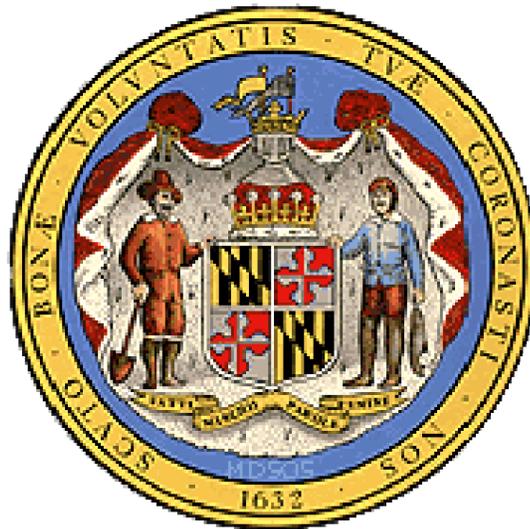


# Maryland Public Information Act Manual



**Office of the Attorney General**

**Brian E. Frosh  
Attorney General**

*Fourteenth Edition*  
**2015**

MARYLAND PUBLIC INFORMATION ACT MANUAL

OFFICE OF THE

MARYLAND ATTORNEY GENERAL

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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.

As technology advances, expectations about the speed and scope of access to information evolve, and policy-makers grapple with how best to accommodate those expectations in a manner that is both efficient and workable. The Fourteenth Edition of this manual reflects extensive changes enacted during the 2015 session of the Maryland General Assembly to move the law forward, as well as noteworthy developments in the case law and the opinions of the Office of the Attorney General.

The 14<sup>th</sup> edition of this manual, like those that precede it, is the work of many talented and committed individuals. 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) who assumed responsibility for subsequent editions. The most recent editions have been produced under the direction of Adam D. Snyder, Chief Counsel, Opinions and Advice. Deborah P. Spence deserves thanks for preparing and finalizing the manuscript.

I also wish to thank the local government officials, 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.

*Brian E. Frosh  
Attorney General  
October 2015*

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