

CHAPTER 22

EXAMINATION OF PUBLIC RECORDS (OPEN RECORDS)

22.1 Definitions.

1. The term “*government body*” means this state, or any county, city, township, school corporation, political subdivision, tax-supported district, nonprofit corporation other than a fair conducting a fair event as provided in chapter 174, whose facilities or indebtedness are supported in whole or in part with property tax revenue and which is licensed to conduct pari-mutuel wagering pursuant to chapter 99D; the governing body of a drainage or levee district as provided in chapter 468, including a board as defined in section 468.3, regardless of how the district is organized; or other entity of this state, or any branch, department, board, bureau, commission, council, committee, official, or officer of any of the foregoing or any employee delegated the responsibility for implementing the requirements of this chapter.

2. The term “*lawful custodian*” means the government body currently in physical possession of the public record. The custodian of a public record in the physical possession of persons outside a government body is the government body owning that record. The records relating to the investment of public funds are the property of the public body responsible for the public funds. Each government body shall delegate to particular officials or employees of that government body the responsibility for implementing the requirements of this chapter and shall publicly announce the particular officials or employees to whom responsibility for implementing the requirements of this chapter has been delegated. “*Lawful custodian*” does not mean an automated data processing unit of a public body if

the data processing unit holds the records solely as the agent of another public body, nor does it mean a unit which holds the records of other public bodies solely for storage.

3. *a.* As used in this chapter, “*public records*” includes all records, documents, tape, or other information, stored or preserved in any medium, of or belonging to this state or any county, city, township, school corporation, political subdivision, nonprofit corporation other than a fair conducting a fair event as provided in chapter 174, whose facilities or indebtedness are supported in whole or in part with property tax revenue and which is licensed to conduct pari-mutuel wagering pursuant to chapter 99D, or tax-supported district in this state, or any branch, department, board, bureau, commission, council, or committee of any of the foregoing.

b. “*Public records*” also includes all records relating to the investment of public funds including but not limited to investment policies, instructions, trading orders, or contracts, whether in the custody of the public body responsible for the public funds or a fiduciary or other third party.

22.2 Right to examine public records — exceptions.

1. Every person shall have the right to examine and copy a public record and to publish or otherwise disseminate a public record or the information contained in a public record. Unless otherwise provided for by law, the right to examine a public record shall include the right to examine a public record without charge while the public record is in the physical possession of the custodian of the public record. The right to copy a public record shall include the right to make photographs or photographic copies while the public record is in the possession of the custodian of the record. All rights under this section are in addition to the right to obtain a

certified copy of a public record under section 622.46.

2. A government body shall not prevent the examination or copying of a public record by contracting with a nongovernment body to perform any of its duties or functions.

3. However, notwithstanding subsections 1 and 2, a government body is not required to permit access to or use of the following:

a. A geographic computer database by any person except upon terms and conditions acceptable to the governing body. The governing body shall establish reasonable rates and procedures for retrieval of specified records, which are not confidential records, stored in the database upon the request of any person.

b. Data processing software developed by the government body, as provided in section 22.3A.

22.3 Supervision — fees.

1. The examination and copying of public records shall be done under the supervision of the lawful custodian of the records or the custodian's authorized designee. The lawful custodian shall not require the physical presence of a person requesting or receiving a copy of a public record and shall fulfill requests for a copy of a public record received in writing, by telephone, or by electronic means. Fulfillment of a request for a copy of a public record may be contingent upon receipt of payment of expenses to be incurred in fulfilling the request and such estimated expenses shall be communicated to the requester upon receipt of the request. The lawful custodian may adopt and enforce reasonable rules regarding the examination and copying of the records and the protection of the records against damage or disorganization. The lawful custodian shall provide a suitable place for the examination and copying of the records, but if it is impracticable to do the examination and copying of the records in the office

of the lawful custodian, the person desiring to examine or copy shall pay any necessary expenses of providing a place for the examination and copying.

2. All expenses of the examination and copying shall be paid by the person desiring to examine or copy. The lawful custodian may charge a reasonable fee for the services of the lawful custodian or the custodian's authorized designee in supervising the examination and copying of the records. If copy equipment is available at the office of the lawful custodian of any public records, the lawful custodian shall provide any person a reasonable number of copies of any public record in the custody of the office upon the payment of a fee. The fee for the copying service as determined by the lawful custodian shall not exceed the actual cost of providing the service. Actual costs shall include only those expenses directly attributable to supervising the examination of and making and providing copies of public records. Actual costs shall not include charges for ordinary expenses or costs such as employment benefits, depreciation, maintenance, electricity, or insurance associated with the administration of the office of the lawful custodian.

22.3A Access to data processing software.

1. As used in this section:

a. "Access" means the instruction of, communication with, storage of data in, or retrieval of data from a computer.

b. "Computer" means an electronic device which performs logical, arithmetical, and memory functions by manipulations of electronic or magnetic impulses, and includes all input, output, processing, storage, and communication facilities which are connected or related to the computer including a computer network. As used in this paragraph, "computer" includes any central processing unit, front-end processing unit, miniprocessor,

or microprocessor, and related peripheral equipment such as data storage devices, document scanners, data entry terminal controllers, and data terminal equipment and systems for computer networks.

c. “*Computer network*” means a set of related, remotely connected devices and communication facilities including two or more computers with capability to transmit data among them through communication facilities.

d. “*Data*” means a representation of information, knowledge, facts, concepts, or instructions that has been prepared or is being prepared in a formalized manner and has been processed, or is intended to be processed, in a computer. Data may be stored in any form, including but not limited to a printout, magnetic storage media, disk, compact disc, punched card, or as memory of a computer.

e. “*Data processing software*” means an ordered set of instructions or statements that, when executed by a computer, causes the computer to process data, and includes any program or set of programs, procedures, or routines used to employ and control capabilities of computer hardware. As used in this paragraph “*data processing software*” includes but is not limited to an operating system, compiler, assembler, utility, library resource, maintenance routine, application, computer networking program, or the associated documentation.

2. A government body may provide, restrict, or prohibit access to data processing software developed by the government body, regardless of whether the data processing software is separated or combined with a public record. A government body shall establish policies and procedures to provide access to public records which are combined with its data processing software. A public record shall not be withheld from the public because it is combined with data processing software. A government body shall not acquire any electronic data processing

system for the storage, manipulation, or retrieval of public records that would impair the government body's ability to permit the examination of a public record and the copying of a public record in either written or electronic form. If it is necessary to separate a public record from data processing software in order to permit the examination or copying of the public record, the government body shall bear the cost of separation of the public record from the data processing software. The electronic public record shall be made available in a format useable with commonly available data processing or database management software. The cost chargeable to a person receiving a public record separated from data processing software under this subsection shall not be in excess of the charge under this chapter unless the person receiving the public record requests that the public record be specially processed. A government body may establish payment rates and procedures required to provide access to data processing software, regardless of whether the data processing software is separated from or combined with a public record. Proceeds from payments may be considered repayment receipts, as defined in section 8.2. The payment amount shall be calculated as follows:

a. The amount charged for access to a public record shall be not more than that required to recover direct publication costs, including but not limited to editing, compilation, and media production costs, incurred by the government body in developing the data processing software and preparing the data processing software for transfer to the person. The amount shall be in addition to any other fee required to be paid under this chapter for the examination and copying of a public record. If a person accesses a public record stored in an electronic format that does not require formatting, editing, or compiling to access the public record, the charge for providing the accessed public record shall not exceed the

reasonable cost of accessing that public record. The government body shall, if requested, provide documentation which explains and justifies the amount charged. This paragraph shall not apply to any publication for which a price has been established pursuant to another section, including section 2A.5.

b. If access to the data processing software is provided to a person for a purpose other than provided in paragraph “*a*”, the amount may be established according to the discretion of the government body, and may be based upon competitive market considerations as determined by the government body.

3. A government body is granted and may apply for and receive any legal protection necessary to secure a right to or an interest in data processing software developed by the government body, including but not limited to federal copyright, patent, and trademark protections, and any trade secret protection available under chapter 550. The government body may enter into agreements for the sale or distribution of its data processing software, including marketing and licensing agreements. The government body may impose conditions upon the use of the data processing software that is otherwise consistent with state and federal law.

22.4 Hours when available.

The rights of persons under this chapter may be exercised at any time during the customary office hours of the lawful custodian of the records. However, if the lawful custodian does not have customary office hours of at least thirty hours per week, such right may be exercised at any time from 9:00 a.m. to noon and from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays, unless the person exercising such right and the lawful custodian agree on a different time.

22.5 Enforcement of rights.

The provisions of this chapter and all rights of persons under this chapter may be enforced by mandamus or injunction, whether or not any other remedy is also available. In the alternative, rights under this chapter also may be enforced by an action for judicial review according to the provisions of the Iowa administrative procedure Act, chapter 17A, if the records involved are records of an “agency” as defined in that Act.

22.6 Penalty.

[Repealed by the Legislature in 2011.]

22.7 Confidential records.

The following public records shall be kept confidential, unless otherwise ordered by a court, by the lawful custodian of the records, or by another person duly authorized to release such information:

[Editor’s note: The following list is not exhaustive. Other sections of the Code or federal law also may provide for confidentiality.]

1. Personal information in records regarding a student, prospective student, or former student maintained, created, collected or assembled by or for a school corporation or educational institution maintaining such records. This subsection shall not be construed to prohibit a postsecondary education institution from disclosing to a parent or guardian information regarding a violation of a federal, state, or local law, or institutional rule or policy governing the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance if the child is under the age of twenty-one years and the institution determines that the student committed a disciplinary violation with respect to the use or possession of alcohol or a controlled substance regardless of whether that information is contained in the student’s education records. This

subsection shall not be construed to prohibit a school corporation or educational institution from transferring student records electronically to the department of education, an accredited nonpublic school, an attendance center, a school district, or an accredited postsecondary institution in accordance with section 256.9, subsection 48.

2. Hospital records, medical records, and professional counselor records of the condition, diagnosis, care, or treatment of a patient or former patient or a counselee or former counselee, including outpatient. However, confidential communications between a crime victim and the victim's counselor are not subject to disclosure except as provided in section 915.20A. However, the Iowa department of public health shall adopt rules which provide for the sharing of information among agencies and providers concerning the maternal and child health program including but not limited to the statewide child immunization information system, while maintaining an individual's confidentiality.

3. Trade secrets which are recognized and protected as such by law.

4. Records which represent and constitute the work product of an attorney, which are related to litigation or claim made by or against a public body.

5. Peace officers' investigative reports, and specific portions of electronic mail and telephone billing records of law enforcement agencies if that information is part of an ongoing investigation, except where disclosure is authorized elsewhere in this Code. However, the date, time, specific location, and immediate facts and circumstances surrounding a crime or incident shall not be kept confidential under this section, except in those unusual circumstances where disclosure would plainly and seriously jeopardize an investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the safety of an individual. Specific portions of electronic mail and

telephone billing records may only be kept confidential under this subsection if the length of time prescribed for commencement of prosecution or the finding of an indictment or information under the statute of limitations applicable to the crime that is under investigation has not expired.

6. Reports to governmental agencies which, if released, would give advantage to competitors and serve no public purpose.

7. Appraisals or appraisal information concerning the sale or purchase of real or personal property for public purposes, prior to the execution of any contract for such sale or the submission of the appraisal to the property owner or other interest holders as provided in section 6B.45.

8. Economic development authority information on an industrial prospect with which the authority is currently negotiating.

9. Criminal identification files of law enforcement agencies. However, records of current and prior arrests and criminal history data shall be public records.

10. A claim for compensation and reimbursement for legal assistance and supporting documents submitted to the state public defender for payment from the indigent defense fund established in section 815.11, as provided in section 13B.4B.

11. *a.* Personal information in confidential personnel records of government bodies relating to identified or identifiable individuals who are officials, officers, or employees of the government bodies. However, the following information relating to such individuals contained in personnel records shall be public records:

(1) The name and compensation of the individual including any written agreement establishing compensation or any other terms of employment excluding any information otherwise excludable from public information pursuant to this section or any

other applicable provision of law. For purposes of this paragraph, “*compensation*” means payment of, or agreement to pay, any money, thing of value, or financial benefit conferred in return for labor or services rendered by an official, officer, or employee plus the value of benefits conferred including but not limited to casualty, disability, life, or health insurance, other health or wellness benefits, vacation, holiday, and sick leave, severance payments, retirement benefits, and deferred compensation.

(2) The dates the individual was employed by the government body.

(3) The positions the individual holds or has held with the government body.

(4) The educational institutions attended by the individual, including any diplomas and degrees earned, and the names of the individual’s previous employers, positions previously held, and dates of previous employment.

(5) The fact that the individual was discharged as the result of a final disciplinary action upon the exhaustion of all applicable contractual, legal, and statutory remedies.

b. Personal information in confidential personnel records of government bodies relating to student employees shall only be released pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §1232g.

12. Financial statements submitted to the department of agriculture and land stewardship pursuant to chapter 203 or chapter 203C, by or on behalf of a licensed grain dealer or warehouse operator or by an applicant for a grain dealer license or warehouse license.

13. The records of a library which, by themselves or when examined with other public records, would reveal the identity of the library patron checking out or requesting an item or information from the library. The records shall be released to a criminal or juvenile justice agency only pursuant to an investigation of a particular

person or organization suspected of committing a known crime. The records shall be released only upon a judicial determination that a rational connection exists between the requested release of information and a legitimate end and that the need for the information is cogent and compelling.

14. The material of a library, museum or archive which has been contributed by a private person to the extent of any limitation that is a condition of the contribution.

15. Information concerning the procedures to be used to control disturbances at adult correctional institutions. Such information shall also be exempt from public inspection under section 17A.3. As used in this subsection disturbance means a riot or a condition that can reasonably be expected to cause a riot.

16. Information in a report to the Iowa department of public health, to a local board of health, or to a local health department, which identifies a person infected with a reportable disease.

17. Records of identity of owners of public bonds or obligations maintained as provided in section 76.10 or by the issuer of the public bonds or obligations. However, the issuer of the public bonds or obligations and a state or federal agency shall have the right of access to the records.

18. Communications not required by law, rule, procedure, or contract that are made to a government body or to any of its employees by identified persons outside of government, to the extent that the government body receiving those communications from such persons outside of government could reasonably believe that those persons would be discouraged from making them to that government body if they were available for general public examination. As used in this subsection, "*persons outside of government*" does not include persons or employees of persons who are communicating

with respect to a consulting or contractual relationship with a government body or who are communicating with a government body with whom an arrangement for compensation exists. Notwithstanding this provision:

a. The communication is a public record to the extent that the person outside of government making that communication consents to its treatment as a public record.

b. Information contained in the communication is a public record to the extent that it can be disclosed without directly or indirectly indicating the identity of the person outside of government making it or enabling others to ascertain the identity of that person.

c. Information contained in the communication is a public record to the extent that it indicates the date, time, specific location, and immediate facts and circumstances surrounding the occurrence of a crime or other illegal act, except to the extent that its disclosure would plainly and seriously jeopardize a continuing investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the safety of any person. In any action challenging the failure of the lawful custodian to disclose any particular information of the kind enumerated in this paragraph, the burden of proof is on the lawful custodian to demonstrate that the disclosure of that information would jeopardize such an investigation or would pose such a clear and present danger.

19. Examinations, including but not limited to cognitive and psychological examinations for law enforcement officer candidates administered by or on behalf of a governmental body, to the extent that their disclosure could reasonably be believed by the custodian to interfere with the accomplishment of the objectives for which they are administered.

20. Information concerning the nature and location of any archaeological resource or site if, in the opinion of the state archaeologist, disclosure of the information

will result in unreasonable risk of damage to or loss of the resource or site where the resource is located. This subsection shall not be construed to interfere with the responsibilities of the federal government or the state historic preservation officer pertaining to access, disclosure, and use of archaeological site records.

21. Information concerning the nature and location of any ecologically sensitive resource or site if, in the opinion of the director of the department of natural resources after consultation with the state ecologist, disclosure of the information will result in unreasonable risk of damage to or loss of the resource or site where the resource is located. This subsection shall not be construed to interfere with the responsibilities of the federal government or the director of the department of natural resources and the state ecologist pertaining to access, disclosure, and use of the ecologically sensitive site records.

22. Reports or recommendations of the Iowa insurance guaranty association filed or made pursuant to section 515B.10, subsection 1, paragraph “a”, subparagraph (2).

23. Information or reports collected or submitted pursuant to section 508C.12, subsections 3 and 5, and section 508C.13, subsection 2, except to the extent that release is permitted under those sections.

24. Reserved.

25. Financial information, which if released would give advantage to competitors and serve no public purpose, relating to commercial operations conducted or intended to be conducted by a person submitting records containing the information to the department of agriculture and land stewardship for the purpose of obtaining assistance in business planning.

26. Applications, investigation reports, and case records of persons applying for county general assistance pursuant to section 252.25.

27. Marketing and advertising budget and strategy of a nonprofit corporation which is subject to this chapter. However, this exemption does not apply to salaries or benefits of employees who are employed by the nonprofit corporation to handle the marketing and advertising responsibilities.

28. The information contained in records of the centralized employee registry created in chapter 252G, except to the extent that disclosure is authorized pursuant to chapter 252G.

29. Records and information obtained or held by independent special counsel during the course of an investigation conducted pursuant to section 68B.31A. Information that is disclosed to a legislative ethics committee subsequent to a determination of probable cause by independent special counsel and made pursuant to section 68B.31 is not a confidential record unless otherwise provided by law.

30. Information contained in a declaration of paternity completed and filed with the state registrar of vital statistics pursuant to section 144.12A, except to the extent that the information may be provided to persons in accordance with section 144.12A.

31. Memoranda, work products, and case files of a mediator and all other confidential communications in the possession of a mediator, as provided in chapters 86 and 216. Information in these confidential communications is subject to disclosure only as provided in sections 86.44 and 216.15B, notwithstanding any other contrary provision of this chapter.

32. Social security numbers of the owners of unclaimed property reported to the treasurer of state pursuant to section 556.11, subsection 2, included on claim forms filed with the treasurer of state pursuant to section 556.19, included in outdated warrant reports received by the treasurer of state pursuant to section 556.2C, or stored in record systems maintained by the

treasurer of state for purposes of administering chapter 556, or social security numbers of payees included on state warrants included in records systems maintained by the department of administrative services for the purpose of documenting and tracking outdated warrants pursuant to section 556.2C.

33. Data processing software, as defined in section 22.3A, which is developed by a government body.

34. A record required under the Iowa financial transaction reporting Act listed in section 529.2, subsection 9.

35. Records of the Iowa department of public health pertaining to participants in the gambling treatment program except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

36. Records of a law enforcement agency or the state department of transportation regarding the issuance of a driver's license under section 321.189A.

37. Mediation communications as defined in section 679C.102, except written mediation agreements that resulted from a mediation which are signed on behalf of a governing body. However, confidentiality of mediation communications resulting from mediation conducted pursuant to chapter 216 shall be governed by chapter 216.

38. *a.* Records containing information that would disclose, or might lead to the disclosure of, private keys used in an electronic signature or other similar technologies as provided in chapter 554D.

b. Records which if disclosed might jeopardize the security of an electronic transaction pursuant to chapter 554D.

39. Information revealing the identity of a packer or a person who sells livestock to a packer as reported to the department of agriculture and land stewardship pursuant to section 202A.2.

40. The portion of a record request that contains an internet protocol number which identifies the computer

from which a person requests a record, whether the person using such computer makes the request through the IowaAccess network or directly to a lawful custodian. However, such record may be released with the express written consent of the person requesting the record.

41. Medical examiner records and reports, including preliminary reports, investigative reports, and autopsy reports. However, medical examiner records and reports shall be released to a law enforcement agency that is investigating the death, upon the request of the law enforcement agency, and autopsy reports shall be released to the decedent's immediate next of kin upon the request of the decedent's immediate next of kin unless disclosure to the decedent's immediate next of kin would jeopardize an investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the public safety or the safety of an individual. Information regarding the cause and manner of death shall not be kept confidential under this subsection unless disclosure would jeopardize an investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the public safety or the safety of an individual.

42. Information obtained by the commissioner of insurance in the course of an investigation as provided in section 523C.23.

43. Information obtained by the commissioner of insurance pursuant to section 502.607.

44. Information provided to the court and state public defender pursuant to section 13B.4, subsection 5; section 814.11, subsection 7; or section 815.10, subsection 5.

45. The critical asset protection plan or any part of the plan prepared pursuant to section 29C.8 and any information held by the department of homeland security and emergency management that was supplied to the department by a public or private agency or organization and used in the development of the critical asset protection plan to include, but not be limited to, surveys, lists, maps, or photographs. However, the director shall

make the list of assets available for examination by any person. A person wishing to examine the list of assets shall make a written request to the director on a form approved by the director. The list of assets may be viewed at the department's offices during normal working hours. The list of assets shall not be copied in any manner. Communications and asset information not required by law, rule, or procedure that are provided to the director by persons outside of government and for which the director has signed a nondisclosure agreement are exempt from public disclosures. The department of homeland security and emergency management may provide all or part of the critical asset plan to federal, state, or local governmental agencies which have emergency planning or response functions if the director is satisfied that the need to know and intended use are reasonable. An agency receiving critical asset protection plan information from the department shall not disseminate the information without prior approval of the director.

46. Military personnel records recorded by the county recorder pursuant to section 331.608.

47. A report regarding interest held in agricultural land required to be filed pursuant to chapter 10B.

48. Sex offender registry records under chapter 692A, except as provided in section 692A.121.

49. Confidential information, as defined in section 86.45, subsection 1, filed with the workers' compensation commissioner.

50. Information concerning security procedures or emergency preparedness information developed and maintained by a government body for the protection of governmental employees, visitors to the government body, persons in the care, custody, or under the control of the government body, or property under the jurisdiction of the government body, if disclosure could reasonably be expected to jeopardize such employees,

visitors, persons, or property.

a. Such information includes but is not limited to information directly related to vulnerability assessments; information contained in records relating to security measures such as security and response plans, security codes and combinations, passwords, restricted area passes, keys, and security or response procedures; emergency response protocols; and information contained in records that if disclosed would significantly increase the vulnerability of critical physical systems or infrastructures of a government body to attack.

b. This subsection shall only apply to information held by a government body that has adopted a rule or policy identifying the specific records or class of records to which this subsection applies and which is contained in such a record.

51. The information contained in the information program established in section 124.551, except to the extent that disclosure is authorized pursuant to section 124.553.

52. *a.* The following records relating to a charitable donation made to a foundation acting solely for the support of an institution governed by the state board of regents, to the board of the Iowa state fair foundation when the record relates to a gift for deposit in or expenditure from the Iowa state fairgrounds trust fund as provided in section 173.22A, to a foundation acting solely for the support of an institution governed by chapter 260C, to a private foundation as defined in section 509 of the Internal Revenue Code organized for the support of a government body, or to an endow Iowa qualified community foundation, as defined in section 15E.303, organized for the support of a government body:

(1) Portions of records that disclose a donor's or prospective donor's personal, financial, estate planning, or gift planning matters.

(2) Records received from a donor or prospective donor regarding such donor's prospective gift or pledge.

(3) Records containing information about a donor or a prospective donor in regard to the appropriateness of the solicitation and dollar amount of the gift or pledge.

(4) Portions of records that identify a prospective donor and that provide information on the appropriateness of the solicitation, the form of the gift or dollar amount requested by the solicitor, and the name of the solicitor.

(5) Portions of records disclosing the identity of a donor or prospective donor, including the specific form of gift or pledge that could identify a donor or prospective donor, directly or indirectly, when such donor has requested anonymity in connection with the gift or pledge. This subparagraph does not apply to a gift or pledge from a publicly held business corporation.

b. The confidential records described in paragraph “*a*”, subparagraphs (1) through (5), shall not be construed to make confidential those portions of records disclosing any of the following:

(1) The amount and date of the donation.

(2) Any donor-designated use or purpose of the donation.

(3) Any other donor-imposed restrictions on the use of the donation.

(4) When a pledge or donation is made expressly conditioned on receipt by the donor, or any person related to the donor by blood or marriage within the third degree of consanguinity, of any privilege, benefit, employment, program admission, or other special consideration from the government body, a description of any and all such consideration offered or given in exchange for the pledge or donation.

c. Except as provided in paragraphs “*a*” and “*b*”, portions of records relating to the receipt, holding, and disbursement of gifts made for the benefit of regents

institutions and made through foundations established for support of regents institutions, including but not limited to written fund-raising policies and documents evidencing fund-raising practices, shall be subject to this chapter.

d. This subsection does not apply to a report filed with the ethics and campaign disclosure board pursuant to section 8.7.

53. Information obtained and prepared by the commissioner of insurance pursuant to section 507.14.

54. Information obtained and prepared by the commissioner of insurance pursuant to section 507E.5.

55. An intelligence assessment and intelligence data under chapter 692, except as provided in section 692.8A.

56. Individually identifiable client information contained in the records of the state database created as a homeless management information system pursuant to standards developed by the United States department of housing and urban development and utilized by the economic development authority.

57. The following information contained in the records of any governmental body relating to any form of housing assistance:

a. An applicant's social security number.

b. An applicant's personal financial history.

c. An applicant's personal medical history or records.

d. An applicant's current residential address when the applicant has been granted or has made application for a civil or criminal restraining order for the personal protection of the applicant or a member of the applicant's household.

58. Information filed with the commissioner of insurance pursuant to sections 523A.204 and 523A.502A.

59. The information provided in any report, record, claim, or other document submitted to the treasurer of state pursuant to chapter 556 concerning unclaimed or

abandoned property, except the name and last known address of each person appearing to be entitled to unclaimed or abandoned property paid or delivered to the treasurer of state pursuant to that chapter.

60. Information in a record that would permit a governmental body subject to chapter 21 to hold a closed session pursuant to section 21.5 in order to avoid public disclosure of that information, until such time as final action is taken on the subject matter of that information. Any portion of such a record not subject to this subsection, or not otherwise confidential, shall be made available to the public. After the governmental body has taken final action on the subject matter pertaining to the information in that record, this subsection shall no longer apply. This subsection shall not apply more than ninety days after a record is known to exist by the governmental body, unless it is not possible for the governmental body to take final action within ninety days. The burden shall be on the governmental body to prove that final action was not possible within the ninety-day period.

61. Records of the department on aging pertaining to clients served by the office of substitute decision maker.

62. Records maintained by the department on aging or office of long-term care ombudsman that disclose the identity of a complainant, resident, tenant, or individual receiving services provided by the department on aging, an area agency on aging, or the office of long-term care ombudsman, unless disclosure is otherwise allowed under section 231.42, subsection 12, paragraph "a".

63. Information obtained by the superintendent of credit unions in connection with a complaint response process as provided in section 533.501, subsection 3.

64. Information obtained by the commissioner of insurance in the course of an examination of a cemetery as provided in section 523I.213A, subsection 7.

65. Tentative, preliminary, draft, speculative, or

research material, prior to its completion for the purpose for which it is intended and in a form prior to the form in which it is submitted for use or used in the actual formulation, recommendation, adoption, or execution of any official policy or action by a public official authorized to make such decisions for the governmental body or the government body. This subsection shall not apply to public records that are actually submitted for use or are used in the formulation, recommendation, adoption, or execution of any official policy or action of a governmental body or a government body by a public official authorized to adopt or execute official policy for the governmental body or the government body.

66. Personal information contained on electronic driver's license or nonoperator's identification card records that is provided by the licensee or card holder to the department of transportation for use by law enforcement, first responders, emergency medical service providers, and other medical personnel responding to or assisting with an emergency.

67. Electronic mail addresses of individuals or phone numbers of individuals, and personally identifiable information about those individuals, collected by state departments and agencies for the sole purposes of disseminating emergency or routine information and notices through electronic communications that are not prepared for a specific recipient.

22.8 Injunction to restrain examination.

1. The district court may grant an injunction restraining the examination, including copying, of a specific public record or a narrowly drawn class of public records. A hearing shall be held on a request for injunction upon reasonable notice as determined by the court to persons requesting access to the record which is the subject of the request for injunction. It shall be the duty of the lawful custodian and any other person

seeking an injunction to ensure compliance with the notice requirement. Such an injunction may be issued only if the petition supported by affidavit shows and if the court finds both of the following:

a. That the examination would clearly not be in the public interest.

b. That the examination would substantially and irreparably injure any person or persons.

2. An injunction shall be subject to the rules of civil procedure except that the court in its discretion may waive bond.

3. In actions brought under this section the district court shall take into account the policy of this chapter that free and open examination of public records is generally in the public interest even though such examination may cause inconvenience or embarrassment to public officials or others. A court may issue an injunction restraining examination of a public record or a narrowly drawn class of such records, only if the person seeking the injunction demonstrates by clear and convincing evidence that this section authorizes its issuance. An injunction restraining the examination of a narrowly drawn class of public records may be issued only if such an injunction would be justified under this section for every member within the class of records involved if each of those members were considered separately.

4. Good-faith, reasonable delay by a lawful custodian in permitting the examination and copying of a government record is not a violation of this chapter if the purpose of the delay is any of the following:

a. To seek an injunction under this section.

b. To determine whether the lawful custodian is entitled to seek such an injunction or should seek such an injunction.

c. To determine whether the government record in question is a public record, or confidential record.

d. To determine whether a confidential record should be available for inspection and copying to the person requesting the right to do so. A reasonable delay for this purpose shall not exceed twenty calendar days and ordinarily should not exceed ten business days.

e. Actions for injunctions under this section may be brought by the lawful custodian of a government record, or by another government body or person who would be aggrieved or adversely affected by the examination or copying of such a record.

f. The rights and remedies provided by this section are in addition to any rights and remedies provided by section 17A.19.

22.9 Denial of federal funds — rules.

If it is determined that any provision of this chapter would cause the denial of funds, services or essential information from the United States government which would otherwise definitely be available to an agency of this state, such provision shall be suspended as to such agency, but only to the extent necessary to prevent denial of such funds, services, or essential information.

An agency within the meaning of section 17A.2, subsection 1, shall adopt as a rule, in each situation where this section is believed applicable, its determination identifying those particular provisions of this chapter that must be waived in the circumstances to prevent the denial of federal funds, services, or information.

22.10 Civil enforcement.

1. The rights and remedies provided by this section are in addition to any rights and remedies provided by section 17A.19. Any aggrieved person, any taxpayer to or citizen of the state of Iowa, or the attorney general or any county attorney, may seek judicial enforcement of the requirements of this chapter in an action brought against the lawful custodian and any other persons

who would be appropriate defendants under the circumstances. Suits to enforce this chapter shall be brought in the district court for the county in which the lawful custodian has its principal place of business.

2. Once a party seeking judicial enforcement of this chapter demonstrates to the court that the defendant is subject to the requirements of this chapter, that the records in question are government records, and that the defendant refused to make those government records available for examination and copying by the plaintiff, the burden of going forward shall be on the defendant to demonstrate compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

3. Upon a finding by a preponderance of the evidence that a lawful custodian has violated any provision of this chapter, a court:

a. Shall issue an injunction punishable by civil contempt ordering the offending lawful custodian and other appropriate persons to comply with the requirements of this chapter in the case before it and, if appropriate, may order the lawful custodian and other appropriate persons to refrain for one year from any future violations of this chapter.

b. Shall assess the persons who participated in its violation damages in the amount of not more than five hundred dollars and not less than one hundred dollars. However, if a person knowingly participated in such a violation, damages shall be in the amount of not more than two thousand five hundred dollars and not less than one thousand dollars. These damages shall be paid by the court imposing them to the state of Iowa if the body in question is a state government body, or to the local government involved if the body in question is a local government body. A person found to have violated this chapter shall not be assessed such damages if that person proves that the person did any of the following:

(1) Voted against the action violating this chapter,

refused to participate in the action violating this chapter, or engaged in reasonable efforts under the circumstances to resist or prevent the action in violation of this chapter.

(2) Had good reason to believe and in good faith believed facts which, if true, would have indicated compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(3) Reasonably relied upon a decision of a court, a formal opinion of the Iowa public information board, the attorney general, or the attorney for the government body, given in writing, or as memorialized in the minutes of the meeting at which a formal oral opinion was given, or an advisory opinion of the Iowa public information board, the attorney general, or the attorney for the government body, given in writing.

c. Shall order the payment of all costs and reasonable attorney fees, including appellate attorney fees, to any plaintiff successfully establishing a violation of this chapter in the action brought under this section. The costs and fees shall be paid by the particular persons who were assessed damages under paragraph “b” of this subsection. If no such persons exist because they have a lawful defense under that paragraph to the imposition of such damages, the costs and fees shall be paid to the successful plaintiff from the budget of the offending government body or its parent.

d. Shall issue an order removing a person from office if that person has engaged in a prior violation of this chapter for which damages were assessed against the person during the person’s term.

4. Ignorance of the legal requirements of this chapter is not a defense to an enforcement proceeding brought under this section. A lawful custodian or its designee in doubt about the legality of allowing the examination or copying or refusing to allow the examination or copying of a government record is authorized to bring suit at the expense of that government body in the district court of the county of the lawful custodian’s principal place of business, or to seek an opinion of the attorney general

or the attorney for the lawful custodian, to ascertain the legality of any such action.

22.11 Fair information practices.

This section may be cited as the “*Iowa Fair Information Practices Act*”. It is the intent of this section to require that the information policies of state agencies are clearly defined and subject to public review and comment.

1. Each state agency as defined in chapter 17A shall adopt rules which provide the following:

a. The nature and extent of the personally identifiable information collected by the agency, the legal authority for the collection of that information, and a description of the means of storage.

b. A description of which of its records are public records, which are confidential records, and which are partially public and partially confidential records and the legal authority for the confidentiality of the records. The description shall indicate whether the records contain personally identifiable information.

c. The procedure for providing the public with access to public records.

d. The procedures for allowing a person to review a government record about that person and have additions, dissents, or objections entered in that record unless the review is prohibited by statute.

e. The procedures by which the subject of a confidential record may have a copy of that record released to a named third party.

f. The procedures by which the agency shall notify persons supplying information requested by the agency of the use that will be made of the information, which persons outside of the agency might routinely be provided this information, which parts of the information requested are required and which are optional and the consequences of failing to provide the information requested.

g. Whether a data processing system matches, collates, or permits the comparison of personally identifiable information in one record system with personally identifiable information in another record system.

2. A state agency shall not use any personally identifiable information after July 1, 1988, unless it is in a record system described by the rules required by this section.

22.12 Political subdivisions.

A political subdivision or public body which is not a state agency as defined in chapter 17A is not required to adopt policies to implement section 22.11. However, if a public body chooses to adopt policies to implement section 22.11 the policies must be adopted by the elected governing body of the political subdivision of which the public body is a part. The elected governing body must give reasonable notice, make the proposed policy available for public inspection and allow full opportunity for the public to comment before adopting the policy. If the public body is established pursuant to an agreement under chapter 28E, the policy must be adopted by a majority of the public agencies party to the agreement. These policies shall be kept in the office of the county auditor if adopted by the board of supervisors, the city clerk if adopted by a city, and the chief administrative officer of the public body if adopted by some other elected governing body.

22.13 Settlements — government bodies.

When a government body reaches a final, binding, written settlement agreement that resolves a legal dispute claiming monetary damages, equitable relief, or a violation of a rule or statute, the government body shall, upon request and to the extent allowed under applicable law, prepare a brief summary of the resolution of the

dispute indicating the identity of the parties involved, the nature of the dispute, and the terms of the settlement, including any payments made by or on behalf of the government body and any actions to be taken by the government body. A government body is not required to prepare a summary if the settlement agreement includes the information required to be included in the summary. The settlement agreement and any required summary shall be a public record.

22.14 Public funds investment records in custody of third parties.

1. The records of investment transactions made by or on behalf of a public body are public records and are the property of the public body whether in the custody of the public body or in the custody of a fiduciary or other third party.

2. If such records of public investment transactions are in the custody of a fiduciary or other third party, the public body shall obtain from the fiduciary or other third party records requested pursuant to section 22.2.

3. If a fiduciary or other third party with custody of public investment transactions records fails to produce public records within a reasonable period of time as requested by the public body, the public body shall make no new investments with or through the fiduciary or other third party and shall not renew existing investments upon their maturity with or through the fiduciary or other third party. The fiduciary or other third party shall be liable for the penalties imposed under statute, common law, or contract due to the acts or omissions of the fiduciary or other third party.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHAPTER 22

QUESTION: (1) Does a request for a record have to be in person? (2) Must it be made in writing?

REPLY: (1) The custodian cannot require the physical presence of the person requesting the public record. (2) In addition, a change in Chapter 22.3 in 2006 requires record custodians to respond to requests made in writing, by telephone or by electronic means. The spoken request is sufficient, so long as you reasonably identify the record sought. A written request might be helpful in a complex matter or one involving litigation. (*See Page 69 for a sample records request letter.*)

QUESTION: (1) Can I see letters written by a public official? (2) What if the letters contain confidential information?

REPLY: (1) Yes, so long as the letter deals with the discharge of public duties. For example, correspondence from a school superintendent to school board members about items on next week's agenda should be open to public inspection. (2) If such correspondence contains information that is confidential by law, the remaining portion of the correspondence should be provided. That rule applies to other public records, too. Mere inclusion of some information that is confidential by law does not make an entire record confidential.

QUESTION: Suppose the record requested is not in the office of the governmental agency, but in the hands of a private company. Can I still get the record?

REPLY: Yes. Under Chapter 22.2(2), "A governmental body shall not prevent the examination or copying of a public record by contracting with a nongovernmental body to perform any of its duties or functions." In

Gannon v. Board of Regents, 692 N.W.2d 31 (Iowa 2005), the Iowa Supreme Court said that a private foundation that solicited and managed donations for Iowa State University performed a government function and its records were “public records.” However, the Court said that not every private entity that performs a duty that could be considered a “government function” is subject to Chapter 22 and that arrangements must be viewed on a case-by-case basis.

QUESTION: I want the record right now. How much time does the public agency have to produce a requested record?

REPLY: Typically, Iowa agencies provide access to records as soon as they can, and most record requests are routine. Chapter 22.8(4) provides for a “good-faith, reasonable delay by a lawful custodian” in permitting examination of a record in some circumstances, including to determine whether the record is confidential. A custodian is allowed up to 20 calendar days to determine whether a confidential record should be released, but such delays should not ordinarily exceed 10 business days, according to the Code. An advisory opinion by the Iowa Public Information Board on Aug. 13, 2014 (citing a 2013 Iowa Supreme Court public records case, Horsfield Materials Inc. v. City of Dyersville (834 N.W.2d 444 (Iowa 2013))), said, “Access to an open record shall be provided promptly upon request unless the size or nature of the request makes prompt access infeasible. If the size or nature of the request for access to an open record requires time for compliance, the custodian shall comply with the request as soon as feasible.”

QUESTION: What police and sheriff’s records are open to the public and press?

REPLY: The question is a crucial one, vital to the nature

of a free society, because access to law enforcement records is one of the rights that set a democracy apart from the totalitarian state. There must be no secret arrests in our society, no unaccountable actions by those exercising police powers.

Access to law enforcement records is spelled out in detail in an Attorney General's opinion, Weeg to Holt, 82-10-3. That opinion interprets Chapter 22.7(5), which provides public access to "the date, time, specific location, and immediate facts and circumstances surrounding a crime or incident."

The opinion notes that a news reporter or citizen does not have to know about a crime or incident to obtain information about it. The request could be a general one, to review the public record of police activities during the past 24 hours: "A citizen may request [Chapter 22.7(5)] information for a particular day or time, or for any number of days or times. The request is not required to specify the particular criminal incident for which the information is requested."

Generally, the opinion calls for routine access to all "date, time, specific location and immediate facts and circumstances" information, and the record custodian carries "the burden of establishing facts necessary to withhold public records. . . ."

QUESTION: Are computerized records treated the same as public records on paper?

REPLY: Yes, Iowa defines public records (22.1) to include "all records, documents, tape, or other information, stored or preserved in any medium . . .," a definition that plainly includes electronic data. Further, Section 22.3A addresses several issues regarding access to data processing software and public records.

So far, court decisions and common sense suggest the following:

1. A government agency cannot force a requester

to take or pay for a computerized record in a prohibitive or expensive format. Chapter 22.3 limits the fees that agencies may charge for records to the actual cost of providing the service.

2. Simply because information could be available via a government computer does not make the information a public record. Government agencies do not have to create data through cross tabulations or selective analysis of data. They could do so if the requester is willing to pay for the staff time. An advisory opinion by the Iowa Public Information Board (Dec. 18, 2014) said that there is no obligation for a government body to provide information in a form other than that which exists at the time of the request. However, the board urged “a cooperative approach as a best practice” that fulfills the legislative objective of access to public information.

3. The record custodian should be the agency that generated the record in the first place and not the computer processor or administrative unit that oversees computer services for a public agency.

4. In Iowa, the law provides no distinction between a citizen’s right to access information stored on paper or stored electronically.

5. With a few exceptions, Iowa law treats all records requests the same. That is, it doesn’t make any difference who the requester is or whether he or she intends to use the record for personal or commercial use.

QUESTION: Are job applications public records?

REPLY: The Iowa Supreme Court ruled in April 1988 that under a 1984 amendment to Chapter 22 public agencies can make job applications confidential.

In City of Sioux City v. Greater Sioux City Press Club, 421 N.W.2d 895 (Iowa 1988), a five-member panel of the Iowa Supreme Court ruled that such confidentiality is provided for in subsection 18 of 22.7.

The Court ruled that job applications might be made

confidential if the person so requests or if the public agency “could reasonably believe that those persons would be discouraged” from applying if applications were available for public inspection.

While subsection 18 does not provide confidentiality for communications required by law, rule or procedure, the Court stated that job applications were not required as part of the hiring process since the job applicant is applying voluntarily.

In an August 1992 decision, Des Moines Register and Tribune Company v. State Board of Regents and Douglas Cramer, Polk County Judge Arthur Gamble ruled that a private firm that had conducted a presidential search for Iowa State University was wrong in keeping secret the names of candidates who had no objections to disclosure.

To summarize, a communication to a government body can be kept confidential under 22.7(18) only if all of the following exist:

(1) The communication is **not** required by law, rule, procedure, or contract.

(2) It is from identified persons outside of government.

(3) The government body could reasonably believe those persons would be discouraged from communicating with government if the information was made public.

Nevertheless, the information can still be released if the person communicating with government consents to its release or if it can be released without identifying the person.

In addition, a communication regarding an illegal act can be kept confidential if disclosing it would jeopardize a continuing investigation or pose a clear and present danger to the safety of an individual.

QUESTION: There is little or no direct reference in

Chapter 22 regarding information about juveniles. What guidelines are available for accessing information about juveniles involved with law enforcement agencies?

REPLY: While Iowa statutes permit many juvenile court records and proceedings to be kept secret, the Iowa General Assembly in 1995 and 1997 passed legislation making it clear that complaints against juvenile offenders must be made public, as must the identity of the youthful offender. These legislative changes carve out complaints in juvenile court from the general secrecy provisions of the juvenile justice statute and grant both court and law enforcement officials authority to release the complaint and identity information.

Specifically, Iowa Code section 232.19(4) states, “Information pertaining to a child who is at least ten years of age and who is taken into custody for a delinquent act which would be a public offense is a public record and is not confidential under section 232.147.”

Section 232.147 is the general confidentiality provision of the juvenile justice statute. Under that provision, official juvenile records are public records, but access to such records can be limited, typically, to court officials, parties in the juvenile case and their attorneys, and agency officials.

Information that is confidential includes child in need of assistance and termination of parental rights cases, and juvenile delinquency cases sealed by the court.

Under the First Amendment, a news reporter (or any citizen, for that matter) could not be prohibited from or punished for publishing or sharing information about a juvenile, including identification, that was obtained legally – for example, by talking with family or friends of that person or by observing the incident firsthand.

(A word of caution here: The fact that a juvenile willingly provides personal information and consents to its publication may not provide legal protection for an

invasion of privacy lawsuit, for example, since a juvenile is not of legal age to give consent.)

Court hearings and trials are open to the public unless required closed by law or court order. Juvenile court proceedings are open unless the court determines that the danger of harm to the child outweighs the public benefit of open proceedings.

Proceedings that can be closed include child in need of assistance and termination of parental rights hearings; juvenile delinquency hearings, and hearings on child custody and adoption.

QUESTION: To what extent are records relating to public employees available for public inspection?

REPLY: Exemption 22.7(11) by its terms shields only “personal information in confidential personnel records” from disclosure. In Des Moines Independent Community School District Public Records v. Des Moines Register & Tribune Co., 487 N.W.2d 666 (Iowa 1992), this exemption was analyzed by the Court with mixed results.

The Court first stated that a settlement agreement under which public funds were paid to a former school principal must be disclosed even though the agreement related to a personnel matter and its express terms called for confidentiality. However, the Court gave wide latitude to the trial court’s interpretation of exemption 22.7(11). The Supreme Court affirmed the lower court determination that information gathered by an in-house investigative committee in connection with complaints of racism and sexism was contained in “job performance” documents that the Legislature intended to remain secret.

The Supreme Court thereby, in this case, upheld the trial court’s interpretation that “personal information in confidential records” was not limited to “personal” data and could be extended to records not contained in a personnel file. This approval of the apparent extension

of 22.7(11) to “job performance” information may be used by government agencies to keep many aspects of job performance and evaluation information secret unless the General Assembly takes action to narrow this interpretation of the exemption. The case, however, does nothing to affect longstanding standards of public access to salary information, and other records not directly related to job evaluation.

In Clymer v. City of Cedar Rapids, 601 N.W.2d 42 (Iowa 1999), the Supreme Court further addressed what personal information about a public employee is a matter of public record. The Court ruled that the public should have access to information concerning a public employee’s sick leave benefits — including pay, dates taken and hours accrued. (It is likely, however, that additional information about an employee’s medical condition, including the reason for using sick leave, remains “personal information.”) Other payroll information that a governmental body may release includes the employee’s full name, department, job title, hire date, bargaining unit, and complete and detailed information about monetary compensation. However, the employee’s gender, home address and birth date are personal and may be kept confidential.

In 2011, the Legislature amended Chapter 22.7(11) to require government agencies to release details of employees’ compensation and terms of employment; the dates of employment and positions held, and resume-type information. Government bodies must also release the fact that an individual was discharged as the result of a disciplinary action, once all remedies are exhausted.

QUESTION: (1) Are email messages and other electronic communications public records? (2) If so, how long must they be kept?

REPLY: (1) The definition of public records under 22.1(3) is broad enough to encompass email messages

and other electronic correspondence. (2) State Records Commission policies govern the maintenance and retention of state agency records. In addition, various sections of the Iowa Code address other public records. For example, Chapter 372.13(5) contains requirements for retention of some city records, such as council minutes, ordinances and resolutions. Local government bodies are encouraged to adopt their own records retention policies and to follow them consistently. Deleting a typical email message under such a policy should pose no legal problems. However, if the message remains recoverable then the government body would be obliged to provide it upon request, though the requester can be charged a reasonable fee for retrieval.

QUESTION: If a government employee or official uses a personal electronic device to conduct government business, are the emails, text messages and other electronic documents stored on that device public records?

REPLY: Yes. According to advice from the Iowa Public Information Board, the content of the document and not its location determines whether it is a public record. “If it concerns public business relating to public duties of an official or employee, then it is a public record,” no matter where it is stored, according to the board website.