

Access to Public Records



An Audit of Rhode Island's Cities & Towns

A Comprehensive Analysis of the Implementation of the Open Records Law

Statement about Authorship

This study originated in April 1997 with eight students from the Introduction to Public Policy course at Brown University. Those students, working under the supervision of Professor Ross Cheit, created an Independent Study project to focus on Freedom of Information in Rhode Island's cities and towns. They researched the topic and designed this study in the first six weeks of the Fall Semester.

Seventeen students from the Public Affairs Reporting course at the University of Rhode Island collaborated in the research from mid-October through the end of the semester in December. Those students, working under the supervision of Professor Linda Levin, conducted the fieldwork in 23 cities and towns, and they wrote narrative accounts for each jurisdiction. They also edited the narratives for all of the cities and towns.

The Brown students conducted fieldwork in 16 cities and towns, and they wrote narrative accounts for each jurisdiction. They did follow-up fieldwork in about a dozen jurisdictions in December and January to resolve various questions from the original research. These students also constructed the database, analyzed the data, and wrote the report.

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