

How can I get information?

- ◆ **Requests:** You can ask for information by mail, phone, or in person and given to the agency you think holds the information you want.
- ◆ **Exemptions:** Your request can only be denied if the information falls within an exemption and the harm of disclosure is greater than the public interest.
- ◆ **Cost:** Asking for information is free. Viewing information is free. You can only be charged for the actual costs of reproducing the documents you want.
- ◆ **Appeals:** If you are not satisfied with the response or do not receive a response within thirty (30) days, you can ask for an internal review. If not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you can appeal to the Information Commissioner. If still unsatisfied, you may appeal the decision of the Information Commissioner to a circuit court.
- ◆ **Proactive Publication:** Certain categories of information must be made available to the public without a specific request. When you want a specific document, you should first see if it has already been published.



“There shall be no limitation on the public right to be informed about the government and its functionaries...”

(Article 15c, The Constitution of the Republic of Liberia)

The Carter Center is currently working in Liberia to support government and civil society efforts to establish greater transparency and transform lives through the right of access to information.

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This brochure is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The contents are the responsibility of The Carter Center and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States government.

Why is...



Freedom of Information (FOI) important for me?



What is FOI?

The right of access to information, or **freedom of information** (FOI), is a fundamental human right now enjoyed by over 4 billion people in 90 countries around the world. Under Liberia's FOI law, everyone has the right to request and receive information from all public agencies of the Government of Liberia and any private entity that performs duties normally carried out by the government, provides public services, or receives public funds or benefits.

Liberia's Freedom of Information (FOI) Act, signed into law on September 16, 2010, provides all persons the right of access to public information.



Why is FOI important?

FOI is important to both government and citizens for many reasons. Freedom of information:

- ◆ Is a fundamental human right
- ◆ Is critical to the exercise of other rights, such as the right to education, health care, and clean water
- ◆ Is a tool in the fight against corruption
- ◆ Is necessary for good governance
- ◆ Increases transparency and government accountability
- ◆ Provides a clearer understanding of government policies
- ◆ Promotes citizen participation
- ◆ Fosters more efficient and effective public administration
- ◆ Improves scarce use of resources
- ◆ Encourages foreign investment
- ◆ Ensures equity and fairness in government processes
- ◆ Is a key component of a modernized public administration
- ◆ Enhances citizen trust and confidence in government

With information, people can more fully participate in public life, help set priorities for government spending, understand decisions taken in their name, and hold leaders to account.

What information can I get?

You can request **any information** from any government agency or private entity that provides public services or receives public funds. Under the Liberia Freedom of Information Act, you have the right to know about:

- **Health**
- **Land records**
- **Public policies**
- **Government spending**
- **Education**
- **Roads**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Environment**
- **Justice**
- **Safety**
- **Human rights**
- **Poverty Reduction**
- **Taxation**
- **Birth records**
- **And more...**

Examples of how FOI has helped others:

In Nimba, a FOI request served as an **anti-corruption** tool by helping to expose more than five years of illegal collection of fees by a senior education officer.



In Lofa, following a request for information from the county community college, a long awaited **school** cafeteria was finally built.

In Grand Gedeh, information was requested from the Liberia Agency for Community Empowerment regarding delayed construction of two **bridges** in Zwedru. Soon after, the bridges were completed.

