

Iowa Public Information Board Budget

FEBRUARY 10, 2025



Iowa Public Information Board

IPIB: Our Role

The IPIB is designed to be ***an official, efficient and free legal resource for citizens and government officials.***

The Iowa Public Information Board was created by the passage of Iowa Code Chapter 23.

- Guidance for government bodies and elected officials on how to ensure compliance with open records and meetings laws
- Review and resolution of complaints related to failure to comply with open records or meetings laws
- Working with citizens and government bodies to resolve issues and concerns
- Educating the public and government bodies on the requirements of laws and best practices to meet those requirements

“One of the big problems today is, you have to go hire a lawyer, spend a bunch of time where it ends up being litigated.”

Governor Terry Branstad, on the lack of a system to address transparency upon signing Iowa Public Information Board legislation into law in 2013.

IPIB – Board Members

Governed by a nine-member board comprised of media, government, and public representatives. These members are appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate:

Joan Corbin – President of the Pella Community School District Board and community volunteer

E.J. Giovannetti, J.D. – Attorney for Hopkins and Huebner, P.C. and former elected official

Barry Lindahl, J.D. – Senior Counsel for the Dubuque City Attorney’s Office

Catherine Lucas, J.D. – General Counsel for the Iowa Department of Public Safety

Luke Martz – Background in public affairs, grassroots advocacy, and campaigns

Joel McCrea – Former General Manager of WHO Radio in Des Moines

Monica McHugh – Shared Services Manager at A.Y. McDonald and owner of JM Farm Accounting

Jackie Schmillen – Director of Public Affairs at the Iowa National Guard

IPIB Staff

IPIB has three staff who report to the Board and carry out the functions of investigation, legal analysis, mediation, administration, technology, and communications.



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IPIB Jurisdiction

IPIB has jurisdiction over Iowa Code Chapter 21 (Open Meetings laws) and Iowa Code Chapter 22 (Open Records laws)

Most common Chapter 21 Complaints:

- Notice,
- Closed sessions,
- Agendas

Most common Chapter 22 Complaints:

- Confidential documents,
 - Delays in providing documents
 - Fees
- 

Complaint Examples

- **Chapter 21:** “My Board of Supervisors met last week. There was not an agenda posted and nobody in the community received notice that the meeting was occurring.”
 - IPIB would educate the government body regarding open meeting requirements and ensure policies and best practices are implemented to comply with the law.
- **Chapter 22:** “I requested public records from the City two months ago. I haven’t received a response to my request.”
 - IPIB would review the case to determine whether the City responded, if the records should be released, and if the records should be deemed confidential pursuant to the law.
 - IPIB would educate the citizen and government body regarding the requirements of Iowa Code Chapter 22.

Cases

Broad Type (Yearly)

49% were public records

35% were open meetings

16% were both

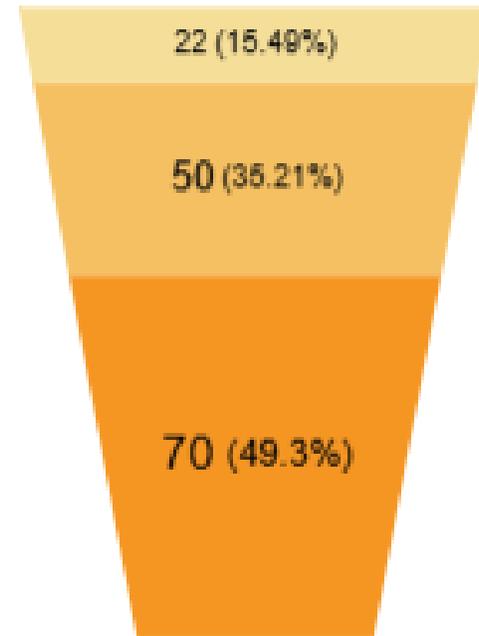
Complaint Type

Both

Chapter 21

Chapter 22

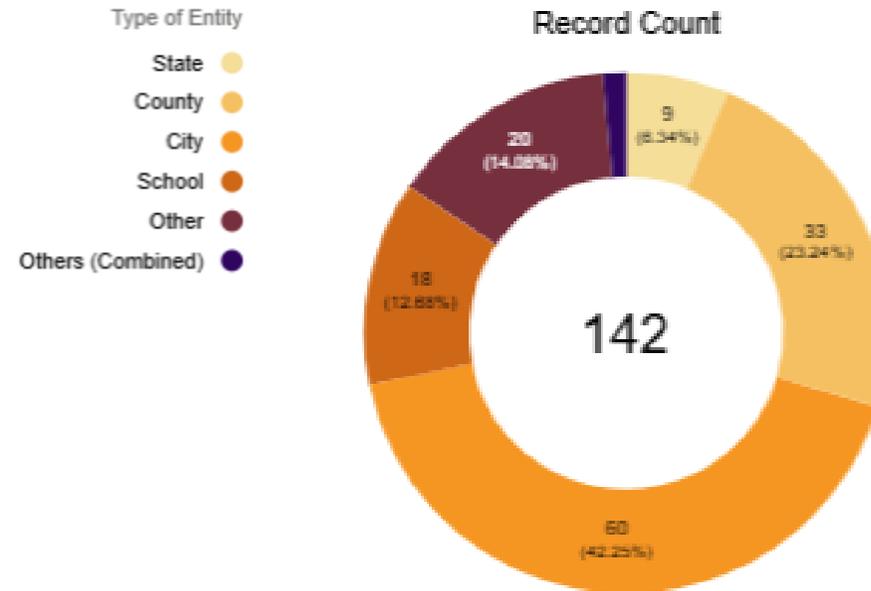
Record Count: 142



Entities

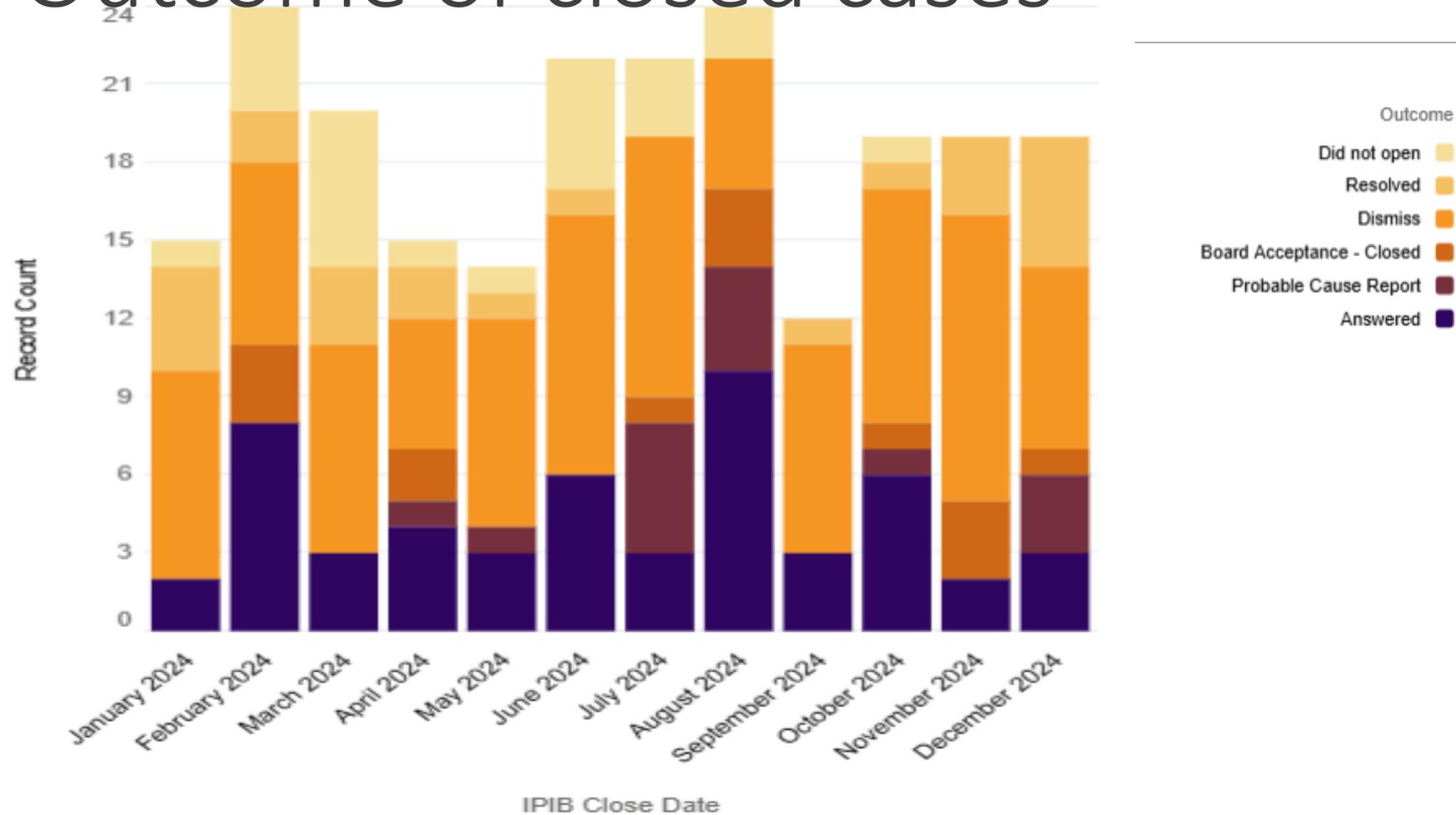
- 9 against state entities
- 33 against counties
- 60 against cities
- 18 against schools
- 20 against others, such as libraries, conservation, etc.

Cases by Entity Yearly



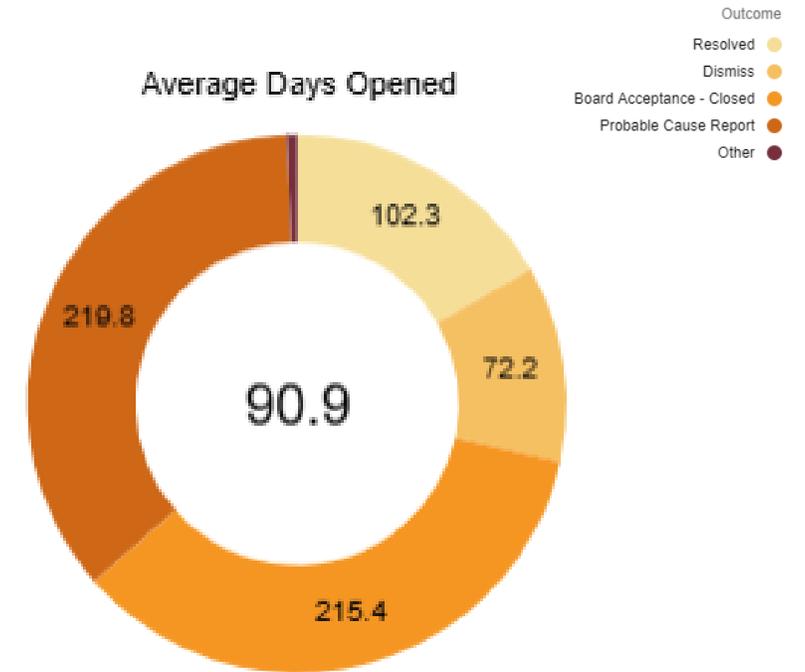
Some cases were consolidated. There were 134 formal complaints.

Outcome of closed cases



Average days to close a file by outcome

- 102 days to resolve
- 72 days to dismiss
- 215 days for informal resolution completion
- 220 days for probable report
- Average days per case= 91 (almost 10 days less than last year)



Year Highlights



In September, reclassified position to have three attorneys (formerly two attorneys and an assistant)

In November, implemented pilot program for more efficient complaint processing, reducing time to process complaints

All meetings in 2024 live-streamed available on YouTube channel

Continued focus on formal complaints **(134 complaints addressed in 2024)**

Continued guidance to officials and citizens via official advisory opinions **(12 advisory opinions issued in 2024)**

Continued outreach, education, and training **(18 formal trainings provided in 2024)**

FY2026 Goals



Completing EO10 review of administrative rules

Tracking timeframes and goals for complaint review and responsiveness

Providing more training opportunities

- Short videos on common issues and advisory opinions
- Updating training materials and FAQs

Increase resources for the public regarding open meetings and public records

- Work on handbook

Continue to collaborate with groups with common interests in open meetings and public records

Challenges



Small staff, so wear multiple hats:

- investigation, legal analysis, mediation, administration, technology, communications

Training

- Need to assist in providing training and support: Chapters 21 and 22 are not easy
- Thousands of officials subject to the requirements

Have utilized as many efficiencies as possible

- Updated complaint process
- Electronic submissions
- Reclassified positions

Turnover

- Only 1 out of 3 staff has tenure over 1 year

FY2025 Budget

Status quo budget of \$369,786.

Increase of \$6,559

General Fund Recommendations

	Actual FY 2024 <u>(1)</u>	Estimated FY 2025 <u>(2)</u>	Gov Rec FY 2026 <u>(3)</u>	Gov Rec vs Est FY 2025 <u>(4)</u>
<u>Public Information Board</u>				
Public Information Board				
Iowa Public Information Board	\$ 357,407	\$ 363,227	\$ 369,786	\$ 6,559
Total Public Information Board	<u>\$ 357,407</u>	<u>\$ 363,227</u>	<u>\$ 369,786</u>	<u>\$ 6,559</u>

