



Pennsylvania House of Representatives' Right-to-Know Law Procedures

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How do I make a Right-to-Know Law request with the House of Representatives?

A: Requests for records under the Pennsylvania Right-to-Know Law (65 P.S. §§67.101 *et seq.*), (hereafter the "RTKL") should be submitted in writing to the House of Representatives Right-to-Know Office, at:

House Right-to-Know Office
133 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2220
Phone: 717-787-7431
Fax: 717-783-3556
Email: righttoknow@pabmc.net

Requests may be submitted in person, by mail, by email, by facsimile, or using the online request form found at: www.house.state.pa.us/RTKL. When submitting a request, please provide us with your name, phone number, and email address. **Please note that if you do not provide adequate contact information in your request, it may not be possible for us to grant access to the records you seek.*

Q: What records are available from the House under the RTKL?

A: The House of Representatives (the "House") is defined as a "legislative agency" under section 102 of the RTKL. According to section 303(a), the House is obligated to provide RTKL requesters with access to "legislative records." This differs from "Commonwealth and local agencies," which are obligated to provide access to "public records" under the Act, as well as "judicial agencies," which are obligated to provide "financial records." "Legislative records," "public records," and "financial records" are specifically defined in the RTKL.

Q: What are “legislative records”?

A: As defined by section 102 of the RTKL, “legislative records” specifically includes the following nineteen (19) items:

1. A financial record.
2. A bill or resolution that has been introduced and amendments offered thereto in committee or in legislative session, including resolutions to adopt or amend the rules of a chamber.
3. Fiscal notes.
4. A cosponsorship memorandum.
5. The journal of a chamber.
6. The minutes of, record of attendance of members at a public hearing or a public committee meeting and all recorded votes taken in a public committee meeting.
7. The transcript of a public hearing when available.
8. Executive nomination calendars.
9. The rules of a chamber.
10. A record of all recorded votes taken in a legislative session.
11. Any administrative staff manuals or written policies.
12. An audit report prepared pursuant to the act of June 30, 1970 (P.L.442, No.151) entitled, “An act implementing the provisions of Article VIII, section 10 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania, by designating the Commonwealth officers who shall be charged with the function of auditing the financial transactions after the occurrence thereof of the Legislative and Judicial branches of the government of the Commonwealth, establishing a Legislative Audit Advisory Commission, and imposing certain powers and duties on such commission.”
13. Final or annual reports required by law to be submitted to the General Assembly.
14. Legislative Budget and Finance Committee reports.
15. Daily Legislative Session Calendars and marked calendars.
16. A record communicating to an agency the official appointment of a legislative appointee.
17. A record communicating to the appointing authority the resignation of a legislative appointee.
18. Proposed regulations, final-form regulations and final-omitted regulations submitted to a legislative agency.
19. The results of public opinion surveys, polls, focus groups, marketing research or similar efforts designed to measure public opinion funded by a legislative agency.

Q: What are some examples of “legislative records”?

- A:** Some examples of “legislative records” include, but are not limited to:
- Reports of House Member expense and/or per diem reimbursements;
 - Salaries of House Members and/or employees;
 - Contractual agreements entered into by the House of Representatives;
 - Transcripts of House Session and committee meetings; and
 - Administrative manuals or policies adopted by the House of Representatives.

Q: How long will it take to get my records?

A: Under the RTKL, the Open Records Officer has five (5) business days (Monday-Friday, except for State holidays; see Appendix) to respond to a request. The Open Records Officer may respond by granting access to the requested records, denying access, referring the request to the appropriate agency if it is misdirected, or by issuing an extension of time for the House to respond. Section 902 of the RTKL allows the Open Records Officer to extend the deadline for compliance with requests for up to thirty (30) calendar days for any of the following reasons:

1. The request for access requires redaction of a record in accordance with section 706;
2. The request for access requires the retrieval of a record stored in a remote location;
3. A timely response to the request for access cannot be accomplished due to bona fide and specified staffing limitations;
4. A legal review is necessary to determine whether the record is a record subject to access under this act;
5. The requester has not complied with the agency’s policies regarding access to records;
6. The requester refuses to pay applicable fees authorized by this act; or
7. The extent or nature of the request precludes a response within the required time period.

Q: Are there any costs involved?

A: Records that are maintained electronically by the House are provided free of charge. Under the House RTKL Policy, records that are not maintained electronically and/or require physical printing or duplication are twenty-five cents (\$0.25) per page, per document. Any necessary postage will be charged at the actual cost of mailing the records. All fees must be paid prior to the provision of the records, and payment can be made by cash or check payable to the “Commonwealth of Pennsylvania”.

Q: Can any “legislative records” be found online?

A: Yes. See the chart below for reference.



House “Legislative Records” Available Online

<p>1. “Financial Records”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Member leases b. House contracts over \$5,000.00 c. Member/employee salaries. <p>*Additional “financial records” are available via RTKL request with the House.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Pennsylvania Treasury PA Treasury e-Library b. Pennsylvania Treasury PA Treasury e-Library c. PennWATCH House Member/Employee Salary
<p>2. Legislative actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A bill or resolution. b. Amendments offered in committee. c. Amendments offered in session. d. Discharge resolutions/miscellaneous legislative documents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. House bill/resolution information b. Amendments offered in committee c. Amendment offered in session d. Discharge resolutions/miscellaneous legislative documents
<p>3. Fiscal notes.</p>	<p>House bill/resolution information</p> <p>* Fiscal notes can be found on the individual bill’s information page.</p>
<p>4. Co-sponsorship memoranda.</p>	<p>Co-sponsorship memoranda</p>
<p>5. House Legislative Journals (Transcripts of Floor action).</p>	<p>House legislative journals</p>
<p>6. Committee meetings/hearings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recorded votes taken in a public committee meeting. b. Transcript of a public hearing when available. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Recorded votes taken in public committee meeting b. Transcript of a public hearing
<p>7. General operating rules of the House.</p>	<p>General operating rules of the House</p>
<p>8. A record of all recorded votes taken in a legislative session.</p>	<p>House session recorded votes</p>
<p>9. Committee reports.</p>	<p>Committee reports</p>
<p>10. Legislative calendars.</p>	<p>House session calendars</p>

APPENDIX




JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

-  - Date request received by Right-to-Know Law office.
-  - Date request is due.

JANUARY

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

-  - Date request received by Right-to-Know Law office.
-  - Date request is due.
-  - Holiday (office closed)