

The public's right to access data the Department of Labor and Industry keeps

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act (MGDPA) gives everyone the right to inspect (look at) and obtain copies of public data the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) keeps. The MGDPA is contained in Chapter 13 of Minnesota Statutes. This document explains these rights and how to exercise them.

General information about the data DLI keeps

The law says all the data DLI keeps is public unless there is a state or federal law that classifies the data in some other way. DLI must give public data to anyone who asks, no matter who is asking or why.

Some of the public data DLI keeps is posted on the internet at www.dli.mn.gov, but it is not necessary to use the internet to inspect or have copies of the data. DLI also offers reports, brochures and other publications to anyone upon request.

How to make a request for public data

To inspect or obtain copies of public data DLI keeps, make a written data request to DLI's data practices compliance official identified in Attachment A. The Data Request Form in Attachment B may be used to make the request, but the form does not have to be used.

The request should: (1) say the requestor is making a data request under the MGDPA; (2) say whether the requestor wishes to inspect the data, have copies of the data or both; and (3) describe very clearly the data to be inspected or copied. Anyone requesting public data has the right to inspect the data before deciding to request copies.

How DLI responds to a data request

First, if it is not clear exactly what data is being requested, DLI will ask the person who is making the request and then find out if DLI has the data. If DLI does not have the data, the requesting person will be notified as soon as reasonably possible.

If DLI has the data but the data is not public, the requesting person will be notified as soon as reasonably possible and DLI will identify the specific law that makes the data not public. DLI will do this in writing upon request.

If DLI has the data and the data is public

- If the request is to inspect the data, DLI will arrange a date, time and place for inspection. DLI can't charge a fee for letting someone inspect data.
- If copies are requested, DLI will provide them as soon as reasonably possible by mail or fax, or they may be picked up. If DLI keeps the data in electronic form and copies are requested in electronic form (such as by email or on disc), the copies will be provided in electronic form.

DLI charges a fee for providing copies. If a person inspects data and then asks for copies of only some of the data, a fee will be charged only for the copies requested.

Note that DLI may charge an additional fee for providing copies of data that has commercial value.

DLI will respond to a data request in an appropriate and prompt way, and in a reasonable time. This depends on things like how much data or how many copies are requested, how many staff members are available to respond to the request and how many other data requests DLI is responding to. If the request is for data about the person making the request, DLI will respond within 10 business days.

If a person does not understand certain data, such as technical terminology, abbreviations or acronyms, DLI will explain it upon request.

The law says DLI doesn't have to create or collect data if it doesn't have the data requested. DLI doesn't have to provide data in the form or arrangement requested if the data is not kept in that form or arrangement. If DLI agrees to create the data or put the data in the form or arrangement requested, the requestor will be charged for the cost.

DLI will prepare summary data if the requestor makes a request in writing and pays the cost of preparing the data. Summary data is statistical records or reports that are prepared by removing all identifiers from private or confidential data about individuals.

Costs for copying

DLI has the right to charge a reasonable fee for providing copies of public data. All DLI units other than the Workers' Compensation File Review section will estimate the cost before making the copies. If the total estimated cost is less than \$10, DLI will not charge for the copies. If the total estimated cost is \$10 or more, DLI will provide the cost estimate before making the copies.

Payment will be required before the copies are provided to the requestor. The Workers' Compensation File Review section will charge for all copies at the workers' compensation file review rate established by the DLI Financial Services unit.

Attachment A

Department data practices contacts

All requests for public data should be directed in writing to the data practices compliance official.

Responsible authority

Roslyn Robertson, commissioner

roslyn.robertson@state.mn.us

Phone: 651-284-5018

Fax: 651-284-5720

443 Lafayette Road N.

St. Paul, MN 55155

Attachment B

Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry

Request to inspect or copy public government data

Date of request: _____

Describe the data you are requesting. Be as specific as possible. Say whether you are asking to inspect the data, whether you want copies of the data or both. If you need more space, use the back of this form.

It may be helpful to know who you are and/or how to contact you to respond to your request – for example, if you want copies mailed to you or if you want to come in and inspect data at a later time. *You do not have to provide this information.* You can decide to provide this information now, later or not at all.

Name: _____

Print

Contact information: _____

Phone number, email address or mailing address

You have the right to inspect data at no cost. If you ask for copies of data, DLI may charge a fee for providing the copies.