

FOIA TRAINING

The Attorney General's electronic training for FOIA officers is now available on the AG's website.

Go to the Attorney General's Open Government page to access the training by [clicking here](#).

<http://foia.ilattorneygeneral.net/Default.aspx>

If you are a FOIA officer, be sure to **register first** AND THEN login to the training portal.

DO NOT simply follow the link entitled "Take the Public Training." That area is for everyone, and you will NOT obtain the credit that you need.

You MUST register and then login to the FOIA/OMA Portal, and complete the training there in order to receive your credit.

It is the public policy of this State that public bodies exist to aid in the conduct of the people's business and that the people have a right to be informed as to the conduct of their business.

- Illinois Open Meetings Act, 5 ILCS 120/1.

Pursuant to the fundamental philosophy of the American constitutional form of government, it is declared to be the public policy of the State of Illinois that all persons are entitled to full and complete information regarding the affairs of government and the official acts and policies of those who represent them as public officials and public employees consistent with the terms of this Act. Such access is necessary to enable the people to fulfill their duties of discussing public issues fully and freely, making informed political judgments and monitoring government to ensure that it is being conducted in the public interest.

- Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/1.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan believes that an open, honest and accountable government, the cornerstone of a democracy, can be achieved only through the free and open exchange of information between government and the public. In Illinois, our most important transparency laws – the [Freedom of Information Act \(FOIA\)](#) and the [Open Meetings Act \(OMA\)](#) – endeavor to open the workings of government to the public, shed light on government actions and, in the process, strengthen our democracy.

In 2009, Attorney General Madigan worked with legislators and open government advocates to draft and pass landmark legislation ([Senate Bill 189, Public Act 096-0542](#)) to strengthen the Freedom of Information Act and the Open Meetings Act to increase the transparency and accountability of governments at all levels. This new law went into effect on January 1, 2010 and provides new tools and provisions to make certain the public has timely access to public records and public meetings.

The new law makes it easier to enforce FOIA and OMA and fight for open and accountable government by making permanent the **Public Access Counselor** position within the Attorney General's Office and empowering the Public Access Counselor with the authority to resolve FOIA and OMA disputes.

On the pages of this website, you will find detailed information to help the public and government officials and employees to understand and comply with FOIA and OMA. We encourage you to check this site routinely as new materials are made available.

We look forward to working with you to enforce the transparency laws and ensure that our government is open, accessible and accountable to all the people of Illinois.

Who is the Public Access Counselor?

Under the new law, the **Public Access Counselor (PAC)** will be a permanent part of the Office of the Attorney General. Working under the direction and supervision of the Attorney General and with a team of attorneys and professional staff, the Public Access Counselor's mission is to help people obtain public documents and access public meetings.

Attorney General Madigan appointed Cara Smith to the position of Public Access Counselor. Her contact information is:

Cara Smith
Public Access Counselor
Office of the Attorney General
500 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, Illinois 62706
Phone: 312-814-5526 or
1-877-299-FOIA (1-877-299-3642)
Fax: 217-782-1396
E-mail: publicaccess@atg.state.il.us