

Updated Public Records Law

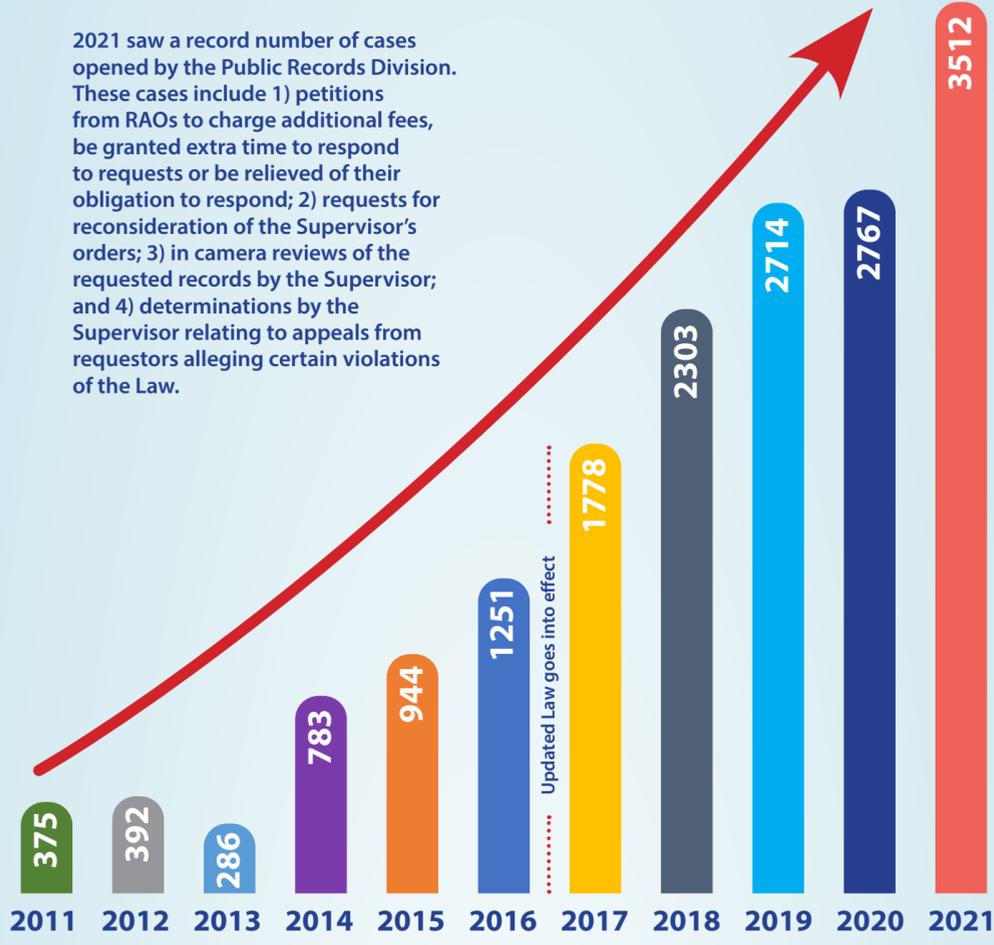
By the Numbers

The updates to the Massachusetts Public Records Law (Law) have now been in effect for a little over five years. Changes to the Law include: specified time periods for the Supervisor of Records (Supervisor) to issue determinations on public records appeals, limits on fees permitted to be charged by government Records Access Officers (RAOs) and requirements for state agencies to track and report public records request information. Take a look below at how the updated Law has had an impact in its first five years:

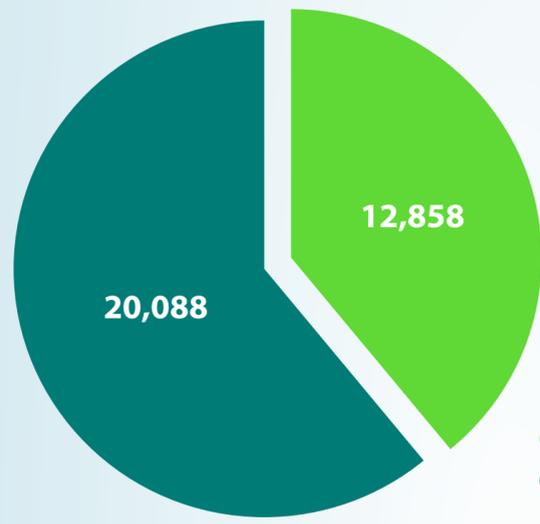


Cases Opened from 2011-2021

2021 saw a record number of cases opened by the Public Records Division. These cases include 1) petitions from RAOs to charge additional fees, be granted extra time to respond to requests or be relieved of their obligation to respond; 2) requests for reconsideration of the Supervisor's orders; 3) in camera reviews of the requested records by the Supervisor; and 4) determinations by the Supervisor relating to appeals from requestors alleging certain violations of the Law.



Determinations Issued Since 1977



For the past five years, the Public Records Division has seen a significant increase in the number of cases opened annually. This largely corresponds with the updates made to the Law in 2017. In fact, the number of cases opened in 2021 (3,512) is almost double that of cases opened in 2017 (1,778). During this five year period, the current Supervisor of Records issued 12,858 determinations, which is 36% of all determinations issued since 1977.

● Current Supervisor
● All other Supervisors

Agency Info

2017 was the first year agencies were required to log the requests received for public records and submit them to the Secretary of the Commonwealth. There were 143 agencies that filed information relating to a record-breaking 32,165 requests that they received in 2021.



Surpassing a Previous Year's Record

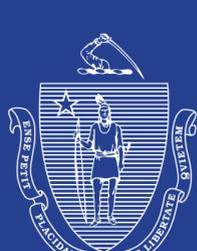
The Public Records Division can monitor its record-breaking progress in real time by comparing when it opened its last-breaking case number to when that same case was opened in the current year. In 2017, the Public Records Division opened its last case of the year, case number 1,780, on December 29th. By 2021, the Public Records Division opened its 1,780th case in July.

7/19

Date on which the 1,780th case was opened:



Busiest Year



All of the determinations issued by the Supervisor are public and available on the Secretary of the Commonwealth's website at: www.sec.state.ma.us/pre.

For more information on the Public Records Law, please read the *Guide to the Massachusetts Public Records Law* available at: www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/prepdf/guide.pdf.

For any questions about the Public Records Law, please contact the Secretary of the Commonwealth's Public Records Division at 617-727-2832 or pre@sec.state.ma.us.