

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Facilitate Public Records Requests to State Agencies

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 1 MRSA §413, sub-§5 is enacted to read:

5. Website. The public access officer for each state agency that maintains a website shall cause the name, physical address, e-mail address and telephone number for the public access officer or a link to a page containing the public access officer's contact information to be posted on the home page of that agency's publicly accessible website.

Sec. 2. State agencies; website link to dedicated page. The Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Office of Information Technology, in consultation with state agencies, shall develop a standardized website link to a dedicated Freedom of Access Act page within each agency's publicly accessible website with instructions and information for persons requesting public records.

Sec. 3. State agencies; keyword match for "FOAA." State agencies shall use executive branch information technology resources to create a keyword match for "FOAA" in their websites.

Sec. 4. Freedom of Access Act portal and request tracking. The Public Access Ombudsman and the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Office of Information Technology shall work with InforME to develop and implement a system of consistent tracking and reporting of Freedom of Access Act request information pursuant to Public Law 2013, chapter 229, section 3. The tracking and reporting system must be implemented by all state agencies by January 1, 2015.

SUMMARY

This bill implements recommendations of the Public Access Ombudsman pursuant to Public Law 2013, chapter 229, section 3 related to the feasibility of developing a centralized system for coordinating the receipt of and response to requests to state agencies for public records in accordance with the Freedom of Access Act.

The bill requires state agencies' public access officers to include their contact information on their agency websites. It also requires the Department of Administrative and Financial Services, Office of Information Technology, in consultation with state agencies, to develop a standardized link to Freedom of Access Act pages and requires state agencies to use executive branch resources to create a keyword match for "FOAA" in their websites.

The bill requires the Public Access Ombudsman and the Office of Information Technology to work with InforME to develop and implement a system of consistent tracking and reporting of public records requests under the Freedom of Access Act.