

Filing A Freedom of Information (FOI) Request

What is an FOI Request?

A freedom of information request is a request for information such as your own personal information, general records held by government, public institutions, and more.

Why file an FOI request?

Access to Information

You may want to obtain specific information held by a public authority that is not readily available to the public.

Research & Analysis

FOI requests can be useful for academic, journalistic, or research purposes to gather data and insights.

Accountability & Oversight

FOI requests can help hold public authorities accountable for their actions and decisions.

Transparency

By accessing information through FOI, the public can better understand government activities and decision-making processes.

How to file an FOI request?

1

Identify the information/records you want

2

Identify the relevant institution(s)

Prepare the official FOI request:

Clearly specify the information you want, being as specific as possible. Include your contact information. The official FOI request form can be found in your province's website.

3

4

Format the request: Some jurisdictions have specific forms or templates for FOI requests. If available, use the official form.

5

Submit the request: Send the request to the designated authority. This can often be done through email, mail, or an online portal.

6

Pay the application fee: There is a mandatory \$5 application fee for each FOI request in Ontario (find the fee amount for your province [here](#)).

7

Await response: The authority has a legal obligation to respond within a specific timeframe, usually within a few weeks. If they don't respond within the timeframe, move to step 9. If you need help, contact the Freedom of Information and Privacy (FOIP) coordinator at the institution you want information from.

8

Review the response: The authority will either provide the information or cite a reason for withholding it (such as national security or personal privacy concerns) (if you believe the reason isn't valid, follow step 9).

9

Appeal (if necessary): If your request is denied, some jurisdictions allow you to appeal the decision with the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of your province.