

1. What is the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL)?

FOIL promotes the policy of open government. FOIL was designed to make documents generated by and in the possession of government agencies available to the public with certain specific exceptions.

Please note the following:

Public Housing Applications. All requests for public housing applications and qualifications for public housing should be made directly to NYCHA's Applications & Tenancy Administration Department. Please refer to NYCHA's website for assistance on applying for public housing.

Employment Records/Personnel Files. All requests from NYCHA employees for their own Employment Records/Personnel Files should be made directly to NYCHA's Human Resources Department located at 90 Church Street, 5th Floor, New York, New York 10007; General Information Number: (212) 306-8000.

2. How do I make a FOIL request?

You must make your request in writing. Please be as specific as possible in describing the records you seek so that we may properly identify which records are responsive to your request. Some information may be downloaded directly from the NYCHA website. If you do not find the information you seek on the website, please send a letter by regular mail or email to:

Records Access Officer
NYCHA
90 Church Street, 11th Floor
New York, New York 10007

Email Address: FOIL@nycha.nyc.gov
Phone: (212) 306-8680

It is not necessary to submit your FOIL request by regular mail and email. Submitting duplicate requests can cause delays. You will know NYCHA received your FOIL request when you receive a written acknowledgment (see # 4 below).

If you would like to amend your initial request, please do so in writing and append a copy of your initial request to the amended version. Please reference your NYCHA FOIL number on your amended request if you've received one in an acknowledgement.

3. What happens after NYCHA receives my FOIL request?

Your request is given a NYCHA FOIL number, entered into NYCHA's tracking system and then routed to the department within NYCHA where the records you seek may be kept. This number will appear on all correspondence you receive from NYCHA, and helps us identify your request if you write or call seeking the status of your request.

The department will then identify and locate the records you have requested, if any are maintained. The FOIL Unit reviews the records for responsiveness to your request and ensures that release of the records complies with the Freedom of Information Law. The materials are photocopied and sections that are determined to be non-releasable are blacked out (redacted). Sometimes an answer to a request contains hundreds or thousands of pages, and may take some time to assemble.

4. When will I receive an answer once I have made a FOIL request?

The Records Access Officer will mail or email you an acknowledgment within five business days of receipt of your request. In this acknowledgment, NYCHA will estimate how long it will take to gather the records you requested. If you have not received notice of completion of your request within the time estimated in our acknowledgment letter, please feel free to contact us.

5. Why is access to certain records denied?

Article 6 of the N.Y. Public Officers Law, Section 87, includes nine conditions for denial of access. Some of the most common requests NYCHA receives that involve records exempt from disclosure include:

- Records that are specifically exempted from disclosure by state or federal law.
- Records that, if disclosed, would constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy (for example, home telephone numbers, home addresses, and social security numbers).
- Records that, if disclosed, could endanger the life or safety of another person.
- Records that are inter-agency or intra-agency materials which do not fall within any exception.

A denial of access must be in writing, stating the reason for denial and advising you of your right to appeal.

6. Do I need to show photo identification and/or sign a release?

If you are requesting your own records, you must produce a valid and legible photo identification to review and/or receive the records.

If you are an attorney making a request on your client's behalf, please note that an original notarized release is required for NYCHA to disclose your client's personal and confidential information.

If you are submitting court documents that require a seal to be valid (such as Letters of Administration) please provide an original document. Photocopies or PDFs cannot be accepted.

7. Are there any costs/fees associated with making a FOIL request?

Individuals making a FOIL request are required to issue payment to NYCHA for any copies NYCHA makes in response to the request. The Records Access Officer will inform the requester by letter of the number of pages of documents responsive to the request, and the fee for making copies (currently \$0.25 per page). The requester is required to provide full payment to NYCHA before the documents can be released. If the requester delivers the fee in person, they must take the fee to the Central Office Cash Control at 90 Church Street, 6th Floor, together with a Control Memo issued by the Records Access Officer, obtain a receipt, and then present the receipt to the Records Access Officer to show proof of payment before the responsive records are released. If you request that the records be mailed to you, the actual cost of postage will be added.

The fee for transferring materials (if available electronically) to a CD or DVD will be based on the actual cost associated with duplication.

8. **When and where can I review the records?**

Once NYCHA notifies you that responsive records are available, you must call the FOIL Unit at (212) 306-8680 to set up an appointment to review the records. Records inspections are conducted during regular business hours except on holidays. Inspections are conducted at 90 Church Street, 11th Floor, New York, New York 10007. You may request that responsive records be mailed to you instead of visiting the FOIL Unit in person.