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# Annual Report from the Data Practices Office

Fiscal Year 2019

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# Introduction

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The mission of the Department of Administration’s Data Practices Office is to promote understanding of and compliance with Minnesota’s [Government Data Practices Act](#) and [Open Meeting Law](#). To further our mission, we provide the following services:

- Informal advice and technical assistance to the government and members of the public (including the Legislature and the media) on questions related to data practices and open meetings
- Training on the Data Practices Act and Open Meeting Law
- Advising the Commissioner of Administration on data practices statutory duties, including advisory opinions, temporary classifications, new uses of data, and appeals of data challenges
- Legislative assistance to individuals, organizations, government entities, and the Legislature in drafting and tracking data practices and open meetings legislation
- Explanatory information pages, model policies and procedures, and training modules on our website
- Consultation on projects with data practices and open meetings issues

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

## Partner Contacts

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The main service we provide in furthering our mission is informal advice and technical assistance to the government and public. Our obligation and authority to provide this service is in [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.073, subdivision 5](#) and [Minnesota Rules, part 1205.1700](#).

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

### Contact summary

We received and responded to **2,106** requests from government, public, media, and legislative partners for informal advice or technical assistance during Fiscal Year 2019 (July 2018 – June 2019). This “partner contact” number does not include the number of individuals we trained at workshops, seminars, or other training events.

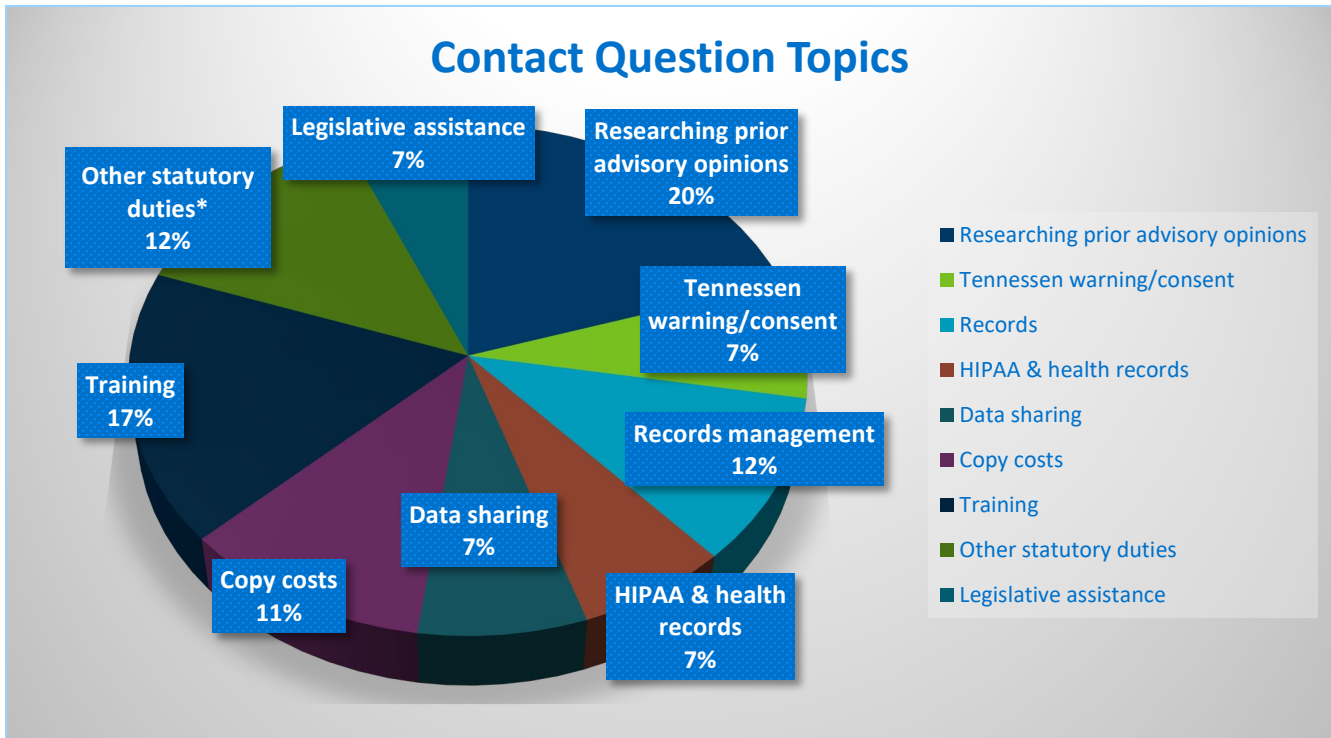
### Contact topics

We receive questions in a variety of areas and track the questions we receive by topic. The following were the top five topical areas for Fiscal Year 2019.

1. Data practices requests
2. Law enforcement data

3. Data classification
4. Government personnel data
5. Open Meeting Law

In addition to the top five topical questions, we track a variety of other question areas. The chart below illustrates a breakdown of the other top questions we received in Fiscal Year 2019.



Additional topical areas we track include:

- Automated license plate reader and body camera data
- Burdensome/harassing data requests
- Data breaches
- Data practices issues in government contracts
- Education data
- Redaction
- Security and trade secret information
- Social services data

\*The “other statutory duties” topic includes questions about temporary classifications, new uses of data, notification requirements, and data challenge determinations and appeals.

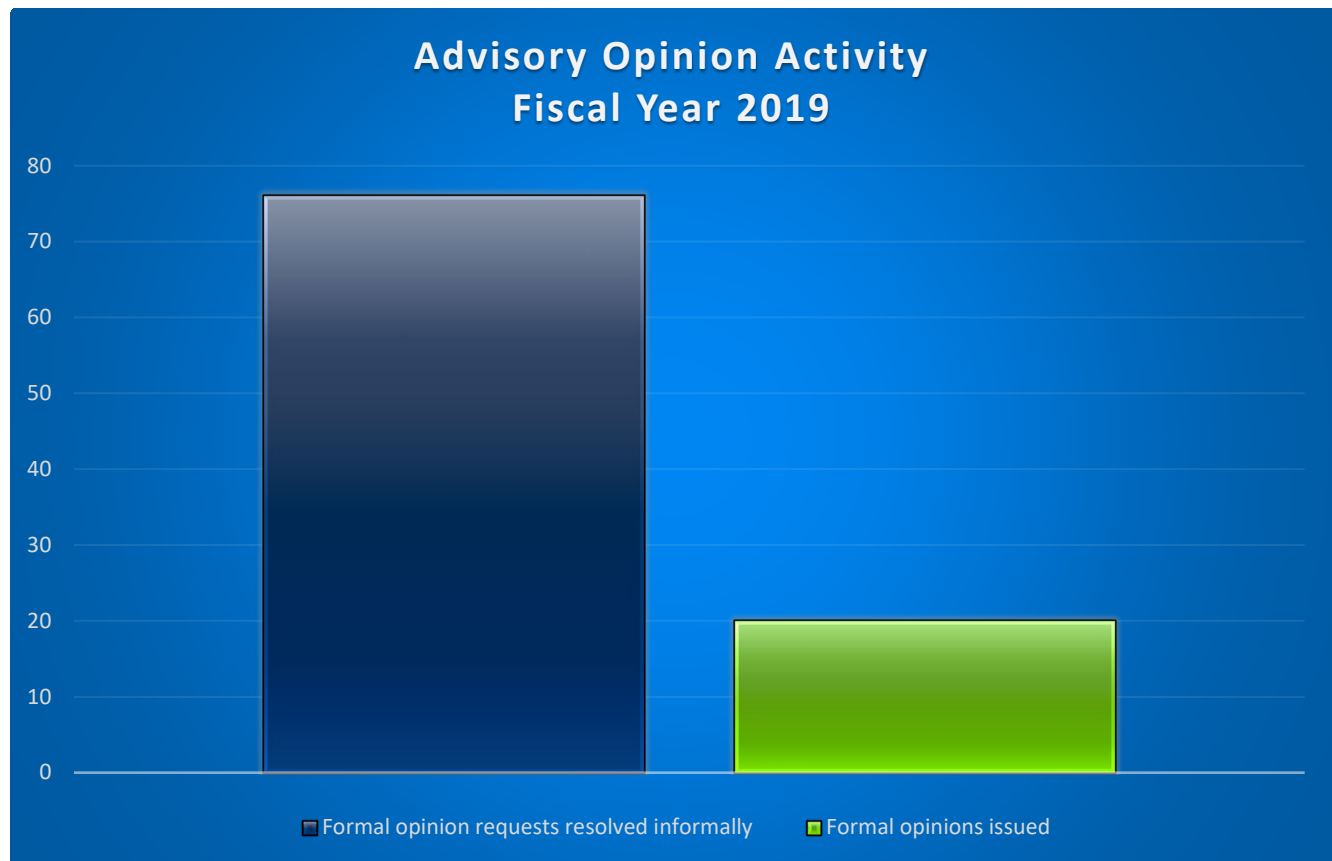
## Advisory Opinion Activity

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The Commissioner of Administration has authority to issue non-binding advisory opinions, on certain matters involving data practices and open meetings, under [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.072](#). The Commissioner issued twenty formal advisory opinions in Fiscal Year 2019, covering the topics of personnel data, law enforcement data, open meetings, data requests, and data classification. Our [website](#) hosts the full text of all advisory opinions.

While we respond to all formal advisory opinion requests, we resolve many of the requests outside the formal opinion request process in a more expedient way. In most situations, we 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 assistance by contacting government entities to resolve disputes with data requesters.

The below chart details the advisory opinion activity in Fiscal Year 2019.



# Data Practices and Open Meetings Training

## Workshops and other training

The Office has developed curriculum for full-day and half-day training workshops based on the highest priority needs of our partners. These high priority needs are identified in the top-five topical areas we consistently handle inquiries on. Our full-day workshops cover the topics of law enforcement data and personnel data. Our half-day workshops cover open meetings and data practices basics (data requests and data classification).

The curriculum for these hands-on, interactive workshops provides a more in-depth experience for partners who work with data practices and open meetings issues on a day-to-day basis. They provide an added-value for these partners 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 partners.

The Office presented or trained at 35 events in Fiscal Year 2019, including twelve full-day and half-day workshops and six events in greater Minnesota.

The below chart details our workshop and other training/presentation breakdown in Fiscal Year 2019. The Office trained a total of 1,801 partners in Fiscal Year 2019.



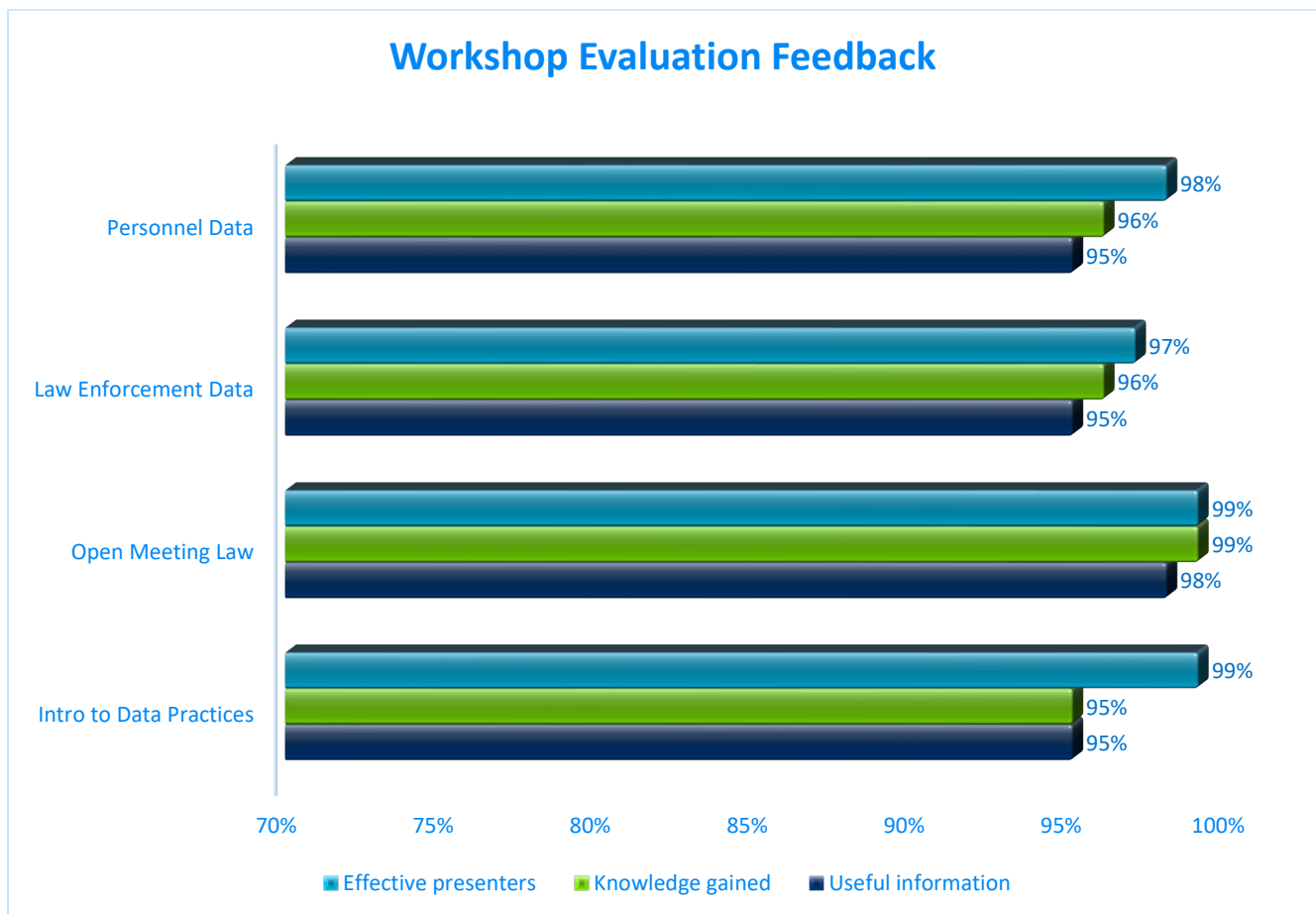
## Partner feedback

We ask for feedback in three areas in evaluating our training content:

1. Whether the information presented will be useful to the attendee in the future
2. If the attendee gained new knowledge about data practices and/or open meetings
3. Whether the presenters were knowledgeable and effective presenters

At every workshop, and at many of the other trainings, presentations and seminars we conduct, we ask our partners to provide feedback, including the three questions above. We also continually revise and update our workshops and other training content based on the specific partner feedback we receive in these evaluations.

The below chart details the feedback we received in Fiscal Year 2019 at our workshops.



## Other activities

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### Temporary classification requests

The Commissioner of Administration has authority to approve requests for temporary classification of government data under [Minnesota Statutes, section 13.06](#). The Commissioner accepted and approved two applications for temporary classification of data related to certain rideshare data and certain transit data in Fiscal Year 2019. The proposed legislation submitted in the temporary classification report to the Legislature, required under section 13.06, addressed both temporary classifications. The proposed language incorporated the requested classifications, from the City of Rochester and SouthWest Transit, into current law in Minnesota Statutes, [sections 13.201](#) and [13.72](#). The Governor signed legislation enacting a permanent classification for the data on May 30, 2019 (see [First Special Session Law Chapter 5](#), article 2, sections 2-3).

### Requests for new uses of government data

The Commissioner did not receive or act on any requests for new uses of data in Fiscal Year 2019.

### Projects/consultations

For the duration of Fiscal Year 2019, the Data Practices Office served on the core team for an initiative awarded to Minnesota by the National Governor's Association (NGA). The NGA's project: [Harnessing the Power of Data to Achieve State Policy Goals: The Foundation for State Success in Improving Quality and Reducing Costs](#) focuses on data best practices in policymaking. Minnesota was among the eight states selected for this 16-month project. The states will address data governance, cross-sector data sharing, and data systems capabilities to enhance informed policy and capacity building across state agencies.

### Areas for growth and looking forward

#### Web-based training

During Fiscal Year 2019, the Data Practices Office finalized testing for the implementation of a complement to its in-person training efforts by utilizing web-based training services. This will allow the Office to see greater efficiency in training our partners in a variety of settings. In addition to efficiency, we expect that the use of web-based training will better serve our greater Minnesota partners.

#### Legislative

The Office will continue to closely monitor and work with the Minnesota Legislature on data practices and open meeting issues, including work with the Legislative Coordinating Commission's subcommittee on Data Practices in its efforts to study issues relating to government data practices and individual privacy rights (see [Minnesota Statutes, section 3.8843](#)).