

From: [AGO - CAP](#)
To: tik.root@gmail.com
Subject: Public Records Act Request 2022-07797
Date: Friday, September 16, 2022 3:44:46 PM
Attachments: [2022-09-13 Root PRA request.pdf](#)
[2022-09-16 CAP cost estimate and partial response to Root 2022-07797.pdf](#)

Dear Tik Root,

Please see attached in response to your Public Records Act request.

Sincerely,

Crystal Baldwin
Consumer Assistance Program
Office of the Attorney General
Mailing Address:
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-1001

Consumer Assistance Hotline: 800-649-2424
Email: ago.cap@vermont.gov

SUSANNE R. YOUNG
ATTORNEY GENERAL

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SARAH E.B. LONDON
CHIEF ASST. ATTORNEY GENERAL



STATE OF VERMONT
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
CONSUMER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM
109 STATE STREET
MONTPELIER, VT
05609-1001

September 16, 2022

Via email to tik.root@gmail.com

Tik Root
<http://tikroot.com>
Cell: (802) 377-8653

Re: Public Records Request 2022-07797

Dear Tik Root,

I write in response to your Public Records Act request dated September 13, 2022, a copy of which is attached for your convenience.

For records of “All AGO-CAP consumer complaints about application fees for rental properties (including attachments, photos, etc.) and/or the relevant law (9 V.S.A. § 4456a.)”

To satisfy your request, no date parameters were set in searching our database records comprising of Consumer Complaint Matters and Complaint Intakes and the Online Scam Form.

Complaint Intakes and the Online Scam Form:

The Consumer Assistance Program (CAP) receives consumer contact via our consumer hotline, standard web form, online scam form, email, and mail. These interactions are recorded as “Complaint Intakes” as well as the “Online Scam Form.”

Complaint Intakes have a field labeled “Description”, where staff take notes during phone calls, copy and paste email reports, view webform submissions, or copy and paste transcribed voicemail messages. All fields of the Online Scam Form are searched. To satisfy your request, our office searched for the following terms: “application fee”, “app fee”, “rental fee”, and “rental application”. Because reports of scams to CAP suggest criminal fraudulent activity, such reports have been excluded per your request for “consumer complaints.”

CAP located six Complaint Intakes with one related file and no Online Scam Form submissions relevant to your request.

Consumer Complaint Matters:

CAP provides letter mediation on consumer complaint matters received in writing where the consumer or business or transaction is located within our state.

To satisfy your request, our office searched for Consumer Complaint Matters in our database with “Rental Property – not vacation” identified as a business subtrade code along with the following terms in the description field “application fee”, “app fee”, “rental fee”, and “rental application”.

CAP has ten such matters on record. Four of these ten consumer complaint matters were responsive to a prior request for records and are already available as they are posted online per the Vermont Attorney General’s Open Government procedure and can be located on the following internet page:

- See 05/23/2022 – Rodriguez, Karen – EW Scripps/Newsy:
<https://ago.vermont.gov/2022-vermont-attorney-generals-office-public-record-act-requests-and-responses/>

Please note that within the documents posted, personal information has been redacted pursuant to 1 V.S.A. § 317(c)(7).

To the extent you feel information has been withheld in error, you may appeal to the Deputy Attorney General, Joshua Diamond. Such appeal should be in writing:

Joshua Diamond
Deputy Attorney General
Office of the Attorney General
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-1001

The remaining six Consumer Complaint Matters include 20 related files.

Cost Estimate:

Option 1 – Documents:

We estimate that searching for, reviewing, and redacting the files of the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matters (20 documents in total) along with the Complaint Intake file (1 document in total) will come to approximately 375 minutes. Note that there is no charge for the first 30 minutes. At 345 minutes, billed according to the Secretary of State’s fee schedule for the rate of other staff time (\$.45 a minute), the cost to produce the documents of the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matter files along with the one Complaint Intake document of your Public Records Act request is an estimated \$155.25.

Option 2 – Spreadsheets (no documents):

We estimate that searching for, reviewing, and redacting a spreadsheet of the remaining Consumer Complaint Matters (6 in total) along with the Complaint Intakes (6 in total) will come to approximately 120 minutes. Note that there is no charge for the first 30 minutes. At 90 minutes, billed according to the Secretary of State’s fee schedule for the rate of other staff time (\$.45 a minute), the cost to produce the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matter files along with the six Complaint Intake files of your Public Records Act request is an estimated \$40.50.

Option 3 – Documents and Complaint Intake Spreadsheet:

We estimate that searching for, reviewing, and redacting the documents of the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matters (20 documents in total) along with the Complaint Intake document (1 document in total) as well as a spreadsheet of the Complaint Intakes (6 in total) will come to approximately 405 minutes. Note that there is no charge for the first 30 minutes. At 375 minutes, billed according to the Secretary of State's fee schedule for the rate of other staff time (\$.45 a minute), the cost to produce the documents of the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matter files along with the one Complaint Intake document of your Public Records Act request is an estimated \$168.75.

Option 4 – Spreadsheets and Documents:

We estimate that searching for, reviewing, and redacting the documents of the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matters (20 documents in total) along with the Complaint Intake document (1 document in total) as well as a spreadsheet of the remaining Consumer Complaint Matters (6 in total) along with the Complaint Intakes (6 in total) will come to approximately 435 minutes. Note that there is no charge for the first 30 minutes. At 405 minutes, billed according to the Secretary of State's fee schedule for the rate of other staff time (\$.45 a minute), the cost to produce the spreadsheets and documents of the remaining six Consumer Complaint Matter files along with the six Complaint Intakes of your Public Records Act request is an estimated \$182.25.

Note, spreadsheets typically include the following fields for Complaint Intakes: Received Date, Description, Intake Method, First/Company Name, Last Name, City, State, Zip, Complaint Against Name, First/Company Name, Last Name and Address, and the following fields for Consumer Complaint Matters: Matter Number, Matter Name, Opened Date, Trade Code, Subtrade Code, Received Date, Matter Summary (description), Claimed Losses, Business Interaction By, Process Code, Status Code.

Payment:

We ask that you identify the option you would like and submit payment as to the estimated cost (1: \$155.25, 2: \$40.50, 3: \$168.75, or 4: \$182.25) before we proceed further with processing your request. Upon receipt of your payment, the records will be made available for you. Note, if the actual time to produce the records is less, we will issue a credit.

You may submit payment as follows:

Online: <https://appengine.egov.com/apps/vt/ago/onlinepayment>

By check sent to:

Attn: Lauren Jandl
State of Vermont
Office of the Attorney General
109 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05609-1001

Thank you for contacting the Vermont Attorney General's Office.

Sincerely,

Crystal Baldwin

Consumer Assistance Program
Office of the Attorney General
State of Vermont