

Recommendations

Recommendations for Grade A municipalities:

High Priority Changes:

- None - this is the sweet spot

Ideal Changes:

- Create an authentication method to ensure that those requesting official police records are involved parties to the incident
- K-anonymize all indirect identifiers (including incident block) in public facing data¹

Recommendations for Grade B municipalities:

High Priority Changes:

- **PDF Request** - Provide electronic access to a PDF records request form that can be printed and mailed; attach a fee to the request
 - Pros:
 - Provides a reasonable avenue for people lawfully seeking official police records, but face an unreasonable hardship to submitting a request in person
 - Authentication method could still be implemented to ensure that the requestor is a verified party in the case before releasing information to them
 - Does not require additional IT budget/resources/support/maintenance
 - Fees would generate marginal revenue for the city/county, while creating a small barrier to those seeking information unlawfully
 - Cons:
 - Authentication method may not be as rigorous, since requests can be submitted digitally and requestors do not have to physically present themselves to the approving authority
 - Does not automatically generate digital documentation of the request, correspondence, and fulfillment

Ideal Changes:

- **Online Form Submission** - Create an online portal that allows official police record requests to be submitted digitally; request form can be behind a paywall

- Pros:
 - Provides a more reasonable level of access for people who are lawfully seeking official police records, but face unreasonable hardship in submitting a request in person (due to proximity, physical disability, lack of transportation, etc.)
 - Enhances accountability by automatically generating digital documentation of the request, correspondence, and fulfillment
 - Authentication method could still be implemented to ensure that the requestor is a verified party in the case before releasing information to them
 - Fees would generate marginal revenue for the city/county while creating a small barrier to those seeking information unlawfully
- Cons:
 - Most resource intensive - Requires IT budget/resources/support/maintenance that may be out of reach for cash strapped municipalities
 - Authentication method may not be as rigorous, since requests can be submitted digitally and requestors do not have to physically present themselves to the approving authority

Recommendations for Grade C municipalities:

High Priority Changes:

- Remove all direct identifiers for suspects from publicly facing data
- Remove exact incident addresses and any other indirect identifiers from publicly facing data; anonymize to the block, at least

Ideal Changes:

- Attach a fee to police record requests that must be paid via credit/debit card; creates an additional barrier for those seeking information unlawfully, creates a digital accountability trail, creates marginal revenue for the city/county
- Create an authentication method to ensure that those requesting official police records are involved parties to the incident
- K-anonymize all indirect identifiers (including incident block) in public facing data²

Recommendations for Grade D and F municipalities:

High Priority Changes:

- Remove all direct identifiers from publicly facing data
- Remove unfettered public access to full police reports

- Remove exact incident addresses and any other indirect identifiers from publicly facing data; anonymize to the block, at least

Ideal Changes:

- Attach a fee to police record requests that must be paid via credit/debit card; creates an additional barrier for those seeking information unlawfully, a digital accountability trail, and marginal revenue for the city/county
- Create an authentication method to ensure that those requesting official police records are involved parties to the incident
- K-anonymize all indirect identifiers (including incident block) in public facing data³
- Link to LexisNexis Community Crime Map, CrimeMapping.com, or CrimeReports.com

Endnotes

1. El Emam, Khaled. (2016). A de-identification protocol for open data. In *Privacy Tech*. International Association of Privacy Professionals. Retrieved from <https://iapp.org/news/a/a-de-identification-protocol-for-open-data/>
2. ibid
3. ibid