
Annual Report from the Data Practices Office

Fiscal Year 2018

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Introduction

The mission of the Data Practices Office is to promote understanding of and compliance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and Minnesota's Open Meeting Law. To realize this mission, we provide the following services:

- Informal advice to the government and members of the public (including the legislature and the media) who have questions about data practices
- Data practices and open meeting training
- Assistance to the Commissioner of Administration with statutory duties, including advisory opinions, temporary classifications, new uses of data, and appeals of data challenges
- Legislative assistance in working with individuals, organizations, government entities, and the Legislature in drafting and tracking legislation
- Explanatory info pages, model policies and procedures, and training modules for our website
- Consultation on projects with data practices issues

The Office has four full-time staff members and an annual general fund budget of \$525,000. To support our budget, we also generate approximately \$40,000 each fiscal year in revenue from our full-day and half-day training workshops.

Customer Contacts

The main service we provide in realizing our mission is informal advice to the government and public. The obligation and authority to provide this informal consultation and technical advice is in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.073 and Minnesota Rules, part 1205.1700.

This section details our customer interactions, referred to as *customer contacts*. The information summarized below includes data on calls, emails, and in-person requests handled by the Office.

Customer contact summary

We received and responded to **1,963** requests from government, public, media, and legislative customers for informal advice or technical assistance during Fiscal Year 2018 (July 2017 – June 2018).

Customer contact topics

We receive questions in a variety of areas and track the questions we receive by topic. The following were the top five specific topical areas for Fiscal Year 2018.

1. Law enforcement data
2. Data practices requests
3. Open Meeting Law

4. Data classification
5. Personnel data

In addition to the top 5 topical questions, we track 24 different types of questions. The chart below illustrates a breakdown of the majority of topical questions received in Fiscal Year 2018.



The other topical areas we track include:

- Automated license plate readers and body cameras
- Burdensome/harassing data requests
- Contracts
- Data breaches
- Data sharing
- HIPAA/Health Records Act
- Redaction
- Security information
- Social services related data

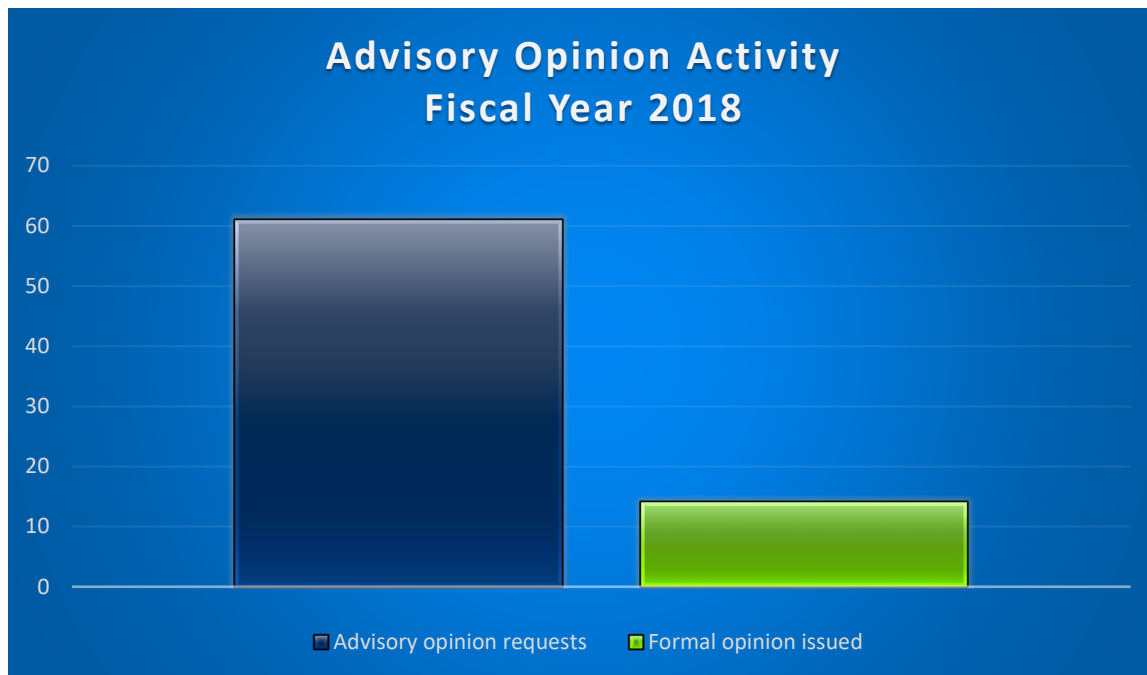
*Other statutory duties includes questions about temporary classifications, new uses of data, and data challenge appeals.

Advisory Opinion Activity

The Commissioner issued fourteen formal advisory opinions in Fiscal Year 2018, covering the topics of personnel data, law enforcement data, Open Meeting Law, data requests, and data classification. Our [website](#) hosts the full text of all Advisory Opinions.

While we respond to all formal advisory opinion requests in some manner, we can resolve many of the requests outside the formal opinion request process in a more expedient way. In the majority of situations, we are able to provide specific guidance in an email or letter, direct the opinion requester to prior advisory opinions on the requested topic, and/or provide informal resolution services by contacting government entities to resolve disputes.

The below chart details the advisory opinion activity in Fiscal Year 2018.



Data Practices and Open Meeting Training

Workshops and other training

We have developed curriculum for full-day and half-day training workshops based on the highest priority needs of our customers. This is evidenced from the top-five topical areas we consistently handle inquiries on. Our full-day workshops cover the topics of law enforcement data and personnel data and our half-day workshops cover the topics of Open Meeting Law and data practices basics (data requests and data classification).

The curriculum for these hands-on, interactive workshops provides a more in-depth experience for customers who work with data practices and open meetings issues on a day-to-day basis. They provide an added-value for these customers and take additional effort and staff time to develop. Therefore, we charge a fee to recoup our costs. Short presentations, trainings, or overviews that we conduct on an ad-hoc basis remain free for our customers.

In addition to the eleven workshops we provided in Fiscal Year 2018, we presented or trained at twenty-seven events, including three events in greater Minnesota.

The below chart details our workshop and other training/presentation breakdown in Fiscal Year 2018.



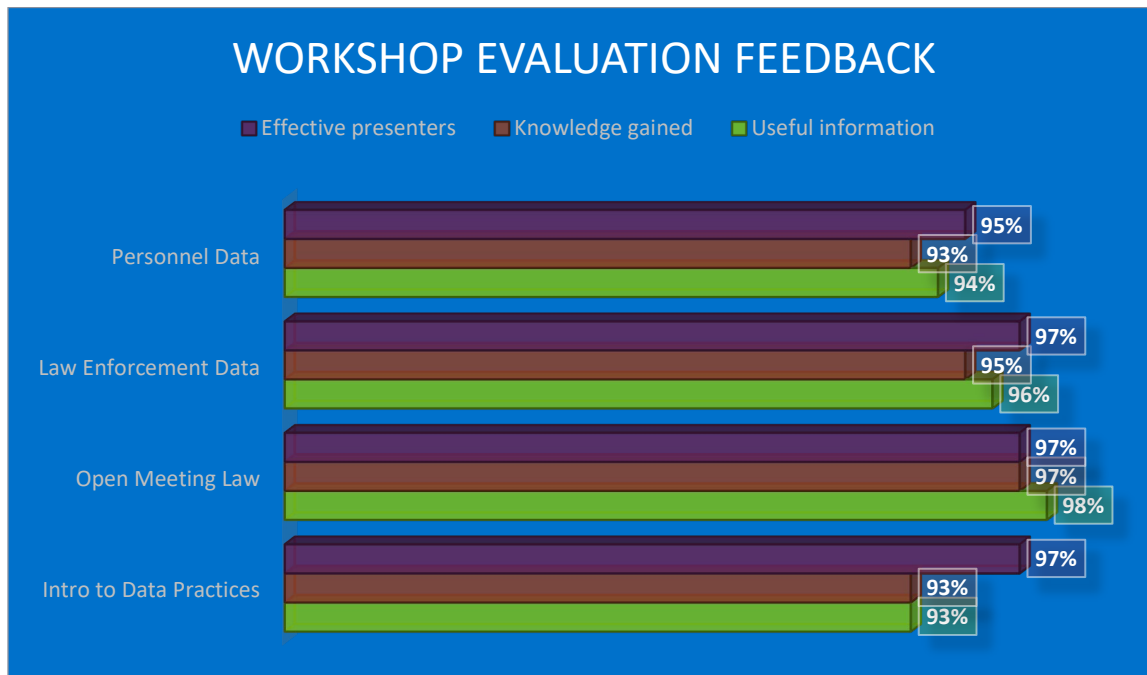
Customer feedback

In evaluating the services we provide to our customers through training, we ask for feedback in three areas:

1. The information presented will be useful in the future
2. Gained new knowledge about data practices and/or open meetings
3. Presenters were knowledgeable and effective presenters

At every workshop, and at many other trainings and presentations, we ask customers to fill out an evaluation form that includes the three questions above. We also continually revise and update our workshops based on the specific customer feedback we receive in these evaluations.

The below chart details the feedback we received in Fiscal Year 2018 at our workshops.



Other activities, areas for growth and looking forward

Temporary classification requests

The Commissioner did not receive or act on any temporary classification requests in Fiscal Year 2018.

Requests for new uses of government data

The Commissioner did not receive or act on any requests for new uses in Fiscal Year 2018.

Projects/consultations

In June 2018, the Data Practices Office was asked to serve on the core team for an initiative awarded to Minnesota by the National Governor’s Association (NGA). The NGA’s initiative, *Harnessing the Power of Data to Achieve State Policy Goals: The Foundation for State Success in Improving Quality and Reducing Costs*, will highlight data best practices in health policymaking. Minnesota was among the eight states selected for this 16-month project. The states will address governance, cross-sector data sharing, and systems capabilities to enhance data informed policy and capacity building across state agencies.

From January – May 2018, the Office participated in a series of meeting convened by Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) on behalf of Results for Children and Youth. The mission of the group was to foster collaboration and efficiency using cross-agency (DHS, MDH, DEED, MDE, OHE, MHFA and DOC) data to provide better services to Minnesota children and families, from the individual service-level to statewide policy.

Areas for growth and looking forward

The Data Practices Office hopes to complement its training efforts in the next year to offer additional training opportunities. Specifically, we hope to better utilize web-based, webinar technology currently available to more efficiently train our customers in a variety of settings. In addition to efficiency, we hope that the use of web-based training will better serve our greater Minnesota customers.

In Fiscal Year 2019, the Commissioner accepted and approved two [applications for temporary classification](#) of data related to certain rideshare data and certain transit data. Proposed legislation submitted in the temporary classification report to the Legislature, required under Minnesota Statutes, section 13.06, addresses both temporary classifications by incorporating the requested classifications, from the City of Rochester and SouthWest Transit, into current law in Minnesota Statutes, section 13.72.