

Model Citizen's Guide for requesting environmental information from government
offices
*Building Environmental Citizenship to Support Transboundary Pollution Reduction in
the Danube: A Pilot Project in Hungary and Slovenia*

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University Law School

USING THE INFORMATION ACT
a Step-by-Step Guide

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Free Information for Our Free Country

"In the process of changing the political system, an especially important kind of freedoms consist of those pertaining to the freedom of information, ... described as

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invariably the first to come under siege from the opponents of freedom, old and new. [This concern for freedom of information is firmly in the Hungarian tradition:] ‘to assure a sound outcome, it is necessary for those in power to propagate the appropriate knowledge of public affairs openly.’”

- Dr. László Majtényi, DP&FOI Commissioner, Parliamentary Commission for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, quoting Mihály Horváth, *The Progress of Democracy in our Country*, 1841.

[insert similar Slovenian quotation]

The [Slovenian Environmental Protection Act] [Hungarian Environmental Protection Act of 1995 Article, 12 Paragraph 1] is based on the premise that openness in government will assist citizens in making the informed choices necessary to a democracy. The Act creates procedures whereby any member of the public may obtain environmental information from the government. The purpose of this Guide is to help you exercise your right to open government action on the environment to the light of public scrutiny. This publication contains detailed information, instructions and sample letters designed to help you make an effective information request. We hope that this step-by-step guide will serve you well.

INFORMATION REQUEST BASICS

How does the Information Law work?

[Insert specific legal authority citation] directs government agencies to disclose certain types of records and describes the required manner of disclosure.

The types of information that might be obtained include:

- [list representative types of information]

What kinds of government bodies must provide information on request?

[List what agencies or offices must provide information]

Examples from the U.S.: The agencies, offices and departments of the Executive branch of the federal government such as the

- Defense Department, the Office of Management and Budget, and the National Security Council
- The independent federal regulatory agencies such as the Federal Trade Commission or the Environmental Protection Agency and the Federal Communications Commission

- Federal government-controlled corporations such as the U.S. Postal Service, the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Smithsonian Institution, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) and others

What are "agency records"?

A few examples of the wide variety of records that citizens can seek under the information access law include requests from the [include environmental examples – particularly water-related information -- instead of the ones below]

- Food and Drug Administration for health and safety reports on silicone breast implants;
- Immigration and Naturalization Service for information that would help locate and help insure the safety of Haitian refugees who had been deported;
- Department of Commerce for statistics on boycotts;
- Atomic Energy Commission for the names and addresses of military service members who participated in nuclear weapons testing;
- Department of the Navy for an inventory of Native Hawaiian graves; and
- FBI and the CIA for records on the assassination of President Kennedy.

You Can Get a Wide Variety of Information

You can get information about how the Ministry of the Environment and the Water Management Ministry operate, what actions it has been taking, how they have been spending their money, and what statistics and other information they have collected on any subject. You can request and receive records relating to public health and environmental hazards including information about discharges to water bodies and the environmental health of the Danube and its tributaries.

But You Can't Get All Kinds of Information

Although the goal of the information disclosure law is full disclosure of government records, some confidentiality is necessary for the government to function.

U.S. rules are below; substitute Hungarian or Slovenian rules:

The Freedom of Information Act does not apply to the following federal entities:

- Congress
- The Federal Courts
- Executive Office staff such as the White House Chief of Staff and others whose sole function is to advise and assist the president

Requests cannot be made under the Freedom of Information Act to the following, as the Act only applies in the United States to federal government agencies.

- State and local government agencies
- Private businesses
- Schools
- Private organizations

- Private individual records

Information Access Exemptions

A government body can refuse to release certain types of information. There are [insert correct number] legal categories that are exempted from request under [insert specific Hungarian or Slovenian legal citation or reference].

The law requires the government to provide you with a "reasonably segregable" (easy to excerpt) portion of a record after the portions which are exempt have been deleted from it. This means an agency can't withhold an entire document just because some portions of the document are exempt. The agency must make an effort to take out portions of the document that can legitimately be withheld, and must provide the rest of the document to the person or organization making the request for it.

1. Exemption One - National Security

Agency records which "reasonably could be expected to cause damage to the national security" if disclosed, are exempt. This kind of data usually includes

- Military plans
- Weapons
- Scientific and technology data that relates to national security

2. Exemption Two - Internal Agency Rules

Information related solely to the internal personnel rules and practices of the agency. This information is not usually of great interest to the general.

3. Exemption Three - Governed By Other Statutes

Information that is specifically exempted from disclosure by another law. [U.S. rules: Laws have been passed making personal tax data, CIA structure, charges of employment discrimination, identifiable census data and other types of information confidential.] The government ought to specify which law it is referring to when it gives this reason for denying an information request.

4. Exemption Four - Business Information

[these are the U.S. rules. Hungary and Slovenia each need to do a careful review of its own national rules to be accurate about what kinds of information might be exempted under an analogous exemption:]

Trade secrets, commercial or financial information, confidential information, and information obtained from a person must not be provided. An agency must prove the information involves

- Trade secrets (including sales statistics, inventories, customer lists, scientific or manufacturing processes or formulas);

- Material protected by established legal privileges (such as attorney-client, doctor-patient or lender-borrower);
- Privileged or confidential information, the disclosure of which would
 - make it difficult for the government to obtain necessary information in the future or,
 - would substantially harm the person from whom the original information was obtained.

The government agency usually has to pledge that the person who provided the information asked for it to remain confidential, and prove that the information you want is not customarily available to the public

- Information obtained from a person (or corporation or organization) as opposed to from a government agency information

Sometimes Exemption 4 leads to a situation in which the person or organization that provided the original information will seek to prevent the government agency from releasing the information to you.

5. Exemption Five - Internal Government Memos

The law protects from disclosure:

- Interagency or intra-agency memos or letters that concern confidential communications between an attorney and a client, or information compiled in preparation for a trial.
- Materials involving advice, recommendations, or opinions which are part of the process of government decision-making.

6. Exemption Six - Private Matters

Personnel files, medical files, and other files that would lead to an invasion of personal privacy if released are exempted.

7. Exemption Seven - Law Enforcement Investigations

Any data that is compiled for law enforcement purposes, if releasing it would

- Interfere with enforcement proceedings
- Deprive a person of the right to a fair trial or an impartial jury
- Constitute an unwarranted invasion of personal privacy
- Disclose the identity of a confidential source such as a state, local or foreign agency, or a private institution which had provided information on a confidential basis
- Disclose investigative techniques or legal procedures
- Endanger the life or physical safety of an individual

In order to claim any of these exemptions, the government must prove that the records were compiled for law enforcement purposes.

8. Exemption Eight - Regulation Of Financial Institutions

This exemption pertains to records related to the examination, operation or condition of certain financial institutions which are subject to government regulation. Examples of such institutions include **list below lists U.S. institutions**

- Commercial, savings, and investment banks
- Trust companies
- The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency
- The Federal Reserve System
- The Federal Home Loan Bank Board

This exemption does not apply to organizations which are not government agencies (such as the Stock Exchange).

It is important to remember that these exemptions are not mandatory, but discretionary. That means the government can choose to release records to you even after it has determined the records fall within one or more of the above exemptions.

Access To Agency Records

The information law provides access to all "agency records," except those which are specifically exempted (see "Exemptions" section of this guide for more information). According to the Aarhus Convention **[and the EU Directive]** on which **[Hungarian]** **[Slovenian]** requirements are based, this includes printed documents or other information-bearing materials - such as photographs, computer tapes, or databases **that satisfy the two following conditions -**

Below is the U.S. rule – this section must be adapted to fit Hungarian and Slovenian rules:

- **The agency record must already exist and have been created or obtained by a federal agency; the Freedom of Information Act does not require an agency to create a record just to satisfy your request.**
- **The record must be within both the possession and the control of the federal agency at the time you make your Freedom of Information Act request. An agency does not have to retrieve a requested record it doesn't possess at the time your request is made. An agency has "control" over a record if it has the power to dispose of it.**

You have the right to obtain this information from the government even if it can be collected from another source.

Any Person Can Make An Information Request

The law permits "any person" to request access to government records, and no justification is required. "Any person" includes

- **[Hungarian]** **[Slovenian]** citizens

- Permanent resident aliens
- Foreign nationals
- Corporations and unincorporated associations
- Universities
- State and local governments and members of Parliament

A Quick Response Required

The information law and the Aarhus Convention require the government to decide within **ten working days** whether to provide information on request and to inform the person making the request of the decision and of the person's right to appeal a refusal to provide information to the head of the agency. A government body has **20 days to respond to an administrative appeal**. If it upholds the decision to refuse to provide the information, it must inform the person requesting it of the right to appeal.

A government body may take **an additional ten days to respond to the initial request or the appeal in "unusual circumstances."** This usually means the agency has to get the records from its field offices, or has to process a large volume of separate records, or it has to consult with another agency or two or more of its components in order to satisfy your request.

And If It Takes Longer Than That...

Unless the government shows that "exceptional circumstances" exist, and that it is actively trying to meet your request, you have the right to pursue your request in court. Even though this is the law, in practice, the courts usually allow the agency to take more time to fill your request provided they take all requests on a first-come, first-served basis.

If this happens, the agency will usually write to you within two weeks telling you your request has been placed in line and will be processed after a delay. (See "Understanding the Agency Response: The Agency Tells You to Wait," p. 11.)

How Much An Information Request Costs

[U.S. policy below; substitute with Hungarian or Slovenian policy]

Three types of fees may be charged for information requests

- The costs of searching for the documents
- The costs of reviewing the documents to decide if they should be included in the response to your request
- The costs of duplicating the documents

Your fee will depend on what kind of request you are making

- If you are making a request for "commercial use," you can be charged all three types of costs
- If your request is not for "commercial use," you will only pay the search and duplication costs

- If your request is on behalf of "an educational or non-commercial scientific institution" or as a representative of the news media," you will only pay duplication costs. Any person or organization which regularly publishes or gives out information to the public can be considered as "news media." Many public service organizations, therefore, meet this definition.

Before you make your information request, be moneywise. Ask the government's information office for the current agency fee schedule. It will explain the cost of different types of searches (manual versus computer, clerical versus professional, and the like). It will also tell you the cost per page for photocopying. Fees can vary widely from Ministry to Ministry, and even within the same Ministry, for similar or identical requests. Let the Ministry know in advance how much you are willing to pay for the requested information.

Sometimes an agency will waive the fee. This will happen on a case-by-case basis if the request is considered to be in the public interest, which means the information will significantly help the public understand the operations or activities of the government agency. (See sample information request letter, p. 17, for more information.)

Making Your Information Request

1. Where To Write

The first thing you need to do is decide which government office to send your request to. If you are not certain about which office has the information you are seeking, you should research the question at your local library or call [who might people call in Hungary or Slovenia?]. The names of government offices that usually are sources of environmental information are listed at the end of this guide.

Once you have narrowed down the possibilities, you might want to call the information or public relations office of those agencies for more specific information.

If you think you know which office has the records you are interested in, get the specific mailing address for its information office. A few of the major environmental agencies' information offices are listed at the end of this guide.

2. Describing What You Want

Your request must "reasonably describe" the records you are seeking. This means the description must be specific enough that a government employee familiar with the agency's files will be able to locate the records within a reasonable amount of time and without an unreasonable amount of effort.

You *do not have to explain why you want the information you are seeking*. But an explanation might be necessary if you want the agency to waive its fees or comply more fully with your request.

The more precise and accurate your request, the more likely you are to get a prompt and complete response, of course, and the lower the search fees will be.

An agency will contact you if it needs more clarification.

3. Planning Your Strategy

Here are some tips for planning your information request:

- Try to limit your request to what you really want. If you simply ask for "all files relating to" a particular subject (e.g. pollution discharged to the Danube River), you may give the agency an excuse to delay its response, and you risk needlessly running up search and copying costs.
- If you know that your request involves a large number of records, try to state both what your request includes and what it does not include.

4. Make Requests For Files As Specific As Possible

- Be as specific as possible. Cite relevant newspaper clips, articles, Parliamentary reports, etc. If the records have already been released, let the agency know the date, release number, and name of the original requester.
- Let the agency know if you'd like to receive information in a particular order. Materials could be reviewed and released to you in chronological or geographical order - or you may simply not want to wait for all the records to be reviewed before any are released.

5. Drafting Your Request Letter

Now we are going to look at some sample letters and some helpful tips for writing your request letter.

a. Keep Records Of Your Verbal And Written Correspondence

- Be sure to keep a copy of all correspondence to and from the government. You'll need it if you write an appeal or go to court later.
- Take notes during all phone conversations - the date, what was said, who you spoke to, etc. Follow phone conversations up with a letter addressed to the official you spoke with. Confirming phone conversations in writing will help ensure there are no misunderstandings, and it is also useful if your request needs to be forwarded to another office or agency. Written notes can also clear up any misunderstandings that might arise.
- In general, it can be useful to establish a regular contact in the agency's information office who you can ask for by name, if this is possible.

A Bad Information Request Letter

Dear Sir¹,

I am worried about pollution in the Danube.² Please send me all information you have on this subject.³

I don't want to pay a lot of money so I hope you can help me out.⁴

Sincerely,⁵

Magdolna Vargas⁶

A Good Information Request Letter

Your envelope should be marked: "Attention, Information Act Unit." Request letters without such markings are frequently held in an agency's mailroom. A list of commonly used addresses appears at the end of this guide.

Agency Head [or Public Relations Office or Information Officer]⁷

Name of Agency

Address of Agency

City, State, Postal Code

Re: Information Act Request

Dear [insert name of person or office]:

This is a request under the Information Act, [cite specific legal authority].

I request that a copy of the following documents [or documents containing the following information] be provided to me: information about farming activities that end up causing pollution in the Tisza River. Specifically, I am concerned about discharges from the XYZ pig farm, which is located at [give name of town].

In order to assess my status for the purpose of establishing appropriate fees, you should know that I am [select one]⁸

¹ Should be addressed to specific agency's office

² Should indicate the part of the Danube River of specific concern; names of towns and villages or specific polluting industries or farms would help.

³ Should specify the documents requested.

⁴ Give a reason for requesting a waiver or else avoid such language

⁵ If you are seeking a waiver of fees, indicate the purpose for which the information is requested

⁶ Give an address and phone number where you can be reached (and e-mail address if you have one)

⁷ Addresses letter to information offices of agency

- A representative of the news media affiliated with [insert name of paper or TV station] and this request is made as part of news gathering and not for a commercial use.
- A representative of a public interest organization that publishes or disseminates information and this request is made as part of news gathering and not for a commercial use.
- Affiliated with an education or non-commercial scientific institution, and this request is made for a scholarly or scientific purpose and not for a commercial use.
- An individual seeking information for personal use and not for a commercial use.
- Affiliated with a private corporation; and seeking information for use in the company's business. [this category will not qualify you for a lower fee]

I am aware that I am entitled to make this request under the Information Act, and if your agency response is not satisfactory, I am prepared to make an administrative appeal. Please indicate to me the name of the official to whom such an appeal should be addressed.

I am aware that if my request is denied I am entitled to know the grounds for this denial.

I am aware that while the law allows your agency to withhold specified categories of exempted information, you are required by law to release any portions of those document that can be separated out, after the exempted material has been deleted from the data I am seeking.⁹

I am willing to pay fees for this request up to a maximum of \$ []. If you estimate that the fees will exceed this limit, please inform me first.

[or]

I request a waiver of all fees for this request. Disclosure of the requested information to me is in the public interest because it is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government, and is not primarily in my commercial interest, nor a business trying to get information on industrial competitors.¹⁰

If possible, I would prefer to see the original documents in person rather than having costs made, in order to avoid copying fees. Because subsequent requesters

⁸ Specifies law under which the request is being made; specifies documents requested; requested; specifies use to which information will be put

⁹ Establishes familiarity with Information Act rules

¹⁰ Makes the argument for a waiver of fees

may also want copies of these documents, I do not consider it fair that as the first requester, I should bear the full cost of the initial search for this material.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Zip Code

Telephone Number [Optional]

Understanding the Agency Response

It is possible that the agency will promptly release all of the information you are seeking. But it is also likely that you will receive one of the following responses.

1. The Agency Tells You To Wait

As we've already mentioned, government agencies are required to fill your request within **ten** working days unless they qualify for an "unusual circumstances" extension. Many agencies meet their deadlines, but others are notoriously slow. When dealing with a backlogged agency, you could wait up to three months before you hear anything, and they may occasionally take years before a final response is made.

An agency may initially acknowledge one or several of the following things:

- Your request has been received and is being processed
- A search for the records you've requested has begun
- The fees for your request are being calculated

Some agencies may warn you that there is an administrative backlog of requests, and ask you to wait your turn. Even though this delay violates the Act's time restrictions, it's best to try to wait patiently; ask the agency to assign you a "wait number."

If you experience a wait, here's what you should do

- After you receive your wait number, call or write the agency's information office and try to get them to commit to a release date for your information - within four to six weeks. Tell them that if there is no action by this date, you will interpret their "non-denial" as being an outright denial, and you will appeal.
- Whatever the cause of the delay, don't hesitate to inquire about the status of your request or about the agency's filing and search procedures in general.
- If your follow-up inquiries are ignored, send an appeal letter. According to the Information Act, an excessive delay in complying with a request constitutes what's called a "denial in effect." Keep records of your written and phone correspondence with the agencies. These can be useful if you have to write an appeal or go to court - you will be able to show you did everything you could to comply with the law.

- Technically, the information act entitles you to go straight to court if the agency does not produce the records you want within the proper time limit, but unless you have a pressing need for the data, you should send a letter of appeal first. (See the "Appeals" section for full information on this process.)

2. *"Your Description Of The Requested Documents Is Inadequate"*

If you get this response, it means you probably did not give enough specific identifying information. Give the agency the benefit of the doubt and rewrite your request. You can try to call or make an appointment with the official processing your request to get more help.

3. *"The Requested Material Does Not Exist"*

If you are reasonably certain the records you've requested do exist, and if your request letter was clear and informative, you should try to do more research. Are there news reports, congressional hearings or court records that describe the information you want more clearly?

Rewrite your request, giving the agency more guidelines and clues for where they might find it. Try to be as patient and understanding as you can; some agencies are short staffed or have disorganized filing systems.

4. *"Some Or All The Materials Are Exempt From Disclosure"*

You should keep certain aspects of the Information Act in mind as far as exemption claims are concerned. Some exemptions are discretionary, not mandatory; in that case, an agency is not required to withhold information. Agency officials can choose to waive the exemptions and release the material, unless another statute specifically restricts that disclosure.

The agency can't withhold an entire document or file because some portion(s) of it is exempt from disclosure. The agency must remove or obscure exempt portion(s) and release any non-exempt material.

The agency must explain its reasons for determining that an exemption applies to any particular information.

- You have the right to contest any exemption claim. You can file an administrative appeal to a higher agency official. If this fails, you can file a lawsuit. U.S. rule: **The federal court must conduct a full judicial review of the agency's claims and it is up to the agency to justify its denial of your request.**
- The exemptions must be narrowly applied, since the Freedom of Information Act was created to maximize public access to agency records

- Even if the agency releases substantial portions of the material you've requested, you can appeal the decision to "sanitize" the rest. You can also request a detailed justification for each deletion.

Fees And Waivers

If you are charged an excessive fee, write the official who responded to your request and ask for an itemization of the charges.

If you are denied a waiver, or if the agency gives you an unsatisfactory fee reduction, press the agency official to justify these actions by requesting a full explanation of the reasons why this decision has been made.

You can also file an appeal and later go to court if you are not satisfied with your fee reduction.

MAKING AN APPEAL

Whatever the problem with an agency's response, you have the right to file an administrative appeal to higher agency officials. There is a good chance your appeal letter will get results because for one thing, senior officials are often less anxious than their subordinates about making decisions to disclose agency records. They are also usually in a better position to take matters of policy into consideration.

Sample Letter Appealing An Exemption

Agency Head [or Information Officer]
Name of Agency
Address of Agency
City, State, Mailcode

Re: Freedom of Information Act Appeal

Dear _____:

This is an appeal under the Information Act, [insert specific legal authority].

On [date] I requested documents under the Information Act. My request was assigned the following identification number: [000 000-000].

On [date], I received a response to my request in a letter signed by [official's name.] I am writing to obtain a precise determination of why my request has been denied.

The documents that were withheld must be disclosed under the Information Act because [provide clear explanation].

I expect a final ruling on my appeal within twenty working days, the time specified in the statute.

Thank you for consideration of this appeal.

Sincerely,

Name
Address
City, State, Mailcode
Telephone Number [Optional]

Like your information request letter, you can write the appeal letter, but a lawyer's advice may be useful. Furthermore, a lawyer's signature may convince the agency that you are serious about going to court to pursue your request.

Sample Letter Appealing Fees Or Waivers:

Agency Head [or Information Officer]
Name of Agency
Address of Agency
City, State, Mailcode

Re: Information Act Appeal

Dear:

This is an appeal under the Information Act, [insert appropriate legal authority citation].

On [date] I requested documents under the Information Act. My request was assigned the following identification number: [000 000-000].

On [date], I received a response to my request in a letter signed by [official's name] stating my waiver of fees was denied.

I appeal the decision to deny my request for a waiver of fees. I believe that I am entitled to a waiver of fees. Disclosure of the documents I requested is in the public interest because the information is likely to contribute significantly to public understanding of the operations or activities of the government, and the information I am requesting is not primarily in my commercial interests.

[or] I appeal the decision to require me to pay review costs for this request. I am not seeking the documents for commercial use.

[or] I appeal the decision to require me to pay search charges for this request. I am a reporter seeking information as part of news gathering, and it is not for commercial use.

I expect a final ruling on my appeal within twenty working days, the time specified in the statute.

Thank you for consideration of this appeal.

Sincerely,

Name

Address

City, State, Mailcode

Telephone Number [Optional]

GETTING OUTSIDE HELP

If your appeal is ignored or conclusively denied, you may want to try to apply some outside official pressure on the agency before the last resort - a lawsuit. Your elected representative to Parliament may, for example, be willing and able to assist you, but there is no guarantee of this. Members of Parliament have no greater legal rights under the Information Act than any other person, however, they can generally be more successful in obtaining the attention and cooperation of agency officials.

Newspapers and other parts of the media might also be interested in denials of requests for information that are of public interest.

Any letter you send should include a concise summary of your request, the problem with the agency's response, and the specific help you are seeking from them. Send one or more of these elected officials copies of your correspondence with the agency and ask them to write or call the agency on your behalf.

COURT - THE LAST RESORT

After you have exhausted the administrative appeals process, your last recourse is to force the agency to release the documents by filing a lawsuit

Take A Deep Breath And Count To Ten

You should probably wait until your request has been ignored or excessively delayed before filing a suit. Although the law says an agency has **ten** working days to respond to your request, judges do not look favorably on lawsuits that are filed in haste, and judges in **[Hungary]** **[Slovenia]** are not familiar with these kinds of law suits. Send an appeal letter first, to be sure you've exhausted your administrative remedies.

There are some law firms, public interest groups, and law schools that may assist you, and even represent you in court for a nominal fee or no fee at all. [insert information. Are there law clinics now at Hungarian and/or Slovenian law schools, and can they take these kinds of cases?]

How Long Will A Lawsuit Take?

Information Act law suits are still novel in the [Hungarian] [Slovenian] legal system. They can take about [insert likely time period -- a year?] and maybe more if appeals are made from lower court decisions to higher courts. Be warned, the government may use all kinds of courtroom maneuvers to delay or prevent mandatory disclosure - you have to decide how far you want to take your request.

Lawyer? No Lawyer?

You will probably want to consult with a lawyer to see what your chances are of winning a lawsuit. While you can file the suit pro se (representing yourself instead of being represented by a lawyer), it's probably wise to have a lawyer represent you because Information Act suits involve complex, highly technical interpretations of the law. When you are seeking legal assistance, all correspondence, notes and other background material concerning your information request should be in good order. U.S. rule: Attorneys filing suit in federal court are required to certify, under risk of sanctions, that the reasons for the suit are well-grounded in both fact and law, and that the action is not being taken for improper purposes, such as harassment or delay.

Look for an attorney who has experience with the Information Act.

Who Pays The Attorney Fees?

U.S. rule: The Freedom of Information Act permits a judge to order the government agency to pay attorney fees and court costs if you, the plaintiff, "substantially prevail" in the lawsuit. This means you must win the release of some significant portion of information that has been withheld, or at least a ruling that forces the agency to comply with some requirement of the law. But you must keep in mind that the judge can use discretion and decide to deny any award of attorney fees even when you have "substantially prevailed."

Low-Cost Or No-Cost Advice Or Legal Representation

Groups that provide low or no-cost advice or legal representation are invariably understaffed, under-funded, and over-committed, so don't expect immediate or certain attention. Remember, although you may attach great importance to the documents you seek, it is up to the attorneys (who are being asked to take the case for little or no money) to decide whether the case raises issues that are sufficiently important to justify committing their organizations' limited resources.

If groups exist that provide low or no-cost assistance, list them here:

Law schools have clinics which may provide legal services. One example is [insert example, if such exist].

GOVERNMENT AGENCY ADDRESSES

If the agency you're interested in seeking information from does not appear here, you will be able to find the correct address by contacting either the local office of that agency or by contacting headquarters in [Budapest] [Ljubljana].

This publication has been prepared by the [insert name of the organization that prepared the Citizen's Guide]