



Access Law Quiz

Answer Key

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1. "False" is the correct answer

There is no age limit for using freedom of information laws. (Louisiana, the last state to have an age restriction on their books, eliminated it in 2004).

2. "False" is the correct answer

Government officials are generally not permitted to deny a freedom of information request based on the requester's identity or purpose for requesting the information.

3. "True" is the correct answer

While some of the statutory exemptions and the mechanics of making or responding to requests differ by state, freedom of information laws from all states work in much the same way.

4. "False" is the correct answer

In fact, in many states a verbal request is sufficient to invoke the open records law. In other states — or where a verbal request is ignored — a simple letter requesting the record and citing the law is generally sufficient. (We've never heard of a Form 1322A.)

5. "True" is the correct answer

State open records laws generally only require "public government officials" or "public agencies" to comply with requests for records. Records kept by a private school are generally not covered by state open records laws.

6. "False" is the correct answer

Journalists have no special license to break the law and are required to obey all lawful police commands.

7. "True" is the correct answer

Freedom of information laws only require that government officials provide copies of existing records. If a document does not exist that is responsive to an FOI request, officials are not required to create one.

8. “False” is the correct answer

Most open meetings laws explicitly allow the non-intrusive use of sound and camera/ video recording equipment.

9. “True” is the correct answer

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) requires that school officials provide students (and if they are minors, the student’s parents) with a copy of their educational records upon request.

10. “False” is the correct answer

No prior authorization is required to attend a public meeting. The law allows you to simply show up. If the meeting is not one typically attended by members of the public, however, it is probably a good idea to bring a copy of the open meetings law with you to remind officials of their obligations.

“Test Your Knowledge of the First Amendment” was developed by the Student Press Law Center with a grant in 2005 from the Newspaper Association of America Foundation (now known as the News Media Alliance, newsmediaalliance.org). SPLC staff periodically review and update the quizzes.

