

Investigation Report

Collecting and reporting public body FOI metrics

The OIPC conducted research into how other jurisdictions track and report on public body FOI performance. As part of the project, the OIPC piloted a BC-specific data collection tool with a small cross-sector sample of BC public bodies.

The survey results identified that, in the absence of regulatory requirements and standardized tracking practices, BC public bodies are not consistently recording or tracking their own FOI metrics. This highlights a gap in understanding how well public bodies' FOI systems are performing.

To address these concerns, the OIPC made two recommendations:

- BC Government amend FIPPA to require public bodies to consistently track and report key FOI metrics to the OIPC.
- Public bodies establish the means to adequately track, monitor, and provide key FOI metrics, and begin tracking and monitoring metrics.

THE OIPC

Established in 1993, the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner provides independent oversight of BC's access and privacy laws.

LEGISLATION

The *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* sets out the terms under which a public body can collect, use, and disclose the personal information of individuals.

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FROM THE COMMISSIONER

Transparency and accountability go hand-in-hand and are cornerstones to a strong democratic society. One of the key purposes of the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) is to make public bodies more accountable to the public. This is achieved, in part, by the public's right of access to records held by public bodies.

Through provision of those records, the public has a better understanding of, for example, how public bodies operate, what information they possess, and the decisions they make.

FIPPA exists to uphold this right and when public bodies comply with their FOI obligations, it demonstrates a commitment to access and transparency. FIPPA not only upholds the right to access, but also works to ensure access is fair, meaningful, complete (with only limited exceptions to disclosure), and done so in a timely way.

Public bodies also reinforce the principles of access and transparency when they are open about how well their FOI systems perform. This allows the public to observe how effectively each fulfill their responsibilities under FIPPA. As such, public reporting of FOI metrics demonstrates openness and fosters trust.

*(See **page 4** of the report for the full Commissioner's Message)*

