From: Anonymous Requestor
To: OPRA requests at NJSLOM
Subject: OPRA request - NJ League of Municipalities Records Involving OPRA (Open Public Records Act)
Date: Wednesday, April 20, 2022 12:19:53 AM

Dear New Jersey State League of Municipalities,

This is a request for public records made under OPRA and the common law right of access. I am not required to fill out an official form. Please acknowledge receipt of this message.

Relevant Background & Opinions of Anonymous Requester
Irvington Township recently filed a rather disturbing lawsuit that shocked and upset a great number of New Jerseyans. It quickly became a big, statewide news story covered by many NJ news outlets.

The presumably frivolous lawsuit brought by Irvington (since abandoned) was brought against a female, African American, senior citizen OPRA requester that required the intervention of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to apparently "encourage" Irvington to dismiss the inappropriate lawsuit brought in apparent retaliation against this woman for exercising her right to free speech, her right to petition for a redress of grievances, and her rights under OPRA and common law.

Similar tactics appear to be a new and upcoming trend among New Jersey Municipalities to attack, belittle, defame, sue, threaten, and portray OPRA requesters as "problems" when they are simply exercising their very important, very lawful, and very much protected rights under New Jersey's Open Public Records Act.

In this regard, it was brought to my attention by an aide to a former New Jersey State Senator that the New Jersey League of Municipalities is a staunch opponent of the Open Public Records Act in its current form, and that the NJLM has been actively lobbying to have OPRA requesters CHARGED SUBSTANTIAL FEES for records responsive to their OPRA requests (currently there is rarely a fee for digital records) in an attempt to actively thwart public inquiries into government activities behind closed doors. OPRA, by contrast, is designed to shine a light on these hidden activities. Such government transparency needs to increase, not decrease, and definitely not be thwarted by politicians who fear the light of public inquiry into their often improper, inappropriate, wasteful, and/or illegal activities.

It appears that the NJLM may be involved in encouraging and advising various New Jersey municipal leaders in such a way that these leaders often feel far more inclined to attack, bully, harass, threaten, demean, intimidate, retaliate against, obstruct, dissuade, and otherwise undermine legitimate OPRA requesters in various ways -- often using very similar language.

The language of these increasingly common complaints made by municipal leaders against benign and well-meaning OPRA requesters appears eerily similar, as they often seem to use the same keywords and catch-phrases in their (often defamatory) attacks on OPRA requesters such as "voluminous requests," "unduly burdensome," and "harass, bully, and harm municipal employees," even when they are simple, ordinary, and infrequent requests.

In short, municipal leaders are actively dodging their responsibilities under OPRA and trying to blame requesters for their own failures and violations of OPRA, instead of simply responding to often very basic and straightforward OPRA requests in a timely, respectful, and professional manner -- and that needs to end.

As such, I am requesting records from the NJ League of Municipalities involving these increasingly-used keywords and catch-phrases as they relate to or involve OPRA requests and OPRA requesters.

- End of relevant background and personal opinions -

Records requested:

Copies of any and all public records containing one or more of the following keywords in relation to

communications and documents specifically involving "OPRA" or the "Open Public Records Act" (see search details below list):

"Frivolous"
"Unduly"
"Burden"
"Burdened"
"Burdensome"
"Overburden"
"Overburdening"
"Overburdened"
"Time consuming"
"Voluminous"
"Expensive"
"Harass"
"Harassment"
"Harm"
"Abuse"
"Stalk"
"Stalking"
"Intimidate"
"Intimidating"
"Too Many"
"Irvington"
"Elouise McDaniel"
"McDaniel"
"Tony Vauss"
"Vauss"
"Resolution"
"Lawsuit"
"Legislation"

Please search each keyword above individually in relation to records specifically discussing or involving OPRA, the Open Public Records Act, OPRA requests, OPRA complaints filed against records custodians, OPRA-handling strategies and suggestions for municipal records custodians and clerks, OPRA opinion pieces, and similar OPRA-related records.

One way to do this effectively would be to search for a individual "Keyword" in the list above plus the word "OPRA" such as:

"Voluminous" and "OPRA" ... searched together, and then...
"Voluminous" and "Open Public Records Act" ... again, searched together...
And then repeating this process for every keyword in the list in relevant records sources such as emails, text messages, meeting minutes, audio/video transcripts, etc, to locate all relevant records.

"Parties" should include representatives (agents, officers, and employees) of the New Jersey League of Municipalities.

With respect to email records, please provide them in a PDF in "landscape" orientation and include the following fields: Sender/Receiver, To/From, Cc, Bcc, Subject, Body of Email, Email Attachments, all embedded images, Date, and Time.

Time frame for this request should be January 1, 2018 to present.

Types of communications and documents should include but not be limited to emails, letters, publications, speeches, text/SMS messages, audio recordings (i.e. in-person meetings, voicemails, text message voicemails, etc.), video recordings (i.e. Zoom meetings, conventions, public speakers, etc.), online posts, online articles, trainings,

presentations, curriculum, newsletter articles, memos, books, manuals, opinion pieces, editorials, agendas, minutes, templates, sample or draft resolutions, sample or draft legislation, and other records discussing OPRA-related matters that include any of the keywords in the list above.

I request that responsive records be provided in searchable PDF format as an email reply.

I believe this request is clearly defined, highly specific, not overly-broad, and includes all necessary elements for a targeted and specific search of public records. However, if you believe this request requires additional clarification or a further narrowing in some way, please specify whatever you deem to be overly broad or not specific enough so that I may consider clarifying/narrowing my request further.

Thank you in advance for your timely and professional handling of my request.

Yours faithfully,

Anonymous Requestor

Please use deliver records electronically via email to the below UNIQUE address for all replies to this request:
opra+request-31174-84d80b17@requests.opramachine.com

Is OPRA@njslom.org the wrong address for OPRA requests to New Jersey State League of Municipalities? If so, please contact us using this form:
https://opramachine.com/change_request/new?body=njslom

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Please note that in some cases publication of requests and responses will be delayed.

If you find this service useful as an OPRA custodian, please ask your web manager to link to us from your organisation's website.