



Accessing Public Government Data

The Minnesota Government Data Practices Act governs access to data held by the Bureau of Criminal Apprehension (BCA). This guide uses a Question and Answer format to explain your rights to access public government data at the BCA.

To learn how to access data about you, your minor child, an individual under your guardianship, or a decedent, please see the BCA [“Accessing Data on Individuals”](#) Guide.¹

What data does the BCA maintain?

Most of the data maintained by the BCA are about individuals and whether they have violated criminal laws. This data may be in an investigative file, a criminal history record, or a laboratory test result. **Data are presumed to be public unless** a federal law or state statute makes them not public.

Government data fall into one of two broad categories under the Minnesota Data Practices Act: **“Data on Individuals”** and **“Data not on individuals.”** “Data on individuals” are pieces of data that name particular human beings or that, when combined with other pieces of data, identify a single individual. All other government data are called “data not on individuals.”

These two data categories are further divided into classifications that determine who can inspect or obtain copies of the data.

Individuals	Data are accessible to...	Example
Public	Anyone for any reason.	Public criminal history.
Private	Data subject - the person the data are about. Individuals authorized by the data subject. Staff at the government entity whose work assignment reasonably requires access. Entities authorized by law.	DNA test results.
Confidential	Staff at the government entity whose work assignment reasonably requires access. Entities authorized by law.	Active criminal investigation.

¹ <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/Documents/Accessing%20Data%20on%20Individuals%20120811.pdf>

Not on Individuals Data are accessible to...**Example**

Public	Anyone for any reason.	Chemicals used in a laboratory procedure.
Nonpublic	The non-human entity the data are about. Parties authorized by the non-human entity. Staff at the government entity whose work assignment reasonably requires access. Entities authorized by law.	Log of transactions related to company whose actions were investigated.
Protected nonpublic	Staff at the government entity whose work assignment reasonably requires access. Entities authorized by law.	Active criminal investigation against a company.

Where can I access public criminal history data?

You can access public criminal history data online at the BCA [website](#)² or on computer terminals in the lobby of the BCA central office, 1430 Maryland Avenue East, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55106. (These terminals cannot be used to access other types of data.)

The website addresses for the BCA's most requested public data are:

Public Data**BCA Website Address (URL)**

Criminal History Records (Public)	https://cch.state.mn.us/
Minnesota Criminal Justice Statute Service	https://webservices.crimnet.state.mn.us/statute/
Methamphetamine Offender Registry	https://mor.state.mn.us/MorOffenderSearch.aspx
Missing Persons Clearinghouse	https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/administrative/Pages/missing-unidentified-persons.aspx
Permit to Carry Reports (Handguns)	https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/administrative/Pages/firearms.aspx
Predatory Offender Registry	https://por.state.mn.us/
Uniform Crime Reports	https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/bca-divisions/mnjis/Pages/uniform-crime-reports.aspx

² <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/Pages/criminal-history-search.aspx>

How do I request public government data from the BCA?

To request public government data from the BCA, please complete the “[Request for Public Government Data](#)” form³. For fastest service, bring your request to the BCA or mail it to:

Judith M. Strobel

Attn: BCA Data Practices
Bureau of Criminal Apprehension
1430 Maryland Avenue East
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55106

You may also bring or mail your request to the BCA Responsible Authority:

Commissioner John Harrington

Minnesota Department of Public Safety
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5000

To seek resolution of an issue related to a data request, please contact:

Sydnee N. Woods

Attn: BCA Data Practices Compliance Official
Minnesota Department of Public Safety
445 Minnesota Street, Suite 1000
Saint Paul, Minnesota 55101-5000

How much time will it take the BCA to respond to my request?

The BCA will respond to your request in a reasonable amount of time that is appropriate and prompt depending on the data you have requested.

If you ask to inspect the data, the BCA will contact you to arrange a date and time for inspection where the data are kept.

If you ask for copies of the data, the BCA will let you know the cost *before* the copies will be made. In addition, the BCA will notify you as soon as possible if:

- it does not have the data you requested.
- it does not have the data in the form or arrangement you requested. (The BCA has no obligation to format data in response to a request although it may agree to do so if you pay the cost.)

³ <https://dps.mn.gov/divisions/bca/Documents/Public%20Data%20Request%201211.pdf>

- your request does not describe the data you are seeking clearly enough for the BCA to determine what you are requesting.
- more information is needed before the BCA can act on your request.
- you are not legally entitled to the data because they are not public. The BCA will tell you which law prohibits the data's release.

Is there a cost to inspect public government data?

No, there is no cost to inspect public government data at the BCA office located at 1430 Maryland Avenue East, Saint Paul, Minnesota, 55106.

Is there a cost to obtain public government data?

Yes, there is a cost to obtain public government data on paper or in other formats. However, if the total amount of your request is less than \$10, there will be no charge.

Paper Requests: If you request 100 or fewer pages of black and white copies to be produced on letter- or legal-sized paper, the fee is \$0.25 per printed page. A printed page is one side of a piece of paper.

If you request more than 100 pages of black and white copies, if the paper required is not letter-sized or legal-sized, or if color copies are requested, the fee is the actual cost of searching for and retrieving the data and making the copies, plus the per-printed page cost, envelope, and postage, if any.

Other Format Requests: The charge for other formats (such as electronic, audio and photographic) is the actual cost of search, retrieval and copying time, media, mailer, if any, and delivery.

What if I would like to do research using BCA data?

If you would like to do research using BCA data, the BCA can create statistical data for you from private and confidential data. The result is known as "summary data." Or, if the Responsible Authority determines that your access will not compromise the data and you sign a nondisclosure agreement, you may request data held by the BCA to compile your own statistics.

The charge for summary data is the actual cost of preparing the data and depends on the type and amount of data requested and the level of effort and skill required to produce it. You must pay the actual cost of preparing the data *before* it will be produced.

Please contact the BCA data practices designee on page 3 for assistance.

What if I do not understand the data I receive?

If you do not understand the data you receive, you may ask the BCA for an explanation. The BCA will make reasonable efforts to explain very specialized data as well as acronyms, abbreviations, and common words whose meaning is not readily apparent in the context of the data.