

New AGO program helps local governments maintain transparency

Public Records Consultation Program assists local governments with compliance

OLYMPIA — Attorney General Bob Ferguson today announced a new initiative to help local governments comply with an increasing amount of public records requests. The Attorney General’s Office now offers local governments assistance through its Local Government Public Records Consultation Program.

“Local officials from across our state have reached out to my office with questions about handling public records requests,” said Ferguson. “We now have a dedicated program to provide them with the help they need to ensure that all Washington residents have access to the information they are entitled to.”

In 2017, an amendment to the state Public Records Act created the Local Government Public Records Consultation Program. The program will provide information and assistance to local government agencies to adopt best practices for public records requests.

The program provides tailored assistance to local governments throughout the state. Dedicated staff within the Attorney General’s Office will offer guidance to local government officials on responding to public records requests, seeking resources to develop or update technology related to public records and ensuring agencies comply with requests properly and efficiently.

Officials of any office, board, district or commission of a Washington city, county, town, municipal corporation or special purpose district may request consultations.

“Local governments, especially smaller cities and special purpose districts with limited staff, do not always know which steps they need to take to increase transparency,” said Toby Nixon, president of the Washington Coalition for Open Government. “This consultation program will help local officials around the state provide Washingtonians easy access to government information and comply with all the detailed requirements of our open government laws.”

“Cities are champions of open and transparent government, and are always looking for ways to better serve their residents,” said Peter B. King, CEO of the Association of Washington Cities. “The Attorney General’s new Local Government Public Records Consultation Program will be a valuable resource for local governments seeking to improve their public records practices.”

The Attorney General’s Office is currently accepting requests for consultation. Local government agencies interested in receiving a consultation can find more information and submit a request at atg.wa.gov/PRA-consulting-program or by contacting Public Records Act

Consultant Morgan Damerow at 360-570-3418 or praconsultation@atg.wa.gov. Agencies can receive consultations via phone, email or in-person.

In addition to the consultation program, the Attorney General's Office offers free training resources for complying with the Public Records Act. Training is available [here](#).

– 30 –

The Office of the Attorney General is the chief legal office for the state of Washington with attorneys and staff in 27 divisions across the state providing legal services to roughly 200 state agencies, boards and commissions. Visit www.atg.wa.gov to learn more.

Contacts:

Brionna Aho, Communications Director, (360) 753-2727; brionna.aho@atg.wa.gov

