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IPIB Monthly Column

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From the Iowa Public Information Board

By Margaret E. Johnson, Executive Director

Iowa Public Information Board 2020 year-in-review

The Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB) celebrated its seventh full year of operation in 2020. Created in 2012, IPIB is a free source of information for citizens and public officials on open meetings and public records laws. When there is a dispute involving these laws, the IPIB can resolve it inexpensively and efficiently.

The IPIB also provides public information and training opportunities on open meetings and public records laws. The IPIB is easily accessible to the public. It is located on the third floor of the Wallace Building, maintains a website at www.ipib.iowa.gov, and can be reached by telephone at 515-725-1781.

Iowans frequently turn to the IPIB as a resource. In 2020, 743 inquiries or actions were opened. This is on par with the last few years. Iowans from at least 83 of the 99 counties contacted the IPIB office.

The IPIB website also experienced a significant activity with 20,408 visitors in 2020. Around 86 percent of these visitors were first-time contacts.

The IPIB acts with speed. Of these 743 matters, most were resolved in less than a day, and 80 percent were resolved in five calendar days or less.

In addition to the 20,408 visitors to the IPIB website, members of the media (13%), citizens (49%), and government officials and staff (38%) also made direct contact with the IPIB in 2020.

The IPIB continues to conduct training presentations throughout the year upon request. Another resource is a monthly informational column on topics of current interest. A slide presentation on the fundamentals of open meetings and public records is also available on the IPIB website.

In 2020, the IPIB also presented state-wide training on promoting transparency during the COVID-19 restrictions and safety concerns. The website also provided information on this topic.

For more information on the activities of IPIB, or to learn more about IPIB's past performance, view our annual reports on the IPIB website.

Board Members

Joan Corbin • E. J. Giovannetti • Barry Lindahl • Keith Luchtel • Monica McHugh
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Opinions, rulings, FAQs, monthly columns, and training documents are also available on the IPIB website – www.ipib.iowa.gov. Questions for the IPIB can be posted on the website or by calling 515-725-1781.

Did You Know that the Iowa Public Information Board staff is available to assist you with questions or problems involving open meetings and public records in Iowa? During the month of January 2021, 49 contacts were made with the Iowa Public Information Board office.

TYPE	January 2021
Formal complaints	6
Advisory opinions	0
Declaratory orders	0
Informal complaints	5
Informal requests	31
Miscellaneous	7
TOTALS:	49

Who can contact the IPIB and how long does it take?

Any person can contact the IPIB for assistance by telephone (515-725-1781), by email, or on the website. In January 2021, 49 identifiable people contacted the IPIB. Of these, 29 were private citizens, 16 were government officials or employees, and 4 were members of the media.

In the month of January 2021, 74% of the incoming contacts were resolved the same day, 14% were resolved in one to five days, and 12% were resolved in six or more days.