

How to Access the Records of the City of Brandon



Understanding Fees in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)

Covered in this Booklet:

- A brief summary of why fees are charged and what they are used for
- Hints for reducing fees on FIPPA requests

What are FIPPA fees?

Under *The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* section 82(1) a public body has the right to charge an applicant fees to cover the search, preparation copying and delivery of records requested under FIPPA.

Shouldn't public information be free?

Yes. However, providing access to many of the City of Brandon's records is not always a simple process. City records often contain the personal information of Brandon's citizens and this information cannot be disclosed to the general public.

In many cases some cases records must have citizen's personal information severed from them before the records can be released publicly. If a large volume of records has been requested and/or these records contain large volumes of personal information the severing process can be very time consuming. If the severing process will take significantly longer than 2 hours an applicant may be required to pay fees for their request to be processed.

The first two hours of document processing time are free.

What are FIPPA fees used for?

Fees collected to process FIPPA requests are typically used to support staff relief needs that may arise when processing large-volume applications. Processing large FIPPA requests in a timely manner sometimes requires staff being removed from their regular duties in order to assist with document preparation. In some cases, the need to divert employee's attention to responding to FIPPA requests can prevent that office from performing its regular duties.

If processing a FIPPA request is preventing an office or department from operating relief employees may be called in. Fees requested under FIPPA are typically used to pay relief employees.

People often hear of FIPPA applications that cost thousands of dollars to process. Processing fees can become large when:

- a) an individual has requested records that are full of other people's personal information.**
- b) an individual has requested thousands of pages of documents**

Why does document processing take so long?

Unfortunately, processing records for release under FIPPA can be an onerous process. Section 12 of FIPPA requires that for every piece of confidential information removed from a record reference must be made to the specific FIPPA provision requiring that information to be withheld. While this referencing is necessary to help applicants understand why certain information cannot be released it can be very time consuming.

Are there any ways to avoid high fees?

There are some basic steps that can be taken to avoid high fees, such as:

- Check to see if the information you are requesting is available publicly in another form.
- Narrow the scope of your request to records related to a specific time, person, event, location or department.
- Contact the Access and Privacy Officer for suggestions on reducing or even eliminating fees.

NOTE: *Requesting an electronic copy of records will not necessarily eliminate fees.*

Document processing is the source of most fees and requires the same amount of work regardless of whether the records are paper or electronic.

Are there any exemptions to FIPPA fees?

Yes. The City of Brandon will not charge fees under FIPPA if you are requesting access to your own personal information.

Departments may have their own fees in place for certain document processing but these fees are being levied under a departmental authority, not under FIPPA.

Table of Fees

Type of Fee	Amount Charged
<i>Search and Preparation Fees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - first 2 hours free of charge - \$30/hr. for each additional hour
<i>Computer Programming & Data Processing Fees</i>	\$10/15 minutes of internal computer programming or data processing
<i>Copying Fees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - \$0.20/page for photocopies and computer printouts - \$0.50/copy from a microprinter - Actual cost of other copying method, such as photographs
<i>Delivery Fees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Free delivery using regular mail - Actual cost if courier is requested

Contacts & Resources

City of Brandon Access & Privacy Officer

To obtain general information about FIPPA, how to access the City of Brandon's records and assistance with making FIPPA applications the public is encouraged to contact the City of Brandon's Access & Privacy Officer.

Contact Attn: Access & Privacy Officer
City of Brandon
Brandon, Manitoba, R7A 6A2
(204) 729-2269
fippa@brandon.ca

Manitoba Ombudsman's Office

To obtain background information about the principles of access and privacy legislation, general information about FIPPA, case summaries of past complaints to the Ombudsman or to file a complaint contact the Manitoba Ombudsman.

Website <http://www.ombudsman.mb.ca>
Contact Ombudsman Manitoba
700-500 Portage Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 3X1
1-800-665-0531