

RULE OF JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION.
Rule 509. Access to Financial Records.

(a) General Policy. Financial records of the Unified Judicial System in the possession or control of the Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts are presumed to be open to any member of the public for inspection or copying during established business hours. The term “financial records” is defined as any account, contract, invoice or equivalent dealing with: 1) the receipt or disbursement of funds appropriated to the system; or 2) acquisition, use or disposal of services, supplies, materials, equipment or property secured through funds appropriated to the system.

Note: The powers and duties of the Court Administrator of Pennsylvania and Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts related to purchasing and financial activities are established under Rules 504 and 505.

(b) Accessibility. All financial records are accessible to the public except the following:

- (1) any part of a record setting forth information to which access is otherwise restricted by federal law, state law, court rule, court order or court policy;
- (2) any part of a record setting forth a person’s social security number, home address, home telephone number, date of birth, operator’s license number, e-mail address, or other personal information;
- (3) any part of a record setting forth financial institution account numbers, credit card numbers, personal identification numbers (PINs) and passwords used to secure accounts;
- (4) any part of a record setting forth information presenting a risk to personal security, personal privacy, or the fair, impartial and orderly administration of justice, as determined by the Court Administrator of Pennsylvania.

(c) Procedure for Requesting Access.

- (1) A request to inspect or obtain copies of records accessible pursuant to this rule shall be made in writing to the AOPC records

manager, as designated by the Court Administrator of Pennsylvania. A written request may be submitted in person, by mail, by e-mail, by facsimile, or, to the extent provided, any other electronic means, on a form provided by the Administrative Office.

Note: Information related to procedures applicable to written requests may be found on the UJS website, located at www.courts.state.pa.us.

(2) A request should identify or describe the records sought with sufficient specificity to enable the AOPC records manager to ascertain which records are being requested. A request need not include any explanation of the requester's reason for requesting or intended use of the records.

(3) The Administrative Office shall not be required to create financial records which do not currently exist or to compile, maintain, format or organize such records in a manner in which the Administrative Office does not currently compile, maintain, format or organize the records.

(4) Within 10 business days of receipt of a written request, the AOPC records manager shall respond in one of the following manners:

(i) fulfill the request, or if there are applicable fees and costs that must be paid by the requester, notify requester that the information is available upon payment of same;

(ii) notify the requester in writing that the requester has not complied with provisions in this rule and specifically identify the reason(s) why;

(iii) notify the requester in writing that the information cannot be provided and specifically identify the reason(s) why;

(iv) notify the requester in writing that the request has been received and the expected date that the information will be available, not to exceed 30 business days.

Note: This rule contemplates that bona fide reasons may impede the Administrative Office's ability to fulfill a records request within 10 business days (e.g., extensive redaction required of personal identifiers; retrieval of a record(s) stored in a remote location may be required; timely response cannot be accomplished due to staffing limitations; or the extent or

nature of the request precludes a response within the requisite time period).

(5) If the AOPC records manager denies a written request for access, the denial may be appealed in writing to the Court Administrator of Pennsylvania or designee. The Court Administrator or designee shall make a determination and forward it in writing to the requester. This remedy need not be exhausted before other relief is sought. Any further appeal shall be subject to Chapter 15, Judicial Review of Governmental Determinations, of the Pennsylvania Rules of Appellate Procedure.

(d) Fees.

(1) The Administrative Office may charge reasonable costs incurred in providing public access to records pursuant to this rule. Such costs may include, but are not limited to, postage, photocopying, copying onto electronic media, transmission by facsimile or other electronic means, and other means of duplication.

(2) Prior to granting a request for access in accordance with this rule, the Administrative Office may require a requester to prepay an estimate of the fees associated with the request, if the fees are expected to exceed \$100.