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Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. Policy #16-02

Approved by the Board of Directors, 02-17-2016

Open Meeting and Open Records Policy

1. Purpose

This document sets forth the Open Meeting and Open Records Policy and Procedure of the Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology, Inc. (FAAST) that will be followed beginning 02/17/2017.

2. Policy Compliance

- a. The Florida Assistive Technology Advisory Council (A-TAC) and the FAAST Board of Directors will be responsible for complying with this Open Meeting and Open Records Policy.
- b. Administrative staff and staff meeting are not subject to the Florida Sunshine Law.
- c. The Sunshine Law also applies to meetings between a member of the A-TAC and FAAST Board of Directors and an individual who is not a board member when that individual is being used as a liaison for a state agency, or to conduct a *de facto* meeting of, board members.
- d. Members elect of the A-TAC and FAAST Board of Directors are subject to the Sunshine Law at the time the election results are certified.

3. Open Meetings

a. Public Notices

- i. Meeting of the A-TAC and FAAST Board of Directors will be scheduled with 30 days public notice.
- ii. Monthly meetings of committees of the A-TAC and FAAST Board of Directors will be scheduled with at least five days public notice.
- iii. Emergency meetings of committees of the A-TAC and FAAST Board of Directors will be scheduled with at least 24 hours public notice
- iv. All public meeting notices will be posted on the FAAST website and community bulletin board at the FAAST State Headquarters.

b. Compliance with the Florida Sunshine Law

- i. All meetings in which two or more members of the A-TAC and FAAST Board of Directors will have the following components:
 1. All meetings will be open to the public.
 2. All meetings will use the appropriate timeline for Public Notices as detailed in 3 a.

3. All meetings will be recorded and provided to the public on the FFAST website.
 4. Minutes will be taken and provided to the public on the FFAST website.
 - a. The FFAST Executive Director will assign one staff member to develop the minutes. The staff members' notes will become a public record for inspection by the public if requested.
- c. Meetings
- i. For the sake of compliance and risk management, all gatherings whether formal or informal of two or more members will be considered an open meeting.
 - ii. Members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors may not engage in private discussions of FFAST business in-person or through written correspondence via emails, text messages, or other electronic communications.
- d. Written Correspondence
- i. Members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors may correspond with other members via written communications using the following guidelines.
 1. All communications will be forwarded to the FFAST Executive Director.
 2. The FFAST Executive Director will work with the FFAST Director of Communications to prepare the correspondence for distribution via email.
 3. Members will be provided a means to respond to the communication.
 4. All responses will provided as public comment at the next appropriate committee meeting.
- e. Community Forums
- i. Community forums sponsored by a *private organization* are not subject to the Sunshine Law even though two or more members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors are in attendance and discussing issues that may come before them in their official capacity.
 - ii. The Sunshine Law *will* apply, however, if the members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors discuss such issues among themselves.
- f. Social Events
- i. The Sunshine Law does *not* apply to social gatherings attended by two or more members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors provided that FFAST business is not discussed.
 - ii. However, “[p]ublic bodies should avoid secret meetings” held in connection with a public meeting “even though such secret meetings are held ostensibly for purely social purposes”
- g. Public Participation
- i. The A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors will provide the public time to comment at each and every meeting.
- h. Inaudible Discussions
- i. A violation of the Sunshine Law may occur if members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors discuss FFAST business in a manner not generally audible to the public attending the meeting. Although such a meeting is not clandestine, it nonetheless violates the letter and spirit of the law.
 - ii. Discussions of FFAST business which are audible only to “a select few” who are within earshot of a discussion of FFAST business by two or more members of the A-TAC and FFAST Board of Directors may violate the “openness” requirement of the Sunshine Law.