diligent search.

SECTION 5. Location.

Records shall be available for public inspection and copying at:

[City/Village/Town] Hall
[address]

or at the location where they are kept.

SECTION 6. Hours for public inspection

Requests for public access to records shall be accepted and records produced during all hours the [City/Village/Town] Hall is regularly open for business. These hours are: on regular business days, Monday through and including Friday, between the hours of _____ AM and _____ PM.

SECTION 7. Requests for public access to records.

- (a) The [City/Village/Town] may require that a request be made in writing. Oral requests may be accepted when records are readily available.
- (b) If records are maintained on the Internet, the requester shall be informed that the records are accessible via the Internet and in printed form either on paper or other information storage medium.
- (c) The [City/Village/Town] shall respond to any request reasonably describing the record or records sought within five business days of receipt of the request by:
 - (1) informing a person requesting records that the request or portion of the request does not reasonably describe the records sought, including direction, to the extent possible, that would enable that person to request records reasonably described;
 - (2) granting or denying access to records in whole or in part;
 - (3) acknowledging the receipt of a request in writing, including an appropriate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part, which shall be reasonable under the circumstances of the request and shall not be more than twenty business days after the date of the acknowledgment, or if it is known that circumstances prevent disclosure, within twenty business days from the date of such acknowledgment, providing a statement in writing indicating the reason for inability to grant the request within that time and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted in whole or in part; or

(4) if the receipt of request was acknowledged in writing and included an approximate date when the request would be granted in whole or in part within twenty business days of such acknowledgment, but circumstances prevent disclosure within that time, providing a statement in writing within twenty business days of such acknowledgment specifying the reason for the inability to do so and a date certain, within a reasonable period under the circumstances of the request, when the request will be granted in whole or in part.

(d) In determining a reasonable time for granting or denying a request under the circumstances of a request, personnel shall consider the volume of a request, the ease or difficulty in locating, retrieving or generating records, the complexity of the request, the need to review records to determine the extent to which they must be disclosed, the number of requests received by the agency, and similar factors that bear on the ability to grant access to records promptly and within a reasonable time.

(e) A failure to comply with the time limitations described herein shall constitute a denial of a request that may be appealed. Such failure shall include situations in which an officer or employee:

(1) Fails to grant access to the records sought, deny access in writing or acknowledge the receipt of a request within five business days of the receipt of a request;

(2) Acknowledges the receipt of a request within five business days but fails to furnish an approximate date when the request will be granted or denied in whole or in part:

(3) Furnishes an acknowledgment of the receipt of a request within five business days with an approximate date for granting or denying access in whole or in part that is unreasonable under the circumstances of the request;

(4) Fails to respond to a request within a reasonable time after the approximate date given or within twenty business days after the date of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request;

(5) Determines to grant a request in whole or in part within twenty business days of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request, but fails to do so, unless the agency provides the reason for its inability to do so in writing and a date certain within which the request will be granted in whole or in part;

(6) Does not grant a request in whole or in part within twenty business days of the acknowledgment of the receipt of a request and fails to provide the reason in writing explaining the inability to do so and a date certain by which the request will be granted in whole or in part;
or

(7) Responds to a request, stating that more than twenty business days is needed to grant or deny the request in whole or in part and provides a date certain within which that will be accomplished, but such date is unreasonable under the circumstances of the request.

SECTION 8. Subject matter list.

(a) The records access officer shall maintain a reasonable detailed current list by subject matter of all records in its possession, whether or not records are available pursuant to subdivision two of section eighty-seven of the Public Officers Law.

(b) The subject matter list shall be sufficiently detailed to permit identification of the category of

the record sought.

(c) The subject matter list shall be updated annually. The most recent update shall appear on the first page of the subject matter list.

SECTION 9. Denial of access to records.

(a) Denial of access shall be in writing stating the reason therefor and advising the person denied access of his or her right to appeal to the person or body established to hear appeals, and that person or body shall be identified by name, title, business address and business telephone number. The records access officer shall not be the appeals officer.

(b) The [Governing Body] shall hear appeals or shall designate a person or body to hear appeals regarding denial of access to records under the Freedom of Information Law.

(c) If the [City/Village/Town] fails to respond to a request as required in section 7 of these Regulations, such failure shall be deemed a denial of access by the [City/Village/Town].

(d) Any person denied access to records may appeal within 30 days of a denial.

(e) The time for deciding an appeal by the individual or body designated to hear appeals shall commence upon receipt of written appeal identifying:

(1) The date and location of a request for records;

(2) The records that were denied; and

(3) The name and return address of the appellant.

(f) A failure to determine an appeal within ten business days of its receipt by granting access to the records sought or fully explaining the reasons for further denial in writing shall constitute a denial of the appeal.

(g) The [City/Village/Town] shall transmit to the Committee on Open Government copies of all appeals upon receipt of an appeal. Such copies shall be addressed to:

Committee on Open Government
Department of State
41 State Street, 11th Floor
Albany, New York 12231

(h) The person or body designated to hear appeals shall inform the appellant and the Committee on Open Government of its determination in writing within ten business days of receipt of an appeal. The determination shall be transmitted to the Committee on Open Government in the same manner as set forth in subdivision (g) of this section.

(i) A final denial of access to a requested record, as provided for in subdivision (h) of this section, shall be subject to court review, as provided for in subdivision (g) of this section, shall be subject to court review, as provided for in Article 78 of the Civil Practice Law and Rules.

SECTION 10. Fees. Except when a different fee is otherwise prescribed by law:

(a) There shall be no fee charged for the following:

- (1) Inspection of records;
- (2) Search for records; or
- (3) Any certification pursuant to the Regulations or pursuant to the Resolution.

(b) Copies may be provided without charging a fee.

(c) Fees for copies may be charged, provided that:

(1) The fee for copying records shall not exceed 25 cents per page for photocopies not exceeding 9 by 14 inches. This section shall not be construed to mandate the raising of fees where agencies or municipalities in the past have charged less than 25 cents for such copies;

(2) The fee for copies of records not covered by paragraphs (1) and (2) of this subdivision, shall not exceed the actual reproduction cost which is the average unit cost for copying a record, excluding fixed costs of the agency such as operator salaries.

SECTION 11. Public notice. The [City/Village/Town] shall publicize by posting in a conspicuous location and/or by publication in a local newspaper of general circulation:

(a) The location where records shall be made available for inspection and copying.

(b) The name, title, business address and business telephone number of the designated records access officer.

(c) The right to appeal by any person denied access to a record and the name and business address of the person or body to whom an appeal is to be directed.

SECTION 12. Severability. If any provision of this Resolution or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect or impair the validity of the other provisions of this Resolution or the application thereof to other persons and circumstances.

PUBLIC OFFICERS LAW, ARTICLE 6

SECTIONS 84-90

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION LAW

Section 84. Legislative declaration

Section 85. Short title

Section 86. Definitions

Section 87. Access to agency records

Section 88. Access to state legislative records

Section 89. General provisions relating to access to records; certain cases

Section 90. Severability

§84. Legislative declaration.

The legislature hereby finds that a free society is maintained when government is responsive and responsible to the public, and when the public is aware of governmental actions. The more open a government is with its citizenry, the greater the understanding and participation of the public in government.

As state and local government services increase and public problems become more sophisticated and complex and therefore harder to solve, and with the resultant increase in revenues and expenditures, it is incumbent upon the state and its localities to extend public accountability wherever and whenever feasible.

The people's right to know the process of governmental decision-making and to review the documents and statistics leading to determinations is basic to our society. Access to such information should not be thwarted by shrouding it with the cloak of secrecy or confidentiality. The legislature therefore declares that government is the public's business and that the public, individually and collectively and represented by a free press, should have access to the records of government in accordance with the provisions of this article.

§85. Short title. This article shall be known and may be cited as the "Freedom of Information Law."

§86. Definitions. As used in this article, unless the context requires otherwise.

1. "Judiciary" means the courts of the state, including any municipal or district court, whether or not of record.
2. "State legislature" means the legislature of the state of New York, including any committee, subcommittee, joint committee, select committee, or commission thereof.
3. "Agency" means any state or municipal department, board, bureau, division, commission, committee, public authority, public corporation, council, office or other governmental entity performing a governmental or proprietary function for the state or any one or more municipalities thereof, except the judiciary or the state legislature.
4. "Record" means any information kept, held, filed, produced or reproduced by, with or for an agency or the state legislature, in any physical form whatsoever including, but not limited to, reports, statements, examinations, memoranda, opinions, folders, files, books, manuals, pamphlets, forms, papers, designs, drawings, maps, photos, letters, microfilms, computer tapes or discs, rules, regulations or codes.
5. "Critical infrastructure" means systems, assets, places or things, whether physical or virtual, so vital to the state that the disruption, incapacitation or destruction of such systems, assets, places or things could jeopardize the health, safety, welfare or security of the state, its residents or its economy.

§87. Access to agency records.

1. (a) Within sixty days after the effective date of this article, the governing body of each public corporation shall promulgate uniform rules and regulations for all agencies in such public corporation pursuant to such general rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the committee on open government in conformity with the provisions of this article, pertaining to the administration of this article.

(b) Each agency shall promulgate rules and regulations, in conformity with this article and applicable rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this subdivision, and pursuant to such general rules and regulations as may be promulgated by the committee on open government in conformity with the provisions of this article, pertaining to the availability of records and procedures to be followed, including, but not limited to:

i. the times and places such records are available;

ii. the persons from whom such records may be obtained; and

iii. the fees for copies of records which shall not exceed twenty-five cents per photocopy not in excess of nine inches by fourteen inches, or the actual cost of reproducing any other record in accordance with the provisions of paragraph (c) of this subdivision, except when a different fee is otherwise prescribed by statute.

c. In determining the actual cost of reproducing a record, an agency may include only:

i. an amount equal to the hourly salary attributed to the lowest paid agency employee who has the necessary skill required to prepare a copy of the requested record;

ii. the actual cost of the storage devices or media provided to the person making the request in complying with such request;

iii. the actual cost to the agency of engaging an outside professional service to prepare a copy of a record, but only when an agency's information technology equipment is inadequate to prepare a copy, if such service is used to prepare the copy; and

iv. preparing a copy shall not include search time or administrative costs, and no fee shall be charged unless at least two hours of agency employee time is needed to prepare a copy of the record requested. A person requesting a record shall be informed of the estimated cost of preparing a copy of the record if more than two hours of an agency employee's time is needed, or if an outside professional service would be retained to prepare a copy of the record.

2. Each agency shall, in accordance with its published rules, make available for public inspection and copying all records, except that such agency may deny access to records or portions thereof that:

(a) are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal statute;

(b) if disclosed would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy under the provisions of subdivision two of section eighty-nine of this article;

(c) if disclosed would impair present or imminent contract awards or collective bargaining negotiations;

(d) are trade secrets or are submitted to an agency by a commercial enterprise or derived from information obtained from a commercial enterprise and which if disclosed would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of the subject enterprise;

(e) are compiled for law enforcement purposes and which, if disclosed, would:

i. interfere with law enforcement investigations or judicial proceedings;

ii. deprive a person of a right to a fair trial or impartial adjudication;

iii. identify a confidential source or disclose confidential information relating to a criminal investigation; or

iv. reveal criminal investigative techniques or procedures, except routine techniques and procedures;

(f) if disclosed could endanger the life or safety of any person;

(g) are inter-agency or intra-agency materials which are not:

i. statistical or factual tabulations or data;

ii. instructions to staff that affect the public;

iii. final agency policy or determinations; or

iv. external audits, including but not limited to audits performed by the comptroller and the federal government; or

(h) are examination questions or answers which are requested prior to the final administration of such questions;

(i) if disclosed, would jeopardize the capacity of an agency or an entity that has shared information with an agency to guarantee the security of its information technology assets, such assets encompassing both electronic information systems and infrastructures; or

* (j) are photographs, microphotographs, videotape

or other recorded images prepared under authority of section eleven hundred eleven-a of the vehicle and traffic law.

* NB Repealed December 1, 2014

* (k) are photographs, microphotographs, videotape

or other recorded images prepared under authority of section eleven hundred eleven-b of the vehicle and traffic law.

* NB Repealed December 1, 2014

* (l) are photographs, microphotographs, videotape or other recorded images produced by a bus lane photo device prepared under authority of section eleven hundred eleven-c of the vehicle and traffic law.

* NB Repealed September 20, 2015

3. Each agency shall maintain:

(a) a record of the final vote of each member in every agency proceeding in which the member votes;

(b) a record setting forth the name, public office address, title and salary of every officer or employee of the agency; and

(c) a reasonably detailed current list by subject matter, of all records in the possession of the agency, whether or not available under this article. Each agency shall update its subject matter list annually, and the date of the most recent update shall be conspicuously indicated on the list. Each state agency as defined in subdivision four of this section that maintains a website shall post its current list on its website and such posting shall be linked to the website of the committee on open government. Any such agency that does not maintain a website shall arrange to have its list posted on the website of the committee on open government.

4. (a) Each state agency which maintains records containing trade secrets, to which access may be denied pursuant to paragraph (d) of subdivision two of this section, shall promulgate regulations in conformity with the provisions of subdivision five of section eighty-nine of this article pertaining to such records, including, but not limited to the following:

(1) the manner of identifying the records or parts;

(2) the manner of identifying persons within the agency to whose custody the records or parts will be charged and for whose inspection and study the records will be made available;

(3) the manner of safeguarding against any unauthorized access to the records.

(b) As used in this subdivision the term "agency" or "state agency" means only a state department, board, bureau, division, council or office and any public corporation the majority of whose members are appointed by the governor.

(c) Each state agency that maintains a website shall post information related to this article and article

six-A of this chapter on its website. Such information shall include, at a minimum, contact information for the persons from whom records of the agency may be obtained, the times and places such records are available for inspection and copying, and information on how to request records in person, by mail, and, if the agency accepts requests for records electronically, by e-mail. This posting shall be linked to the website of the committee on open government.

5.(a) An agency shall provide records on the medium requested by a person, if the agency can reasonably make such copy or have such copy made by engaging an outside professional service. Records provided in a computer format shall not be encrypted.

(b) No agency shall enter into or renew a contract for the creation or maintenance of records if such contract impairs the right of the public to inspect or copy the agency's records.

§88. Access to state legislative records.

1. The temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly shall promulgate rules and regulations for their respective houses in conformity with the provisions of this article, pertaining to the availability, location and nature of records, including, but not limited to:

- (a) the times and places such records are available;
- (b) the persons from whom such records may be obtained;
- (c) the fees for copies of such records, which shall not exceed twenty-five cents per photocopy not in excess of nine inches by fourteen inches, or the actual cost of reproducing any other record, except when a different fee is otherwise prescribed by law.

2. The state legislature shall, in accordance with its published rules, make available for public inspection and copying:

- (a) bills and amendments thereto, fiscal notes, introducers' bill memoranda, resolutions and amendments thereto, and index records;
- (b) messages received from the governor or the other house of the legislature, and home rule messages;
- (c) legislative notification of the proposed adoption of rules by an agency;
- (d) transcripts or minutes, if prepared, and journal records of public sessions including meetings of committees and subcommittees and public hearings, with the records of attendance of members thereat and records of any votes taken;
- (e) internal or external audits and statistical or factual tabulations of, or with respect to, material otherwise available for public inspection and copying pursuant to this section or any other applicable provision of law;
- (f) administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect members of the public;
- (g) final reports and formal opinions submitted to the legislature;
- (h) final reports or recommendations and minority or dissenting reports and opinions of members of committees, subcommittees, or commissions of the legislature;
- (i) any other files, records, papers or documents required by law to be made available for public inspection and copying.

3. Each house shall maintain and make available for public inspection and copying:

- (a) a record of votes of each member in every session and every committee and subcommittee meeting in which the member votes;
- (b) a record setting forth the name, public office address, title, and salary of every officer or employee; and
- (c) a current list, reasonably detailed, by subject matter of any records required to be made available for public inspection and copying pursuant to this section.

§89. General provisions relating to access to records; certain cases. The provisions of this section

apply to access to all records, except as hereinafter specified:

1. (a) The committee on open government is continued and shall consist of the lieutenant governor or the delegate of such officer, the secretary of state or the delegate of such officer, whose office shall act as secretariat for the committee, the commissioner of the office of general services or the delegate of such officer, the director of the budget or the delegate of such officer, and seven other persons, none of whom shall hold any other state or local public office except the representative of local governments as set forth herein, to be appointed as follows: five by the governor, at least two of whom are or have been representatives of the news media, one of whom shall be a representative of local government who, at the time of appointment, is serving as a duly elected officer of a local government, one by the temporary president of the senate, and one by the speaker of the assembly. The persons appointed by the temporary president of the senate and the speaker of the assembly shall be appointed to serve, respectively, until the expiration of the terms of office of the temporary president and the speaker to which the temporary president and speaker were elected. The four persons presently serving by appointment of the government for fixed terms shall continue to serve until the expiration of their respective terms. Thereafter, their respective successors shall be appointed for terms of four years. The member representing local government shall be appointed for a term of four years, so long as such member shall remain a duly elected officer of a local government. The committee shall hold no less than two meetings annually, but may meet at any time. The members of the committee shall be entitled to reimbursement for actual expenses incurred in the discharge of their duties.

(b) The committee shall:

- i. furnish to any agency advisory guidelines, opinions or other appropriate information regarding this article;
- ii. furnish to any person advisory opinions or other appropriate information regarding this article;
- iii. promulgate rules and regulations with respect to the implementation of subdivision one and paragraph (c) of subdivision three of section eighty-seven of this article;
- iv. request from any agency such assistance, services and information as will enable the committee to effectively carry out its powers and duties; and
- v. develop a form, which shall be made available on the internet, that may be used by the public to request a record; and
- vi. report on its activities and findings regarding articles six and seven of this chapter, including recommendations for changes in the law, to the governor and the legislature annually, on or before December fifteenth.

2. (a) The committee on open government may promulgate guidelines regarding deletion of identifying details or withholding of records otherwise available under this article to prevent unwarranted invasions of personal privacy. In the absence of such guidelines, an agency may delete identifying details when it makes records available.

(b) An unwarranted invasion of personal privacy includes, but shall not be limited to:

- i. disclosure of employment, medical or credit histories or personal references of applicants for employment;
- ii. disclosure of items involving the medical or personal records of a client or patient in a medical facility;
- iii. sale or release of lists of names and addresses if such lists would be used for solicitation or fund-raising purposes;
- iv. disclosure of information of a personal nature when disclosure would result in economic or personal hardship to the subject party and such information is not relevant to the work of the agency requesting or maintaining it;
- v. disclosure of information of a personal nature reported in confidence to an agency and not relevant to

the ordinary work of such agency; or

vi. information of a personal nature contained in a workers' compensation record, except as provided by section one hundred ten-a of the workers' compensation law; or

vii. disclosure of electronic contact information, such as an e-mail address or a social network username, that has been collected from a taxpayer under section one hundred four of the real property tax law.

(c) Unless otherwise provided by this article, disclosure shall not be construed to constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy pursuant to paragraphs (a) and (b) of this subdivision:

i. when identifying details are deleted;

ii. when the person to whom a record pertains consents in writing to disclosure;

iii. when upon presenting reasonable proof of identity' a person seeks access to records pertaining to him or her; or

iv. when a record or group of records relates to the right, title or interest in real property, or relates to the inventory, status or characteristics of real property, in which case disclosure and providing copies of such record or group of records shall not be deemed an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy.

2-a. Nothing in this article shall permit disclosure which constitutes an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy as defined in subdivision two of this section if such disclosure is prohibited under section ninety-six of this chapter.

3. (a) Each entity subject to the provisions of this article, within five business days of the receipt of a written request for a record reasonably described, shall make such record available to the person requesting it, deny such request in writing or furnish a written acknowledgment of the receipt of such request and a statement of the approximate date, which shall be reasonable under the circumstances of the request, when such request will be granted or denied, including, where appropriate, a statement that access to the record will be determined in accordance with subdivision five of this section. An agency shall not deny a request on the basis that the request is voluminous or that locating or reviewing the requested records or providing the requested copies is burdensome because the agency lacks sufficient staffing or on any other basis if the agency may engage an outside professional service to provide copying, programming or other services required to provide the copy, the costs of which the agency may recover pursuant to paragraph (c) of subdivision one of section eighty-seven of this article. An agency may require a person requesting lists of names and addresses to provide a written certification that such person will not use such lists of names and addresses for solicitation or fund-raising purposes and will not sell, give or otherwise make available such lists of names and addresses to any other person for the purpose of allowing that person to use such lists of names and addresses for solicitation or fund-raising purposes. If an agency determines to grant a request in whole or in part, and if circumstances prevent disclosure to the person requesting the record or records within twenty business days from the date of the acknowledgement of the receipt of the request, the agency shall state, in writing, both the reason for the inability to grant the request within twenty business days and a date certain within a reasonable period, depending on the circumstances, when the request will be granted in whole or in part. Upon payment of, or offer to pay, the fee prescribed therefor, the entity shall provide a copy of such record and certify to the correctness of such copy if so requested, or as the case may be, shall certify that it does not have possession of such record or that such record cannot be found after diligent search. Nothing in this article shall be construed to require any entity to prepare any record not possessed or maintained by such entity except the records specified in subdivision three of section eighty-seven and subdivision three of section eighty-eight of this article. When an agency has the ability to retrieve or extract a record or data maintained in a computer storage system with reasonable effort, it shall be required to do so. When doing so requires less employee time than engaging in manual retrieval or redactions from non-electronic records, the agency shall be required to retrieve or

extract such record or data electronically. Any programming necessary to retrieve a record maintained in a computer storage system and to transfer that record to the medium requested by a person or to allow the transferred record to be read or printed shall not be deemed to be the preparation or creation of a new record.

(b) All entities shall, provided such entity has reasonable means available, accept requests for records submitted in the form of electronic mail and shall respond to such requests by electronic mail, using forms, to the extent practicable, consistent with the form or forms developed by the committee on open government pursuant to subdivision one of this section and provided that the written requests do not seek a response in some other form.

4. (a) Except as provided in subdivision five of this section, any person denied access to a record may within thirty days appeal in writing such denial to the head, chief executive or governing body of the entity, or the person therefor designated by such head, chief executive, or governing body, who shall within ten business days of the receipt of such appeal fully explain in writing to the person requesting the record the reasons for further denial, or provide access to the record sought. In addition, each agency shall immediately forward to the committee on open government a copy of such appeal when received by the agency and the ensuing determination thereon. Failure by an agency to conform to the provisions of subdivision three of this section shall constitute a denial.

(b) Except as provided in subdivision five of this section, a person denied access to a record in an appeal determination under the provisions of paragraph (a) of this subdivision may bring a proceeding for review of such denial pursuant to article seventy-eight of the civil practice law and rules. In the event that access to any record is denied pursuant to the provisions of subdivision two of section eighty-seven of this article, the agency involved shall have the burden of proving that such record falls within the provisions of such subdivision two. Failure by an agency to conform to the provisions of paragraph (a) of this subdivision shall constitute a denial.

(c) The court in such a proceeding may assess, against such agency involved, reasonable attorney's fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred by such person in any case under the provisions of this section in which such person has substantially prevailed, when:

- i. the agency had no reasonable basis for denying access; or
- ii. the agency failed to respond to a request or appeal within the statutory time.

5. (a) (1) A person acting pursuant to law or regulation who, subsequent to the effective date of this subdivision, submits any information to any state agency may, at the time of submission, request that the agency except such information from disclosure under paragraph (d) of subdivision two of section eighty-seven of this article. Where the request itself contains information which if disclosed would defeat the purpose for which the exception is sought, such information shall also be excepted from disclosure.

(1-a) A person or entity who submits or otherwise makes available any records to any agency, may, at any time, identify those records or portions thereof that may contain critical infrastructure information, and request that the agency that maintains such records except such information from disclosure under subdivision two of section eighty-seven of this article. Where the request itself contains information which if disclosed would defeat the purpose for which the exception is sought, such information shall also be excepted from disclosure.

(2) The request for an exception shall be in writing and state the reasons why the information should be excepted from disclosure.

(3) Information submitted as provided in subparagraphs one and one-a of this paragraph shall be excepted from disclosure and be maintained apart by the agency from all other records until fifteen days after the entitlement to such exception has been finally determined or such further time as ordered

by a court of competent jurisdiction.

(b) On the initiative of the agency at any time, or upon the request of any person for a record excepted from disclosure pursuant to this subdivision, the agency shall:

(1) inform the person who requested the exception of the agency's intention to determine whether such exception should be granted or continued;

(2) permit the person who requested the exception, within ten business days of receipt of notification from the agency, to submit a written statement of the necessity for the granting or continuation of such exception;

(3) within seven business days of receipt of such written statement, or within seven business days of the expiration of the period prescribed for submission of such statement, issue a written determination granting, continuing or terminating such exception and stating the reasons therefor; copies of such determination shall be served upon the person, if any, requesting the record, the person who requested the exception, and the committee on open government.

(c) A denial of an exception from disclosure under paragraph (b) of this subdivision may be appealed by the person submitting the information and a denial of access to the record may be appealed by the person requesting the record in accordance with this subdivision.

(1) Within seven business days of receipt of written notice denying the request, the person may file a written appeal from the determination of the agency with the head of the agency, the chief executive officer or governing body or their designated representatives.

(2) The appeal shall be determined within ten business days of the receipt of the appeal. Written notice of the determination shall be served upon the person, if any, requesting the record, the person who requested the exception and the committee on public access to records. The notice shall contain a statement of the reasons for the determination.

(d) A proceeding to review an adverse determination pursuant to paragraph (c) of this subdivision may be commenced pursuant to article seventy-eight of the civil practice law and rules. Such proceeding, when brought by a person seeking an exception from disclosure pursuant to this subdivision, must be commenced within fifteen days of the service of the written notice containing the adverse determination provided for in subparagraph two of paragraph (c) of this subdivision.

(e) The person requesting an exception from disclosure pursuant to this subdivision shall in all proceedings have the burden of proving entitlement to the exception.

(f) Where the agency denies access to a record pursuant to paragraph (d) of subdivision two of section eighty-seven of this article, the agency shall

have the burden of proving that the record falls within the provisions of such exception.

(g) Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to deny any person access, pursuant to the remaining provisions of this article, to any record or part excepted from disclosure upon the express written consent of the person who had requested the exception.

(h) As used in this subdivision the term "agency" or "state agency" means only a state department, board, bureau, division, council or office and any public corporation the majority of whose members are appointed by the governor.

6. Nothing in this article shall be construed to limit or abridge any otherwise available right of access at law or in equity of any party to records.

7. Nothing in this article shall require the disclosure of the home address of an officer or employee, former officer or employee, or of a retiree of a public employees' retirement system; nor shall anything in this article require the disclosure of the name or home address of a beneficiary of a public employees' retirement system or of an applicant for appointment to public employment; provided however, that nothing in this subdivision shall limit or abridge the right of an employee organization, certified or recognized for any collective negotiating unit of an employer pursuant to article fourteen of the civil service law, to obtain the name or home address of any officer, employee or retiree of such employer, if such name or home address is otherwise available under this article.

8. Any person who, with intent to prevent public inspection of a record pursuant to this article, willfully conceals or destroys any such record shall be guilty of a violation.

9. When records maintained electronically include items of information that would be available under this article, as well as items of information that may be withheld, an agency in designing its information retrieval methods, whenever practicable and reasonable, shall do so in a manner that permits the segregation and retrieval of available items in order to provide maximum public access.

§90. Severability.

If any provision of this article or the application thereof to any person or circumstances is adjudged invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, such judgment shall not affect or impair the validity of the other provisions of the article or the application thereof to other persons and circumstances.