

TEMPLATE 00 · COLORADO PUBLIC RECORDS

Start here

Which statute applies, the deadlines, the fee caps, and how to file

WHEN TO USE THIS

Read this first if you have never filed a records request in Colorado. It tells you which of the two records statutes applies to the agency you are writing to, which is the single most common thing people get wrong.

WHAT THE LAW GIVES YOU

CORA DEADLINE

Three working days. Up to seven more only with written notice of extenuating circumstances. C.R.S. 24-72-203(3)(b)

FEES

First hour of research and retrieval is free. After that the cap is \$41.37 per hour. C.R.S. 24-72-205(6)

CCJRA DEADLINE

None. But a denial requires written grounds within seventy-two hours on request. C.R.S. 24-72-305(6)

COST

No filing fee. No reason, residency or affiliation required.

HOW TO SEND IT

Copy the letter on the next page into an email, fill in every highlighted field, and send it to the agency's custodian of records. Keep your sent copy and calendar the deadline the day you send it. If the deadline passes, use template 04. If you are denied, use template 05 the same day.

REFERENCE

Everything highlighted below must be replaced before you send this. Delete nothing else. The statutory citations are what make the request enforceable.

PAGOSA TRANSPARENCY PROJECT

Public records templates for Colorado

Updated 30 July 2026

WHAT THIS IS

Fill-in-the-blank templates for filing your own public records request in Colorado. Free to use. No attribution needed. Written for Archuleta County but they work statewide, swap the agency names.

Not legal advice. I am not an attorney. These are letters, not filings, and nothing here creates an attorney-client relationship.

WHICH TEMPLATE DO I USE

Two different Colorado statutes cover public records, and picking the wrong one is the most common way a request gets stalled.

CORA Colorado Open Records Act, C.R.S. 24-72-201 et seq. Use for: county commissioners, county administration, finance, town clerks, school districts, special districts, any non-police agency. File: 01-cora-request.txt

CCJRA Colorado Criminal Justice Records Act,

C.R.S. 24-72-301 et seq.

Use for: sheriff's offices, police departments,
district attorneys.

File: 02-ccjra-request.txt

If you are not sure, or the agency is a sheriff's office holding what are really business records like a vendor contract, file under both in the alternative. Template 02 already does this. Agencies will sometimes route a record into CCJRA precisely because CCJRA gives them more discretion.

THE DEADLINES THAT MATTER

CORA

Three working days to respond. Up to seven additional working days only if the custodian claims extenuating circumstances, and they have to tell you in writing that they are taking the extension. C.R.S. 24-72-203(3)(b)

Note: the legislature tried to stretch this to five days in 2025 and again in 2026. The 2025 bill was vetoed and the 2026 bill died in committee. Three working days is still the law.

CCJRA

No statutory deadline. This is the single biggest difference. A sheriff's office can sit on a CCJRA request. What they cannot do is refuse and stay silent about why.

If they deny you, ask in writing for a statement of grounds. They then have seventy-two hours to give you one, and it has to cite the specific law or describe the public interest being protected. C.R.S. 24-72-305(6)

That written statement is what you need if you ever go to district court under 24-72-305(7).

FEES

First hour of research and retrieval is free. After that the cap is 41.37 dollars per hour. That figure is set in statute and adjusted for inflation every five years. C.R.S. 24-72-205(6)

Always ask for a written cost estimate before they start work, and say you want to approve any charge first. Fee shock is the most common way a request quietly dies.

Ask for records in the digital format they are already stored in. If a record lives in a searchable or sortable format, you can ask for it that way, which sidesteps per-page copy charges. C.R.S. 24-72-203(3.5)

HOW TO ACTUALLY FILE

1. Pick the template. 2. Fill in every bracket. 3. Attach or paste your list of records. Template 03 is the Flock camera list if that is what you are after. 4. Email it. Keep the sent copy. 5. Calendar the deadline the day you send it. 6. If they blow the deadline, send template 04. 7. If they deny, send template 05 the same day.

Send it from an address you actually check. Everything after the first email is about persistence, not cleverness.

A FEW THINGS THAT WORK

Ask for a specific document, not a topic. "The contract" beats "information about the contract." Give a date range. It cuts their search time and their fee. Never explain why you want it. You do not have to, and it gives them nothing to argue with. Stay boring and polite in writing. Every email you send is itself a public record and may end up in front of a judge.

END OF TEMPLATE 00 · PAGOSATransparency.org