

SCDMH FOIA Request Policies and Fee Schedule

- SCDMH's Office of Public Affairs coordinates Freedom of Information Act requests/responses.
- Requests must be submitted in writing, in one of the following ways: mail, email, or fax.
- SCDMH will provide a message of receipt for all FOIA requests.

SCDMH Requests for Clarification, Additional Information, etc.

- On occasion, SCDMH may require more information or clarification from a requestor in order to undertake a search for responsive materials. Requests for Clarification or Additional Information will be sent in writing.
- Should the requestor NOT provide the clarification or additional information to SCDMH within 10 business days, the Agency will consider the request withdrawn.
- However, if SCDMH has documents responsive to the request absent those needing clarification/information, it will provide that information.

ID Verification Requirement

For responsive materials that contain employee information (e.g., Human Resources-related requests), SCDMH may require verification of identification before providing responsive documents to ensure employee confidentiality.

Fee Schedule

The SCDMH Office of Public Affairs Charges will decide when fees will be waived or imposed. The Office of Public Affairs should waive fees for public record when it determines that waiver is in the public interest.

For requests that require a fee, the amount will be calculated according to the following guidelines:

- **Hard copy pages***
1-15 pages of material: FREE
16 + pages: 20¢ per page.
- **Employee Time (Research, Document Retrieval, Redaction, Copying/Scanning)***
If the request requires approximately one hour or more of staff time, fees will be based on the actual cost of the search, retrieval, copying/scanning, and redaction (if necessary) of records. This hourly fee will be the hourly salary of the employee who has the necessary access and skill to fulfill the request.

*Fees for photocopying, employee time, and electronic storage devices are individual fees.

- **Electronic Data Storage Devices**
If the FOIA request an electronic data storage device (e.g., thumb drive, CD-ROM, etc.) the charge will be the actual cost associated with the device.

Deposits, Invoices & Payments

At the discretion of the SCDMH Office of Public Affairs, a deposit may be required before the research process begins. This is generally for requests that will require many hours of employee time. The deposit will be no more than 25% of the total estimated cost for providing the materials.

The SCDMH will provide an estimate of costs for FOIA requests requiring a fee to the requestor **before** proceeding to gather materials. The requestor should opt to continue the process in writing.

SCDMH will provide an itemized invoice for the cost of responsive materials upon completion of research, copying, and redaction of the documents. Payment should be made to the address below.

Payment for FOIA deposits and materials should be made payable to the South Carolina Department of Mental Health. PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH. Checks and money orders, along with a copy of the estimate/itemized invoice, should be mailed to the address below:

SCDMH Office of Public Affairs.
PO Box 485
Columbia, SC 29202

FOIA Request funds are deposited to the account of the SCDMH division/component that provided the information/staff time to respond to the request.

Reviewed & Updated December, 2020

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