

East Providence

FIRST TWO VISITS:

OCT. 24

DEC 5

I found the East Providence police to be very courteous. They contacted their supervisors in an attempt to figure out if the request could be granted. The whole time they remained friendly and helpful. On the first visit, when I requested the arrest records, the clerk was unsure. She asked me to wait and resent my request to the officer in charge. The officer in charge believed that my request for arrest reports could not be fulfilled because the reports were too confidential but asked that I wait while he consulted the deputy chief, who in turn contacted the chief. They agreed that I could view the fact sheets of the arrest record, but not get copies of them, although a big sign on the window read, "Copies, \$.25." The clerk escorted me into the office and provided desk space to examine the reports. All of them said, "see attached statement" which was not attached. When I asked to view the brutality records, I was told to go down to the chief's office and ask him directly. The chief was extremely pleasant, helpful, and open. Another officer, whom I was not introduced to, was in the corner reading through what appeared to be a code of Island General Laws. The chief took ten minutes to explain to me how they take brutality complaints and that most of the serious ones are not filed through them, but go directly to the FBI. He also told me about a case in which the complaints turned out to be valid and how essential they were to eliminating "bad apples." In the end, he agreed to provide me with redacted versions of several recent complaints as long as I agreed not to publicize any of the details of them such that someone would recognize the events. I agreed to pick them up in a week, but when I called to confirm that they were ready, I was told they were still working on them, and when I called a few days later was told that the Solicitor was looking over them. A few subsequent calls resulted in answers that they were not sure what was going on and that I was going to have to call again. Finally, I got in touch with a person who again explained that they had referred the matter to the City Solicitor who instructed them not to release the information. I was told that if I was to make a written request detailing the reasons for the request to the City Solicitor's office they would reconsider it.

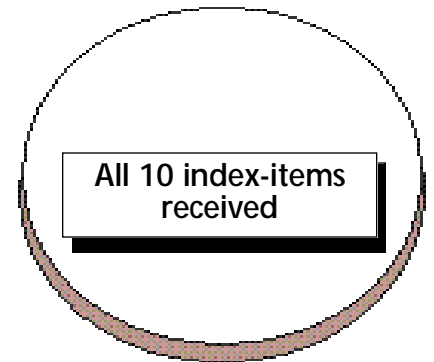
School Committee Minutes:

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

City/Town Council Minutes:

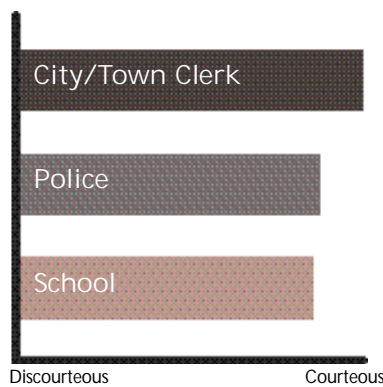
- Readability: Average
- Thoroughness: Good
- Layout: Average
- Legal Compliance: Full

Documents Not Received

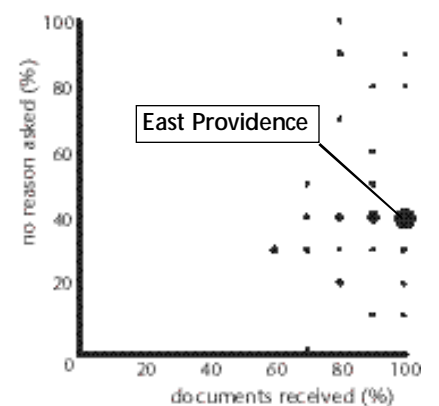


East Providence is one of eight jurisdictions in the state to provide access to all of the indexed documents requested. Indeed, East Providence would be a model of compliance were it not for two factors: overcharging and multiple visits. While earning the distinction of excellent compliance with the requests for documents, East Providence shares the dubious distinction of being one of four jurisdictions in which a division of municipal government charges more than the statutory limit for photocopying. The East Providence Police charge 25 cents per page, 10 cents over the statutory limit. * Also, unlike most jurisdictions, multiple visits were required for several of the items requested. The School Department required two visits to produce three of the five requests. The Police Department required four visits to determine if the police brutality reports were going to be made available. (They were not.) Still, this department is one of only six in the state to be rated "very courteous". They provided access to the log and to arrest reports. (Footnote on p. 70.)

How We Were Treated



Comparison: Cities/Towns



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* 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.