

Q: What is happening?

A: F-1 statements filed in 2020 and beyond will be available to the public on the PDC's website. Older reports will remain available by public records request.

The 2020 implementation date was chosen to coincide with the release of the PDC's new F-1 filing application, which provides a better user experience and helps ensure that filers only disclose the information required by law.

Q: Why is the PDC doing this?

A: F-1 reports are public records, and the PDC provides thousands of them on request annually. Making them readily available will reduce delays for filers, jurisdictions and members of the public who need to access them.

Q: Why now?

A: Since the launch of its Open Data portal last year, the PDC has made more than 7 million public records readily accessible. In light of the agency's mission to make information readily available, the commission asked staff last year to take steps toward adding F-1 reports to the records the agency puts on the website. The F-1 is the last required PDC form to be made available online.

Q: Why do candidates and elected officials have to file F-1s?

A: Reports that disclose financial interests and holdings are a means for the public to know that officials are acting in the public interest and not for their private gain. Completing the reports also gives officials an opportunity annually to review their holdings and be more sensitive to subjects that might pose an actual or perceived conflict of interest.

Q: What will be posted?

A: Only reports submitted after Jan. 1, 2020.

Q: Can I keep my information private?

A: Filers who can demonstrate that disclosing certain information would pose a manifestly unreasonable hardship and that not disclosing the information won't frustrate the purposes of the disclosure law can request what's known as a reporting modification from the commission. Such a modification exempts the filer from disclosing only that piece of information; the filer must still file a F-1 and provide the other required information.

Q: Will you track who accesses my report?

A: No. Even under the old system in which a records request was required, we had no way to confirm the requester's identity. The requester also could remain anonymous.

Q: Will the older reports ever go online?

We don't know. The PDC has released large batches of past F-1 records to public records requesters. Those requesters could decide to post them in some way online.