

TIPS ON HOW TO FIND WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT (GOV)

It can be tricky to figure out what government ministry/department/agency is responsible for whatever it is you are looking to get public records from. Hopefully this guide can help you start!

Housing Example:

- Say you are on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and you are looking at housing trends and what they are for renters and those who own
- Check out this handout that details responsibilities of government branches (please note it may be dated: <https://civix.ca/resources/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/ON-Secondary-Handout-5.2.pdf>)
- This is also a good start: <https://www.legalline.ca/legal-answers/canadas-government-municipal-provincial-federal/>
- This guide is a little dated but it's from the Library of Parliament and can be useful: https://lop.parl.ca/staticfiles/Learn/assets/PDF/ParliamentaryPrimer/our_country_our_parliament-e.pdf
- **Now, back to housing.** If you are interested in pursuing a story on this trend, you need to figure out where you can get public records from, and how housing policy works within public institutions. Imagining I don't have any background knowledge on this, here is how I would approach figuring this out:
 1. **Google searches.** We know that different records are collected on the federal, provincial, and municipal level. Again, assuming I don't know anything about housing, something as simple as these searches can get me on the right track
 - a. Who is responsible for housing in Canada?
 - b. City of Toronto (or other city) housing
 - c. Ontario (or other province) housing
 - d. How does housing policy work in Canada?
 - e. Who controls housing developments in Canada/Toronto/Ontario?
 - f. Who is responsible for rent in Canada?
 2. **News articles.** The good thing about news articles is that they place the policy or the government institution responsible for whatever it is you are looking into in context.
 - a. So, I'd go to a website like CBC News and then just search "housing". Most likely you will get daily news as well as investigations/explainers into cost of living.
 - i. Most of the time these articles will feature spokespeople for the organizations/institutions/agencies responsible for housing, AND they will also usually reference advocacy groups and non-profits/grassroots organizations that also comment. This way you can see some balanced reporting, and get context to how government institutions work.

3. **News releases.** Government websites all have media portals where they publish news releases. In most cases you can filter by a department or filter by a key word. At the bottom of each news release, and usually in the body and even the title, there is mention of what ministry/agency/minister is making the announcement. This is an easy way to figure out what department is in charge of whatever topic you want. In this case it's housing, but you can search by any key term/word/topic
 - a. City of Toronto news releases: <https://www.toronto.ca/news/>
There is a filter search at the top you can use. Try key words like housing, rent, etc.
 - b. Ontario news releases: <https://news.ontario.ca/en>
You can filter by topic/ministry on the lefthand side
 - c. Gov. of Canada news releases: <https://www.canada.ca/en/news.html>
You can also filter by topic/region/etc. on lefthand side
4. **Academic Material**

Since you are all TMU students, you have access to a huge online library source at the university. There are tons of studies online, even news articles and all kinds of records, that you can find through a simple TMU library search. Academic papers can be lengthy, but it can help you understand particular policy, and its analysis can help you understand how government works.

LINK TO ONLINE RESOURCES LIBRARY OFFERS:
<https://library.torontomu.ca/eresource/>

LINK TO LIBRARY CATALOGUE SEARCH: <https://library.torontomu.ca/>

Please note this is a tip sheet to help get you started. You will probably find more information and resources as you Google search and look through websites online. This is to help you get a start if you feel lost or are unsure of how government works.