



DIGITAL BLACKOUT:

*Local government websites
keep public in the dark*

Illinois' Open Meetings Act requires that public bodies post and maintain the following basic information on their own websites:

- Notice of public meetings
- Public meeting agendas
- Approved minutes from public meetings

However, a recent study by the Citizens Advocacy Center (CAC) of more than 700 local government websites found the results to be nothing short of a **digital disaster**. This study surveyed an approximate 20% random sampling of local governments 102 counties (20), 1,432 townships (298), 866 (176) school districts, and 1,312 (262) municipalities in Illinois. While there are many other categories of special taxing bodies in Illinois, the study focused on those public bodies that have the most obvious impact on people's daily lives.

49%

DID NOT HAVE A WEB SITE

The survey showed that out of the 756 public bodies surveyed, only 385 even bother to maintain a website.

Key Takeaways:

- Posting and maintaining this information to local government websites is a legal requirement. Failure to do so is a violation of the Open Meetings Act.
- **MUNICIPAL COMPLIANCE:** Only **65%** are complying with the website notice provision. Notably, municipalities were not very good at posting agendas as compliance with timely posting of an agenda was **54%**. Timely website posting of approved meeting minutes dropped to a **38%** compliance rate.
- **TOWNSHIP COMPLIANCE:** Township compliance levels were also low with only **61%** of those with a website complying with posting notice, **46%** complying with posting an agenda and **38%** complying with posting approved meeting minutes.
- **COUNTY COMPLIANCE:** Arguably, the worst performing of the public bodies surveyed. Just **39%** of counties with websites complied with posting notice, **33%** posting an agenda, and **33%** for posting approved meeting minutes.
- **SCHOOL DISTRICT COMPLIANCE:** The majority, **89%**, of school districts posted timely notice. However, timely posting of an agenda was poorer, **69%** overall. The numbers for timely posting of approved meeting minutes was poorer still at **62%**.

- **TOTAL COMPLIANCE —**
73% complied with posting notice,
57% complied with posting an agenda, and
48% complied with posting approved meeting minutes.