

LEGISLATURE OF NEBRASKA  
ONE HUNDRED SIXTH LEGISLATURE  
FIRST SESSION

**LEGISLATIVE BILL 150**

Introduced by Brewer, 43.

Read first time January 11, 2019

Committee: Government, Military and Veterans Affairs

1 A BILL FOR AN ACT relating to public records; to amend sections 84-712,  
2 84-712.01, and 84-712.07, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and  
3 section 84-712.05, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement, 2018; to  
4 define a term; to change provisions relating to access to and fees  
5 for public records; to harmonize provisions; and to repeal the  
6 original sections.

7 Be it enacted by the people of the State of Nebraska,

1 Section 1. Section 84-712, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is  
2 amended to read:

3 84-712 (1) Except as otherwise expressly provided by statute, all  
4 residents ~~citizens~~ of this state and all other persons interested in the  
5 examination of the public records as defined in section 84-712.01 are  
6 hereby fully empowered and authorized to (a) examine such records, and  
7 make memoranda, copies using their own copying or photocopying equipment  
8 in accordance with subsection (2) of this section, and abstracts  
9 therefrom, all free of charge, during the hours the respective offices  
10 may be kept open for the ordinary transaction of business and (b) except  
11 if federal copyright law otherwise provides, obtain copies of public  
12 records in accordance with subsection (3) of this section during the  
13 hours the respective offices may be kept open for the ordinary  
14 transaction of business.

15 (2) Copies made by residents ~~citizens~~ or other persons using their  
16 own copying or photocopying equipment pursuant to subdivision (1)(a) of  
17 this section shall be made on the premises of the custodian of the public  
18 record or at a location mutually agreed to by the requester and the  
19 custodian.

20 (3)(a) Copies may be obtained pursuant to subdivision (1)(b) of this  
21 section only if the custodian has copying equipment reasonably available.  
22 Such copies may be obtained in any form designated by the requester in  
23 which the public record is maintained or produced, including, but not  
24 limited to, printouts, electronic data, discs, tapes, and photocopies.  
25 This section shall not be construed to require a custodian to copy any  
26 public record that is available to the requester on the custodian's web  
27 site on the Internet. The custodian of the public record is required to  
28 provide the location of the public record on the Internet to the  
29 requester. If the requester does not have reasonable access to the  
30 Internet due to lack of computer, lack of Internet availability, or  
31 inability to use a computer or the Internet, the custodian shall produce

1 copies for the requester as provided in this subsection.

2 (b) Except as otherwise provided by statute, the public body, public  
3 entity, or public official which is the custodian of a public record may  
4 charge a fee for providing copies of such public record pursuant to  
5 subdivision (1)(b) of this section, which fee shall not exceed the actual  
6 added cost of making the copies available. For purposes of this  
7 subdivision, (i) for photocopies, the actual added cost of making the  
8 copies available shall not exceed the amount of the reasonably calculated  
9 actual added cost of the photocopies, which may include a reasonably  
10 apportioned cost of the supplies, such as paper, toner, and equipment,  
11 used in preparing the copies, as well as any additional payment  
12 obligation of the custodian for time of contractors necessarily incurred  
13 to comply with the request for copies, (ii) for printouts of computerized  
14 data on paper, the actual added cost of making the copies available shall  
15 include the reasonably calculated actual added cost of computer run time  
16 and the cost of materials for making the copy, and (iii) for electronic  
17 data, the actual added cost of making the copies available shall include  
18 the reasonably calculated actual added cost of the computer run time, any  
19 necessary analysis and programming by the public body, public entity,  
20 public official, or third-party information technology services company  
21 contracted to provide computer services to the public body, public  
22 entity, or public official, and the production of the report in the form  
23 furnished to the requester.

24 (c) For residents of Nebraska, the ~~The~~ actual added cost used as the  
25 basis for the calculation of a fee for records shall not include any  
26 charge for the existing salary or pay obligation to the public officers  
27 or employees with respect to the first four cumulative hours of  
28 searching, identifying, physically redacting, or copying. A special  
29 service charge reflecting the calculated labor cost may be included in  
30 the fee for time required in excess of four cumulative hours, since that  
31 large a request may cause some delay or disruption of the other

1 responsibilities of the custodian's office, except that the fee for  
2 records shall not include any charge for the services of an attorney to  
3 review the requested public records seeking a legal basis to withhold the  
4 public records from the public.

5 (d) For nonresidents of Nebraska, the actual added cost used as the  
6 basis for the calculation of a fee for records may include a charge for  
7 the existing salary or pay obligation to the public officers or  
8 employees, including a charge for the services of an attorney to review  
9 the requested public records.

10 (e) ~~(d)~~ State agencies which provide electronic access to public  
11 records through a portal established under section 84-1204 shall obtain  
12 approval of their proposed reasonable fees for such records pursuant to  
13 sections 84-1205.02 and 84-1205.03, if applicable, and the actual added  
14 cost of making the copies available may include the approved fee for the  
15 portal.

16 (f) ~~(e)~~ This section shall not be construed to require a public body  
17 or custodian of a public record to produce or generate any public record  
18 in a new or different form or format modified from that of the original  
19 public record.

20 (g) ~~(f)~~ If copies requested in accordance with subdivision (1)(b) of  
21 this section are estimated by the custodian of such public records to  
22 cost more than fifty dollars, the custodian may require the requester to  
23 furnish a deposit prior to fulfilling such request.

24 (4) Upon receipt of a written request for access to or copies of a  
25 public record, the custodian of such record shall provide to the  
26 requester as soon as is practicable and without delay, but not more than  
27 four business days after actual receipt of the request, an estimate of  
28 the expected cost of the copies and either (a) access to or, if copying  
29 equipment is reasonably available, copies of the public record, (b) if  
30 there is a legal basis for denial of access or copies, a written denial  
31 of the request together with the information specified in section

1 84-712.04, or (c) if the entire request cannot with reasonable good faith  
2 efforts be fulfilled within four business days after actual receipt of  
3 the request due to the significant difficulty or the extensiveness of the  
4 request, a written explanation, including the earliest practicable date  
5 for fulfilling the request, an estimate of the expected cost of any  
6 copies, and an opportunity for the requester to modify or prioritize the  
7 items within the request. The requester shall have ten business days to  
8 review the estimated costs, including any special service charge, and  
9 request the custodian to fulfill the original request, negotiate with the  
10 custodian to narrow or simplify the request, or withdraw the request. If  
11 the requester does not respond to the custodian within ten business days,  
12 the custodian shall not proceed to fulfill the request. The four business  
13 days shall be computed by excluding the day the request is received,  
14 after which the designated period of time begins to run. Business day  
15 does not include a Saturday, a Sunday, or a day during which the offices  
16 of the custodian of the public records are closed.

17 (5) For purposes of sections 84-712 to 84-712.09, resident means a  
18 person domiciled in this state and includes news media without regard to  
19 domicile.

20 Sec. 2. Section 84-712.01, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is  
21 amended to read:

22 84-712.01 (1) Except when any other statute expressly provides that  
23 particular information or records shall not be made public, public  
24 records shall include all records and documents, regardless of physical  
25 form, of or belonging to this state, any county, city, village, political  
26 subdivision, or tax-supported district in this state, or any agency,  
27 branch, department, board, bureau, commission, council, subunit, or  
28 committee of any of the foregoing. Data which is a public record in its  
29 original form shall remain a public record when maintained in computer  
30 files.

31 (2) When a custodian of a public record of a county provides to a

1 member of the public, upon request, a copy of the public record by  
2 transmitting it from a modem to an outside modem, a reasonable fee may be  
3 charged for such specialized service. Such fee may include a reasonable  
4 amount representing a portion of the amortization of the cost of computer  
5 equipment, including software, necessarily added in order to provide such  
6 specialized service. This subsection shall not be construed to require a  
7 governmental entity to acquire computer capability to generate public  
8 records in a new or different form when that new form would require  
9 additional computer equipment or software not already possessed by the  
10 governmental entity.

11 (3) Sections 84-712 to 84-712.03 shall be liberally construed  
12 whenever any state, county, or political subdivision fiscal records,  
13 audit, warrant, voucher, invoice, purchase order, requisition, payroll,  
14 check, receipt, or other record of receipt, cash, or expenditure  
15 involving public funds is involved in order that the residents ~~citizens~~  
16 of this state shall have the full right to know of and have full access  
17 to information on the public finances of the government and the public  
18 bodies and entities created to serve them.

19 Sec. 3. Section 84-712.05, Revised Statutes Cumulative Supplement,  
20 2018, is amended to read:

21 84-712.05 The following records, unless publicly disclosed in an  
22 open court, open administrative proceeding, or open meeting or disclosed  
23 by a public entity pursuant to its duties, may be withheld from the  
24 public by the lawful custodian of the records:

25 (1) Personal information in records regarding a student, prospective  
26 student, or former student of any educational institution or exempt  
27 school that has effectuated an election not to meet state approval or  
28 accreditation requirements pursuant to section 79-1601 when such records  
29 are maintained by and in the possession of a public entity, other than  
30 routine directory information specified and made public consistent with  
31 20 U.S.C. 1232g, as such section existed on February 1, 2013, and

1 regulations adopted thereunder;

2 (2) Medical records, other than records of births and deaths and  
3 except as provided in subdivision (5) of this section, in any form  
4 concerning any person; records of elections filed under section 44-2821;  
5 and patient safety work product under the Patient Safety Improvement Act;

6 (3) Trade secrets, academic and scientific research work which is in  
7 progress and unpublished, and other proprietary or commercial information  
8 which if released would give advantage to business competitors and serve  
9 no public purpose;

10 (4) Records which represent the work product of an attorney and the  
11 public body involved which are related to preparation for litigation,  
12 labor negotiations, or claims made by or against the public body or which  
13 are confidential communications as defined in section 27-503;

14 (5) Records developed or received by law enforcement agencies and  
15 other public bodies charged with duties of investigation or examination  
16 of persons, institutions, or businesses, when the records constitute a  
17 part of the examination, investigation, intelligence information, ~~citizen~~  
18 complaints or inquiries from residents of this state or other interested  
19 persons, informant identification, or strategic or tactical information  
20 used in law enforcement training, except that this subdivision shall not  
21 apply to records so developed or received:

22 (a) Relating to the presence of and amount or concentration of  
23 alcohol or drugs in any body fluid of any person; or

24 (b) Relating to the cause of or circumstances surrounding the death  
25 of an employee arising from or related to his or her employment if, after  
26 an investigation is concluded, a family member of the deceased employee  
27 makes a request for access to or copies of such records. This subdivision  
28 does not require access to or copies of informant identification, the  
29 names or identifying information of members of the public ~~citizens~~ making  
30 complaints or inquiries, other information which would compromise an  
31 ongoing criminal investigation, or information which may be withheld from

1 the public under another provision of law. For purposes of this  
2 subdivision, family member means a spouse, child, parent, brother,  
3 sister, grandchild, or grandparent by blood, marriage, or adoption;

4 (6) Appraisals or appraisal information and negotiation records  
5 concerning the purchase or sale, by a public body, of any interest in  
6 real or personal property, prior to completion of the purchase or sale;

7 (7) Personal information in records regarding personnel of public  
8 bodies other than salaries and routine directory information;

9 (8) Information solely pertaining to protection of the security of  
10 public property and persons on or within public property, such as  
11 specific, unique vulnerability assessments or specific, unique response  
12 plans, either of which is intended to prevent or mitigate criminal acts  
13 the public disclosure of which would create a substantial likelihood of  
14 endangering public safety or property; computer or communications network  
15 schema, passwords, and user identification names; guard schedules; lock  
16 combinations; or public utility infrastructure specifications or design  
17 drawings the public disclosure of which would create a substantial  
18 likelihood of endangering public safety or property, unless otherwise  
19 provided by state or federal law;

20 (9) The security standards, procedures, policies, plans,  
21 specifications, diagrams, access lists, and other security-related  
22 records of the Lottery Division of the Department of Revenue and those  
23 persons or entities with which the division has entered into contractual  
24 relationships. Nothing in this subdivision shall allow the division to  
25 withhold from the public any information relating to amounts paid persons  
26 or entities with which the division has entered into contractual  
27 relationships, amounts of prizes paid, the name of the prize winner, and  
28 the city, village, or county where the prize winner resides;

29 (10) With respect to public utilities and except as provided in  
30 sections 43-512.06 and 70-101, personally identified private customer  
31 ~~citizen~~ account payment and customer use information, credit information



1 on others supplied in confidence, and customer lists;

2 (11) Records or portions of records kept by a publicly funded  
3 library which, when examined with or without other records, reveal the  
4 identity of any library patron using the library's materials or services;

5 (12) Correspondence, memoranda, and records of telephone calls  
6 related to the performance of duties by a member of the Legislature in  
7 whatever form. The lawful custodian of the correspondence, memoranda, and  
8 records of telephone calls, upon approval of the Executive Board of the  
9 Legislative Council, shall release the correspondence, memoranda, and  
10 records of telephone calls which are not designated as sensitive or  
11 confidential in nature to any person performing an audit of the  
12 Legislature. A member's correspondence, memoranda, and records of  
13 confidential telephone calls related to the performance of his or her  
14 legislative duties shall only be released to any other person with the  
15 explicit approval of the member;

16 (13) Records or portions of records kept by public bodies which  
17 would reveal the location, character, or ownership of any known  
18 archaeological, historical, or paleontological site in Nebraska when  
19 necessary to protect the site from a reasonably held fear of theft,  
20 vandalism, or trespass. This section shall not apply to the release of  
21 information for the purpose of scholarly research, examination by other  
22 public bodies for the protection of the resource or by recognized tribes,  
23 the Unmarked Human Burial Sites and Skeletal Remains Protection Act, or  
24 the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;

25 (14) Records or portions of records kept by public bodies which  
26 maintain collections of archaeological, historical, or paleontological  
27 significance which reveal the names and addresses of donors of such  
28 articles of archaeological, historical, or paleontological significance  
29 unless the donor approves disclosure, except as the records or portions  
30 thereof may be needed to carry out the purposes of the Unmarked Human  
31 Burial Sites and Skeletal Remains Protection Act or the federal Native

1 American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act;

2 (15) Job application materials submitted by applicants, other than  
3 finalists or a priority candidate for a position described in section  
4 85-106.06 selected using the enhanced public scrutiny process in section  
5 85-106.06, who have applied for employment by any public body as defined  
6 in section 84-1409. For purposes of this subdivision, (a) job application  
7 materials means employment applications, resumes, reference letters, and  
8 school transcripts and (b) finalist means any applicant who is not an  
9 applicant for a position described in section 85-106.06 and (i) who  
10 reaches the final pool of applicants, numbering four or more, from which  
11 the successful applicant is to be selected, (ii) who is an original  
12 applicant when the final pool of applicants numbers less than four, or  
13 (iii) who is an original applicant and there are four or fewer original  
14 applicants;

15 (16) Records obtained by the Public Employees Retirement Board  
16 pursuant to section 84-1512;

17 (17) Social security numbers; credit card, charge card, or debit  
18 card numbers and expiration dates; and financial account numbers supplied  
19 to state and local governments ~~by citizens~~;

20 (18) Information exchanged between a jurisdictional utility and city  
21 pursuant to section 66-1867;

22 (19) Draft records obtained by the Nebraska Retirement Systems  
23 Committee of the Legislature and the Governor from Nebraska Public  
24 Employees Retirement Systems pursuant to subsection (4) of section  
25 84-1503;

26 (20) All prescription drug information submitted pursuant to section  
27 71-2454, all data contained in the prescription drug monitoring system,  
28 and any report obtained from data contained in the prescription drug  
29 monitoring system; and

30 (21) Information obtained by any government entity, whether federal,  
31 state, county, or local, regarding firearm registration, possession,

1 sale, or use that is obtained for purposes of an application permitted or  
2 required by law or contained in a permit or license issued by such  
3 entity. Such information shall be available upon request to any federal,  
4 state, county, or local law enforcement agency.

5 Sec. 4. Section 84-712.07, Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska, is  
6 amended to read:

7 84-712.07 The provisions of sections 84-712, 84-712.01, 84-712.03 to  
8 84-712.09, and 84-1413 pertaining to the rights of residents of this  
9 state and all other interested persons ~~citizens~~ to access to public  
10 records may be enforced by equitable relief, whether or not any other  
11 remedy is also available. In any case in which the complainant seeking  
12 access has substantially prevailed, the court may assess against the  
13 public body which had denied access to its ~~their~~ records, reasonable  
14 attorney's ~~attorney~~ fees and other litigation costs reasonably incurred  
15 by the complainant.

16 Sec. 5. Original sections 84-712, 84-712.01, and 84-712.07, Reissue  
17 Revised Statutes of Nebraska, and section 84-712.05, Revised Statutes  
18 Cumulative Supplement, 2018, are repealed.