

## **TUSCARAWAS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS PUBLIC RECORDS POLICY**

It is the policy of the Tuscarawas County Commissioner's Office (TUSCARAWAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE) that, as required by Ohio law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. It is the policy of TUSCARAWAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE to strictly adhere to the state's Public Records Act. All exemptions to openness are to be construed in their narrowest sense and any denial of public records in response to a valid request must be accompanied by an explanation, including legal authority, as outlined in the Ohio Revised Code. If the request is in writing, the explanation must also be in writing. Record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and posted prominently.

### **Section 1: Definition of a Public Record**

The Tuscarawas County Commissioner's Office, in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, e-mail), or other format – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. All records of TUSCARAWAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE are public unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under the Ohio Revised Code.

### **Section 2: Request of Public Records**

Each request for public records should be evaluated for a response using the following guidelines:

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the public office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the records custodian must contact the requester for clarification, and should assist the requestor in revising the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which the office keeps its records.

The requestor does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record. It is TUSCARAWAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S general policy that this information is not to be requested.

### **Section 3: Availability of Public Records**

Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. "Prompt" and "reasonable" take into account the volume of records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review of the records requested.

### **Section 4: Availability of Public Records Policy including Records Retention Schedules**

TUSCARAWAS COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S Public Records Policy will be available in the main office via hard copy. It will also be available on the website under Departments – Commissioners - Public Records Policy. Individual schedules are on file with records retentions custodian.