

**INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF CHILD SERVICES
ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Policy Number: GA-13

Effective Date: January 1, 2013

Version: 1.0

POLICY TITLE: Off-Site Participation in Public Meetings

OVERVIEW: DCS consists of professionals who possess critical skills and knowledge helpful in determining matters involving child abuse and neglect detection, services and prevention. DCS professionals are located in 92 different counties within the state. The amount of travel time involved in DCS staff driving to and attending meetings can be time-consuming and costly to the taxpayers of the state of Indiana. The various governing bodies within DCS shall do what it can to best accommodate the professionals on the various committees and governing bodies to maximize the number of meetings each employee can attend. It is therefore deemed advisable to adopt a liberal policy concerning the offsite participation of members via electronic communications as allowed by [IC 5-14-1.5-3.5](#). DCS hereby adopts this policy. The liberal use of electronic participation shall be allowed to encourage full participation.

I. DEFINITIONS

- A. Electronic Means/Communication: Participation in a public meeting by telephone, computer, video conferencing, or any other type of electronic means.
- B. Executive Session: A meeting from which the public is excluded. However, the governing body may admit non-members necessary or desired to conduct its business.
- C. Governing Body: Two (2) or more individuals who are a board, commission, authority, council, or other entity and take official action on public business; and any committee appointed directly by an agency or its presiding officer.
- D. Roll Call Votes: A voting system that guarantees every member's vote is recorded. In this system of voting, members vote as their names are called.

II. REFERENCES

- A. [IC 5-14-1.5: Public Meetings \(Open Door Law\)](#)
- B. [IC 5-14-1.5-3.5: Electronic meetings of political subdivisions; statutory authorization required](#)
- C. [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6: Electronic communications by certain governing bodies](#)
- D. [IC 5-14-1.5-5: Public notice of meetings](#)

III. STATEMENTS OF PURPOSE

- A. Employees of DCS and members of the public present at the meeting place, the off-site members and any members of the public present at the public off-site location all must be able to simultaneously communicate with each other during the meeting.
- B. The greater of either two (2) members or 1/3 of the members of the committee or governing body must be physically present at the primary meeting site as required by [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6](#).
- C. All votes must be roll call votes as required by [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6](#).
- D. Each member must physically attend at least one (1) meeting of the governing body or committee annually as required by [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6](#).

- E. DCS and its committees or governing bodies shall not conduct a meeting by electronic communication until DCS, by favorable majority vote of DCS executive management adopts this policy governing participation in meetings of its various committees and governing bodies by electronic communication as required by [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6](#).
- F. This policy, once adopted by DCS, shall be posted on the DCS website, as required by [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6](#).
- G. DCS desires to allow members of the public to attend the meeting at any alternative public location used by any member for electronic participation of any meeting not held as an executive session.
- H. Pursuant to [IC 5-14-1.5-3.6](#) and [IC 5-14-1.5-5](#), the policy adopted by DCS allows the public to attend the meeting in public locations where one (1) or more members are participating via electronic communication.

IV. PROCEDURE

Members wishing to participate via electronic means will notify the meeting coordinator by telephone or e-mail no later than 72 hours prior to the meeting in order for the public notice for any such meeting to:

- A. Identify each member who will be physically present at a public place and who will participate in the meeting by electronic communication;
- B. Identify the address and phone number of each public location where a member will be participating via electronic communication; and
- C. Include a statement that the locations described in (B) will be open and accessible to the public, unless the meeting is an executive session.

DATE: 1/1/2013

John P. Ryan, Director

Department of Child Services

A signed copy is on file.