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A joint publication from the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and the Local Government Attorneys of Virginia

**Local Government Officials' Guide
to the**

Virginia Freedom of Information Act

By Roger C. Wiley

“And say, finally, whether peace is best preserved by giving energy to the government or information to the people.”

—Thomas Jefferson



4TH EDITION, 2007

Local Government Officials' Guide to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act



By Roger C. Wiley

About the Author

Roger C. Wiley has been advising Virginia local governments on legal matters for over 35 years. Since 2000, when the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council was created, he has served as a state Senate appointee on that body. He formerly served as Charlottesville city attorney and as senior assistant attorney general for local government. He is a partner in the Richmond law firm of Hefty & Wiley, which represents local government bodies throughout Virginia.

The Local Government Officials' Guide to the Virginia Freedom of Information Act was first issued in 1996. This 4th edition of the guide, published in 2007, has been rewritten and expanded to include all of the changes to the act effective July 1, 2006.

This guide explains the Virginia Freedom of Information Act in a clear, readable format of over 100 questions and answers. Information is arranged under six broad categories.

- Who is covered by the act?
- What is considered a public 'meeting'?
- When are closed meetings permissible?
- To what public records does the act apply?
- What happens if someone violates the act?
- What are other sources of FOIA information?

The guide gives public officials the knowledge they need to ensure that public business is carried out with public access, to the fullest extent permissible under the law.

The guide is indispensable—not only for Virginia's elected and appointed government officials—also for all Virginia citizens who care about good government.



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