

OFFICE OF THE SHERIFF

MICHAEL G. MASTRONARDY
SHERIFF

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February 5, 2024

Anonymous

opra+request-59177-a8a6fa95@requests.opramachine.com

Good day,

The Ocean County Sheriff's Office received your Open Public Records Act (OPRA) request on or about March 5, 2024. The official Records Custodian, Lt. Adrian Bullock, received your OPRA request on March 5, 2024.

The following records were requested:

I am requesting all resignation letters submitted by Public Safety Telecommunicators between the dates of 1/1/2019 and 1/1/2024.

The following is a line by line response to your requested items.

A. Requested records

I. All resignation letters submitted by Public Safety Telecommunicators between the dates of 1/1/2019 and 1/1/2024. **Denied Overly Broad request**

The New Jersey Superior Court has held "[w]hile OPRA provides an alternative means of access to government documents not otherwise exempted from its reach, **it is not intended as a research tool litigants may use to force government officials to identify and siphon useful information. Rather, OPRA simply operates to make identifiable government records 'readily accessible for inspection, copying, or examination.'**" N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1." (Emphasis added.) MAG Entertainment, LLC v. Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 375 N.J.Super. 534, 546 (App. Div. 2005). The Court added that "[u]nder OPRA, **agencies are required to disclose only 'identifiable' government records** not otherwise exempt ... In short, OPRA does not countenance open-ended searches of an agency's files." (Emphasis added.) Id. at 549.

Further, in Bent v. Stafford Police Department, 381 N.J. Super. 30, 37 (App. Div. 2005), the Superior Court held a requestor must specifically describe the document sought because OPRA operates to make identifiable government records "accessible." "As such, a proper request under OPRA must identify with



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reasonable clarity those documents that are desired, and a party cannot satisfy this requirement by simply requesting all of an agency's documents.” supra.

Moreover, in Bart v. Passaic County Public Housing Agency, 406 N.J. Super. 445 (App. Div. 2009) the Appellate Division stated:

“The Act [OPRA] does not, however, require custodians of government records to undertake research for a requestor. The requestor must identify the records sought with specificity. The request may not be a broad, generic description of documents that requires the custodian to search the agency's files and "analyze, compile and collate" the requested information.” (citing MAG Entertainment, LLC v. Division of Alcoholic Beverage Control, 375 N.J. Super. 534 (App. Div. 2005) and Bent v. Stafford Police Department, 381 N.J. Super. 30 (App. Div. 2005)).

In the spirit of cooperation, I will provide you with information that between the dates of January 1, 2019 and January 1, 2024 there have been 15 letters of resignation for Telecommunicators. Please provide this agency with a specific name and specific time period for a letter of resignation for a Telecommunicator to begin a new request.

This response is being communicated with you via e-mail as per your request.

If your request for access to a government record has been denied or unfilled within the seven (7) business days required by law, you have a right to challenge the decision by the Ocean County Sheriff's Office to deny access. At your option, you may either institute a proceeding in the Superior Court of New Jersey or file a complaint with the Government Records Council (GRC) by completing the Denial of Access Complaint Form. You may contact the GRC by toll-free telephone at 866-850-0511, by mail at P.O. Box 819, Trenton, NJ, 08625, by e-mail at grc@dca.state.nj.us, or at their web site at www.state.nj.us/grc.

The GRC can also answer other questions about the law. All questions regarding complaints filed in Superior Court should be directed to the Court Clerk in your County.

Sincerely,

Lieutenant Adrian Bullock
Ocean County Sheriff's Office
Abullock@co.ocean.nj.us



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