

Guide for requesting data about you

This document explains the rights and process for people to request data about themselves (“you”) from the Minnesota Department of Human Services (DHS). The purpose of this document is, in part, to fulfill the requirements of [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.025, subdivision 3](#).

What law governs my right to access data about me?

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) says that when DHS has government data about you, you have rights, including the right to access the data. “Government data” is a term that means all information that DHS, as a state agency, collects, creates, receives, maintains, or sends out. The MGDPA requires DHS to keep government data in a way that makes it easy for you to access. You have the right to inspect data that DHS keeps and to receive copies of this data. The MGDPA allows DHS to charge for copies and related costs incurred when responding to a request for data. For more information about these costs, review the sections in this document about costs.

How does the law classify data about me?

The MGDPA presumes that all government data are public unless a state or federal law or a temporary classification says that the data are not public. Under state law, data about you can be classified as public, private or confidential. This is what those terms mean to you:

- **Public data:** DHS must give public data to anyone who asks. It does not matter who is asking for the data or why they are asking for it.
- **Private data:** DHS cannot give private data to the general public, but you have the right to access private data about you. Your private data can also be accessed by another person who has your permission to access the data, by DHS employees whose work assignment reasonably requires access to the data, and by others as permitted by law or court order.
- **Confidential data:** DHS cannot give your confidential data to you or the general public. Your confidential data can only be accessed by DHS employees whose work assignment reasonably requires access to the data and by others as permitted by law or court order.

What are my rights to access data about me?

DHS must keep its government data in a way that makes it easy for you to access. Also, DHS may only collect and keep data about you that DHS needs to manage programs. You have the following rights:

- You have the right to inspect public and private data that we keep about you free of charge. You also have the right to get copies of public and private data about you for a fee. More information about these fees can be found on page 6 of this document. You have the right to look at data, free of charge, before deciding to request copies. Also, if you ask, DHS will tell you whether DHS keeps data about you and whether the data are public, private or confidential.
 - Parents have the right to look at and get copies of public and private data about their minor children, which means under the age of 18.
 - Legally appointed guardians have the right to look at and get copies of public and private data about an individual for whom they are appointed guardian.
 - Minors have the right to ask DHS not to give data about them to their parent or guardian. If you are a minor, DHS will tell you that you have this right. DHS may ask you to put your request in writing and to include the reasons that DHS should deny your parent/guardian access to the data. DHS will make the final decision about your request based on your best interests.

When DHS collects data from you

When DHS asks you to provide data about yourself that are not public, DHS must give you a notice describing what DHS does with the data it collects from you. Usually, DHS can use and disclose the data only in the ways described in the notice.

DHS will ask for your written permission if it needs to use or disclose private data about you in a different way, or if you ask DHS to disclose the data to another person. This permission is called informed consent.

Protecting your data

The MGDPA requires DHS to protect your data. DHS has appropriate safeguards to ensure that your data are safe.

In the unfortunate event that DHS determines that an unauthorized person has gained access to your data with the intent to use it for nongovernmental purposes, DHS will notify you as required by law.

When your data are inaccurate or incomplete

You have the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of public and private data about you. If you are a minor, your parent or guardian has the right to challenge the accuracy and completeness of data about you. You also have the right to appeal a decision denying your challenge.

What is a data request?

A data request is a request from you to access public data, or private data about you that DHS keeps.

How do I make a data request?

Data requests must be made in writing. DHS does not require you to use a form to request information about yourself. However, if you are request data about yourself, [a data request form](#) is available.

If you choose not to use the available form, write down a specific description of the data you are seeking. Your written request should include:

- A statement that you are making a request for data about you under the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act
- A clear description of the data you would like to access
- A statement that you would like to receive copies of the data or inspect the data

How do I verify my identity?

Before DHS discloses your data to you, DHS will need to verify that you are who you say you are. If you are requesting data about yourself, you can complete the [DHS Verification of Identity and Request for Information form](#) and include it with your written data request. You may also verify your identity by providing an acceptable proof of identity, including any of these:

For adults, a valid photo ID, such as:

- State driver's license
- Military ID
- Passport
- Minnesota ID
- Minnesota Tribal ID

For minors, a valid photo ID, such as:

- State driver's license
- Military ID
- Passport
- Minnesota ID
- Minnesota tribal ID
- Minnesota school ID

For parents or guardians of a minor, a valid photo ID and either:

- A certified copy of the minor's birth certificate, or
- A certified copy of documents that establish the parent or guardian's relationship to the child, such as:
 - A court order relating to divorce, separation, custody, foster care
 - A foster care contract
 - An affidavit of parentage

For the legal guardian for an individual, a valid photo ID and a certified copy of appropriate documentation of formal or informal appointment as guardian, such as:

- Court order(s)
- Valid power of attorney

Where do I send my data request?

The responsible authority is the official designated by law as the individual responsible for the collection, use and dissemination of a government entity's data. At the Minnesota Department of Human Services, the responsible authority is the Commissioner of Human Services, Jodi Harpstead.

Data requests and concerns generally are handled by DHS staff members assigned to respond to requests for the DHS responsible authority. Please see the following list for where to send your data request:

DHS Central Office. If your request is for information maintained by the DHS Central Office, send your request:

By email to: dhs.datarequest@state.mn.us

By U.S. mail to: The Minnesota Department of Human Services
Attention: Data Request
P.O. Box 64998
St. Paul, MN 55164-0998

Direct Care and Treatment (DCT). If you are requesting information from the Direct Care and Treatment (DCT) Division of DHS, send your data request to one of the following email addresses:

- For Forensic Services, Community Based Services, or Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, send your data request to: DCT.Release.of.Information.DHS@state.mn.us
- For the Minnesota Sex Offender Program (MSOP), send your data request to: MSOP-InfoRequest@state.mn.us

Media. If you are a member of the media, you may send your data request to a DHS communications person. You can find mailing addresses and contact information for [communications contacts](#) online.

How does DHS respond to a data request?

DHS responds to data requests in three ways:

1. **No responsive data:** If DHS does not have any data responsive to a request, DHS will notify you.
2. **Responsive data classified as confidential or private not about you:** If DHS has data responsive to the request, but the data is confidential or private data that is not about you, DHS will notify you. The MGDPA requires that when DHS withholds data classified as not public, and DHS will provide the law that classifies the data as not public when notifying.
3. **Responsive data collected, reviewed and disclosed:** If DHS has data responsive to your request, and the data is classified as public or private about you, DHS will begin the process to collect, review and disclose the data.

After DHS determines that responsive data exists, DHS collects the data from DHS employees, reviews the data to ensure that it meets the criteria for public data or private data about you, and discloses the data to you. DHS makes copies of the data or makes the data available for in-person inspection. DHS generally provides copies of data electronically, unless paper copies are requested. When the volume of responsive data is high, DHS may disclose data on a rolling basis, until the response is complete.

How long will it take to get the data I requested?

If you request access to data about you, the MGDPA requires DHS to respond within 10 days of receiving your request, unless we make arrangements with you for extra time. DHS must respond to other data requests within a reasonable time. The time it takes to fulfill a request depends on the volume of responsive data and the complexity of the request. If you write your request to be specific and concise, DHS will be more able to efficiently locate, review and disclose the data. Requests that seek a broad range of data, or unclear types of data, often yield high volumes of data, which take longer to process.

What if my request requires DHS to create new data, or I request data in a particular file format?

The MGDPA does not require DHS to create or collect new data to respond to a data request. This means that if data does not exist at DHS, DHS cannot disclose it in response to a data request. If DHS agrees to create data to respond to a request, DHS will work out the details of that request with you, including the cost of creating data.

The MGDPA also does not require DHS to create new formats of the requested data. This means that DHS is not required to disclose data in a particular electronic format. DHS is also not required to scan data that is only in paper form to respond to a request that seeks the data in an electronic format.

The MGDPA does not require DHS to answer questions that are not data requests. However, DHS typically attempts to answer questions from the public. Direct your questions to the DHS division that you think can best answer it. You can find [contact information for DHS divisions](#) on DHS' website.

How much does it cost to look at or “inspect” data?

DHS does not charge to inspect data. The inspection must take place at DHS, at a time and place arranged by DHS, and you may not take data from DHS without first paying the costs outlined below.

What if I want to take the data after “inspecting” it?

If you request copies of data after inspecting the data, DHS may charge you a prorated amount of the actual costs related to the request unless you are requesting paper copies of 100 or fewer pages, in which case you are only responsible for the copy charges listed below. For example, if 1000 pages of data are made available to you to inspect, and you want copies of 200 pages, you must pay 20 percent of the actual costs to receive the copies.

How does DHS calculate the actual costs of a request?

If you request data about you, DHS computes the actual costs of a request by multiplying the hourly pay rates of the DHS staff involved in the request by the time required to make, certify, sort, and electronically transmit or mail the data. Unlike requests for public data from members of the public, DHS does not include the time to search and retrieve data about you when computing the actual costs of your request.

DHS uses hourly staff pay rates determined annually by DHS Human Resources to calculate the actual costs related to a request. These rates reflect the median wage for DHS staff members and do not include any adjustment for benefits, indirect costs or other surcharges.

DHS does not charge actual costs if you are requesting paper copies of 100 or fewer pages.

How much do the copies cost?

In addition to the actual costs of a request, if applicable, DHS may also charge for copies of the data.

- Paper copies
 - 100 or fewer pages: DHS may charge 25 cents per page for a one-sided copy or 50 cents, at 25 cents per page, for a two-sided copy.
 - More than 100 pages: DHS may charge 8 cents per page for a one-sided copy or 16 cents per page for a two-sided copy.
- Electronic copies: DHS may charge for physical media to provide the electronic copies, which is commonly a CD for 59 cents each.

For accessible formats of this publication or assistance with additional equal access to Human Services, write to dhs.info@state.mn.us, call 651-431-2911, or use your preferred relay service.

Attention. If you need free help interpreting this document, call the above number.

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ملاحظة: إذا أردت مساعدة مجانية لترجمة هذه الوثيقة، اتصل على الرقم أعلاه.

သတိ။ ဤစာရွက်စာတမ်းအားအခမဲ့ဘာသာပြန်ပေးခြင်း အကူအညီလိုအပ်ပါက၊ အထက်ပါဖုန်းနံပါတ်ကိုခေါ်ဆိုပါ။

កំណត់សំគាល់ ។ បើអ្នកត្រូវការជំនួយក្នុងការបកប្រែឯកសារនេះដោយឥតគិតថ្លៃ សូមហៅទូរស័ព្ទតាមលេខខាងលើ ។

請注意，如果您需要免費協助傳譯這份文件，請撥打上面的電話號碼。

Attention. Si vous avez besoin d'une aide gratuite pour interpréter le présent document, veuillez appeler au numéro ci-dessus.

Thov ua twb zoo nyeem. Yog hais tias koj xav tau kev pab txhais lus rau tsab ntaub ntawv no pub dawb, ces hu rau tus najnpawb xov tooj saum toj no.

ဟ်သူဉ်ဟ်သးဘဉ်တက့ၢ်. ဝဲန့ၢ်လိၣ်ဘဉ်တၢ်မၤတၢ်ကလိလၢတၢ်ကကျိးထံဝဲဒၣ်လၢ် တီလၢ်မိတခါအံၤန့ၣ်,ကိးဘဉ်လိဝဲစိနီၣ်ဂံၢ်လၢထးအံၤန့ၣ်တက့ၢ်.

알려드립니다. 이 문서에 대한 이해를 돕기 위해 무료로 제공되는 도움을 받으시려면 위의 전화번호로 연락하십시오.

ໄປຮດຊາບ. ຖ້າຫາກ ທ່ານຕ້ອງການການຊ່ວຍເຫຼືອໃນການແປເອກະສານນີ້ພຣີ, ຈົ່ງໂທໄປທີ່ໝາຍເລກຂ້າງເທິງນີ້.

Hubachiisa. Dokumentiin kun tola akka siif hiikamu gargaarsa hoo feete, lakkoobsa gubbatti kenname bilbili.

Внимание: если вам нужна бесплатная помощь в устном переводе данного документа, позвоните по указанному выше телефону.

Digniin. Haddii aad u baahantahay caawimaad lacag-la' aan ah ee tarjumaadda qoraalkan, lambarka kore wac.

Atención. Si desea recibir asistencia gratuita para interpretar este documento, llame al número indicado arriba.

Chú ý. Nếu quý vị cần được giúp đỡ dịch tài liệu này miễn phí, xin gọi số bên trên.