

## **WARREN COUNTY PROBATE-JUVENILE COURT PUBLIC RECORD POLICY**

It is the position of the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court that openness leads to a better-informed community, which leads to a better government and better public policy.

Public Records are governed by Ohio's Public Records Act. Court records are governed by Rules 44-47 of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio. It is the policy of the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court to adhere to the applicable law in its handling of all requests for disclosure of records.

### **ACCESSING COURT RECORDS**

Records of the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court are presumed open to public access, unless they are specifically exempt from disclosure under Ohio's Open Records Act of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio.

Records subject to direct public access are available for inspection at the Court Clerk's office during regular business hours. Original records shall not be removed from the Court. Copies of requested records may be obtained for the actual costs incurred in copying the records, and will be made available within a reasonable period of time, taking into account the volume of records requested, the proximity of the location where the records are stored, the necessity for any legal review and redaction, and other facts and circumstances of the records requested.

Many Probate Court records may be viewed and copied through the Online Record Search option on the Warren County Probate-Juvenile court website at [www.co.warren.oh.us/Probate\\_Juvenile](http://www.co.warren.oh.us/Probate_Juvenile) . Adoption, civil commitment, involuntary treatment for alcohol or drugs, mental retardation proceedings and certain estate tax filings are confidential. Records of these proceedings may be accessed only as allowed by law.

Certain Juvenile Court records may not be considered a public record and may only be accessed as allowed by law.

### **PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST**

Although requests for public records are not required to be in writing, requestors must identify the records requested with sufficient clarity to allow the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court to identify, retrieve and copy the records. An optional Public Records Request form is available to assist in adding clarity to the request. If the requestor is unclear, the Warren County Probate-Juvenile Court will contact the requestor for clarification, therefore, appropriate contact information is necessary. Likewise, an ambiguous or overly broad request may be denied by the Court, but the Court shall provide the requester an opportunity to revise the request.

A requestor does not have to provide his or her identify or the intended use of the requested public records. However, if the Court requires a reasonable time for processing a request, the Court will require some direction relating to the method of delivery of the records, whether by pick up, mail, electronic delivery, or some other method of delivery.

If the Court withholds, redacts, or otherwise denies the request, it will provide an explanation, including legal authority, for the redaction or denial. If the initial request was made in writing, the explanation will also be in writing.

If a request is denied for the reason that the Court has restricted public access to a record, a requester can follow the procedure outlined in Rule 45(F) of the Rules of Superintendence for the Courts of Ohio to request public access to the record.

A requestor may be required to pay in advance the actual costs involved in providing voluminous copies, cost of postage and mailing supplies, or other actual costs of production and delivery. There is no charge for electronically delivered records.