



**pennsylvania**

OFFICE OF OPEN RECORDS

## **The Office of Open Records webinar will begin soon**

- Use the “Conversation” box to submit questions
- Submitted questions are records under the RTKL
- After the webinar ends:
  - Email [openrecords@pa.gov](mailto:openrecords@pa.gov) or call 717-346-9903
- OOR website has resources for agencies & requesters
  - <https://www.openrecords.pa.gov/>



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OFFICE OF OPEN RECORDS

Erik Arneson, Executive Director

# PA Sunshine Act Primer Webinar for Government Officials

Phone Number: 717.346.9903

<http://openrecords.pa.gov>

# Who is Covered?

- Applies to any state or local government body
- and all *committees*
- that perform an essential government function
- and exercises authority to take official action.
- Making recommendations = official action

# Public Notice

- Three days in advance of the first regular meeting of the year, along with all of the remaining meetings
- Printed in a newspaper of general circulation  
(websites don't count)
- Posted at the meeting site
- Special meetings = 24 hour notice
- No requirement for cancellations

# Public Comment

- Commenters can be limited to residents and taxpayers
- Right to comment on issues that are or may be before the board (before any pertinent votes)
- Board may establish reasonable rules for public comment (time limits, spokespersons, specific v. general)

# Executive Sessions

- Can be held before, during, or after an open meeting
- *Complete* reason must be announced during the open meeting (Reading v. Reading Eagle)
- No requirement for minutes
- No official action can be taken during an Executive Session – votes must occur in a public session

# Executive Sessions II

## Allowable Reasons for Executive Sessions:

- Personnel matters (hiring, firing, discipline)
- Discussing labor negotiations
- Considering purchasing, leasing or selling property
- Consulting with counsel about litigation
- Avoiding violating privilege or confidentiality
- Discussing university admission standards
- Discuss emergency preparedness

# Miscellaneous

- Must produce meeting minutes recording board attendance and who voted for and against
- No requirement for an agenda
- The public can record public meetings
- Agency recordings and minutes are public records
- Agencies can “cure” violations
- Complaints = public goes to court to enforce
- Fines are paid by the officials, not the agency



# Additional Resources

- [www.OpenRecords.pa.gov](http://www.OpenRecords.pa.gov)
  - Citizens Guide
  - Agency Guides
  - Final Determinations and Key Court Decisions
- Open Records Officer Guidebook
- On Site Training = [RA-DCOORTRAINING@pa.gov](mailto:RA-DCOORTRAINING@pa.gov)
- Twitter Feed = @OpenRecordsPa
- OOR Phone = 717.346.9903

# Webinar Q&A

## Please send your questions now

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