

## I.        **POLICY STATEMENT**

Texas Southern University (the “University”) is committed to institutional transparency and compliance with the letter and spirit of the Texas Public Information Act (“the Act”) (Texas Government Code, Chapter 552). This policy establishes procedures for receipt, processing, and response to requests for information under the Act and shall be adhered to in accordance with applicable law and the provisions herein.

## II.       **PURPOSE AND SCOPE**

Records of Texas Southern University are public pursuant to the Texas Public Information Act (Texas Government Code, Chapter 552). Public information includes documentation in any format, including correspondence. Such information is subject to public disclosure upon request unless excepted under the Act or other applicable law.

This policy establishes procedures for the University’s response to public information requests. It applies to all University personnel and all records in the University's custody or control, regardless of the format or media in which the records are maintained.

This policy is a directive for the handling of requests for information under the Act and shall be adhered to in accordance with applicable law and the provisions as noted below.

## III.      **POLICY PROVISIONS**

**3.1. Public Information Coordinator.** Texas Southern University's Office of General Counsel is the designated Public Information Coordinator. The Office of General Counsel is responsible for ensuring compliance with the Act and the processing and fulfillment of all public information requests made pursuant to the Act.

**3.2 Employee Responsibility and Mandatory Forwarding.** Any University employee who receives a written request for information must forward the request **immediately** (within 24 hours) to the Office of General Counsel. Any University personnel receiving verbal inquiries concerning disclosure of information should direct the inquirer to submit the request in writing and forward it to the Office of General Counsel in Room 310, Hannah Hall. University personnel who receive a written request for information should forward the request immediately to the Office of General Counsel.

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**3.3 A request for public information must be submitted in writing to:**

Office of General Counsel Texas Southern University

*By mail:* 3100 Cleburne, Houston, Texas 77004

*By fax:* (713)313-1906

*In person:* Hannah Hall, Suite 310

*By email:* [legalgeneralcounsel@tsu.edu](mailto:legalgeneralcounsel@tsu.edu)

The requestor must provide sufficient detail to enable the University to identify and locate the records. The University may ask for clarification of a vague request but may not inquire into the purpose of the request ..

**3.4 Processing and Attorney General Rulings.** The Office of General Counsel shall determine if the information requested exists and whether is it subject to public disclosure. The University shall promptly release requested information that is not confidential by law, either constitutional, statutory, or by judicial decision, or information for which an exception to disclosure has not been sought.

If the University determines that the information is excepted from disclosure, OGC must request a ruling from the Texas Attorney General no later than ten (10) business days after the date of receiving the written request. In accordance with the Act, the requestor will be provided with a copy of the University’s written communication to the Attorney General’s Office. If that communication contains the specific information requested, the University shall provide a redacted copy to the requestor. \

**3.5: Cost of Records** In accordance with 1 Tex. Admin. Code § 70.3, the University may charge for the production of public information. If estimated charges exceed \$40, the University will provide the requestor with a written, itemized estimate before processing the request, allowing the requestor an opportunity to accept the charges, modify the request, or narrow the scope of the information sought. Pursuant to Texas Government Code § 552.2615, a request is considered withdrawn if the requestor does not respond in writing within ten (10) business days of the date the estimate is sent, confirming acceptance of the charges or modification of the request.

**3.6 Redaction Authority.** Pursuant to the Act, the University may redact certain information (e.g., social security numbers, personal credit card numbers, or certain law enforcement data) without requesting an Attorney General ruling, provided the requestor is given the required statutory notice of the redaction and their right to appeal.

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**Section**            **General Counsel**  
**Area**                General Counsel  
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**3.7 Personal Records.** This policy does not limit the rights of students or employees to access records pertaining to themselves, subject to verified identification and applicable privacy laws such as **FERPA**.

**3.8 Resources:** Further information regarding rights of requestors and responsibilities of governmental bodies is available at:

- Texas Attorney General's website at <http://www.oag.state.tx.us/opinopen/opengovt.shtml>
- Office of the Attorney General Open Records Hotline at (512) 478-6736 or toll free at (877) 673-6839