

Polk County Property Appraiser Information Technology Division

Records Access Policy

Policy Statement

This Records Access Policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for accessing public records in accordance with the Florida Public Records Law (Chapter 119, Florida Statutes¹). The policy ensures transparency, accountability, and the public's right to access government records maintained by The Polk County Property Appraiser.

Scope

This policy applies to all employees, contractors, and individuals associated with The Polk County Property Appraiser who are involved in the creation, maintenance, storage, and dissemination of public records.

Definitions

Public Records: Any materials, documents, data, or information, regardless of format, that are created, received, or maintained in connection with the transaction of official business of The Polk County Property Appraiser and are subject to the Florida Public Records Law. The Public Records Act is fully outlined in Chapter 119, Florida Statutes¹.

Requestor: Any individual, organization, or entity that seeks access to public records held by The Polk County Property Appraiser.

Policy Guidelines

Accessibility and Availability:

All public records maintained by The Polk County Property Appraiser shall be made available for inspection, copying, and reproduction by requestors, unless exempted by law.

Request Process:

The process for completing a public records request involves: 1) a review to determine what public records, if any, exist which are responsive to the request; 2) a determination of whether any responsive records may be exempt from disclosure; and 3) analysis to determine the method of collection/retrieval of the requested records.

¹http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?mode=View%20Statutes&SubMenu=1&App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=119.071&URL=0100-0199/0119/Sections/0119.071.html

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Confidential Information:

The Polk County Property Appraiser shall ensure confidential and sensitive information is properly protected and disclosed only to authorized individuals. Confidential and sensitive information is protected in accordance with Florida Statutes and the Polk County Property Appraiser's Data Classification Policy.

Appeals:

If a records request is denied, requestors shall be provided the statutory citation for not releasing the records. The requestor has the right to appeal the decision to the appropriate authority as designated by The Polk County Property Appraiser or by the State of Florida.

Record Retention:

Records shall be retained in accordance with the records retention schedules established by the State of Florida and The Polk County Property Appraiser's own records management policies. At no time shall the Polk County Property Appraiser's own records management policies reduce the retention schedules established by the State of Florida. NOTE: Records may be retained beyond the Retention Schedule if there is good justification, such as but not limited to, active or pending audit / litigation.

Data Disclaimer:

The Polk County Property Appraiser makes every effort to produce and publish the most current and accurate information possible. The Property Appraiser's Office assumes no responsibility for errors in the information and does not guarantee that the data is free from errors or inaccuracies. Similarly, the Property Appraiser's Office assumes no responsibility for the consequences of inappropriate uses or interpretations of the data. No warranties, expressed or implied, are provided for the data herein, its use, or its interpretation. Confidential information is redacted per Chapter 119, Florida Statutes¹ unless the request is from a governmental agency that is authorized to have access to confidential data in furtherance of statutory duties. The initial request for confidentiality made to the Property Appraiser's Office follows the records when they are relayed to the requestor. Utilization of the data provided indicates understanding and acceptance of this statement by the user.

Policy Review:

This policy shall be reviewed and updated as necessary to ensure compliance with changes in law, record retention schedules and best practices. As stated, Chapter 119, Florida Statutes¹ "Any public officer who violates any provision of the chapter commits a noncriminal infraction, punishable by fine not exceeding \$500. Any person who willfully and knowingly violates any of the provisions of this chapter commits a misdemeanor of the first degree, punishable as provided in s. 775.082 or s.775.083."

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Effective Date:

This policy shall be effective as of 01/17/2024.

Approval:

This Records Access Policy has been reviewed and approved by Marsha M Faux, Polk County Property Appraiser

01/17/2024

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