

January 27, 2012

Dear Township Supervisor:

Please share this with ALL elected and appointed officials in your township.

This is to inform you of a new requirement mandating participation in an electronic training for the Open Meetings Act (OMA), 5 ILCS 120. This new law (Public Act 97-0504) requires ALL elected or appointed members of public bodies to successfully complete an electronic training curriculum. The Office of the Illinois Attorney General has been given the responsibility of providing the training and maintaining records indicating completion. The training is ONLY available ONLINE.

The goal of the training is to provide an overview of the general principles of the OMA and provide hypothetical situations that relate to specific provisions in the law. Also, to familiarize you with the requirements in practice.

Elected officials and those appointed to public bodies are required to complete the training ONLY ONE TIME as long as they remain in their positions. There is an exception for the elected or appointed member of the public body who also serves as the Open Meetings Act Designee. If you currently serve the township as the Open Meetings Act Designee, you are required to complete the training annually.

Under this new provision, you are required to (1) complete the electronic training administered by the Public Access Counselor in the Attorney General's Office; and (2) file a copy of the certificate of completion with the public body. TOI is recommending that this be the township clerk in the capacity as the chief record keeper for the township.

All elected or appointed officials have until JANUARY 1, 2013 to complete the training ONLINE.

*Please NOTE:* If a person is appointed to fill a township vacancy or a vacancy on a public body subject to the Open Meetings Act after January 1, 2012, they are required to complete the within 90 days after (1) taking the oath of office, if required; and (2) assuming the responsibilities as a member of a public body if no oath of office is required.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING THE TRAINING:

### ***Is the training only available ONLINE?***

Yes, although not preferred by TOI, the Attorney General's Office ONLY provides access to the training ONLINE. No paper submittals are available. If you have difficulty accessing a computer you can contact the Attorney General's Office at 217.782.1090. The Public Access Counselor can be reached at 877.299.3642 or at [PublicAccess@atg.state.il.us](mailto:PublicAccess@atg.state.il.us). Computers with internet connections are available at all Illinois state library facilities and free to the general public for use.

### ***How long will the training take?***

The training is designed to be completed within an hour. However, this is subject to your computer skills and ability to read onscreen information.

### ***Will I be tested with this training?***

The training is **NOT** a pass/fail test. The intent of the training is to present informative scenarios that familiarize you with the requirements of the Open Meetings Act. You are able to move forward and go back to review information a second time. You are not timed.

### ***What happens if members of the Township board decline to take the training?***

Although the new requirement does not specifically address enforcement nor has the Attorney General's Office indicated their procedure, it is **NOT** recommended to ignore compliance with the Act. If an elected official fails to complete the training, it may negatively be addressed in future endeavors to secure the elected position.

### ***Where do I get the Certificate of Completion?***

Upon completion of the training, you are provided an opportunity to print the certificate. Please make sure you have access to a printer.

### ***How can I access the training curriculum?***

You can access the training which takes approximately 50 minutes at:  
<http://foia.ilattorneygeneral.net/>

If you have any questions, please contact me toll free at 866.897.4688 or by e-mail at [jerry@toi.org](mailto:jerry@toi.org).

Completion of this training qualifies for 1 hour of voluntary education credits through TOI, but you are responsible for reporting it to TOI.

Thank you for your cooperation and your service as a township official.

Sincerely,

**Jerry B. Crabtree**

Associate Director / Education Coordinator