



WASHINGTON COUNTY ELECTION COMMISSION



OPEN RECORDS POLICY AND PROCEDURES

This Open Records Policy and Procedures document is adopted by the **Washington County Election Commission** on **November 12, 2026**.

This policy is adopted to balance the Election Commission's need to function efficiently and openly, protect confidential information, and maintain the integrity of records with the public's right to access records pursuant to the **Tennessee Public Records Act**.

It is the policy of the Washington County Election Commission to maintain, retain, and dispose of all records as required by state law. It is also the policy of the Washington County Election Commission to give the citizens of Tennessee complete access to public records.

Definition of Public Records

"Public record or records" or "state record or records" means all documents, papers, maps, books, photographs, microfilms, electronic data processing files and output, films, sound recordings, or other material, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received pursuant to law or ordinance in connection with the transaction of official business by any government agency.

(T.C.A. § 10-7-503(a)(1))

Public Records Request Coordinator

The Public Records Request Coordinator shall be **Chuck Vest, Administrator of Elections, or anyone that he designates to fulfill the public records request**. Personnel of the Washington County Election Commission shall timely and efficiently provide access and assistance to persons requesting to view or receive copies of public records.

No provisions of this Policy shall be used to hinder access to open public records. However, the integrity and organization of public records, as well as the efficient and safe operation of the Washington County Election Commission, shall be protected as provided by current law.

Concerns about this Policy should be addressed to the Public Records Request Coordinator for the Washington County Election Commission or to the **Tennessee Office of Open Records Counsel (OORC)**.

Access to Public Records

All records of the Washington County Election Commission are open to **Tennessee citizens** for inspection and/or copying.

This written policy delineates reasonable rules governing the manner in which records requests are to be made and fulfilled.

This Public Records Policy is posted at the **Washington County Election Commission, 2516 East Oakland Avenue, Johnson City, TN 37601**, and online at www.wcecoffice.com

Inspection and Copying of Records

T.C.A. § 10-7-503 provides that all state, county, and municipal records, except any public documents authorized to be destroyed by the county public records commission in accordance with T.C.A. § 10-7-404, shall at all times, during business hours, be open to public inspection.

The records shall be open for personal inspection by any citizen of Tennessee. The record keeper shall not refuse such right of inspection to any citizen, unless otherwise provided by state law. The Washington County Election Commission may require an appointment for inspection.

Upon payment of copies and postage, copies will be delivered to the requestor's mailing address by the United State Postal Service.

A requestor will not be allowed to make copies or take photographs with personal equipment.

Confidential Information

- Any information regarding absentee requests and applications shall be confidential and not subject to the Open Records Law until the end of the early voting period. (*Acts of 2007, ch. 152, §1*)
 - Social Security numbers will be redacted from any record provided to the public.
 - Other personal information may be redacted as required by state or federal law.
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Procedures

1. This policy applies only to citizens of the State of Tennessee.
2. There will be no charge to inspect a document in the Washington County Election Commission office during regular business hours.
3. Any person requesting documents must present a government-issued photo ID (Tennessee Citizen only).
4. Document requests must be submitted in writing, including the requester's name, address, date, specific document(s) requested, and the preferred format for viewing. This information is used for internal planning and budgeting purposes but remains an open record.
5. In most cases, documents will be provided in a timely manner. The Election Commission has up to **seven (7) business days** from the date of the request to provide the documents. (*T.C.A. § 10-7-503(a)(2)(B)*)
6. During the period beginning **three (3) business days before Early Voting** and ending **five (5) business days after Election Day**, document requests may not be fulfilled within the normal timeframe.
7. During this period, the requester will receive a written statement explaining this temporary delay and will be asked to sign acknowledging receipt and understanding.
8. The Washington County Election Commission will make every effort to provide as many documents of public interest as possible on its website.
9. No original documents may be photographed or removed from the Washington County Election Commission office, except as permitted by law.
10. The cost of copies, media production, and any associated labor costs will be disclosed in writing to and approved by the requester prior to processing. Charges will follow the uniform pricing system established by the State of Tennessee. There will be **no charge** for requests totaling **six (6) or fewer pages per calendar year**.
11. If an outside vendor must be used to reproduce records, the requester will be informed in writing of the projected cost before copying is performed.
12. **Voter lists** must be requested in writing using forms provided by the Washington County Election Commission and signed by the requester. (*T.C.A. § 2-2-138*)
13. All Social Security numbers and any other information required by law will be redacted from documents before being released.
14. When a requester's description of records is unclear, a Washington County Election Commission employee will contact the requester to clarify or narrow the request. If clarification is not possible, the request may be denied for failure to identify the records with sufficient specificity.
15. Records will be provided in a format determined by the Election Commission, provided such format does not distort or restrict public access.