Ohio’s Public Records Act, part of the Sunshine Laws, tells us how requests for public records are to be handled.

**What are Public Records?**

The Ohio Revised Code defines public records as “any record that is kept by any public office, including, but not limited to, state, county, city, village, township, and school district units.” With specific exceptions, nearly everything we create at the University of Cincinnati is a public record and must be made accessible to the public via the Public Records Act.

**Some Specifics in the Law**

- Records must be turned over upon request; requestors are not required to show purpose or need, nor are they required to give their name or be Ohio citizens.
- There are records that do not have to be turned over, such as student records covered under FERPA, some medical records, and others.
- A request has to be specific and not too broad and must fall into the manner in which records are maintained and accessed.
- Every public office is required to have a current records retention schedule available for public access.

**Are You Comfortable?**

Are you ready to tackle public records requests? Do you know what records in your office can and cannot be turned over as public records? Do you have an approved records retention schedule for your area? Fines up to $1000 and court costs can be imposed for improperly handling a public records request. If you need more information about public records, contact Janice Schulz, University Records Manager, or Doug Nienaber, Assistant General Counsel. We offer a presentation appropriate for all levels of staff that outlines how to handle public records and public records requests. We’re also here to answer your questions and address concerns you may have about the process.

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“Democracy flourishes when government operates in the sunshine.”  
-Ohio Attorney General