

# *How to Effectively & Efficiently Respond to FOI Requests*

# The Requester's Obligations

The requester must:

- ▶ Make the request in writing;
- ▶ Provide sufficient detail to enable an experienced employee, upon reasonable effort to identify the records;
- ▶ Pay the fee.

# The Public Body's Obligations

- ▶ Must respond to the requester in writing within 30 days following the date when the request was received.
- ▶ Where third party information is at issue, the public body must notify the affected organization or individual and consider their views before making a decision about access.
- ▶ “Duty to assist”

# What Prevents Effective Responses?

- ▶ Lack of resources/time
- ▶ Record information management practices
- ▶ Inadequate training
- ▶ Experience
- ▶ Applicants who may not know what they want -- employees not knowing what to search for

# Most Effective Response – Avoid Process Entirely

- ▶ While formal FOI process are required in specific circumstances where information must / should be protected from disclosure, dissemination of government-held information can be accomplished through other mechanisms.
- ▶ Governments moving to increase the amount of proactive disclosure of information.
- ▶ Province and municipalities embracing the Open Data movement.

# Tips & Resources

- ▶ Perform a Privacy Audit to determine your organizations privacy culture
- ▶ Start a Record management program
- ▶ Invite IT /security to table
- ▶ Write everything with disclosure in mind!!
- ▶ Seek out training (new feeds, websites, conferences, local communities of practice)

# For information:

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