

## THE VERMONT OPEN MEETING LAW

Vermont’s open meeting law requires “all meetings of public bodies to be open to the public at all times,” unless a specific exception applies. 1 V.S.A. § 312(a). The open meeting law is based on the right to have an open and accountable government as established in Article 6 of the Vermont Constitution.

In general, the Vermont Open Meeting Law requires public bodies to:

- Conduct all business in an open meeting, with limited exceptions.
- Provide notice and agendas of meetings in advance.
- Provide an opportunity for public comments.
- Take meeting minutes and make them available to the public.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE ADVISORY PANEL

### Does the open meeting law apply to the Advisory Panel?

Yes. The Advisory Panel is considered a public body as defined in the open meeting law. 1 V.S.A. § 310(4).

### When does the open meeting law apply?

The Vermont Open Meeting Law applies to meetings of public bodies. A meeting is defined as a “gathering of a quorum of the members of a public body for the purpose of discussing the business of the public body or for the purpose of taking action.” 1 V.S.A. § 310(3)(A). For the Advisory Panel, a quorum is twelve members.

It is important to know that a meeting for the purpose of the open meeting law can take on many forms. If a business discussion occurs over any type of communication (including email, social media, etc.) with at least twelve members of the Advisory Panel, it is considered a meeting subject to the open meeting law and triggers the requirements for public notice and participation.

### How will the Advisory Panel communicate outside of open meetings?

We will use the Advisory Panel email listserv for the purpose of scheduling a meeting, organizing an agenda, or distributing materials to discuss at a meeting. To avoid violations of the open meeting law, the listserv should not be used for business discussions. We will use the monthly meetings for discussions and the Advisory Panel’s decision-making process.

It's important to note that email correspondence, and other electronic communication that results in written or recorded information, is subject to Vermont's Public Records Act, and so must generally be made available to the public for inspection and copying upon request. This includes email communications of Advisory Panel members.

## Will our Advisory Panel meetings be advertised?

Yes. We will provide notice of all Advisory Panel meetings on the project portal page hosted by Future iQ and the Department of Libraries calendar of public meeting events. The notice announcement will include the agenda for the meeting and a physical location to join the meeting.

## How will we work on editing documents together?

A quorum of the Advisory Panel cannot collectively edit a document outside of a duly-warned public meeting. We will provide mechanisms to provide feedback and we will use our monthly meetings for the full body of the Advisory Panel to make decisions.

## Where can I learn more about Vermont's Open Meeting law?

You can read the Vermont Open Meeting Law at [Vermont Statutes Online 1 V.S.A. §§ 310-314](#). The Vermont's Secretary of State [website](#) provides additional information about the law.

If you have questions about the Advisory Panel will meet the requirements of the Vermont Open Meeting Law, please reach out to Danny Fitzko at [Danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov](mailto:Danielle.fitzko@vermont.gov) or 802-598-9992.