

# Iowa Public Information Board 2015 year-in-review



*Editor's Note: This is a monthly column prepared by the Iowa Public Information Board to update Iowans on the IPIB's activities and provide information on some of the issues routinely addressed by the board.*

The Iowa Public Information Board (IPIB) celebrated its second full year of operation in 2015. Created in 2012, IPIB strives to settle complaints concerning Iowa's open meetings and public records laws inexpensively and efficiently. The IPIB is also tasked with training the public on open meetings and public records laws, administrative rule-making, and publishing advisory opinions to clarify issues relating to public information. The IPIB is located on the third floor of the Wallace Building and receives cases from the website, e-mails, mail, phone calls, and in-person visits.

In 2015, 811 cases were opened: 97 formal complaints, 8 advisory opinions, 3 declaratory orders, 151 informal complaints, 531 informal requests, and 21 miscellaneous cases. Of these 811 cases, 62% were resolved in less than a day, 20% were resolved in one to five days and 18% were resolved in six

or more days. No formal hearings were conducted in 2015. The IPIB saw the same number of cases as in 2014, but dealt with less informal complaints and more formal complaints. A new facet of the IPIB case management system allows the IPIB to track contacts with the office: 46% were citizens, 14% were members of the media, and 40% were government officials or staff.

The IPIB's training efforts include a website, found at [www.ipib.iowa.gov](http://www.ipib.iowa.gov). In 2015, there were 9,397 visitors to the website, a marked increase from 4,707 visitors in 2014. In addition, IPIB conducted over 15 training presentations throughout the year. The IPIB also circulates a monthly column covering topics about open meetings and public records and maintains an e-mail distribution list for notices, minutes, and agendas.

The IPIB also participated in

administrative rule making this year and submitted a study bill for the 2015 legislative session. For more information on the activities of IPIB, or to learn more about IPIB's past performance, view our annual reports on the website at [www.ipib.gov/about-ipib](http://www.ipib.gov/about-ipib).

Opinions, rulings, FAQs, monthly columns, and training documents are available on the IPIB website – [www.ipib.iowa.gov](http://www.ipib.iowa.gov). Questions for the IPIB can be posted on the website or by calling 515-725-1781.

**SUNSHINE WEEK 2016:** March 13 – 19 has been designated as Sunshine Week, the annual nationwide celebration of access to public information and what it means for you and your community. Contact the IPIB or visit the Sunshine Week website at [www.sunshineweek.org](http://www.sunshineweek.org) for more information.

## IPIB Facts and Figures

During the month of February 2016, 80 contacts were made with the Iowa Public Information Board office.

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FEB. 2016</u>	<u>2016 TOTAL</u>
Formal complaints	13	22
Advisory opinions	2	6
Declaratory orders	1	1
Informal complaints	11	15
Informal requests	53	100
Miscellaneous	0	0
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>144</b>

### 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. So far, in 2016, 144 identifiable people have contacted the IPIB. Of these, 48% were private citizens, 40% were government officials or employees, and 12% were members of the media.

In the month of February 2016, 66% of the incoming contacts were resolved the first day, 13% were resolved in one to five days, and 21% were resolved in six or more days.