

# Chapter 14-276 WAC

## ACCESS TO PUBLIC RECORDS

### WAC

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| 14-276-010 | Purpose.  |
| 14-276-020 | Definitions.  |
| 14-276-030 | Description of central and field organization of the committee on advanced college tuition payment. |
| 14-276-040 | Operations and procedures.  |
| 14-276-050 | Public records available.   |
| 14-276-060 | Public records officer.   |
| 14-276-070 | Office hours.   |
| 14-276-080 | Requests for public records.  |
| 14-276-090 | Copying.  |
| 14-276-100 | Determination regarding exempt records.   |
| 14-276-110 | Review of denials of public records requests.   |
| 14-276-120 | Protection of public records.   |
| 14-276-130 | Records index.  |
| 14-276-140 | Adoption of form.   |

**WAC 14-276-010 Purpose.** The purpose of this chapter is to ensure that the advanced college tuition payment program complies with the provisions of chapter 42.56 RCW and in particular with those sections of that chapter dealing with public records.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-010, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-010, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-020 Definitions.** (1) "Public record" includes any writing containing information relating to the conduct of government or the performance of any governmental or proprietary function prepared, owned, used or retained by any state or local agency regardless of physical form or characteristics.

(2) "Writing" means handwriting, typewriting, printing, photostating, photographing, and every other means of recording any form of communication or representation, including letters, words, pictures, sounds or symbols, combination thereof and all papers, maps, magnetic or paper tapes, photographic films and prints, magnetic or punched cards, disks, drums and other documents.

(3) The "committee on advanced college tuition payment" is an agency organized by statute pursuant to chapter 28B.95 RCW. The committee on advanced college tuition payment, also known as the guaranteed education tuition (GET) committee, shall hereafter be referred to as the "committee." Where appropriate, the term "committee" also refers to the staff and employees of the committee.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-020, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-020, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-030 Description of central and field organization of the committee on advanced college tuition payment.** (1) The committee on advanced college tuition payment is a state agency established and organized under the authority of chapter 28B.95 RCW for the purpose of implementing the advanced college tuition payment program ("program") established by the legislature. The administra-

(12/7/05)

tive office of the program is located at 919 Lakeridge Way S.W., Olympia, Washington 98502.

(2) The program is operated under the supervision and control of the committee. The committee consists of the executive director of the higher education coordinating board, the director of the office of financial management, the state treasurer, or their designees and two citizen members. The committee meets, as provided in WAC 14-104-010. The committee employs a director and an administrative staff. The committee takes such actions and promulgates such rules and policies as are necessary to the administration and operation of the program.

(3) The director is responsible to the committee for the operation and administration of the program.

(4) The staff of the higher education coordinating board shall support the committee and the board shall carry out administrative responsibilities otherwise not assigned to the committee.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-030, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-030, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-040 Operations and procedures.** Formal decision-making procedures are established by the committee through rules promulgated in accordance with the requirements of chapter 34.05 RCW, the Administrative Procedure Act.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-040, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-050 Public records available.** All public records of the program, as defined in this chapter, are deemed to be available for public inspection and copying pursuant to these rules, except as otherwise provided by RCW 42.56.210 or other statutes.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-050, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-050, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-060 Public records officer.** The committee's public records shall be in the charge of the public records officer designated by the committee. The person so designated shall be located in the administrative office. The public records officer shall be responsible for the following: Implementation of the committee's rules regarding release of public records, coordinating employees in this regard, and generally ensuring compliance by committee employees with the public records disclosure requirements in chapter 42.56 RCW.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-060, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-060, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-070 Office hours.** Public records shall be available for inspection and copying during the customary office hours of the committee. For purposes of this chapter, the customary office hours shall be from 8:00 a.m. to noon, and from 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding legal holidays.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-070, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-070, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-080 Requests for public records.** In accordance with the requirements of RCW 42.56.100 that agencies prevent unreasonable invasions of privacy, protect public records from damage or disorganization, and prevent excessive interference with essential functions of the agency, public records are only obtainable by members of the public when those members of the public comply with the following procedures:

(1) A request shall be made in writing upon a form prescribed by the committee which shall be available at the committee's administrative office. The form shall be presented to the public records officer or, if the public records officer is not available, to any member of the committee's staff at the committee administrative office during customary office hours. The request shall include the following information:

- (a) The name of the person requesting the record;
- (b) The time of day and calendar date on which the request was made;
- (c) The nature of the request;
- (d) If the matter requested is referenced within the current index maintained by the public records officer, a reference to the requested record as it is described in such current index;
- (e) If the requested matter is not identifiable by reference to the current index, an appropriate description of the record requested.

(2) In all cases in which a member of the public is making a request, it shall be the obligation of the public records officer, or person to whom the request is made, to assist the member of the public in succinctly identifying the public record requested.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-080, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-080, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-090 Copying.** No fee shall be charged for the inspection of public records. The committee may impose a reasonable charge for providing copies of public records and for the use by any person of agency equipment to copy public records and such charges shall not exceed the amount necessary to reimburse the committee for its actual costs incident to such copying. No person shall be released a record so copied until and unless the person requesting the copied public record has tendered payment for such copying to the appropriate committee official. All charges must be paid by money order, cashier's check, or cash in advance.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-090, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-100 Determination regarding exempt records.** (1) The committee reserves the right to determine

[Ch. 14-276 WAC p. 2]

that a public record requested in accordance with the procedures outlined in WAC 14-276-080 is exempt pursuant to the provisions set forth in RCW 42.56.210 or other statute. Such determination may be made in consultation with the public records officer, or an assistant attorney general assigned to the committee.

(2) Pursuant to RCW 42.56.070, the committee reserves the right to delete identifying details when it makes available or publishes any public record when there is reason to believe that disclosure of such details would be an unreasonable invasion of personal privacy or impair a vital governmental interest: Provided, however, That in each case, the justification for the deletion shall be explained fully in writing.

(3) Response to requests for a public record must be made promptly. For the purposes of this section, a prompt response occurs if the person requesting the public record is notified within two business days as to whether his request for a public record will be honored.

(4) All denials of request for public records must be accompanied by a written statement, signed by the public records officer or designee, specifying the reason for the denial, a statement of the specific exemption authorizing the withholding of the record and a brief explanation of how the exemption applies to the public record withheld.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-100, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-100, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-110 Review of denials of public records requests.** (1) Any person who objects to the denial of a request for a public record may petition for prompt review of such decision by tendering a written request for review. The written request shall specifically refer to the written statement which constituted or accompanied the denial.

(2) The written request by a person demanding prompt review of a decision denying a public record shall be submitted to the chair of the committee or designee.

(3) Within five business days after receiving the written request by a person petitioning for a prompt review of a decision denying a public record, the chair of the committee or designee, shall complete such review.

(4) During the course of the review the chair or designee shall consider the obligations of the committee to comply with the intent of chapter 42.56 RCW insofar as it requires providing full public access to official records, but shall also consider the exemptions provided in RCW 42.56.210 or other pertinent statutes, and the provisions of the statute which require the committee to protect public records from damage or disorganization, prevent excessive interference with essential functions of the agency, and prevent any unreasonable invasion of personal privacy by deleting identifying details.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-110, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-110, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-120 Protection of public records.** Requests for public records shall be made at the administrative office of the committee at 919 Lakeridge Way S.W., Olympia, Washington 98502. Public records and a facility for their inspection will be provided by the public records officer. Such records shall not be removed from the place design-

(12/7/05)

nated. Copies of such records may be arranged according to the provisions of WAC 14-276-090.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 05-24-103, § 14-276-120, filed 12/7/05, effective 1/7/06; WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-120, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-130 Records index.** (1) The committee has available for the use of all persons a current index which provides identifying information as to the following records issued, adopted, or promulgated by the committee after September 1, 1998:

- (a) Final opinions, including concurring and dissenting opinions, as well as orders, made in the adjudication of cases;
- (b) Those statements of policy and interpretations of policy, statute and the constitution which have been adopted by the agency;
- (c) Administrative staff manuals and instructions to staff that affect a member of the public;
- (d) Planning policies and goals, and interim and final planning decisions;
- (e) Factual staff reports and studies, factual consultant's reports and studies, scientific reports and studies, and any other factual information derived from tests, studies, reports or surveys, whether conducted by public employees or others; and
- (f) Correspondence, and materials referred to therein, by and with the committee whereby the committee determines, or opines upon, or is asked to determine or opine upon, the rights of the state, the public, a subdivision of state government, or of any private party.

(2) The current index maintained by the committee shall be available to all persons under the same rules and on the same conditions as are applied to public records available for inspection.

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-130, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]

**WAC 14-276-140 Adoption of form.** The committee hereby adopts for use by all persons requesting inspection and/or copying or copies of its records the following form:

REQUEST FOR PUBLIC RECORD TO COMMITTEE ON ADVANCED TUITION PAYMENT

(a) .....  
Name (please print)                      Signature

.....  
Name or Organization, if applicable

.....  
Mailing Address                      Phone Number  
of Applicant

(b) .....  
Date Request Made                      Time of Day  
Request Made

(c) Nature of Request .....  
.....  
.....

(d) Identification Reference on Current Index (Please describe) .....  
.....  
.....

(e) Description of Record, or Matter, Requested if not Identifiable by Reference to the Committee on Advanced Tuition Payment Index .....  
.....  
.....

Request: APPROVED ..... DENIED ..... Date .....

By .....  
Name    Title

Reasons for Denial: .....  
.....  
.....

Referred to ..... Date .....

By .....  
Name    Title

[Statutory Authority: RCW 28B.95.030 (9)(e). WSR 98-23-009, § 14-276-140, filed 11/5/98, effective 12/6/98.]