

Northwestern Oklahoma Workforce Board
Policy on “Comments from the Public” at NOWB Meetings
4/27/17

The Northwestern Oklahoma Workforce Board (NOWB) desires to be open to the public and encourages communication in order to hear the viewpoints of citizens throughout the Northwestern Workforce Area. The NOWB considers the responsible presentation of these viewpoints as vital to the efficient operations of the System and the NOWB. System stakeholders, workforce partners, businesses, and other patrons are encouraged to attend NOWB Meetings so that they may become better acquainted with the operation and programs of the Northwestern Oklahoma Area, and that the NOWB may have an opportunity to hear the wishes and ideas of the public.

The NOWB will have an agenda item labeled “Comments from the Public” on each Regular NOWB Meeting Agenda that affords citizens the right to speak on any action item on the Agenda for that Meeting. Matters not on the Agenda are not proper subjects for discussion. Members of the public shall not be recognized or allowed to be heard or participate at any other time during the Meeting or while the NOWB is conducting its official business.

The purpose of the NOWB meetings is to carry on the business of the Northwestern Oklahoma Workforce Board in an orderly and businesslike manner. Therefore, the NOWB sets the following rules for public participation at NOWB meetings:

- A. All meetings of the Board will be open to the public.
- B. The Board shall conduct its business pursuant to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act. The meetings are not public hearings, but are meetings held in the public. Spontaneous discussion from the audience will not be permitted.
- C. As the purpose of the “Comments from the Public” agenda item is to hear the comments, concerns and opinions of patrons, NOWB Members and administrative staff shall not respond to questions from the public. The Oklahoma Open Meeting Act prevents the discussion or action by the NOWB on any item presented under the “Comments from the Public” Agenda topic.
- D. Information about items on the agenda should be obtained from the Workforce Board Director.
- E. All visitors shall be asked to list their names on the meeting’s attendance/sign-in sheet.
- F. Pursuant to the Oklahoma Open Meeting Act, an item must appear on the posted agenda if discussion and action are to occur.
- G. “Comments from the Public” is not when Workforce System Partners or stakeholder should discuss reports or provide updates of projects. An agenda item will be clearly labeled for these types of reports if such reports are necessary.
- H. Advanced requests to address the NOWB is not required but will be accepted. Advance requests for permission to address the NOWB must be submitted to the NOWB Director in

writing no later than three days (not including weekends or holidays) preceding a meeting of the NOWB. The request shall state the name of the individual or group submitting the request, a telephone number and mailing address, the purpose of the request and topic to be presented.

- I. The NOWB Director shall confer with the NOWB Chair concerning whether the requested item should be placed on an agenda and, if so, the appropriate meeting for such discussion. The NOWB Director will respond to all written requests that an item be placed on an agenda.
- J. At the meeting, the NOWB Chair shall recognize speakers, maintain proper order, and adhere to time limits established by this policy:
 - 1) During the agenda item for “Comments from the Public”, if there is allowable time, a limit of five (5) minutes is established for individuals addressing the NOWB.
 - 2) Groups or organizations shall designate one spokesperson to address the NOWB.
 - 3) The NOWB reserves the right to limit repetitive comments.
 - 4) All presentations pursuant to this policy shall be directed to the Chair of the NOWB. No questions or comments shall be directed to NOWB members except upon approval of the Chair.
 - 5) Members of the NOWB and the Board Director may ask questions of any person who addresses the NOWB.
- K. This policy does not create a right to address the NOWB. The NOWB reserves complete control over its agenda and the conduct of its meetings.