

CJ Griffin Interviewed by NPR on Slow Access to Government Records

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CJ Griffin, Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, was interviewed by NPR and WHYY radio in their story, "COVID-19 slows access to government records in Pa. and N.J." Griffin discusses why access to public records may be more difficult during a pandemic.

C.J. Griffin, a New Jersey attorney focusing on government transparency, said there are valid reasons why a public records request may take longer or be more difficult to fulfill during a pandemic.

"There could be some categories of documents that [government officials] just can't access because they're not physically in the office, and maybe those records exist only in hard copy or maybe they're in an archive or storage," she said.

Still, she agreed that agencies should not use the pandemic as an excuse to withhold information, "especially any public records that relate to the outbreak itself, in terms of information about the cases that are occurring and the government resources that are needed."

Griffin said that could include information like how governments are spending money on coronavirus supplies and which companies are getting the contracts, as well as police activity in a given town.

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