



Obtaining Judicial Branch Public Records

San Juan County District Court is committed to facilitating the access to court and administrative records as provided by Article I, Section 10 of the Washington State Constitution and in accordance with both the letter and spirit of [General Rule 31](#) and [General Court Rule 31.1](#) as adopted by the State Supreme Court. Judicial court and administrative records are not subject to the [Public Records Act](#).

How to Submit a Public Records Request

Download the Administrative/Court Records Request Form and submit it to the [District Court Public Records Officer](#). It is very important to fill out the form completely and be as specific as possible with your request. You may submit your request via email, in person, by mail or by fax using the following contact information:

Mellissa Derksema
PO Box 127
350 Court St.
Friday Harbor, WA 98250

360-378-4017, 360-378-4099 fax
districtcourt@sanjuancountywa.gov

The Court's Response to a Request

The Public Records Officer will respond to your request within 5 business days to acknowledge your request and advise you of one of the following: (1) the records are available, (2) provide a good faith estimate of when the records will be available or (3) ask for clarification of your request. A subsequent response will be issued within the timeframe set forth in the initial response if records are not prepared within 5 business days of receiving the request.

Once the records have been gathered and copied, the Public Records Officer will issue an invoice in accordance with the fee schedule listed below. Upon payment of the fees owed, the records will be released.

Fees

The following fees apply to administrative and court records:

- Viewing administrative or court records: no charge
- Copies administrative or court records: \$0.10 per page
- Certified copies of administrative or court records: \$5.00 per document

- Copy of recording of court proceedings: \$20.00 per CD
- Research for court records: \$20.00 per hour
- Research for administrative records: \$30.00 per hour beginning with the second hour

Fees must be paid in advance of records being released.

A Court is Not Required to Create Records

While, in general, a court must provide access to existing administrative records in its possession, a court is not required to collect information or organize data to create a record that does not exist at the time of the request.

Extraordinary Requests

Upon receipt of a sizeable request which the court is unable to fulfill in a timely manner due to constraints on the court's time, resources and personnel, the requester will be notified as soon as practicable. Every effort will be made to reach a reasonable agreement as to an installment plan and/or a narrowing of the scope of the request.

The Court May Notify Affected Persons of Administrative Records Requests and Who May Seek Court Protection

The court may notify persons to whom the record pertains that release of the record has been requested. The agency, or a person to whom the record applies, may ask a court to prevent an inspection of the record. If a court order preventing disclosure is sought, the records request will be held until further order of the court.

Requests for Review of Public Records Officer's Decision

Some records may be exempt from disclosure or the records you receive may contain redactions. If so, the Public Records Officer will supply a description of the authority for the exemption/redaction. If you feel the Public Records Officer's decision may be incorrect you may request an internal review of the decision by completing and submitting the Request for Review of the Public Records Officer's Decision form within 90 days of the Public Records Officer's decision.

The internal review proceeding will be held within five working days of the request. If that is not reasonably possible, then within five working days the review shall be scheduled for the earliest practical date.

You may seek external review if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the internal review. Request for an external review must be submitted within 30 days of the internal decision described above.

You may choose between two external review alternatives:

File a civil action in superior court challenging the administrative records decision; or
Request external review of the decision by a visiting judge.

Monetary awards are not allowed. Attorney fees, costs, civil penalties or fines may not be awarded under [GR 31.1](#).