ACCESSING
PUBLIC INFORMATION

Under Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (which covers provincial government organizations) and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (which covers local government organizations), you have the right to request access to recorded information held by government organizations.

This information may appear on paper, computer disk, etc., and includes things such as photographs and maps.

For information on your right to request access to general information held by government organizations, or to request access to your own personal information, please refer to our brochure, **Access to Information under Ontario's Information and Privacy Acts**. For additional information on requesting access to your personal information, or correction of that information, please refer to our brochure, **Your Privacy and Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner**. (Both brochures are available at this information table, and from our office and website, http://www.ipc.on.ca/english/Resources/Forms/.)

A Directory of Records for provincial government organizations is available for viewing online at http://www.cfipo.gov.on.ca/mbs/dor/dirrec.nsf/ODAMainpage/. The directory describes the kinds of general information kept by each provincial government organization. Municipal government organizations have their own directories, which should be available at offices such as city halls, police departments and boards of education.

In many cases, you may be able to obtain the information just by calling, writing or visiting the appropriate government organization.

If you do not obtain the information you want, you can make a formal freedom of information request in writing by simply following these steps:

Step 1: Complete a request form, or write a letter stating that you are requesting information or asking for a correction

of your personal information under *FIPPA* or *MFIPPA*.

Request forms are available from most government organizations across Ontario or you can use our generic request form available from our office and on our website http://www.ipc.on.ca/english/Resources/Forms/Forms-Summary/?id=198.

Step 2: Forward the completed request form or letter to the "Freedom of Information and Privacy Co-ordinator" at the government organization most likely to have the information you are looking for.

A $5 application fee must accompany your request for access to information. As well, you may be charged for the time required to locate and prepare records containing the information, photocopying and shipping costs.

Government organizations that receive information requests under *FIPPA* or *MFIPPA* must respond within 30 calendar days of receipt of a request. However, under some circumstances, government organizations may need to extend this time frame.

You have the right to appeal to the office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario any decision made by a government organization in regard to your request for access to information. An appeal must be made within 30 days of the government organization advising you of its decision.

To appeal, write a letter to the Registrar at the IPC, describing why you are not satisfied with the government organization's decision. Alternatively, you may wish to use our appeal form, which is available both from our office and from our website at http://www.ipc.on.ca/english/Resources/Forms/Forms-

Summary/?id=199. This form must be completed and mailed to the Registrar at the IPC at the address on the form.

There is a $25 appeal fee when the information sought is general information. (The appeal fee is $10 when the information sought is personal information.) For more information on how to file an appeal, please refer to our brochure, ***The Appeal Process and Ontario's Information and Privacy Commissioner*** (http://www.ipc.on.ca/English/Resources/Educational-Material/Educational-Material-Summary/?id=279).