

# Open Meetings, Closed Sessions, & Library Records

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## **Session Objectives:**

- Understand open meetings law
- Know when it is appropriate to convene in closed session
- Learn how to handle public records requests

# 19.81(2): Open Meetings Law

- Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law (1976) requires openness in government
- “...all meetings of all state and local governmental bodies shall be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public and shall be open to all citizens at all times unless otherwise expressly provided by law.”
- Meetings must be properly noticed
- AG office provides an [Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide](#)

# 19.81(2): Open Meetings Law

## Closed Sessions

- “...all meetings...shall be open to all citizens at all times **unless otherwise expressly provided by law.**”
- Section IV (pp. 17-23) of the [Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide](#) detail the permissibility and requirements of convening in closed session

# 43.30: Public Library Records

## Privacy of Library Records

- Records of any library...supported by tax funds, including the records of a public library system,
- Indicating the identity of any individual who borrows or uses the library's documents or other materials, resources, or services
- May not be disclosed except by court order or to persons acting within their scope of duties in the administration of the library...

# 43.30: Public Library Records

## Exceptions to 43.30

- Persons authorized by the individual to inspect such records
- Custodial parents or guardians of children under the age of 16
- Other libraries, for the purpose of borrowing materials for an individual
- Law enforcement officer investigating criminal conduct alleged to have occurred at the library... All such records produced by a surveillance device under the control of the library
- Information about delinquent accounts to a collection or law enforcement agency (over \$50)– only name, contact info, amount, and material type

# 19.31-39: Public Records Requests

## More on Public Records

- Public libraries and library boards are subject to public records law; emails and other communications may also be subject
- Record: any material on which written, drawn, printed, spoken, visual, or electromagnetic information is recorded or preserved, regardless of physical form or characteristics, which has been created or is being kept by an authority [s. 19.32(2)]
- AG office provides a [Public Records Law Compliance Guide](#)
- Your board may adopt the [Records Retention Schedule](#)