

PUBLIC RECORDS ACT TRAINING CLASSES

For Local Governments and Washington State Agencies

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CLASSES OFFERED

Public Records Act Essentials for Public Records Officers & Lawyers

*Comprehensive training on procedural requirements
based on real-world examples*

Records Management: Exemptions & Retention

*Training focused on when records do not have to be produced –
covering personnel records, law enforcement records and retention rules*

Managing Your Public Records Act Program

*Training based on structuring your agency's Public Records Act
compliance program to streamline responses and minimize mistakes*

Open Government Retreat for Councils, Commissions & Boards

*Policy-based training in the Public Records Act and the Open Public Meetings Act
designed to help decision makers follow the rules and provide them with tools
to discuss agency compliance with the public*

CONSULTING

*Fixed-rate consulting packages to help local governments at all junctures of a Public Records Act
dispute from the interpretation of the initial request to forming the best arguments on appeal*

Hear what others have said about Ramsey's prior trainings:

"I thought the program was excellent and covered all I was hoping it would"

"The entire presentation was very, very informative - one of the best I have attended"

"Excellent presentation presented in a very user-friendly manner"

*"Great presentation; easy to follow, hands-on practical materials Very good use of actual
examples for the variety of issues"*

“A popular Government, without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a Prologue to a Farce or a Tragedy; or perhaps both.” James Madison

Why Public Records Act Training?

Over a decade ago, the Washington Supreme Court warned, “An agency’s compliance with the Public Records Act is only as reliable as the weakest link in the chain. If an agency employee along the line fails to comply, the agency’s response will be incomplete, if not illegal.” *Progressive Animal Welfare Society v. University of Washington*, 125 Wn. 2d 677 (1995).

Even one innocent mistake can amount to a violation of the Washington Public Records Act (PRA) and Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). That violation can have serious consequences to your agency’s bottom line and to the public’s trust and confidence in your agency. There is no insurance to cover these claims so the best thing you can do to protect your agency is to make sure every employee fully understands the rules. Most of the cases where agencies have been hit with harsh penalties have involved mistakes – not deliberate attempts to hide information. The better your employees understand their legal obligations, the less likely your agency will be to make a mistake.

About Ramsey Ramerman

*Ramsey Ramerman’s legal practice is focused on helping governments comply with the Washington State Public Records Act, 42.56 RCW and Open Public Meetings Act, 42.30 RCW. He has trained 1000s of public employees on open government compliance and lectures at the **University of Washington School of Law**. He is the founding president of the **Washington Association of Public Records Officers** and serves as the local government representative on the **Washington State Sunshine Committee**. He has argued several PRA cases before the **Washington State Supreme Court** and has assisted dozens of local governments – including counties, cities, school districts, public hospital districts, public utility districts and public housing authorities – with PRA and OPMA compliance. Currently, he is an Everett assistant city attorney. Previously he worked at Foster Pepper PLLC, Division II of the Court of Appeals and the Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.*

Email questions about open government training and consulting to RamseyRamerman@gmail.com.