

**Governor's Council on Domestic Abuse, Committee and Workgroups**  
**Open Meetings Law – Reminders**

*Note: This document should not be construed as legal advice.*

When organizing a meeting:

- Prepare Public Notice
  - o Include the time, date, place, and subject matter of the meeting
  - o For a fully virtual meeting, include contact information for follow-up if a member of the public does not have the ability to join virtually.
  - o Must be published at least 24 hours in advance
    - If there is good cause and notice is impossible or impracticable, notice cannot be less than 2 hours
  - o Follow specific requirements for where publication must occur
  - o For Council, Committees, and Workgroups, provide to DCF staff (Stacey Cicero) at least 10 days in advance, if possible.
  
- Ensure Accessibility
  - o Reasonably accessible place for the public and open to all
  - o If virtual, make sure the virtual platform link works and is accessible to the public
  
- Keep a Record of the Meeting
  - o Create and preserve a record of all motions and roll-call votes
  - o Best practice to record this at the meeting or very soon after
    - Minutes are the most common way to do this
  - o Meeting records are public records under Public Records law
  
- Use Closed Sessions Only When Authorized
  - o Must be noticed with the subject matter if contemplated at the time of the notice
  - o A motion must be passed during an open session to start a closed session
  - o Must announce the nature of the business to be discussed and the specific statutory exemption that authorizes the closed session
  - o Votes should usually not happen in closed sessions

For members:

- Avoid discussing matters within the body's authority outside of noticed meetings if you are with more than half of the body.
- Avoid walking quorums (a series of meetings between small groups of members in which the members agree to act uniformly)
- Don't reply all to emails or forward emails to the whole group (such e-mails can be considered a meeting)

Detailed guidance from the Wisconsin Department of Justice relating to the Open Meetings Law is available in the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law Compliance Guide at:

[https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/office-open-government/Resources/OML%20Guide\\_2024.pdf](https://www.doj.state.wi.us/sites/default/files/office-open-government/Resources/OML%20Guide_2024.pdf)