

Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council Records Subcommittee

# Personal Information Definitions in State Public Records Laws

*A Six-State Survey — Virginia, Alaska, Illinois, Maryland, New Mexico & Ohio*

July 2026

## Background

At the May 2026 Council meeting, Council members expressed interest in continued research on *personal information* definitions among the several states. The states included in this round of research were selected based on prior staff research presented at the May meeting. Of the 50 states surveyed at that time, only a fraction expressly defined *personal information*. Using that prior research, staff narrowed the results to six states (including Virginia) with some form of definition for *personal information* and compiled the relevant information into the tables below. The comparative overview provides an at-a-glance summary of each state’s defined term, key identifiers, and notable exclusions; the state by state profiles that follow provide the governing citation, principal identifiers, express exclusions, and operative statutory language for each jurisdiction.

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## Comparative overview

| State      | Key identifiers covered                                                                                                                                                                                                          | Notable exclusions / limits                                                                                                 |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Alaska     | Information identifying a person and supporting judgments about personal characteristics                                                                                                                                         | Published directory name, address, or telephone number; public-job information                                              |
| Illinois   | SSN, driver's license, employee ID, biometrics, financial information, passwords/access codes, medical records, personal contact information, home address, personal license plates, HIPAA electronic medical-record information | Home address and license plates excluded when compiled without possibility of attribution or as otherwise provided by law   |
| Maryland   | Name, address, email, ID numbers, medical/disability information, photo/image, SSN, telephone number                                                                                                                             | Driver's status, driving offenses, five-digit ZIP code, vehicular accident information                                      |
| New Mexico | Partial tax/financial/credit/debit/driver's license numbers, DOB except year, SSN, certain nonelected employee home street addresses                                                                                             | Allows last four digits for listed numbers; allows year of birth; employee address protection excludes city, state, and ZIP |
| Ohio       | SSN, tax ID, driver's license/state ID, checking/savings/credit/debit accounts, other financial or medical account numbers                                                                                                       | Definition is tied to § 149.45 and appears narrower than open-ended “identifies an individual” formulations                 |

## State-by-state profiles

Each profile summarizes the jurisdiction's defined term, statutory citation, key identifiers, and express exclusions, with the operative statutory language reproduced for reference. Virginia appears first as the focal jurisdiction.

| Virginia • Personal information           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Public records law</b>                 | Virginia Freedom of Information Act (companion definition in the Government Data Collection and Dissemination Practices Act)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Citation</b>                           | Va. Code § 2.2-3700 et seq. (FOIA); “personal information” defined at § 2.2-3801 (GDCDPA), incorporated by select FOIA exemptions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>Key identifiers</b>                    | SSN, driver's license, agency-issued ID, and student ID numbers; property holdings derived from tax returns; education, financial transactions, and medical history; ancestry, religion, political ideology, and criminal or employment record; inferred characteristics (finger and voice prints, photographs); and record of presence, registration, or membership in an organization.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Exclusions / limits</b>                | Routine internal-office-administration information whose use could not adversely affect a data subject; real estate assessment information. The definition does not expressly enumerate email addresses or personal telephone numbers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Operative language from § 2.2-3801</b> | <i>"Personal information" means all information that (i) describes, locates, or indexes anything about an individual, including his social security number, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) alien registration number, driver's license number, agency-issued identification number, student identification number, real or personal property holdings derived from tax returns, tax identification number, and his education, financial transactions, medical history, ancestry, national origin, religion, political ideology, voting history, criminal or employment record, and immigration status, or (ii) affords a basis for inferring personal characteristics, such as fingerprints, voiceprints, faceprints, eye retinas, irises, or other unique biological patterns or characteristics, physical or digital photographs, videos, or audio, or things done by or to such individual; and the record of his presence, registration, or membership in an organization or activity, or admission to an institution. "Personal information" does not include routine information maintained for the purpose of internal office administration whose use could not be such as to affect adversely any data subject nor does the term include real estate assessment information.</i> |

| Alaska • Personal information |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
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| <b>Public records law</b>     | Alaska Public Records Act                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Citation</b>               | Alaska Stat. § 40.25.100 et seq.; definition at § 40.25.350                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Key identifiers</b>        | Information that can identify a person and support judgments about that person's character, habits, avocations, finances, occupation, reputation, credit, or health.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Exclusions / limits</b>    | Name, address, or telephone number published in a current telephone directory; information describing a public job held by a person.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Operative language</b>     | <i>"Personal information" means information that can be used to identify a person and from which judgments can be made about a person's character, habits, avocations, finances, occupation, general reputation, credit, health, or other personal characteristics, but does not include a person's name, address, or telephone number, if the number is published in a current telephone directory, or information describing a public job held by a person.</i> |

| Illinois • Private information |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
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| Public records law             | Illinois Freedom of Information Act                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Citation                       | 5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.; definition at 5 ILCS 140/2(c-5)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Key identifiers                | SSN, driver's license number, employee ID, biometric identifiers, personal financial information, passwords/access codes, medical records, personal contact information, home address, personal license plates, and HIPAA electronic medical-record information.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Exclusions / limits            | Home address and personal license plates excluded where compiled without possibility of attribution, or as otherwise provided by law.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| Operative language             | <i>“Private information” means unique 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. For a public body that is a HIPAA-covered entity, “private information” includes electronic medical records and all information, including demographic information, contained within or extracted from an electronic medical records system operated or maintained by the public body in compliance with State and federal medical privacy laws and regulations, including HIPAA and its regulations, 45 CFR Parts 160 and 164.</i> |

| Maryland • Personal information |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Public records law              | Maryland Public Information Act                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Citation                        | Md. Code Ann., Gen. Prov. §§ 4-101 et seq.; definition at § 4-101(h)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Key identifiers                 | Name, address, email, driver's license or other ID number, medical/disability information, photograph or computer-generated image, SSN, and telephone number.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Exclusions / limits             | Driver's status; driving offenses; five-digit ZIP code; information on vehicular accidents.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Operative language              | <i>“Personal information” means information that identifies an individual. Except as provided in § 4-355, “personal information” includes an individual's name; address; e-mail address; driver's license number or any other identification number; medical or disability information; photograph or computer-generated image; Social Security number; and telephone number. “Personal information” does not include an individual's driver's status; driving offenses; five-digit zip code; or information on vehicular accidents.</i> |

| New Mexico • Protected personal identifier information |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
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| Public records law                                     | Inspection of Public Records Act (IPRA)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Citation                                               | NMSA 1978, §§ 14-2-1 to 14-2-12; definition at § 14-2-6(F)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Key identifiers                                        | Partial tax/financial/credit/debit/driver's license numbers; date of birth except year; SSN; certain nonelected-employee home street addresses (2023 amendment, ch. 67).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Exclusions / limits                                    | Last four digits of listed numbers allowed; year of birth allowed; employee-address protection excludes city, state, and ZIP.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| Operative language                                     | <i>“Protected personal identifier information” means: (1) all but the last four digits of a taxpayer identification number, financial account number, credit or debit card number, or driver's license number; (2) all but the year of a person's date of birth; (3) a social security number; and (4) with regard to a nonelected employee of a public body in the context of the person's employment, the employee's nonbusiness home street address, but not the city, state or zip code.</i> |

| Ohio • Personal information |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
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| Public records law          | Ohio Public Records Act                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Citation                    | Ohio Rev. Code § 149.43 et seq.; cross-reference at § 149.43(A)(1)(dd); definition at § 149.45(A)(1)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Key identifiers             | SSN, state/federal tax ID, driver's license/state ID, checking/savings/credit/debit account numbers, and other financial or medical account numbers.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Exclusions / limits         | Definition is tied to § 149.45 (internet-redaction context) and is narrower than open-ended “identifies an individual” formulations.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Operative language          | <i>§ 149.43(A)(1)(dd): “Personal information, as defined in section 149.45 of the Revised Code.” § 149.45(A)(1): “Personal information” means any of the following: an individual's social security number; state or federal tax identification number; driver's license number or state identification number; checking account number, savings account number, credit card number, or debit card number; demand deposit account number, money market account number, mutual fund account number, or any other financial or medical account number.</i> |