



Public Records Request Process

Office of the Secretary of State

The Secretary of State's Office fulfills public records requests in accordance with the Montana Code Annotated ([Title 2, Chapter 6](#) and [Title 2, Chapter 15](#)) and the Administrative Rules of Montana ([ARM 44.2.204](#)).

The procedure is as follows:

1. The requester must go to <https://sosmt.gov/public-records-request/>. The requester will find an online request form that must be filled out in its entirety and submitted electronically. Forms that are submitted without being filled out completely will not be processed.
2. The requester will receive a letter of acknowledgment from the Secretary of State's Office within five business days of submission of the electronic form.
3. A preliminary review of your request will be conducted by the Secretary of State's Office to determine whether the records requested are public records of the agency. In accordance with Montana law, if the request is determined by the Secretary of State's Office to be a single, specific, clearly identifiable, and readily available document that will take less than 30 minutes of staff time to identify, gather, and provide, the request will be fulfilled within five working days. If the preliminary review of the search results in what appears to be a large number of potentially responsive documents, the requester may be contacted to refine, narrow, or clarify the request. If the requester does not respond within 30 days of being contacted, the request may be considered closed, and no further action will be taken.
4. Once the request has been reviewed by the Secretary of State's Office, a general estimate of the cost to fulfill the request will be provided. The requester has 30 days to commit to payment. Failure to do so in that timeframe may result in the closure of the public records request.
5. Upon receipt of a commitment from the requester to pay the actual costs, the records will be gathered and the actual costs calculated.
6. The requester will receive notification of the actual costs to fulfill the request and will have 30 days from the date of the notification to make payment to the Secretary of State's Office. An invoice for the actual costs will be sent to the email address provided on the request form. Failure to make payment in that timeframe will result in closure of the public records request, and no further action will be taken. If the records are still desired, the requester will need to submit a new records request.
7. Once full payment has been received, records will be sent to the requester.

If you have questions about submitting a public records request or the information above, you can contact the Secretary of State's Office's designated contact at sames@mt.gov.