

Question: What should a government body do when a records request is received?

Editor's Note: This is a monthly column prepared by the Iowa Public Information Board to update Iowans on the IPIB's activities and provide information on some of the issues routinely addressed by the board.

ANSWER: The Iowa Code provides only basic direction for responding to a records request. Requests should be fulfilled in a timely manner unless an injunction is being sought pursuant to Iowa Code section 22.8.

Best practices suggest that the record custodian should acknowledge receipt of the request as soon as possible, preferably the same day. If the government body has a policy concerning record requests, such as a fee schedule, that information should

be provided with the acknowledgement.

Sometimes the record release may be unavoidably delayed, such as difficulty in finding the records or a legal review. If the records release may be delayed, the reasons for any delay and the anticipated date for release should be communicated.

A government body should have a procedure in place to avoid delays due to vacation schedules, medical situations, and holidays. This may require designating an assistant cus-

todian who can respond to requests when the legal custodian is absent.

Opinions, rulings, FAQs, monthly columns, and training documents are available on the IPIB website – www.ipib.iowa.gov. Questions for the IPIB can be posted on the website or by calling 515-725-1781.



IPIB Facts and Figures

During the month of January 2016, 64 contacts were made with the Iowa Public Information Board office.

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>JAN. 2016</u>	<u>2016 TOTAL</u>
Formal complaints	9	9
Formal opinions	0	0
Declaratory orders	0	0
Informal complaints	4	4
Informal requests	47	47
Misc.	4	4
TOTAL:	64	64

Who can contact the IPIB and how long does it take?

Any person can contact the IPIB for assistance by telephone (515-725-1781), by email (Margaret.Johnson@iowa.gov) or website (www.ipib.iowa.gov). So far, in 2016, 64 identifiable people have contacted the IPIB. Of these, 49% were private citizens, 45% were government officials or employees, and 6% were members of the media.

In the month of January 2016, 73% of the incoming contacts were resolved the first day, 5% were resolved in one to five days, and 22% were resolved in six or more days.