

June 25, 2009

Letter to municipalities participating in Citizens Initiative for Transparency: Public Document Audit.

For the last few months the Leagues in Kane County have conducted a public document audit to assess how well Freedom of Information or “Sunshine” laws are being administered in local and state locations. The timing of our final report was deliberately planned to coincide with the anniversary of the Freedom of Information Act on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

Of the 850 state and local leagues nationwide, the Leagues in Kane County (Batavia, Elgin Area, and Geneva-St. Charles) were among a total of 12 chosen nationally—and the only group in Illinois awarded a grant from the National League of Women Voters Education Fund to support work to make local government more transparent.

Our auditor team of 10 women and 1 man requested information on their own behalf not as representatives of the LWV. The auditors covered a geographic area mostly within Kane County. Additionally, the State of Illinois was included and a couple of municipalities outside of the Kane area. The request was simple and straightforward: “A list of the names, salaries, titles, and dates of employment of all public employees and officers of public bodies.” (5 ILCS 140/1).

Your municipality was audited by our team during the last week in late April. Many of you were able to give us the information according to the Freedom of Information Act. Our findings showed, however, that others were in need of education of the Illinois FOI laws.

Our final report can be found at either [www.lwvgenstc.org](http://www.lwvgenstc.org) or <http://elgin.il.lwvnet.org/> (Public Document Audit. Citizens Initiative for Transparency) We hope this report illustrates how your procedures regarding compliance with FOIA differ from your neighboring communities.

Note: A FOIA rewrite has since been passed by the General Assembly and is awaiting the Governor’s signature.

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