

What to Expect:

Electronic Message Searches under the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA)

Your request includes a search for existing City email and/or text message records. To help you better understand the process, here are some important details:

Costs

- After the first hour, staff time is billed at **\$41.37 per hour** under CORA (C.R.S. § 24-72-205(6)) and City Resolution No. 36-17.
- For larger or more complex requests, the City may provide a cost estimate before work begins and may require advance payment of a portion of the estimated cost, as permitted by C.R.S. § 24-72-205(6) and the [City's Open Records Request Policy](#).

Charges for staff time are non-refundable, even if no responsive records are identified or produced, because fees reflect the time spent conducting a reasonable search, not the outcome or volume of records located.

Broad vs. Narrow Searches

- **Broad or vague searches can be costly.** For example, broad or common keywords and numbers like “committee,” “planning,” “4th,” “city,” or “Colorado” often generate thousands of results, many of which are irrelevant (e.g., from email signature blocks). This can significantly increase the time and cost associated with processing your request.
- **Narrow searches are more efficient.** Using distinctive keywords, paired with specific staff names or position titles, and limited date ranges may produce fewer, but more relevant, results.

Search Criteria and Tips

To process your request, please provide:

- **A specific date range.** *Routine operating documents and correspondence are retained in accordance with the City's records retention schedule of two years. As a result, some older records may no longer exist or be available.*
- **Keywords** to guide the search. *The City does not provide or assume search terms; instead, it conducts searches based on the criteria provided by the requester.*
- **Names of staff or position titles** to be searched. *Narrowing to the most relevant staff or position titles is recommended, rather than requesting "all staff".*

Questions?

We are happy to explain the records request process, applicable timelines, and potential costs so you can make an informed decision about how to proceed.