

CJ Griffin Quoted in Article on Municipalities Adapting to Technology During COVID-19

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CJ Griffin, Director of the Justice Gary S. Stein Public Interest Center at Pashman Stein Walder Hayden, was quoted in NJ Spotlight article, “Municipalities Adapt, Try to Keep Local Government Going with Technology.” Griffin discusses the importance of transparency during COVID-19 and the Legislature’s amendments to the Open Public Records Act to relax response deadlines.

“What I believe is that most agencies will do their best to try to reply to OPRA requests, although it may be a little slower than usual and certain categories of documents ... may not be available until people can go back into physical work spaces,” Griffin said. “Those agencies that already routinely violate OPRA’s 7-day rule and take endless extensions, however, will view the new amendment as justification to essentially ignore OPRA. I am already seeing that with some problem agencies.”

Griffin said the revision is “particularly problematic” for reporters and the public who are trying to get information about the COVID-19 crisis.

“Transparency is an essential function of a democracy and in a time of crisis people need more information, not less,” Griffin said. “So, at a bare minimum, I hope that agencies will respond to COVID-19-related requests within the ordinary 7 days, if not sooner. People are desperate for information.”

Please click [here](#) for an online version of the article.