

Survey: Local Public Agencies and the California Public Records Act

CSAC Survey Summary

Hello,

The California State Association of Counties, on behalf of a coalition of local public agency advocates, launched this survey to assess the scope, scale, and impact on local governments to comply with the California Public Records Act (PRA).

The results of this survey will inform our advocacy efforts and allow us to better represent local governments on this issue.

Your participation is key to well-informed advocacy. Individual survey responses will be held confidential.

Please provide your responses by close of business on **Monday, January 8, 2024.**

We request that one survey response is submitted per public agency (i.e., it is not necessary for multiple departments to respond on behalf of a single county or city, etc.)

Thank you to the public agencies that provided information and data regarding Public Records Act requests to CSAC in August 2023. Your feedback informed the development of this survey.

If you have any questions or would like to retake the survey, please contact Jessica Sankus, Senior Legislative Analyst, California State Association of Counties, at jsankus@counties.org.

Please select your type of local public agency:

- ☐ City
 - ☒ County
 - ☐ Special District
 - ☐ Other
-

Please provide the following information:

- ☐ Name of public agency: County of Monterey
 - ☐ Name and title of respondent: Shane E. Strong, Deputy County Counsel
 - ☐ Email address: strongse1@co.monterey.ca.us
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1. How many Public Records Act requests has your public agency received annually for the last five calendar years? Please include all departments, including the Sheriff's Office and/or probation office.

Please input responses in whole numbers, e.g. no decimal places.

(If this information is not available to provide, please leave the field blank or input "n/a.")

☐ 2018: 1852

☐ 2019: 1944

☐ 2020: 2898

☐ 2021: 2543

☐ 2022: 2398

☐ 2023: (If available thus far) 2771

2. Does your public agency have dedicated staff for Public Records Act requests?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Display This Question:

If Does your public agency have dedicated staff for Public Records Act requests? = Yes

2a If yes, how many dedicated staff as of 2023? *(An estimate is an acceptable answer.)*

☒ Number of dedicated staff: 28 (Approximately one staff member per department.)

3. How many staff (whether dedicated staff or any staff) and staff hours has your public agency needed to respond to Public Records Act requests for the last five calendar years?

Please input responses in whole numbers, e.g. no decimal places. An estimate is an acceptable answer.

(If this information is not available to provide, please leave the field blank or input "n/a.")

- ☐ 2018 Staff: 66
 - ☐ 2018 Staff hours: 28,586
 - ☐ 2019 Staff: 60
 - ☐ 2019 Staff hours: 106,026
 - ☐ 2020 Staff: 61
 - ☐ 2020 Staff hours: 105,586
 - ☐ 2021 Staff: 95
 - ☐ 2021 Staff hours: 107,072
 - ☐ 2022 Staff: 100
 - ☐ 2022 Staff hours: 107,891
 - ☐ 2023 Staff: (If available thus far) 112
 - ☐ 2023 Staff hours: (If available thus far) 108,008
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4. Does your public agency use software to track or manage PRA requests?

☐ Yes

☒ No

☐ Unsure

5. What is the average amount of time it takes to respond to a 'typical' PRA request?

In this context, a 'typical' PRA request could be a request that is fairly straightforward, such a request for a document that is already publicly available, narrow requests for specific documents such as contracts, etc.

Please input responses in whole numbers, e.g. no decimal places. An estimate is an acceptable answer.

(If this information is not available to provide, please leave the field blank or input "n/a.")

☒ Enter number: 1-2

☐ Increment of time: (hours, days, weeks, etc.) hours

6. What is the average amount of time it takes to respond to a 'complex' PRA request?

Please input responses in whole numbers, e.g. no decimal places. An estimate is an acceptable answer.

(If this information is not available to provide, please leave the field blank or input "n/a.")

☒ Enter number: 2 hours - 4 weeks

☐ Increment of time: (hours, days, weeks, etc.) hours/weeks

7. What department or service category receives the most requests?

Please select the top three departments or service categories from the drop-lists below that apply.

7a Select service category:

▼ Select choice here

Planning (HCD)

7b Select service category:

▼ Select choice here

Other (Emergency Communications)

7c Select service category:

▼ Select choice here

County Counsel

8. Does your public agency track the type of entity that submits each PRA request?

- ☐ Yes
- ☒ No
- ☐ Unsure

Display This Question:

If Does your public agency track the type of entity that submits each PRA request? = Yes

8a Which category of requester submits the most PRA requests to your public agency?

- ☐ Commercial
- ☐ Media or journalism
- ☒ Private individuals
- ☐ Other _____

9. Does your public agency have a records retention policy (or policies)?

☒ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unsure

Display This Question:

If Does your public agency have a records retention policy (or policies)? = Yes

7a If yes, how long does your public agency typically retain records (on average, if your public agency has multiple retention policies across departments)

▼ Select choice here

2 - 3 years.

10. Has your public agency experienced receiving a single Public Records Act request that required an inordinate amount of staff time to address and/or reduced/diverted staff capacity to administer other county programs and services?

- ☒ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

Display This Question:

If Has your public agency experienced receiving a single Public Records Act request that required an... = Yes

10a If yes, if you are comfortable doing so, please share your experience below. Responses will be held confidential.

If you would like to share additional information that cannot fit into this questionnaire, please email [Jessica Sankus](#).

SB 1421 required us to go through numerous records; producing records
on a rolling basis it took us approximately one year to produce required
records given several department had to redact personal identifying
information.

11. Is there any other information or data that you would like to share with us regarding your public agency's management of Public Records Act requests?

If you would like to share additional information that cannot fit into this questionnaire, please email [Jessica Sankus](#).

4. Currently working on purchasing a County-wide software.

7.b. "Other" department is County Emergency Communications.
