



CIDS

County Information and Data Service

Published weekly by: County Commissioners Association of Ohio

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COUNTY GOVERNMENT SCORES 99% IN RECENT RECORDS REQUEST AUDIT

This spring, Ohio journalists from newspaper, radio and television stations spread out across the state and walked into local government offices asking for public records. The journalists, who did not disclose their occupations in this statewide public-records compliance audit, were recruited by the Ohio Coalition for Open Government (OCOG). Journalists, who were sent into media markets where they would not be known, asked for 4 records that were readily available and easy to obtain. The survey auditors were trained how to ask for and record the records request results. The survey found that public employees turned over records in nine out of 10 times as compared to seven in 10 times during a 2004 audit.

Summary of results: counties 99%, police chief's salary 84%, superintendent's salary 80%, treasurer's expense reports 78%, mayor's expenses 75%, and police incident reports 72%.

With electronic searches for records, some auditors found that local government websites contained email addresses or online contact forms. Others had difficulty finding officials' email addresses or sent multiple email requests but received no response.