

45-222. Civil remedies to enforce act; attorney fees. (a) The district court of any county in which public records are located shall have jurisdiction to enforce the purposes of this act with respect to such records, by injunction, mandamus, declaratory judgment or other appropriate order, in an action brought by any person, the attorney general or a county or district attorney. The district court may require a defendant to complete training approved by the attorney general concerning the requirements of the open records act.

(b) In any action hereunder, the court shall determine the matter de novo. The court on its own motion, or on motion of either party, may view the records in controversy in camera before reaching a decision.

(c) In any action hereunder, or under K.S.A. 2016 Supp. 45-251, and amendments thereto, the burden of proof shall be on the public agency to sustain its action.

(d) In any action hereunder, the court shall award costs and a reasonable sum as an attorney's fee for services rendered in such action, including proceedings on appeal, to be recovered and collected as part of the costs to the plaintiff if the court finds that the agency's denial of access to the public record was not in good faith and without a reasonable basis in fact or law. The award shall be assessed against the public agency that the court determines to be responsible for the violation.

(e) In any action hereunder in which the defendant is the prevailing party, the court shall award to the defendant costs and a reasonable sum as an attorney's fee for services rendered in such action, including proceedings on appeal, to be recovered and collected as part of the costs if the court finds that the plaintiff maintained the action not in good faith and without a reasonable basis in fact or law.

(f) In any action hereunder brought by the attorney general or a county or district attorney, if the court finds that any provisions were violated, such court:

(1) Except as provided in subsection (f)(2), may award the attorney general's or the county or district attorney's reasonable expenses, investigation costs and attorney fees; and

(2) shall award the same if the court determines that the violation was not made in good faith and without a reasonable basis in fact or law.

(g) Except as otherwise provided by law, proceedings arising under this section shall be assigned for hearing and trial at the earliest practicable date.

(h) The provisions of subsections (d) and (e) concerning the awarding of costs and attorney fees for services rendered during an appeal shall apply only to actions which are based on causes of action accruing on or after July 1, 2004.

History: L. 1984, ch. 187, § 8; L. 1984, ch. 282, § 6; L. 1990, ch. 190, § 1; L. 2000, ch. 156, § 4; L. 2004, ch. 151, § 2; L. 2015, ch. 68, § 11; July 1.