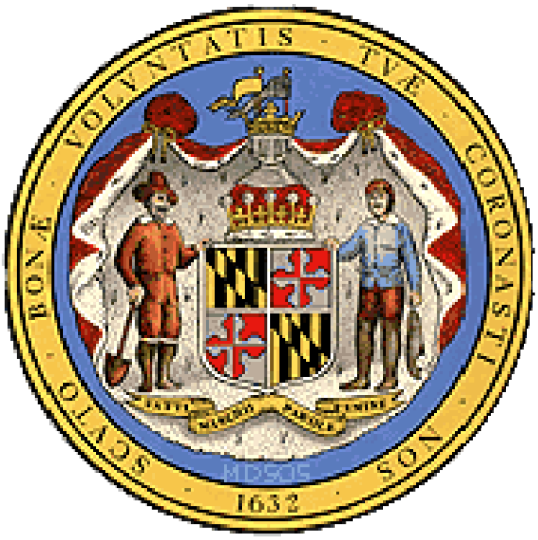
Maryland
Public Information Act
Manual



Office of the Attorney General

Anthony G. Brown
Attorney General

Nineteenth Edition
2024

MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT MANUAL

OFFICE OF THE

MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

ANTHONY G. BROWN
ATTORNEY GENERAL

200 Saint Paul Place
Baltimore, Maryland 21202

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PREFACE

The Maryland Public Information Act is based on the enduring principle that public knowledge of government activities is critical to the functioning of a democratic society; that a Government of the people, by the people, and for the people must be *open* to the people. Members of the public need and deserve complete information as they make the decisions and form the opinions that determine our future path, and the Act ensures that those needs are met fairly and expeditiously while protecting important privacy rights and other public policy goals.

As Attorney General, I am committed to open access to information, and to promoting a consistent application of the Act throughout State and local government. The Office of the Attorney General has long worked toward ensuring the correct implementation of the Act, and I am continuing and expanding on that tradition.

This manual is designed to be a resource for a range of users, from members of the public and the media who request information, to the government officials who have the responsibility to implement the Act's requirements.

The 19th edition of this manual, like those that precede it, is the work of many talented and committed individuals from the Office of the Attorney General. Special credit goes to former Deputy Attorney General, later Judge, Dennis M. Sweeney for preparing the first several editions, and to former Assistant Attorneys General Jack Schwartz and Robert N. McDonald (now Judge McDonald), as well as to Assistant Attorney General Adam D. Snyder, who assumed responsibility for subsequent editions. This most recent edition has been produced under the supervision of Patrick B. Hughes, the current Chief Counsel for Opinions & Advice.

I also wish to thank the local government officials, the Public Access Ombudsman, members of the private bar, and representatives of the media and open-government advocacy groups for their many constructive suggestions about how best to implement the PIA.

In addition to being available in printed version, the Manual is on-line at http://www.oag.state.md.us/Opengov/pia.htm.

Please let me know if you have suggestions for further refinements.

Anthony G. Brown
Attorney General
December 2024

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