



400 Tuscarawas Street East, Canton, OH 44702 Phone: 330-454-8051 Fax: 330-454-8065 Ohio Relay: 1-800-750-0750

## **Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority**

### **Public Records Request Policy**

Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority (“SMHA”), in accordance with the Ohio Revised Code, defines records as including the following: Any document – paper, electronic (including, but not limited to, e-mail), or other format – that is created or received by, or comes under the jurisdiction of a public office that documents the organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities of the office. It is the policy of SMHA that, as required by Ohio law, records will be organized and maintained so that they are readily available for inspection and copying. Additionally, record retention schedules are to be updated regularly and posted prominently.

#### **Record Requests:**

Although no specific language is required to make a request, the requester must at least identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the public office to identify, retrieve, and review the records. If it is not clear what records are being sought, the records custodian must contact the requester for clarification, and should assist the requestor in revising the request by informing the requestor of the manner in which the office keeps its records. The requester does not have to put a records request in writing, and does not have to provide his or her identity or the intended use of the requested public record.

#### **Notice of receipt:**

All requests for public records should either be satisfied or be acknowledged in writing by Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority within three business days following receipt. If a request will not be satisfied within three business days, a notice of receipt should be sent to the requester, including at least the following terms:

- Request for clarifications (if necessary)
- Any items within the request that may be exempt from disclosure
- Estimated cost if copies are requested (see below)

#### **Production of requested records:**

Public records are to be available for inspection during regular business hours, with the exception of published holidays. Public records must be made available for inspection promptly. Copies of public records must be made available within a reasonable period of time. “Prompt” and “reasonable” take into account the volume of records requested; the proximity of the location where the records are stored; and the necessity for any legal review and/or redaction of the records requested. If any portion of your request for records is denied because the records are exempt from disclosure under the law, SMHA will inform you which records you have requested are not public and/or will clearly redact exempt information and provide an explanation regarding portions of the record(s) that have been redacted. In addition, SMHA will provide you with the legal authority upon which it has relied.

#### **Cost for Public Records:**

Those seeking public records will be charged the actual cost of making and/or mailing copies in addition to any other applicable charges.

- There is no charge for viewing (inspecting) public records.
- The charge for paper copies is .15 cents per page.
- The charge for downloading computer files to a compact disc is \$1 per disc or to a thumb drive is \$5 per thumb drive.
- There is no charge for documents emailed.
- Requestors may ask that documents be mailed to them. They will be charged the actual cost of the postage and mailing supplies.

#### **Failure to respond to a public records request:**

If a person believes this Agency has failed to comply with the Ohio Public Records Act, they may file a court petition in mandamus: 1) to compel the Agency to comply with the request, 2) to seek payment of statutory damages, 3) for court costs, and 4) to have the Agency pay for the requester’s attorney fees.

**Please contact SMHA’s Legal Services Manager at 330-454-8051 ext. 305 regarding public records requests.**

**For a copy of the full version of Stark Metropolitan Housing Authority’s Public Records Policy, ask the Human Resources Department located at 400 Tuscarawas Street East, Canton, OH 44702 or visit our website at [starkmha.org](http://starkmha.org).**