

Wisconsin.Gov



State of Wisconsin

Department of Justice



Open Meetings

Open Meetings Compliance Guide

This guide provides an overview of the law and compiles information provided by Wisconsin DOJ in response to inquiries submitted over the course of several decades. This guide is provided pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 19.98](#) and does not constitute an informal or formal opinion of the Attorney General pursuant to [Wis. Stat. § 165.015\(1\)](#).

[Open Meetings Compliance Guide](#)

Meeting Notices

Meetings notices for the Wisconsin Department of Justice:

- Diversity Advisory Council, Black History Month Community Event | February 11, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. | [View the meeting notice](#)
- Diversity Advisory Council | February 12, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. | [View the meeting notice](#)
- Office of Crime Victim Services, Task Force on Children in Need, Judicial Subcommittee Meeting | February 13, 2026 at 12:00 p.m. | [View the meeting notice](#)
- Wisconsin Violence Against Women Act, Services, Training, Officers, and Prosecution (VAWA STOP) Advisory Committee | February 17, 2026 at 10:00 a.m. | [View the meeting notice](#)
- Office of Crime Victim Services, Task Force on Children in Need, Training Support Subcommittee Meeting | February 24, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. | [View the meeting notice](#)



- Office of Crime Victim Services, Task Force on Children in Need, Mental Health Barriers Subcommittee Meeting | March 3, 2026 at 9:00 a.m. | [View the meeting notice](#)
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About the Wisconsin Open Meetings Law

[Wisconsin's Open Meetings Law](#), enacted in 1976, promotes openness in government by providing Wisconsin citizens with an opportunity to attend and observe the meetings of governmental bodies.

The open meetings law requires that all meetings of all state and local governmental bodies shall be publicly held in places reasonably accessible to members of the public and shall be open to all citizens at all times unless otherwise expressly provided by law. More detailed information about the open meetings law is available in the compliance guide and other resources below.

Frequently Asked Questions

When does a meeting occur such that the open meetings law applies?

What can I do if I believe a governmental body violated the open meetings law?

My town board's meeting minutes do not reflect everything that occurred at the meeting. Is this a violation of the open meetings law?

What is a walking quorum?

What type of notice is required for a meeting of a government body?



As a private citizen, do I have a right to speak at my city council's public meetings?

The Wisconsin Open Meetings Law acknowledges the public is entitled to the fullest and most complete information regarding government affairs as long as it does not hinder the conduct of governmental business. All meetings of governmental bodies, such as a city council, shall be held publicly and be open to all citizens at all times unless otherwise expressly provided by law. The open meetings law does not require a governmental body to allow members of the public to speak or actively participate in an open session meeting. The law only grants citizens the right to attend and observe open meetings.

However, the law permits a governmental body to set aside a portion of an open meeting as a public comment period. While public comment periods are not required, if a governmental body decides to have such a comment period, it must be included in the meeting notice.

There are other state statutes — other than the open meetings law — that require governmental bodies to hold public hearings regarding certain matters. Unless such a statute specifically applies, a governmental body has wide discretion over any public comment period it chooses to permit. Besides the discretion over whether to allow public comments at all, a body also has discretion to decide to what extent it will allow public participation. For example, a governmental body can limit how much time each citizen may speak.

If a governmental body permits a public comment period, it may receive information from the public, and it may discuss any subject raised by a member of the public. A body may not take any formal action on such a subject unless it was identified in the body's meeting notice. If a citizen raises a subject that is not included on the meeting notice, it may be advisable for the body to limit substantive discussion on the subject until a subsequent meeting in which the body can include the subject on the



meeting notice.

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