Pennsylvania
Office of Open Records

Pennsylvania Office of Open Records
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FINAL DETERMINATION

DATE ISSUED AND MAILED: November 10, 2026

IN RE: *William Garnett III v. Philadelphia Law Department*; OOR Dkt. AP 2026-5013

Upon review of the appeal filed with the Office of Open Records ("OOR") to the above-referenced docket number, it is determined that the appeal is **DENIED** because:

An agency may promulgate policies to govern its administration of the RTKL. 65 P.S. § 67.504(a). An agency that has a posted policy requiring the use of a form may deny access to records where a requester fails to use the required form. *See*, *e.g.*, *Miller v. Chester County*, OOR Dkt. AP 2025-3497, 2025 PA O.O.R.D. LEXIS 3384. In this case, the Philadelphia Law Department ("City") has a posted policy requiring the use of the OOR's standard request form. Because the Requester did not utilize the method to submit his RTKL Request, the City was permitted to deny the Request due to the Requester's failure to comply with the City's Right-to-Know policy.[1] However, nothing in this Final Determination precludes the Requester from filing a new request with the City, consistent with the requirements in the City's RTKL policy.

For this reason, the City is not required to take any further action. Within thirty days of the mailing date of this Final Determination, you may appeal or petition for review with the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas. 65 P.S. § 67.1302(a). All parties must be served with notice of the appeal. The OOR also shall be served notice and have an opportunity to respond according to court rules as per 65 P.S. § 67.1303. However, as the quasi-judicial tribunal adjudicating this matter, the OOR is not a proper party to any appeal and should not be named as a party.[2] All documents or communications following the issuance of this Final Determination shall be sent to oor-postfd@pa.gov. This Final Determination shall be placed on the website at: http://openrecords.pa.gov.

Issued by:

/s/ Joshua T. Young

Senior Deputy Chief Counsel
Joshua T. Young, Esq.

Sent via OOR e-file portal to: Requester, Agency Open Records Officer

[1] *See https://www.phila.gov/open-records-policy/* (last accessed on November 9, 2026).
[2] *Padgett v. Pa. State Police*, 73 A.3d 644, 648 n.5 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2013).