

61.01.02.X1.01 Public Information

Approved September 29, 2009
Next Scheduled Review September 29, 2011

Procedure Statement

This procedure establishes procedures for Texas AgriLife Extension Service (Extension) employees to comply with the Texas Public Information Act and System Regulation 61.02.01, *Public Information*

Reason for Procedure

This procedure is required by System regulation 61.02.01, *Public Information* and provides Extension employees guidance for the management of public information requests and the compilation of responses to comply with the Texas Public Information Act.

Procedures and Responsibilities

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The Texas Public Information Act designates the Chief Executive Officer of each System member as the Officer for Public Information Officer (PIO). The Director has delegated these responsibilities the Assistant Agency Director-Compliance. The Manager, Human Resource Services in the Texas A&M AgriLife Human Resources Office serves as the alternate to act in the PIO's absence. Each department/unit head is a public information contact point for the PIO.
- 1.2 The PIO will distribute public information requests to the appropriate agency administrative contact(s) and unit(s) for the purpose of gathering responsive information.
- 1.3 The PIO will copy the System Office of General Counsel (OGC) on all requests and OGC will be consulted in regard to all responses. OGC will notify the Chancellor of requests that may have public relations significance, as appropriate.
- 1.4 The PIO will copy Texas A&M AgriLife Communications on all requests that may have public relations significance.

2. RECEIPT OF PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

2.1 Manner of Receipt

- 2.1.1 No official format is required, but information must be requested in writing and contain requestor contact information.
- 2.1.2 A governmental body may not inquire into the purpose of a request.
- 2.1.3 All requests received directly by a department, by mail or hand delivery, shall be forwarded immediately upon receipt to the PIO.
- 2.1.4 Requests made by electronic mail or facsimile transmission must be addressed directly to the PIO. Departments/units receiving requests directly from the requestor by electronic mail or facsimile transmission should ask the requestor to resubmit the request to the PIO.

3. RESPONSES TO PUBLIC INFORMATION REQUESTS

- 3.1 The department/unit contact(s) shall provide all documents that are responsive to a request to the PIO by the date indicated by the PIO;
 - 3.1.1 Records shall be forwarded electronically (via e-mail or CD) when possible;
 - 3.1.2 If necessary to provide hard copies, copies should be single sided and staples removed;
 - 3.1.3 No redactions shall be made to responsive documents;
 - 3.1.4 Responses to multiple items shall be sorted and identified per item;
 - 3.1.5 Concerns regarding release of certain responsive items shall be noted.
- 3.2 If sources for responsive information are known that are not indicated on the distribution, the PIO shall be notified as soon as possible.
- 3.3 A response to a public information request includes responsive documents that exist at the time of a request.
 - 3.3.1 A governmental body is not required to create new documents in response to a request.
 - 3.3.2 A data base, as it exists at the time of a request, is considered an existing document.
- 3.4 The PIO will assist department/unit contacts with cost estimates as described in System Regulation 61.01.02, Section 4.
 - 3.4.1 Cost estimates may be an option if a request will cost more than \$40 to process.

3.4.2 If it is determined that a cost estimate is appropriate, it must be provided to the requestor by the PIO no later than 10 business days after a request is received.

3.4.3 Cost estimates may be determined by taking a sample section of the responsive information and multiplying the sample by the total number of sections.

3.4.4 Actual copying work should not be done until the requestor agrees to the cost estimate

3.5 All decisions regarding withholding or releasing records will be made in accordance with System Regulation 61.01.02, Section 5.

Related Statutes, Policies, or Requirements

- Policy 61.01, *Public Information Act Compliance*
<http://tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/61-01.pdf>
- Regulation 61.01.02, *Public Information*
<http://tamus.edu/offices/policy/policies/pdf/61-01-02.pdf>

Definitions

- The terms “Public Information” and “Open Records” are used interchangeably.

Contact Office

- For interpretation or clarification, please contact the Public Information Officer at (979) 862-1524.