

Maggie Smith

Under the Section titled "WAC 173-03-060 Requests for public records," the Department of Ecology must allow people to make verbal and in person requests for records under Title II of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). This requires state and local governments to protect people with disabilities from discrimination in state and local government services, programs, and activities. There is a chance that those with limited sight/vision impairment or who struggle with literacy (typically in low-income communities) will be discouraged from, and therefore discriminated against, if required to submit a records request in writing. The language of the rule should say, "All requests under the Public Records Act to inspect or copy public records shall be made verbally or in writing..." etc. Section WAC 173-03-030(3) should also include the location where an in person request can be made, as well as a phone number where verbal requests are submitted. For examples, please see the California State of Community Services and Development website (<http://www.csd.ca.gov/ContactUs/PublicRecordsRequest.aspx>), Commonwealth of Massachusetts (<https://www.sec.state.ma.us/pre/prereq/reqidx.htm>), and Washington State's City of Lynden (<http://www.lyndenwa.org/request-access-to-public-records/>). Thank you.