



OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
STATE OF ILLINOIS

KWAME RAOUL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

September 30, 2025

Via electronic mail



RE: FOIA Request for Review – 2025 PAC 88977, 88978

Dear [REDACTED]:

This determination letter is issued pursuant to section 9.5(c) of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 ILCS 140/9.5(c) (West 2024)). For the reasons set forth below, the Public Access Bureau concludes that no further action is warranted in these matters.

On August 11, 2025, you submitted a FOIA request to the City of Springfield (City) seeking a record provided by Snap, Inc. in relation to a court case. Your request specified that you wanted the record "unaltered or 'unzipped'" and that you would "like a copy of the zip file that was sent by snap inc[.]"¹ On August 22, 2025, the City responded that it did not possess records responsive to your request and suggested that the Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office (State's Attorney's Office) may possess the records you sought.

On August 19, 2025, you submitted a FOIA request to the State's Attorney's Office seeking "1. The native, unaltered zip file sent by snap inc mentioned in the certificate of authenticity 127a. 2. The original delivery record from snap inc (email, law enforcement portal, etc.). 3. Any records reflecting account attribute history or changes."² On September 2, 2025, the State's Attorney's Office provided you with copies of the file from Snap Inc. with redactions pursuant to sections 7(1)(b), 7(1)(c), and 7(1)(o) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/7(1)(b), (1)(c), (1)(o) (West 2024)). The State's Attorney's Office stated that, "[w]hile you requested 'the native,

¹FOIA Request 40579 from [REDACTED] to City of Springfield (August 11, 2025).

²FOIA Request from [REDACTED] to Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office (dated August 22, 2025).

500 South 2nd Street
Springfield, Illinois 62701
(217) 782-1090 • Fax: (217) 782-7046

115 South LaSalle Street
Chicago, Illinois 60603
(312) 814-3000 • Fax: (312) 814-3806

1745 Innovation Drive, Suite C
Carbondale, Illinois 62903
(618) 529-6400 • Fax: (618) 529-6416

Individuals with hearing or speech disabilities can reach us by using the 7-1-1 relay service.

www.IllinoisAttorneyGeneral.gov

September 30, 2025

Page 2

unaltered zip file,' portions of the document have been redacted."³ The State's Attorney's Office also stated that it possessed no records responsive to your request for the delivery record or records reflecting account attribute history or changes.

On September 8, 2025, you completed the submission of your Requests for Review contesting the responses by the City (2025 PAC 88977) and State's Attorney's Office (2025 PAC 88978), which again specified that you seek the "native, unaltered Snap Inc. ZIP" file.⁴ You argued that the City's response was inadequate because you "sought the **native electronic file**["⁵ (Emphasis in original.) You argued, citing section 6 of FOIA,⁶ that the State's Attorney's Office must provide the records "in the **electronic format in which they are maintained** when feasible["⁷ (Emphasis in original.)

Section 6(a) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/6(a) (West 2024)) provides:

When a person requests a copy of a record maintained in an electronic format, the public body shall furnish it in the electronic format specified by the requester, **if feasible**. (Emphasis added.)

"Feasible" is defined as "capable of being done or carried out."⁸ Thus, a public body must comply with a request for a record in a specific electronic format only if the public body is capable of doing so in accordance with the provisions of FOIA.

Section 7(1) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/7(1) (West 2024)) provides:

When a request is made to inspect or copy a public record that contains information that is exempt from disclosure under this Section, but also contains information that is not exempt from disclosure, **the public body may elect to redact the information that is exempt**. The public body shall make the remaining information available for inspection and copying. (Emphasis added.)

³Letter from Jason P. Young, Freedom of Information Officer, Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office, to [REDACTED] (September 2, 2025), at 1.

⁴E-mail from [REDACTED] to Public Access Counselor (September 2, 2025).

⁵E-mail from [REDACTED] to Public Access Counselor (September 2, 2025).

⁶5 ILCS 140/6 (West 2024).

⁷E-mail from [REDACTED] to Public Access Counselor (September 2, 2025).

⁸Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/feasible> (last visited September 24, 2025).

The General Assembly's clear intent is to allow public bodies to provide redacted records to requesters when certain confidential information within the records is exempt from disclosure under section 7.

Your FOIA requests and Requests for Review specifically seek "unaltered" or "native" copies of the file provided by Snap Inc. You argued that "the agency should produce the records in the **electronic format in which they are maintained**" and that "redactions can be provided separately without altering the native file."⁹ (Emphasis in original.)

However, "[i]t is always presumed that the legislature did not intend to cause absurd, inconvenient, or unjust results." *People v. Garcia*, 241 Ill. 2d 416, 421 (2011). Requiring public bodies to provide unaltered files and separately provide redactions would defeat the General Assembly's intent of allowing public bodies to withhold or redact certain types of information pursuant to the exemptions enumerated under section 7 of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/7 (West 2024)). Therefore, the State's Attorney's Office cannot provide you with a copy of the "native, unaltered zip file" because the zip file contains information that the State's Attorney's Office asserts is exempt from disclosure under those section 7 exemptions.¹⁰ Although a public body may be required to provide an unaltered or native record when the record contains no exempt information, it is not feasible for a public body to provide an unaltered or native record when the public body applies permissible exemptions.

With regard to the remaining parts of your requests, there is no indication that the State's Attorney's Office maintains a record responsive to your request for the "original delivery record from snap inc," as the zip file was uploaded onto Evidence.com by a detective, as stated in the return on search warrant. The State's Attorney's Office simply had to log into its Evidence.com account to view the file. Further, your request to the City's police department stated you were seeking a copy of the zip file that was referenced in a certificate of authenticity from Snap Inc. You then quoted language from that certificate in which Snap Inc. certified that "[a]ttached is a true and correct copy of" the zip file of the data that was requested in the search

⁹E-mail from [REDACTED] to Public Access Counselor (September 2, 2025).

¹⁰Although your Requests for Review did not challenge the State's Attorney's Office's application of any FOIA exemptions, a cursory review of the redacted records finds they are replete with information exempt from disclosure. For instance, section 7(1)(b) of FOIA exempts from disclosure "[p]rivate information, unless disclosure is required by another provision of this Act, a State or federal law or a court order." Section 2(c-5) of FOIA (5 ILCS 140/2(c-5) (West 2024)) defines "private information" as:

[U]nique identifiers, including a person's social security number, driver's license number, employee identification number, biometric identifiers, personal financial information, passwords or other access codes, medical records, home or **personal telephone numbers**, and **personal email addresses**. Private information also includes home address and personal license plates, except as otherwise provided by law or when compiled without possibility of attribution to any person. (Emphasis added.)


September 30, 2025

Page 4

warrant. Therefore, you appear to possess records concerning the delivery of the zip file from Snap Inc. Regarding your request for "records reflecting account attribute history or changes," this item appears to ask the State's Attorney's Office to provide general information concerning when it viewed or downloaded the zip file from Evidence.com and whether it made any changes to the file. "A request to inspect or copy must reasonably identify a public record and not general data, information, or statistics." *Chicago Tribune Co. v. Department of Financial & Professional Regulation*, 2014 IL App (4th) 130427, ¶ 33; *see also Kenyon v. Garrels*, 184 Ill. App. 3d 28, 32 (1989) (a public body is not required to answer questions or create new records in response to a FOIA request). Rather than reasonably identifying a public records that may contain the information you are seeking, your request seeks unspecified data. Accordingly, this office has no basis to conclude that the City and State's Attorney's Office improperly responded to your requests, and, and this office has determined that no further inquiry is warranted in these matters.

These files are closed. If you have any questions, please contact me at the Chicago address on the first page of this letter.

Very truly yours,


BENJAMIN J. SILVER
Supervising Attorney
Public Access Bureau

88977 88978 f no fi war pd sao

cc: *Via electronic mail*
Mr. Michael Hampleman
FOIA Officer
City of Springfield
300 South Seventh Street, Room 106
Springfield, Illinois 62701
cityclerk@cwlp.com

Via electronic mail
Mr. Jason P. Young
Freedom of Information Officer
Sangamon County State's Attorney's Office
200 South Ninth Street, Room 402
Springfield, Illinois 62701
jason.young@sangamonil.gov