

SURVEILLANCE TOOLKIT: SAMPLE PUBLIC RECORDS REQUEST

This is a draft request for records under the California Public Records Act (CPRA). For further background on public records laws, check out guides by the Reporters' Committee for Freedom of the Press ([here](#)) and the California League of Cities ([here](#)). The Appendix also includes definitions of particular surveillance technologies to help you customize your requests. [The blue text](#) should be customized.

Month ##, 2020

Sent via e-mail

City Official
City Agency
Address
State, ZIP

Re: Public Records Act request related to [surveillance technology](#)

Dear [City Official](#),

This is a request under the California Public Records Act (California Government Code § 6250 et seq.) and Article I, § 3 of the California Constitution. This request seeks records¹ regarding software designed to access information from [surveillance technology](#).²

Records Requested

Please provide copies of the following:

1. All records referencing the design or features of [surveillance technology](#), including but not limited, to marketing materials, e-mail promotions, product brochures, product manuals, and requests for specification.
2. All records referencing the public process related to the acquisition of [surveillance technology](#), including but not limited to meeting agendas, meeting minutes, public notice, communications between your office and elected leaders, and analyses.

¹ Throughout this request, the term “records” includes but is not limited to any paper or electronic information, reports, evaluations, memoranda, correspondence, letters, emails, charts, graphs, flyers, meeting agendas, meeting minutes, training materials, diagrams, forms, DVDs, tapes, CDs, notes, or other similar materials.

² Throughout this request, the term [\[Here, you can insert a definition of the particular surveillance technology that you seek records about. Definitions for common surveillance technologies can be located elsewhere in the Toolkit Appendix.\]](#)

3. All records of correspondence between an employee in your office and any company or company representative regarding [surveillance technology](#), including but not limited to e-mails, calendar invitations, and instant messages.
4. All records of correspondence between employees in the [City Department](#) regarding [surveillance technology](#), including but not limited to e-mails, calendar invitations, and instant messages.
5. All records referencing the purchase of [surveillance technology](#), including requests for proposal, purchase orders, invoices, grant applications, sole source letters or justifications, and budget requests.
6. Any records referencing draft or finalized agreements related to [surveillance technology](#), including e-mail negotiations, contracts, memoranda of understanding, terms of service, and master services agreements.
7. All records referencing policies governing [surveillance technology](#), including policies that describe authorized uses, prohibited uses, applicable legal standards, limits on sharing with third parties, data security, and training requirements.

If you determine that some but not all of the information is exempt from disclosure and that you intend to withhold it, I ask that you redact it for the time being and make the rest available as requested. In any event, please provide a signed notification citing the legal authorities on which you rely if you determine that any or all of the information is exempt and will not be disclosed. If I can provide any clarification that will help expedite your attention to our request, please contact me at [\(###\) ###-####](#) or [you@email.com](#).

Because this request is on a matter of public concern, we request a fee waiver. We are also requesting that documents be provided in electronic format if at all possible. Doing so would eliminate the need to copy the materials and provides another basis for our requested fee waiver. If, however, such a waiver is denied, we will reimburse you for the reasonable cost of copying. Please inform us in advance if the cost will be greater than \$50.

According to the California Public Records Act (California Government Code § 6253(c)), a response is required within 10 days. Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. Please furnish all applicable records to us at [you@email.com](#) if in electronic format or, if in physical form, at [your street address](#).

Sincerely,