



**NEW JERSEY GOVERNMENT RECORDS COUNCIL**  
**Administrative Complaint Disposition – Not a Valid OPRA Request**

**Yusuf Muhammad**  
**Complainant**

**GRC Complaint No. 2022-459**

v.

**New Jersey Office of the Public Defender**  
**Custodial Agency**

**Custodian of Record:** Alison Perrone  
**Request Received by Custodian:** N/A  
**GRC Complaint Received:** August 29, 2022

**Complaint Disposition:** The Complainant submitted a written request that did not reference OPRA. Rather, he stated in the last sentence of the letter that if the Custodian failed to respond he would file “an official complaint with the Government Records Council.” OPRA is invoked only when a requestor submits a valid OPRA request for “government records.”<sup>1</sup> Thus, the request as written is invalid under OPRA,<sup>2</sup> and this complaint shall be dismissed.

**Applicable OPRA Provision:** “A person who is denied access to a government record by the custodian of the record, at the option of the requestor, may . . . in lieu of filing an action in Superior Court, file a complaint with the Government Records Council established pursuant to [OPRA].” N.J.S.A. 47:1A-6.

“The Government Records Council shall . . . receive, hear, review and adjudicate a complaint filed by any person concerning a denial of access to a government record by a records custodian . . .” N.J.S.A. 47:1A-7(b).

**This is the final administrative determination in this matter. Any further review should be pursued in the Appellate Division of the Superior Court of New Jersey within forty-five (45) days. Information about the appeals process can be obtained from the Appellate Division Clerk’s Office, Hughes Justice Complex, 25 W. Market St. PO Box 006, Trenton, NJ 08625-0006.**

**Effective Date of Disposition:** March 28, 2023

<sup>1</sup> In Renna v. Cnty. of Union, 407 N.J. Super. 230 (App. Div. 2009), the Appellate Division held that although requestors shall continue to use public agencies’ OPRA request forms for making requests, no custodian shall withhold such records if the written request is not presented on the official form. The written request shall include the requisite information prescribed in N.J.S.A. 47:1A-5(f). Id. Therefore, requestors may submit a request not on an official form as long as it sufficiently invokes OPRA.

<sup>2</sup> The reference to the Government Records Council is insufficient under the Renna standard, which requires that the written equivalent specifically invoke OPRA and not the agency created pursuant thereto.



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