

Importance of Accurate PIA Custodian Contact Information

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The Maryland Public Information Act (“PIA”) works best when members of the public can easily find out where to send PIA requests, and who those requests should be addressed to. Similarly, government agencies can best manage their PIA responses when they have a clearly-identified point person who receives PIA requests and knows what to do with them. That’s why the PIA requires all State and local government agencies to designate an agency PIA contact and to post that person’s name and business address, phone number, and email address in a conspicuous place on the agency’s website. See Section 4-503 of the PIA. Each agency must update this information every year, and send updates to the Attorney General’s Office, which maintains a list of PIA contacts [here](#).

Although most State and local government agencies have had to change the way they do business during the current coronavirus crisis, communicating with the public remains crucially important. After all, “open government” isn’t just about following the law, it’s about ensuring that the public knows what’s happening. That’s why it might be a good time for government agencies to designate a PIA representative if they have never done so, or to update their PIA contact information on their websites to reflect any changes that have taken place before or during the current operational challenges.

In addition to posting any new or updated PIA contact information to your agency website, please also email that information to piaopengov@oag.state.md.us for inclusion on the Attorney General’s Statewide PIA custodian list.