



BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

County Attorney's Office  
2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way  
Building C, Room 308  
Viera, Florida 32940

## Inter-Office Memo

**TO:** Frank B. Abbate, County Manager

**THRU:** Morris Richardson, County Attorney 

**FROM:** Sarah Beazley, Assistant County Attorney 

**SUBJ:** Citizen Efficiency and Effectiveness Recommendation #2024038

**DATE:** 04/01/2024

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CEER # 2024038 was received by the County from Sandra Sullivan, affiliated with the group WAVESaction LLC.

**Citizen Statement:**

Transparency is indicative of good governance. All Public Record Records (PRRs) fulfilled under Sunshine are free to anyone that asks. Unfortunately, we do not know if someone has already done a records request for the information we want. It would save on staff time (for duplicating work), if all records requests fulfilled were online and searchable.

**Citizen Recommendation:**

Requesting Brevard County create a page on their website which has all of the Public Records Requests (fulfilled) in a table with a link to the digital response files provided.

**Staff Analysis:**

Access to Brevard County's records is governed by Florida's Public Records law, Chapter 119 of the Florida Statutes. Administrative Order 47, Coordination of Public Records Requests, outlines Brevard County's procedures for processing and responding to public records requests. County staff uses the Public Records Request Software to respond to public records requests.

Currently, the results of fulfilled public records requests are not available on the County's website. However, anyone can request the results of a previously fulfilled public records request.

If all fulfilled public records requests were made available on a publicly accessible page on the County's website, changes would need to be made to the way public records requests are



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processed. These changes would increase the amount of staff time devoted to public records. Staff would need to ensure all documents comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act before making them available on the County's website. Optical character recognition would need to be performed on scanned paper documents for a search function to be able to read the documents. Fulfilled public records requests resulting in large file sizes would need to be broken into multiple smaller files by staff to allow access by a variety of operating systems and prevent lengthy download times. The Records Coordinator would need to devote additional time to working with department Records Custodians to achieve compliance and uniformity across all County departments on these additional tasks.

Additional consideration would need to be given to review and redaction of documents if all fulfilled public records requests were available to the public online. For example, the County routinely receives property-related records requests from property owners whose home address is exempt from public disclosure. An unredacted copy of the record may be given to the property owner, but it would need to be redacted before being made available to the public on the County's website to prevent disclosure of exempt records.

The Brevard County Information Technology Department developed the Public Records Request Software currently used by staff. This department would be responsible for developing and implementing a public-facing search function for fulfilled public records requests. Development would take a minimum of a few months for a search function that searches the title and description fields for fulfilled requests, or longer for a more complex search function that searches the fulfilled request documents themselves.

The search function would need to be compatible across multiple operating systems and prioritize user-friendliness. However, the effectiveness of any search function can be compromised by several factors. For example, if a requestor misspells a search term or uses acronyms or abbreviations, the search function may fail to yield the desired results.

Adoption of this recommendation would result in a significant increase in staff time spent on public records requests and require a minimum of a few months of development time by the IT Department. The results of previously fulfilled public records requests are already available upon request. It is anticipated that implementing this recommendation would have limited utility for a small number of citizens.

### **Staff Recommended Action:**

It is recommended that the Board of County Commissioners reject CEER # 2024038.

## Recommendation Details

## Contact Information

<b>Full Name:</b>	Sandra I Sullivan	<b>Email Address:</b>	s2sully@gmail.com
<b>Mailing Address:</b>	165 Dorset Lane South Patrick Shores fl 32937	<b>Alt Email Address:</b>	sandra@sandrasullivan.com
		<b>Phone Number</b>	954-224-8624
<b>Group/Organization</b>	WAVESaction LLC	<b>Recommendation Information</b>	

**Recommendation Title:** Public Records Requests Transparency

**Areas Affected:** Public Records Requests

**Department:** COUNTY ATTORNEY

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**Problem Description:****Recommendation Description****Attachments**

There are no attachments for this recommendation.

## Administrative Action

## Evaluation

## Recommendation Timeline

User	Status	Date	Remarks
CEER WebUser	Citizen Submitted	Dec 30, 2023	
Karen Conde	Department Assigned	Jan 3, 2024	COUNTY ATTORNEY Assigned

Awaiting action from department director