RCW 42.56.520 Prompt responses required. (1) Responses to requests for public records shall be made promptly by agencies, the office of the secretary of the senate, and the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives. Within five business days of receiving a public record request, an agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives must respond in one of the ways provided in this subsection (1):

(a) Providing the record;

(b) Providing an internet address and link on the agency's website to the specific records requested, except that if the requester notifies the agency that he or she cannot access the records through the internet, then the agency must provide copies of the record or allow the requester to view copies using an agency computer;

(c) Acknowledging that the agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives has received the request and providing a reasonable estimate of the time the agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives will require to respond to the request;

(d) Acknowledging that the agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives has received the request and asking the requestor to provide clarification for a request that is unclear, and providing, to the greatest extent possible, a reasonable estimate of the time the agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives will require to respond to the request if it is not clarified; or

(e) Denying the public record request.

(2) Additional time required to respond to a request may be based upon the need to clarify the intent of the request, to locate and assemble the information requested, to notify third persons or agencies affected by the request, or to determine whether any of the information requested is exempt and that a denial should be made as to all or part of the request.

(3)(a) In acknowledging receipt of a public record request that is unclear, an agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives may ask the requestor to clarify what information the requestor is seeking.

(b) If the requestor fails to respond to an agency request to clarify the request, and the entire request is unclear, the agency, the office of the secretary of the senate, or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives need not respond to it. Otherwise, the agency must respond, pursuant to this section, to those portions of the request that are clear.

(4) Denials of requests must be accompanied by a written statement of the specific reasons therefor. Agencies, the office of the secretary of the senate, and the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives shall establish mechanisms for the most prompt possible review of decisions denying inspection, and such review shall be deemed completed at the end of the second business day following the denial of inspection and shall constitute final agency action or final action by the office of the secretary of the senate or the office of the chief clerk of the house of representatives for the purposes of judicial review. [2017 c 303 s 3; 2010 c 69 s 2; 1995 c 397 s 15; 1992 c 139 s 6; 1975 1st ex.s. c 294 s 18; 1973 c 1 s 32

(Initiative Measure No. 276, approved November 7, 1972). Formerly RCW 42.17.320.]

Finding—2010 c 69: "The internet provides for instant access to public records at a significantly reduced cost to the agency and the public. Agencies are encouraged to make commonly requested records available on agency websites. When an agency has made records available on its website, members of the public with computer access should be encouraged to preserve taxpayer resources by accessing those records online." [2010 c 69 s 1.]

Effective date—1995 c 397: See note following RCW 29B.40.020.

Effective date—Construction—1973 c 1: See notes following RCW 29B.05.010.