

Central Falls

FIRST TWO VISITS:

OCT. 28

NOV. 20

Documents Not Received



School Committee Minutes:

- Readability: Good
- Thoroughness: Average
- Layout: Average
- Legal Compliance: Partial

City/Town Council Minutes:

- Readability: Average
- Thoroughness: Poor
- Layout: Average
- Legal Compliance: Full

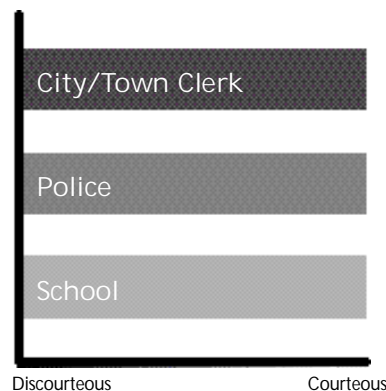
“ After some questioning, an officer with knowledge in the subject spent 45 minutes looking for adjudicated reports. He was a law student and seemed familiar with the Open Records Law. While he compiled the arrest reports he asked me more about what I was doing research for, and what I was studying at college, and my career aspiration. He brought up brutality reports in casual conversation when he said, ‘Now, I can get this stuff for you but if you wanted brutality reports, say, that would be almost impossible to get.’ When I asked him what he meant, he told me that I would have many more hoops to jump through and that they would need me to show real and valid reasons for requesting the material. He finally pulled up three arrest reports he felt were safe to give me. ”

Central Falls complied with 90 percent of the documents requested. The Police Department denied access to the arrest reports. The Police officer was courteous and friendly, but failed to provide useful information or the information that is required by law to be included in the arrest reports. Names, addresses, and other vital information was redacted from the copies of the arrest reports.

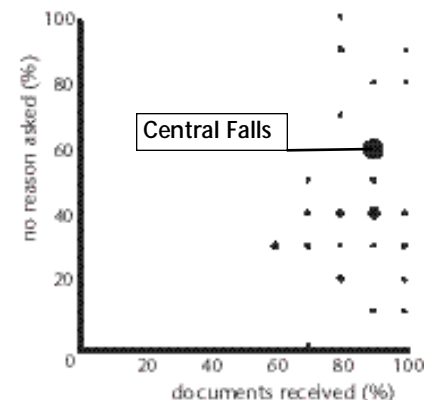
The researchers were asked the reason for their request in 40 percent of the cases. Although the ideal would be that citizens requesting documents are treated like public library patrons - who would never be asked why they want to check out a particular book - the rate was one of the five lowest in the state. A written request was required once, but the request was honored and the paperwork was relatively simple.

(Footnote on p. 70.)

How We Were Treated



Comparison: Cities/Towns



* Footnotes for Cities and Towns

Central Falls: The researchers received arrest reports from the Central Falls Police Department, but all of the personal information was redacted and therefore did not comply with the Open Records Law.

Coventry: The officer in charge insisted upon seeing a piece of identification from the researcher before any arrest records would be shown. As the researcher refused to present verification of her identity, the arrest reports were not obtained.

East Providence: The charge was not actually levied, but was clearly marked on a sign outside of the front window.

Johnston: The school department clerk said that a printed copy of the school contract was not available and even if it were, she would not provide copy because it would be too difficult to understand.

Providence: After being denied on four separate visits, arrest reports were ultimately granted to the researcher on the fifth visit. However, it is appropriate to deem this a refusal, especially in light of the considerable runaround, since the general protocol of the study dictated that three separate unsuccessful attempts should indicate a denial.

South Kingstown: The arrest reports were received by mail after the narrative was written.

Warwick: The officer on duty explained that arrest reports were not filed chronologically, so it would be difficult to retrieve the three most recent arrest reports. The officer did suggest that he would be willing to look up arrest reports if the researcher gave specific names.