



Open Meetings Act

Description

The [Illinois Open Meetings Act](#) is the state law that requires governments to conduct their business in public — including providing advance notice so citizens can attend, allowing for public comment and maintaining written minutes.

Things you should know

- OMA applies to most public bodies at all levels of government that are supported by or spend tax dollars. This includes legislative and executive bodies and advisory boards. It does not apply to the Illinois General Assembly or its committees.
- A meeting can be in person or via electronic means, including phone, email or videoconference.
- Any such gathering at which a majority of a quorum (typically a majority of a majority) is present to discuss public business is considered a meeting under OMA.
- A public body must provide notice of its regular meeting schedule at the beginning of each year. Special or rescheduled meetings require 48-hour notice, except in an emergency. Agendas must be available 48 hours before a meeting.
- A meeting can be closed to the public only under limited circumstances.

Closed sessions

A public body can hold a closed meeting to discuss matters on an ever-growing list of subjects, including:

- Personnel matters
- Collective bargaining negotiations
- Purchase, sale or lease of property
- Purchase or sale of investments
- Considering candidates to fill an appointment to public office
- Security procedures
- Litigation

Before going into closed session, a public body must take a vote publicly, during a properly noticed meeting, and it must cite the exception under OMA that allows it to meet privately. Any final action, such as a vote, must take place in public. If not, a judge could later invalidate the action.

If you believe a meeting is being closed illegally, interrupt the proceedings and ask for the specific exemption cited to do so. Ask if a vote has been taken and recorded. If you don't like the answers, state that you object and ask that your objection be included in the minutes of the meeting.