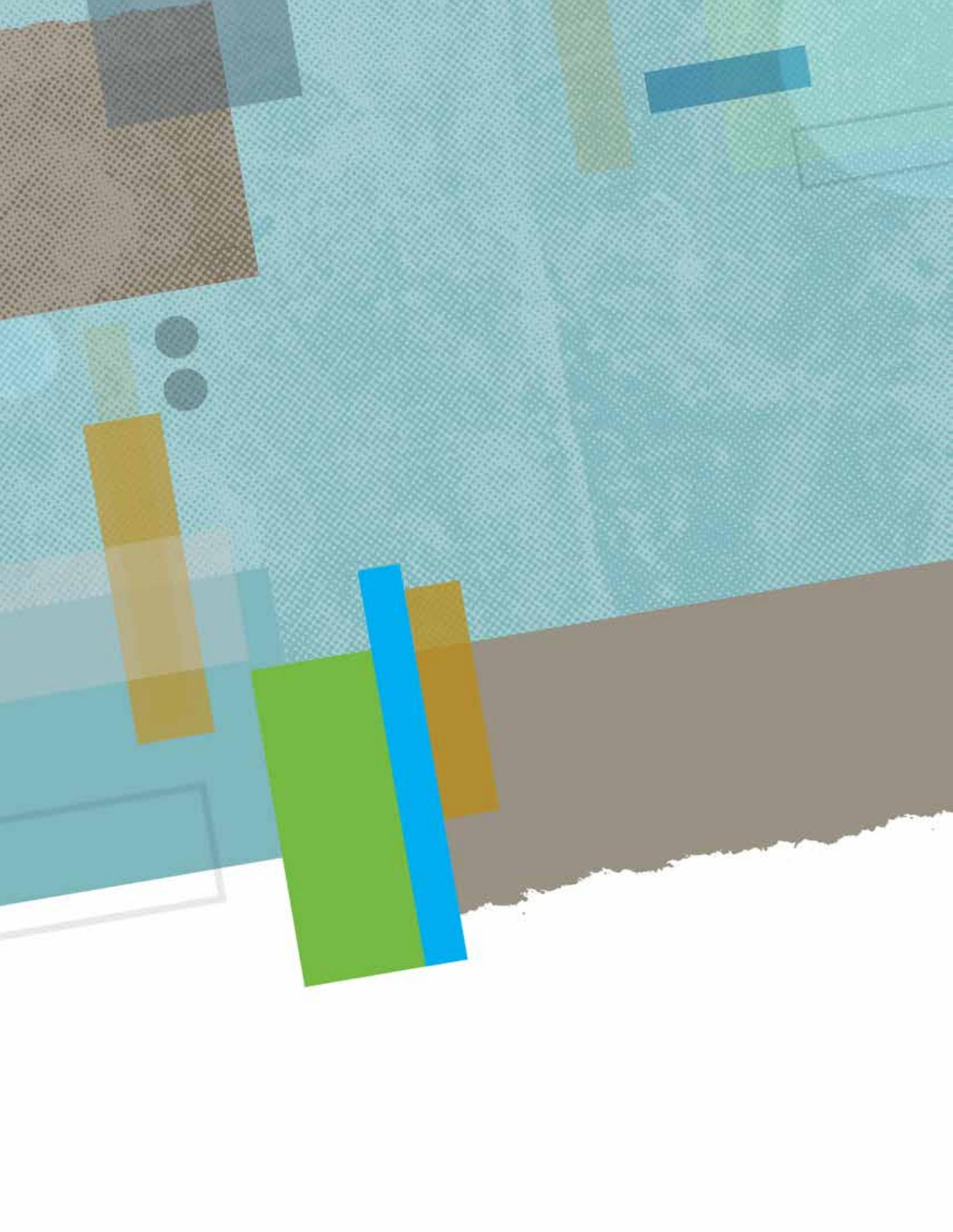


Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy

Annual Report 2015–2016



September 2017

Honourable Robert Wanner
Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Alberta
325 Legislature Building
10800 – 97 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Dear Sir:

In accordance with section 86 of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, I present the 20th Annual Report of the operation of this Act for fiscal year 2015–16.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephanie McLean', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Honourable Stephanie McLean
Minister

Message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act* Annual Report for 2015–16.

Timely, efficient access to government information is important to Albertans. That's borne out in the large number of FOIP requests the Government of Alberta receives each year. In 2015–16, Albertans made 2,637 FOIP requests to provincial government departments, including our agencies, boards, and commissions – an 8.1 per cent increase from 2014–15.

Our response times improved over the last year. In 2014–15, we responded to 58.8 per cent of our FOIP requests in 30 days or less; in 2015–16, that increased to 65.7 per cent.

We remain committed to ongoing improvement – both in our response times and our overall compliance rate – and we are working hard to meet the legislated timelines required under the FOIP Act.

We know that Albertans need access to important information to make the decisions that improve their lives. The requests we receive are increasing in volume and complexity. Many of our FOIP requests require consultation with parties outside of government before we can release information. Many others are requesting records from multiple departments. Often, it is a combination of both.

These challenges have prompted us to review the entire process that is involved in responding to FOIP requests, with a goal to increase consistency in the application of the FOIP Act across government and strengthen overall performance of the process. Watch for more on this in the coming year.

However, one way we can improve our FOIP response time, across the board, is by undertaking initiatives that hold true to the original intention of the FOIP Act: regarding FOIP requests as an “avenue of last resort” and encouraging other means of releasing and disclosing information.



We're doing this by proactively putting more and more information into our Open Government Portal. Launched in August 2015, the Portal provides Albertans with unprecedented access to government information, including thousands of government publications and visualizations such as charts and graphs. The content in the Portal is searchable and machine-readable so it can be used in a variety of ways, without technical or legal restrictions.

We're constantly "feeding" the portal. Every week, we add new data that Albertans would not normally be able to find through more traditional channels. Examples include grant recipients, government sole-sourced contracts, and travel and expense lists for elected and government officials.

In addition to overseeing administration of the FOIP Act and supporting all provincial government departments, Service Alberta will continue to provide resources and guidance for the FOIP programs of all public bodies in the

province. We will also remain on our path of continuous improvement by exploring best practices and listening to Albertans about how they want to interact with their government and its various types of information.

I hope you find this report interesting and informative.

Regards,



Honourable Stephanie McLean
Minister, Service Alberta

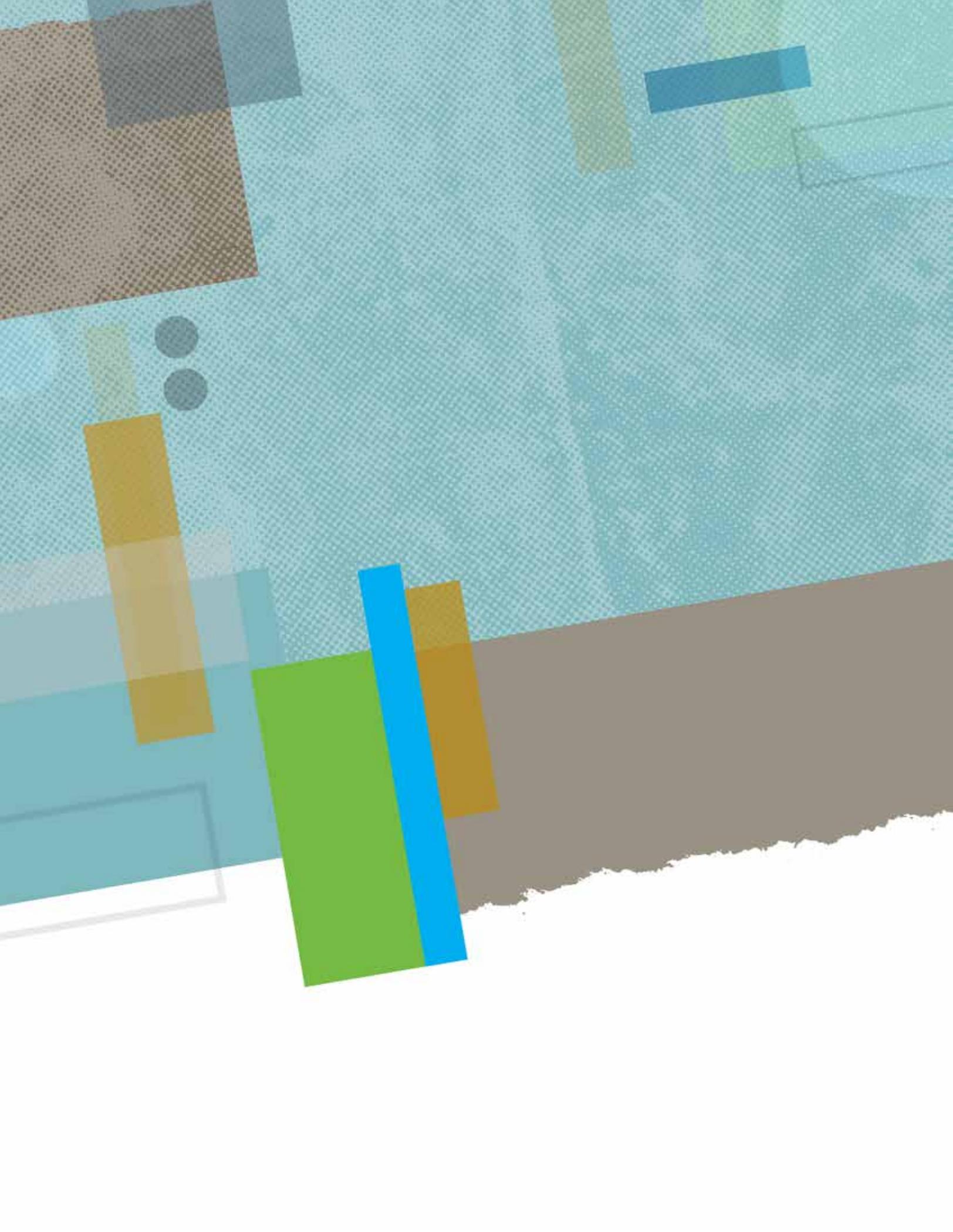
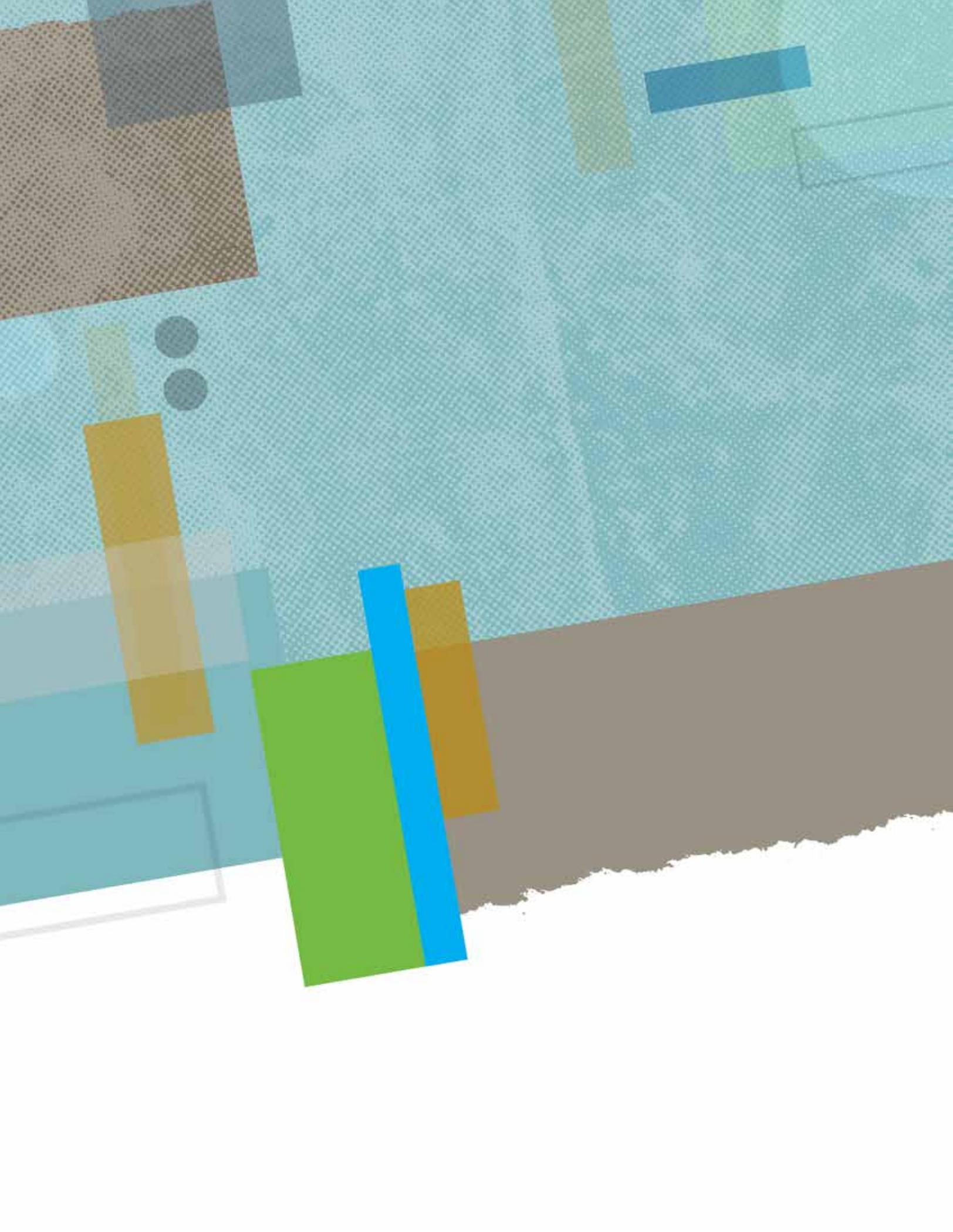


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1. Access and Privacy 2015–16 Highlights

Access to Information processes face new challenges as program integration increases; service delivery models become more multifaceted; technology accelerates change; and records management, for both paper and electronic formats, grows in volume and complexity (including record formats, areas of search, and consultations).

Government Departments, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions (“provincial government public bodies”) have increased openness and support access through the routine addition of more searchable and machine-readable content to Alberta’s Open Government Portal.

See: open.alberta.ca

In 2015, government introduced new legislation for roll-out in 2016 that expands on the earlier work done to proactively disclose the salaries of higher-income earners in government. The *Public Sector Compensation Transparency Act* added additional salary disclosure for: agencies, boards, and commissions; public post-secondary institutions; Offices of the Legislature; and health service entities. More information is available at the Public Sector Compensation Transparency website.

See: www.justice.alberta.ca/programs_services/law/Pages/PublicSectorCompensationTransparencyAct.aspx

In addition to these other avenues of access, formal access to information under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, or “FOIP Act”, has also been made easier, through the ability to initiate a general information access request online at MyAlberta eServices.

See: eservices.alberta.ca/foip-request.html

2. FOIP Statistics – Requests to Government Departments, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions

“Parliament and the public cannot hope to call the government to account without an adequate knowledge of what is going on; nor can they hope to participate in the decision-making process and contribute their talents to the formation of policy and legislation that is hidden from view. Access laws operate on the premise that politically relevant information should be distributed as widely as possible.”

*Former Supreme Court Justice Gerard LaForest,
Dig v. Canada (Minister of Finance), [1997] 2 SCR 403*

The “right to know” principles of the FOIP Act are very much in keeping with the global movement for increased access and transparency in support of democratic principles. The formal access to information process under the FOIP Act is one avenue by which the Government of Alberta demonstrates its openness and transparency in government decision-making. Access to information is intended to normalize a reasonable means of access to the general information of government that is not otherwise available.

Access requests continue to change in nature and increase in volume, impacting all provincial government public bodies. In fact, requests are more complex to administer due in large part to better integration of government programs, requiring wider record searches, which in turn translates into high amounts of records and more consultations. These new trends intensify the challenges of administering access to information.

Government is working to ensure effective processes are in place to address these trends and continue to strive for better efficiency in the delivery of access to information.

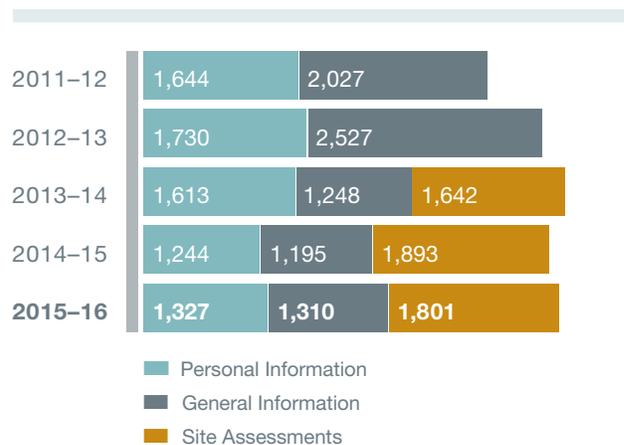
2.1 Providing Access to Public Records

In fiscal year 2015–16, access requests to provincial government public bodies totalled 2,637

Of the 2,637 access requests made to provincial government public bodies, 49.7 per cent were for the general information of government and 50.3 per cent were requests for individuals' own personal information. Site Assessments continue to be reported separately as a part of proactive disclosure.

Of the 2,637 total general and personal information requests, 1,136 were made to Government of Alberta Departments and the remainder to other provincial government public bodies.

Number of FOIP requests during the last five years*



* Excludes requests for correction of personal information. Prior to 2013–14, Site Assessments were counted as general information requests.

2.1.1 Top 10 Requests for Information in 2015–16 Government of Alberta

General Information

Environment and Parks	143
Executive Council	105
Energy	87
Transportation	84
Health	84
Justice and Solicitor General	79
Treasury Board and Finance	79
Service Alberta	60
Alberta Securities Commission	59
Infrastructure	58

Personal Information

Human Services	803
Justice and Solicitor General	271
Provincial Archives	42
Workers Compensation Board	37
Transportation	34
Health	23
Executive Council	22
Innovation and Advanced Education*	15
Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour**	11
Alberta Human Rights Commission	8

* Innovation and Advanced Education became Advanced Education in FY 2015–16.

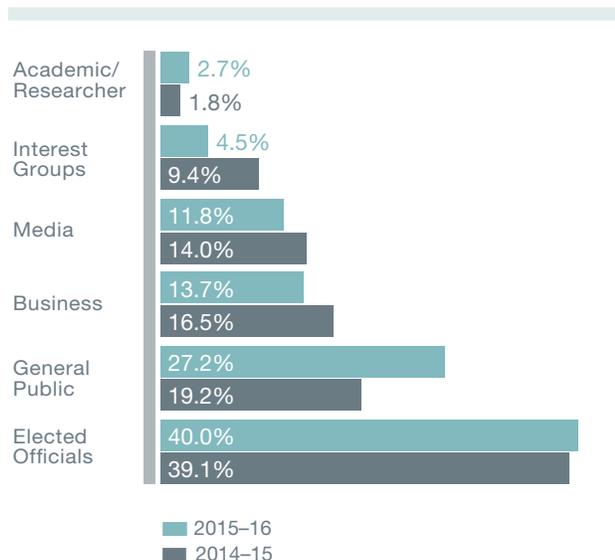
** Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour became Labour in FY 2015–16.

- Justice and Solicitor General, Executive Council, Environment and Parks, Health, Alberta Securities Commission, and Transportation have been in the top 10 for volumes of general information requests for three consecutive years.
- Environment and Parks experienced a 47.5 per cent increase in general information requests for 2015–16 over 2014–15.
- The average number of requests in the top 10 is just under 84.
- Service Alberta makes its first appearance in the top ten in 2015–16.
- Human Services consistently processes the majority of personal information files.
- Human Services, Justice and Solicitor General, Provincial Archives, Worker's Compensation Board, Transportation, and Health are consistently in the top 10 for processing of personal information requests.

2.1.2 Who Made Access Requests?

Requests to Provincial Government Departments, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions

2015–16 Total Number General Information Requests: 1,310



See page 9 for request totals, including percentage of personal information requests versus general information requests

In 2015–16, individuals seeking their own personal information submitted over half (50.3 per cent) of the 2,637 total FOIP requests received by provincial government public bodies. Of the 1,310 general information requests received, the general public made 27.2 per cent of the requests, increasing from 19.2 per cent in 2014–15. When the number of general information requests made by the general public is added to the number of personal information requests made by individuals, this means that individuals or the general public are making almost 64 per cent of the total requests made to provincial government public bodies in 2015–16. This is a great indicator of an aware populace, actively seeking both its own personal records and general records of information.

Historically, prior to the removal of Site Assessments, “Business” rated the highest category of applicant (in 2012–13, this number was at 70.2 per cent). This was identified as having inaccurately skewed the statistics, and with the correction, we now have three years of data with a clear and more representative breakdown of applicants who have made general information requests, and the highest usage occurs from the “Elected Official” category as a tool used to hold the government to account.

2.1.3 Information Released to Albertans

A good indicator of government transparency is the number of records disclosed. In 2015–16, of the 68.4 per cent general information requests with responsive records (those categorized as partly disclosed 43.5 per cent, totally disclosed 20.9 per cent and nothing disclosed 5 per cent), 94 per cent of these responsive records were partially or totally disclosed (64.4 per cent of the 68.4 per cent). The other 31.6 per cent of requests did not have responsive records under the FOIP Act and are categorized as either abandoned, withdrawn, transferred, publicly available, or the records do not exist.

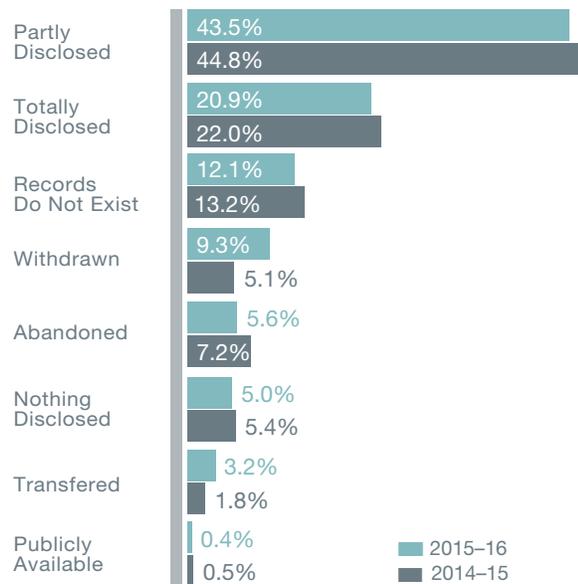
Similarly for those 65.5 per cent of personal information requests with responsive records (those categorized as partly disclosed 50.2 per cent, totally disclosed 9.5 per cent, and nothing disclosed 5.8 per cent), 91 per cent of these responsive records were partially or totally disclosed (59.7 per cent of 65.5 per cent). The other 34.5 per cent of requests are categorized as either abandoned, withdrawn, transferred, publicly available, or the records do not exist.

- For 94 per cent of general information requests, responsive records were partially or totally disclosed.
- For 91 per cent of personal information requests, responsive records were partially or totally disclosed.
- Publicly-available records have previously been reported in a grouping with “nothing disclosed”. Publicly-available responses have been separated out from general information requests to more accurately reflect disposition. The importance of having publicly-available information, outside of the formal FOIP process, is unrecognized when grouped as “nothing disclosed”.
- Publicly-available records are not reflected under the personal information requests because there are generally no personal information requests where records are publicly available.

How access requests were processed

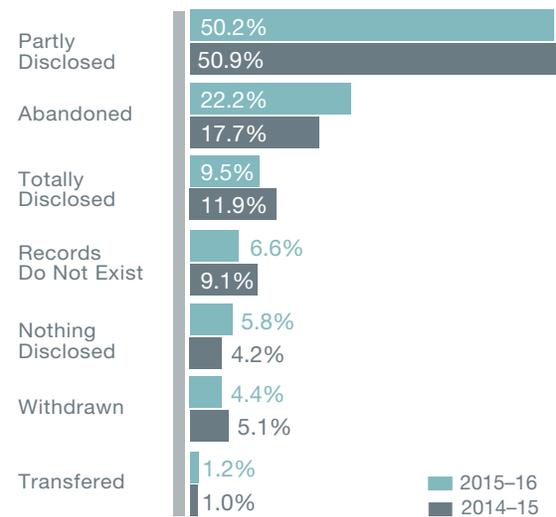
Requests to Provincial Government Departments, Agencies, Boards, and Commissions

General Information



* "Nothing disclosed" includes statistics for nothing disclosed and requests authorized to be disregarded by the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC).

Personal Information



* "Nothing disclosed" includes statistics for nothing disclosed and requests authorized to be disregarded by the OIPC.

There is no publicly-available information under personal information access requests.

2.1.4 Why Information was Not Released

Of the 2,857 exceptions/exemptions/exclusions applied in 2015–16, 1,458 (51 per cent) are mandatory or required and must be applied by the provincial government public bodies that identify them in records. Discretionary exceptions to the right of access may or may not be applied when they are identified. These were applied 1,399 (49 per cent) of the times that information was withheld.

Provincial government public bodies, while ensuring their duty to assist is fully met under the FOIP Act, also have a responsibility to balance this with equal consideration of the protective measures of the legislation and its mandatory requirements. For example, safeguards for personal information and third party proprietary information cannot be compromised, despite demands for access and expectations of openness.

An open and transparent government applies discretionary exceptions sparingly. This means that when weighing discretion, arguments in favour of disclosure should be given ample consideration. Those arguments in support of withholding information from disclosure should be considered in light of the FOIP Act's intent to increase access and transparency in support of democratic principles.

Considerations in the Exercise of Discretion:

- The purpose of the legislation
- Balance of interests (what is the purpose of the exception?)
- Severing
- Historical practice
- Nature of the record
- Will disclosure increase public confidence?
- Age of the record
- Sympathetic or compelling need
- Previous orders

These are examples of factors used in the weighing of discretion and not an exhaustive list. They are derived from guidance provided by the provincial help desks, the review of Commissioner's Orders made under the FOIP Act, the FOIP Guidelines and Practices (2009 edition), and other sources.

Exemptions, Exclusions, Exceptions Sections of the Act Used

The following tables identify the number of times sections of the FOIP Act were cited by provincial government public bodies as the reasons for not releasing information during the 2015-16 reporting period.

The application in 2,857 instances, where information was withheld, is a decrease from previous years. In 2014-15 these were applied a total of 3,352 times, and for 2013-14 the total was 3,296.

Exemptions: Sections of the FOIP Act that list the types of records to which the FOIP Act does not apply.

Section	Number of Occurrences
4(1)(a) Court/judicial records	124
4(1)(l) Registry records	69
4(1)(q) Communications between MLAs and/or members of Executive Council	64
4(1)(d) Records of Officers of the Legislature	10
4(1)(k) Incomplete prosecution records	7
4(1)(p) Speaker/MLA records in Legislative Assembly Office	6
4(1)(o) Personal/constituency records of members of Executive Council	4
4(1)(g) Examination/test questions	4
4(1)(u) Health information as defined in the <i>Health Information Act</i>	3
4(1)(m) Personal/constituency records of an elected official	2
4(1)(i) Post-secondary research material	1
5 Other legislation paramount	2

Exclusions: Sections of the FOIP Act that list types of records that are excluded from the right of access.

Section	Number of Occurrences
6(4)(b) Ministerial briefing for a session of the Legislative Assembly	25
6(4)(a) Ministerial briefing for a new portfolio	9

Exceptions: Sections of the FOIP Act under which a public body is withholding records from disclosure to an applicant under an access request.

Section	Number of Occurrences
17 Third party - personal information*	954
24 Advice from officials	538
27 Privileged information	361
21 Intergovernmental relations	146
20 Law enforcement	124
16 Third party - business/tax interests*	124
25 Harmful to economic or other interests of a public body	111
22 Cabinet and Treasury Board confidences*	50
29 Information otherwise available to the public	36
18 Harmful to individual or public safety	26
26 Testing procedures, tests, and audits	25
19 Confidential evaluations	24
12 Refuse to confirm or deny existence of a record	7
23 Local public body confidences	1

Note: Exemptions and Exclusions are outside the FOIP Act and are required to be withheld when identified. Mandatory Exceptions are marked with an asterisk and must be withheld when identified.

2.1.5 Response Times

The 30-60-60+ statistic is meaningful when viewed as the timeliness or the rate of responsiveness on the part of provincial government public bodies, despite being viewed as an ambiguous indicator of “compliance.” As per the FOIP Act, the intent is always to respond within the first 30 days. However, the legislation acknowledges that some requests may require more time; therefore, extensions may be necessary, and the legislation has provided for that.

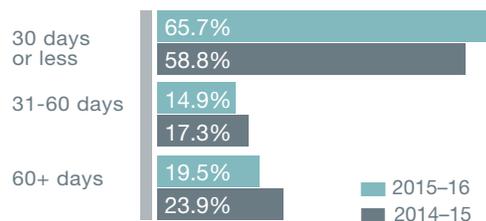
A parallel can be drawn between the rising trend of increased request complexity and the requirement for extensions. It is reasonable to extrapolate that requests that entail large amounts of records, numerous and broad record searches, and consultation with a third party or another public body may require more time to be administered, and therefore may require an extension of time.

When extensions are appropriately taken under the FOIP Act, an access request remains in compliance with the time requirements, or “on-time”, even if more than 30 days have passed. In the end, provincial government public bodies use extensions only when required and seldom ask the OIPC for extensions, working within the provisions of the Act.

Success is the increase in the number of requests processed in 30 days or less, from 58.8 per cent in 2014–15 to 65.7 per cent in 2015–16.

Percentage of completed requests and the number of days to complete the request

Requests to Provincial Government Departments, Agencies, Boards and Commissions



The Commissioner stated in the OIPC 2015–2016 Annual Report that 82 per cent of the requests for time extensions received by their office were from provincial government ministries. This percentage represents 83 extension requests, or 3.6 per cent of all general and personal information requests processed by the Government of Alberta departments in fiscal year 2015–16. Of those extensions requests, 74 per cent were fully or partially granted by the OIPC.

More meaningful statistics that support the understanding and identification of areas for continuous improvement are required as we move forward. Specifically, the Government of Alberta FOIPNet corporate record tracking system is nearing the end of its life and requires review in consideration of potential upgrade or replacement. As such, the identification of capital funding is planned for the fiscal year 2017–18 for potential upgrading or updating of FOIPNet.



2.2 Privacy Compliance

Under the pressure of legislated timelines, processing access requests is important. However, public bodies collect, use, and disclose personal information every day, and its protection is required by the FOIP Act. It is paramount to ensure Albertans trust their public bodies to appropriately safeguard the personal information they share with these public bodies.

We've highlighted some important work undertaken by your Alberta Public Service employees to support this.

“I really believe that we don't have to make a trade-off between security and privacy. I think technology gives us the ability to have both.”

John Poindexter, CIO Magazine, August 1, 2004

MyAlberta Digital ID (MADI)'s Innovative Approaches to Enhancing Privacy in the Digital World

MADI is a government-wide online identity service that was launched in July 2015, and provides citizens with a secure username and password so they can easily access government services online. This service enables Albertans to use a single login to identify themselves to government online.

MADI utilizes an innovative privacy algorithm to protect citizens from profiling by not storing any downstream application user identifiers. Additionally, each downstream application receives a unique identifier (different across program areas) as further protection against potential user profiling.

Further privacy enhancing protection is also provided by only passing identity information (e.g., personal attributes like name and gender) that a downstream application has the authority to collect under the FOIP Act or the *Health Information Act* (HIA). This is not possible in the physical world because when you pass your Alberta Driver's Licence or Alberta ID card, you share all your personal information as well as card identifiers.

An example of a service that is using MADI is MyAlberta eServices. Through MyAlberta eServices, formal access under the FOIP Act has been made easier, by giving the ability to initiate a general information access request online through this innovative ecommerce platform.

2.3 Increasing Capacity in Alberta's FOIP Community

Sharing Personal Information to Provide Programs and Services

The Information Sharing Strategy Office in the Government of Alberta coordinates and leads the Information Sharing Strategy (ISS) implementation, working to “ensure information sharing practices within government and with service agencies support the best decisions possible in regard to the health, education and safety of children and families.”

The initial phase included the Ministries of Education and Health, with Human Services (now Children's Services and Community and Social Services) as the lead. The ISS implementation activities have resulted in many learnings from existing and emerging information practices to support more seamless service delivery for Albertans seeking social-based services.

An Information Sharing Framework Guide with supporting Toolkit has been developed. The Information Sharing Framework Guide provides guidelines and a template to design an overarching information sharing framework that supports a collaborative, coordinated, or fully integrated social-based program or service delivery approach. The Toolkit, with practice tips, templates, and other resources, can be customized to support effective information-sharing in an integrated service delivery environment. These materials have been created for different users ranging from decision-makers and subject matter experts to front line delivery staff.

The FOIP Act came into force on October 1, 1995 for provincial government public bodies, and was extended between 1998 and 1999 to local public bodies, such as school boards, health care bodies, post-secondary institutions, and municipalities.

Work is underway through policy improvements to make the FOIP Act clearer and more user-friendly, to support the need for a common understanding, and to address discrepancy in the interpretation and application of the Act. Identifying inconsistent processes and ensuring consistency will result in all departments processing FOIP requests using the same best practices, resulting in very similar outcomes in terms of records disclosed and timelines being met. Increased rigour in the consistency of practices will assist departments to streamline and realize process improvements.

Shared Responsibility

The FOIP Act does not require an applicant to work with a public body to clarify in a timely manner what information they are seeking. However, applicants and provincial government public bodies usually work together to ensure the information requests can be administered efficiently and quickly. This collaboration is important to limit unclear or vexatious requests, but most significantly, it permits public bodies to make sure applicants receive the records they are seeking and needing.

Although not formally defined under the FOIP Act, a “vexatious” request could be characterized in accordance with the word's general definition as a request that causes vexation, such as a troublesome, disorderly, or confused request.



Important areas for collaboration include: clarifying or focusing the records requested; ensuring both parties understand the timelines and any extensions that may be taken; identifying and considering eliminating redundant or duplicative requests; looking for opportunities to aggregate or modify requests; and discussing modifications to requests that may seem too wide in scope or are too complex.

Another area that has supported this collaboration is the Mediation/Investigation step in the OIPC practice to process requests for review and complaints. This has enabled 83 per cent, or 337 out of 405 cases, to be closed through this step (OIPC 2015–2016 Annual Report). This is a great example of how cooperation and engagement lead to resolution and reduces the additional time, resources, and efforts by all parties involved and prevents escalation to more formal resolution methods, such as Orders or Decisions.

Improvement to Processes and Best Practices

Improving processes and applying consistent best practices are essential to address challenges within public bodies. These challenges include: outdated information practices; inconsistent application of the FOIP Act; increasing numbers of requests; quantitative predictions of even greater increases; increasing volumes of records that are identified as responsive and taking longer to process (the volume of records and information has drastically increased since the Act was introduced); and a need for strengthened capacity to measure, report, and account for performance.

Therefore, continuous improvement is important. Current practices are under review, and work is ongoing in review of governance and best practices.

A key initiative completed is the best practices guide for decision-makers. The Government of Alberta's Deputy Ministers are leading the development of this best practices guide for delegated decision-makers so they better understand the decision-making process and their obligations under the FOIP Act. This was launched in 2016 (fiscal year 2016–17). Enhanced training and the sharing of best practices continue to improve efforts and make government more effective, responsive, and accountable.

A key feature of the decision-makers guide is an updated delegation instrument for FOIP accountability and the introduction of consistent sign-offs and approval processes to further reinforce and support these important factors in compliance. The Government of Alberta will provide more information about the roll-out of this initiative in its FOIP Annual Report next fiscal year.

Other areas of continuous improvement are ongoing; for example, when the OIPC issues Orders or investigative reports, requirements are met by public bodies, and recommendations are implemented where possible or appropriate to do so. Any remaining recommendations are reviewed and addressed where possible.

It is clear that change and outcomes must be consistent, transparent, and implemented in a manner that will not have a negative impact on the applicant's experience or response times; change must increase efficiency and consistency.

2.4 Publications and Resources

The Government of Alberta develops online publications and resources to support FOIP offices and provide information for applications, users of the legislation, and interested parties.

Ongoing Training and Outreach

Service Alberta supports the University of Alberta (U of A)'s annual Access and Privacy Conference and works in partnership with the U of A's Faculty of Extension to do so. Every year, Service Alberta contributes by introducing speakers, participating in panels, moderating sessions, and leading workshops for the development of FOIP capacity. In 2015, Service Alberta rolled out a new template for Privacy Impact Assessments to aid public bodies and engaged them in its use through a series of workshops that began at the Conference. For the 2016 Conference, an advanced workshop was delivered with the intent to prepare FOIP practitioners for the evolving priorities of a busy FOIP office.

Service Alberta also provides awareness sessions. In 2015–16, sessions included U of A Graduate Research Students, MacEwan University Library Science Students, and the Calgary Chamber of Volunteer Organizations.

FOIP Networks

Outreach is provided by Service Alberta through networking Communities of Practice for Provincial Government Public Bodies; Municipalities; Post-Secondary Institutions (co-chaired with Advanced Education); and School Jurisdictions (co-chaired with Education). Meetings are held ten times each year, quarterly for the Provincial

Government Public Bodies. For the local public bodies, these are twice yearly, split between the spring and fall, and rotated between Calgary and Edmonton. A range of content is covered from privacy compliance to current events impacting the sectors.

FOIP Instructor-led Training

Service Alberta engages a highly competent training partner, Cenera, to administer and provide FOIP training to attendees from all public bodies. Employees of public bodies may attend scheduled classes or arrange for onsite training.

Service Alberta and Cenera work together to draft the annual training calendar, found at: [www.servicealberta.ca/foip/documents/2016-17_Training_Calendar\(1\).pdf](http://www.servicealberta.ca/foip/documents/2016-17_Training_Calendar(1).pdf)

The number of attendees taking instructor-led FOIP training increased by 17 per cent and the number of classes increased by 19 per cent over the last fiscal year (2014–15)

FOIP Instructor-led Training 2015–16

Type of Course

	Onsite	Scheduled	Total
General Awareness (1/2 Day)	11		11
Introduction and Privacy (Full Day)	21	6	27
Access to Information (Full Day)	2	6	8
Managing a FOIP Program (Full Day)	1	6	7
Total	35	18	53

Type of Attendee

	Number
Provincial Government Public Bodies	55
Local Public Bodies	996
Total	1,051

Provincial Help Desks

Two provincial Help Desks for the FOIP Act and the *Personal Information Protection Act* (PIPA) are maintained by subject matter experts in Service Alberta. The Help Desks provide policy interpretation and general guidance, but not legal advice.

The Help Desks currently work on a message retrieval system. Improvements to transform this process and provide better customer service are being developed.

Annual Help Desk Statistics

FOIP Act	1,242
PIPA	751
Redirects*	216
Total	2,209

* For "Redirects", callers are assisted in finding the information they require elsewhere

The FOIP and PIPA Help Desks saw a 9 per cent increase in call volume over the last fiscal year (2014–15)

Cross-Department Processes –

Internal to Government Departments

Requests received by two or more public bodies are considered cross-department requests and increase the complexity of consultation and coordination. These types of requests have increased from two in 2012–13 to 24 in 2015–16. New cross-department processes are being implemented with the underlying principles:

- legislative requirements continue to be met;
- efficiency and effectiveness increase; and
- better outcomes for Albertans and other applicants.

2.5 National Initiatives

The cross-department request process was approved and endorsed by Deputy Ministers across the Government of Alberta in June 2016. The process works well and helps offices to be consistent. Service Alberta puts a priority on ensuring coordination of cross-department requests is done in a timely manner.

Monitoring of cross-department requests indicates positive impact and increasing recognition of the value and benefit it provides to streamline and improve processes, with best practices and subject matter expertise increasingly shared across Government of Alberta departments.

Service Alberta continues to monitor the effectiveness of the cross-department process with a mind to ensuring that it has minimal or no impact on processing timelines, and supports and facilitates access to information for better outcomes for Albertans and other applicants.

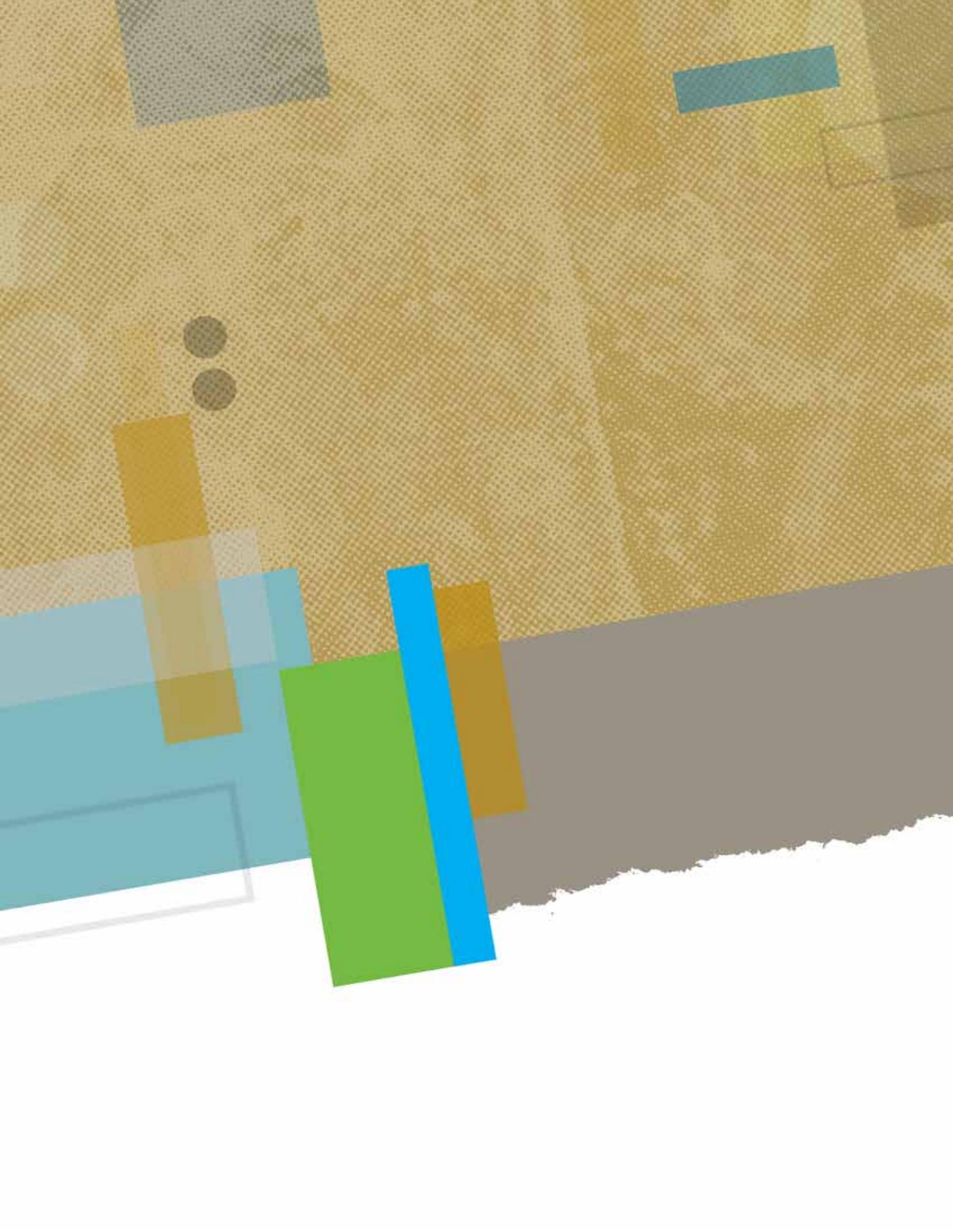
Succession Planning

A shortage of qualified professionals in the access and privacy field is recognized, and a new internship initiative is being developed to address this challenge.

Service Alberta is part of the national Privacy Subcommittee reporting to the Public Sector Chief Information Officer Council and the Public Sector Service Delivery Council. The benefit of shared subject matter expertise and jurisdictional comparison is facilitated through this body.

Topics of discussion in 2015–16 included: case management systems for access requests; Commissioner's powers; duty to document; fee waivers; records search criteria; standardized reporting; website privacy policies; and much more.

The Privacy Subcommittee's face to face meetings were held in Halifax on May 13 and 14, 2015. Representatives from Service Alberta participated via video and audio teleconferencing to minimize the cost of participation.



3. FOIP Statistics – Requests to Local Public Bodies

3.1 Providing Access to Public Records

Local public bodies include: municipalities and other local governing bodies; schools; post-secondary institutions; health management bodies; housing management bodies; police services and commissions; Métis Settlements; public libraries; drainage districts; and irrigation districts.

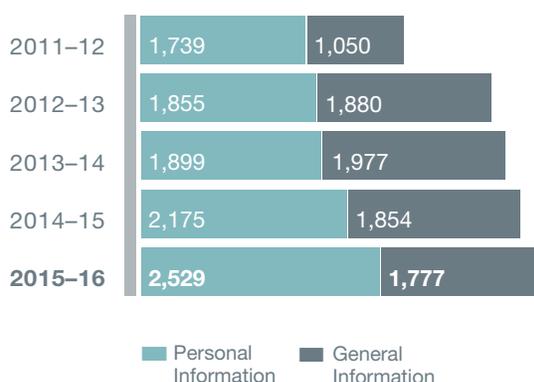
The local public bodies responded to 4,306 access to information (FOIP) requests in 2015–16. Of this total, 55 per cent were received by Police Services and Police Commissions, of which 43 per cent were for an individual’s own personal information.

For general information requests received in 2015–16, for the third straight year in a row, the top three sectors were:

- The Local Government grouping received 1,027, which represents 58 per cent of the general information requests and 23 per cent of all requests received by local public bodies.
- Second are the Police Services and Commissions which received 465, which represent 26 per cent of the general information requests and 11 per cent of all requests received by local public bodies.
- Rounding out the top three, the Health Management Bodies received 180, which represent 10 per cent of the general information requests and 4 per cent of all requests received by local public bodies.

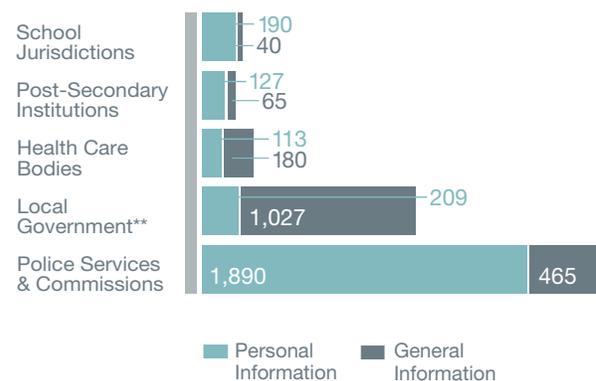
Number of Requests* Local Public Bodies

Received during the last 5 years*



* Excludes requests for correction of personal information

Sectors that received access requests



* Excludes requests for correction of personal information

** Includes municipalities, improvement districts, special areas, regional service commissions, drainage and irrigation districts, housing management bodies, Métis Settlements/General Council, and public libraries

3.1.1 Top 10 Requests for Information in 2015–16 Local Public Bodies

General Information

City of Calgary	261
Westlock Intermunicipal Library Board	185
Lethbridge Regional Police Service	173
Alberta Health Services	166
Calgary Police Service	161
Edmonton Police Service	121
City of Edmonton	86
Rocky View County	57
City of St. Albert	55
City of Grande Prairie	29

The local public body that received the most general information requests in 2015–16 is the City of Calgary, returning to the top spot from 2013–14.

The City of Edmonton took the top spot for the number of general information requests in 2012–13 and 2014–15.

Personal Information

Calgary Police Service	1,337
Edmonton Police Service	322
Lethbridge Regional Police Service	151
Alberta Health Services	102
Medicine Hat Police Service	74
MacEwan University	63
Parkland School Division No. 70	57
Greater St. Albert Roman Catholic Separate School District No. 734	47
Westlock Intermunicipal Library Board	25
University of Calgary	22

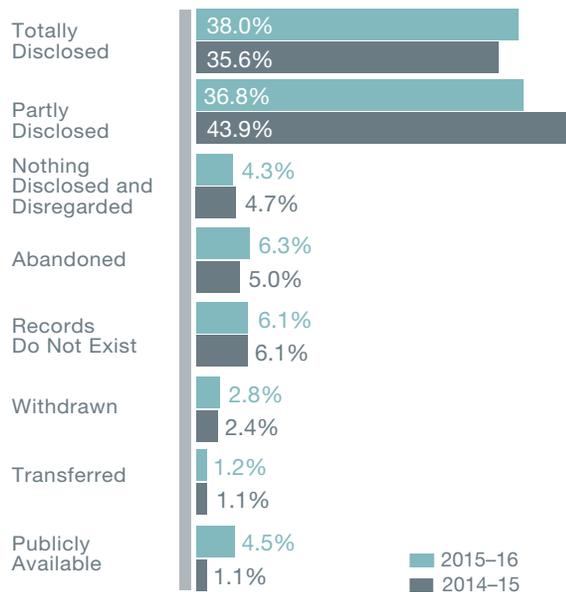
The Calgary Police Services, the Edmonton Police Services, and the Lethbridge Police Services have had the most personal information requests, in that order, for three consecutive years (2015–16, 2014–15, and 2013–14).

The “Top 10” looks at a more granular breakdown of public bodies receiving general information requests.

Information Released to Albertans

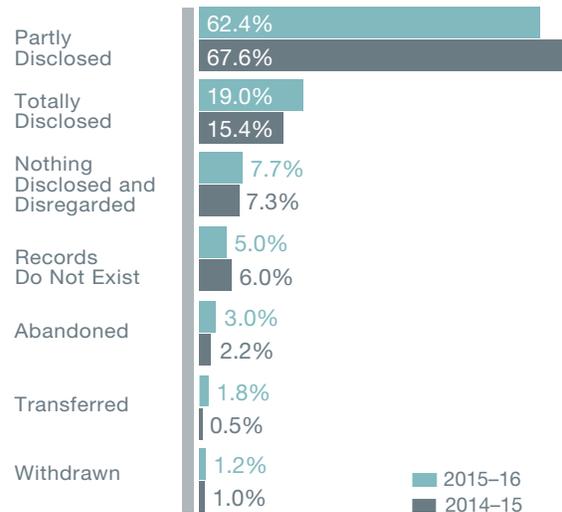
How access requests were processed Requests to Local Public Bodies

General Information



* "Nothing disclosed" includes statistics for nothing disclosed and requests authorized to be disregarded by the OIPC.

Personal Information

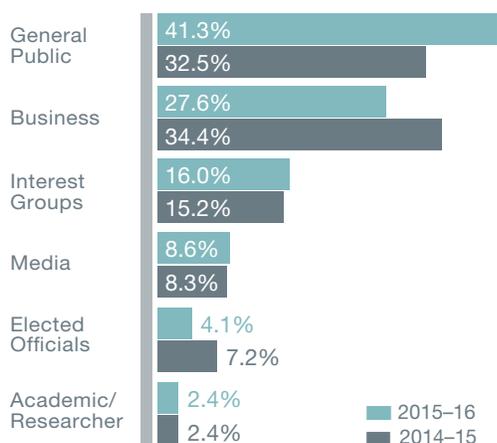


* "Nothing disclosed" includes statistics for nothing disclosed and requests authorized to be disregarded by the OIPC.

There is no publicly-available information under personal information access requests.

3.1.2 Who Made Access Requests

General Requests to Local Public Bodies



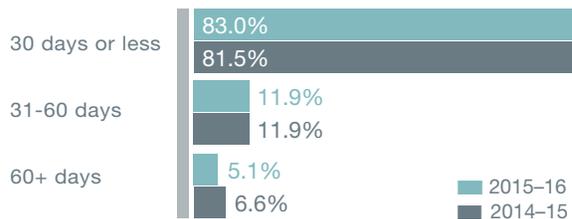
In 2015-16, individuals seeking their own personal information submitted over half (59 per cent) of the total FOIP requests received by local public bodies (4,306 requests in total). Of the general information requests received, the general public made 41.3 per cent of the requests, increasing from 32.5 per cent in 2014-15.

3.1.3 Response Times

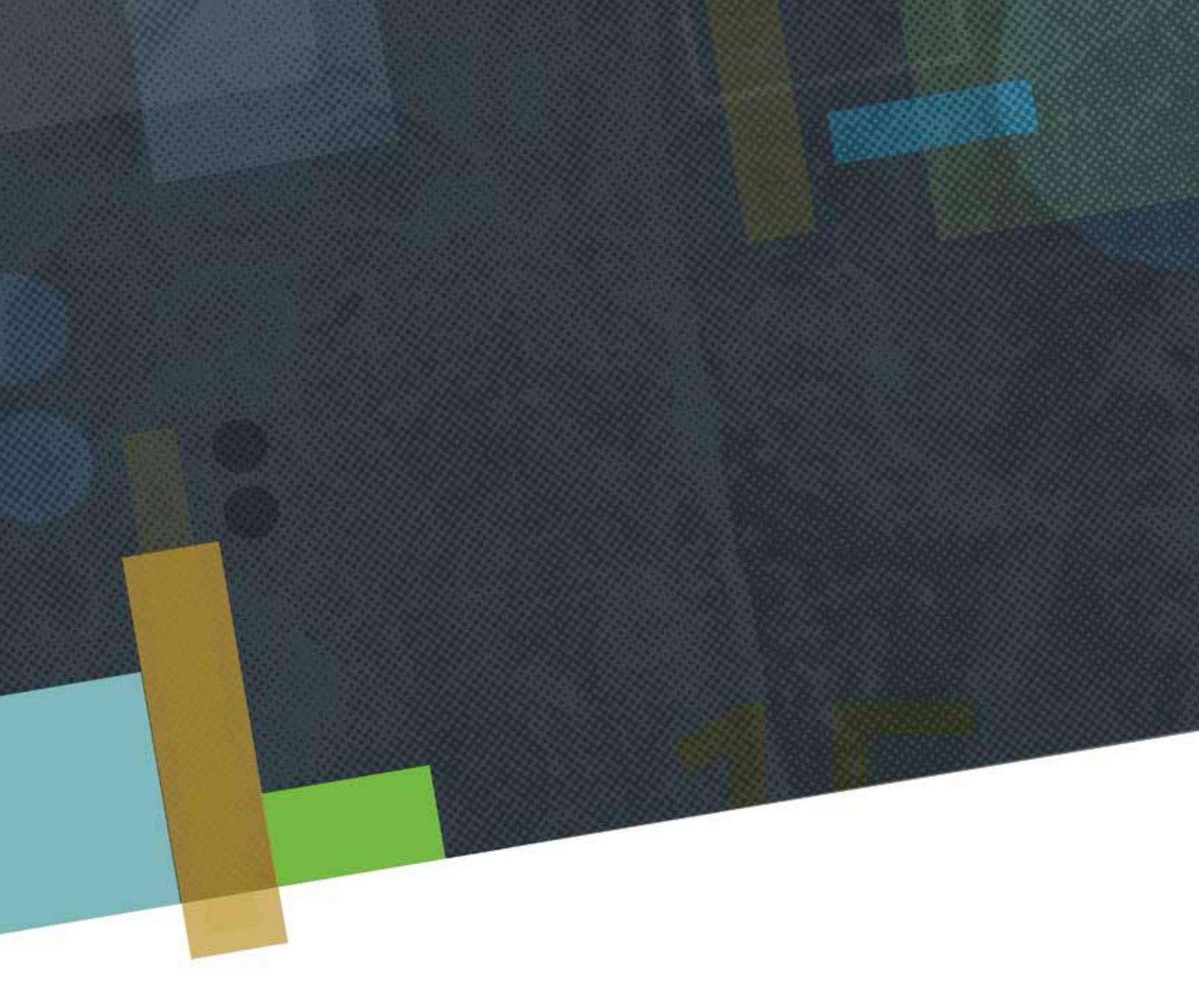
Local public bodies are very timely in responding to applicants, with 83 per cent of files processed in 30 days or less.

Percentage of completed requests and the number of days to complete the request

Requests to Local Public Bodies



When the number of general information requests made by the general public is added to the number of personal information requests made by individuals, this means that individuals or the general public are making almost 76 per cent of the total requests made to local public bodies in 2015-16. This is a great indicator of an aware populace, actively seeking both its own personal records and general records of information.



Contact Information

Information Access and Protection Service Alberta

Office hours: Monday to Friday, 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
Office phone: 780-422-2657
FOIP Helpdesk: 780-427-5848
Toll free: In Alberta, dial 310-0000 then enter 780-427-5848
Fax: 780-427-1120
Email: foiphelpdesk@gov.ab.ca
Website: www.servicealberta.ca/foip
FOIP Statistics: www.servicealberta.ca/foip/resources/statistics.cfm

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