

Open Meeting Law (OML)

The Open Meeting Law ([Minnesota Statutes Chapter 13D](#)) requires meetings of governmental entities to be open to the public, with limited exceptions.

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Who?

- The OML applies to both state-level public entities and local public entities in Minnesota. Examples include:
 - Sourcewell's Board of Directors.
 - The Better Health Collective's Board of Trustees.
 - Brainerd Public Schools' Board of Education (School Board).
- The OML applies to "meetings." A "meeting" occurs when enough members required to conduct business are gathered (in person or through technology) (referred to as a "quorum").
 - Example: Sourcewell's Bylaws define a quorum as a majority of elected Board of Directors.
 - The OML does not apply to social gatherings or trainings *so long as* members avoid discussions of official business.
- The OML does not apply to meetings held among staff at a governmental entity.

Why?

The OML is designed to:

- Prohibit secret meetings,
- Allow the public to be informed on public officials' decision making, and
- Allow members of the public to present their views to their public officials.

When?

- The OML requires meetings to be open in most circumstances. To hold an "open" meeting, the governmental entity must:
 - Provide notice prior to the meeting,
 - Allow the public to attend, and
 - Ensure meeting materials are available to the public.
- The OML requires a governmental entity to "close" a meeting in several specific circumstances.
 - Example: A governmental entity must close a meeting to discuss educational or health data classified as "not public."
- The OML allows a governmental entity to close a meeting in several specific circumstances.
 - Example: Sourcewell's Board of Directors may close a meeting to conduct its evaluation of the Chief Executive Officer.
 - Example: Sourcewell's Board of Directors may close a meeting to prepare a litigation strategy (attorney-client privilege).

What?

The OML also establishes requirements for how meetings must be conducted.

- Notice: The OML law creates four types of meetings: regular, special, emergency, and meetings by interactive technology. The notice requirements vary by meeting type.
 - For regular meetings, the governmental entity must have a schedule of its regular meetings kept on file at its primary offices.
- Meeting materials: The OML requires materials related to the meeting agenda be:
 - Distributed prior to the meeting and at the meeting to all members of the body.
 - Available in the meeting room for inspection by the public.
- Remote meetings: The OML establishes requirements for holding a remote meeting, including:
 - All members participating in the meeting can see and hear each other.
 - At least one board member is physically present at the regular meeting location.
 - All votes must be conducted by roll call.

Questions?

Contact the Sourcewell Legal Team by submitting a ticket through [LENS](#).