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A Friendly Reminder About Iowa's New Sunshine Law Training Requirements

November 20, 2026
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Congratulations to those recently elected or appointed to public office in Iowa. Included with your new responsibilities: training on Iowa's Sunshine Laws.

All Iowa public officials newly elected or appointed after July 1, 2025, must complete training on Iowa's Open Meetings Law (Iowa Code Chapter 21) and Open Records Law (Iowa Code Chapter 22), also known as Sunshine Laws. The training must be provided by the Iowa Public Information Board or a certified provider. The Iowa Public Information Board has certified Dorsey & Whitney LLP as a Sunshine Laws training provider. Re-election or reappointment to the same position does not trigger this mandatory training requirement.

The training must be completed within 90 days after an official is elected, takes the initial oath of office, or assumes the responsibilities of the position if no oath of office is required. **For many officials elected in November 2026, that clock will start ticking on January 4, 2027, when they take their oath of office, making April 4, 2027, an important date to circle on the calendar.**

Of course, nobody enjoys thinking about deadlines, but this is one worth keeping in mind. Officials who do not complete the required training with the 90-day timeframe will be given an additional 60 days to comply. Continued noncompliance may result in civil penalties ranging from $500 to $2,500, and knowing and intentional violations may result in penalties of up to $12,500.

Let Dorsey Help You Check This Requirement Off Your List

To help public officials satisfy these new requirements, Dorsey & Whitney LLP will host an online Open Meetings and Records Law Training Session on February 11, 2027, at 6 p.m. The session is open to the general public and to any Iowa public official subject to the statutory training requirements, including officials elected during the November 2026 election cycle and newly appointed officials. The training will last between one and two hours and will cover key aspects of Iowa's Sunshine Laws,

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including meeting notices, agendas and minutes, closed sessions, public records requests, confidentiality exceptions, and enforcement provisions.

Upon completion, participants will receive a certificate documenting successful completion of the training. Dorsey's attorneys in the Des Moines office are also available to assist governmental bodies with compliance questions, policy development, and other issues related to Iowa's open government laws.

Additional information regarding the February 11, 2027 training session, including registration instructions and program details, is available on the Des Moines Office Open Meetings and Records Law Training website.