



APPLICATION FEE FOR GENERAL REQUESTS

Background

Amendments to the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (FOIPPA) received royal assent on Nov. 25, 2021. As part of these changes, the B.C. government introduced a \$10 fee for general freedom of information (FOI) requests.

The application fee for general requests is intended to bring B.C. in line with other Canadian jurisdictions that also have an application fee. Those making personal requests will continue to pay no fee at all.

B.C. receives among the highest volumes of FOI requests in Canada with over 10,000 requests annually. This volume increased by more than 40% between 2018 and 2020. And while work is being done to modernize and streamline the FOI system, stakeholders have told government they are not getting their information fast enough. This is mostly because of overly broad requests that are slowing down the system.

Overview

A non-refundable application fee of \$10 will now apply to all general FOI requests. This fee must be paid before the request will be processed and will apply to every public body included in the request (e.g., records requested from three ministries would be \$30).

If additional public bodies have records beyond the original request, the request may be transferred to ensure a fulsome response is provided. Those submitting the request will be notified before it is transferred to an additional public body as there will be an additional fee for any added public bodies.

To ensure the fee is not a barrier to access, Indigenous Governing Entities will not be required to pay application fees.

This fee also does not apply to personal FOI requests; those continue to be without a cost.

More information

Additional information regarding FOI requests and associated fees can be found [here](#) or contact the Information Access Operations Branch of the Ministry of Citizens' Services at FOI.Requests@gov.bc.ca or 250-387-1321. More information about the FOIPPA 2021 amendments can be found at gov.bc.ca/FOIPPAUpdates.

Information sessions are being held for ministries and the broader public sector. Check www.gov.bc.ca/privacytraining for updates.