



## Board, Committee & Commission Handbook

This guide serves as a resource and reference tool for appointed members of standing El Dorado County Board of Supervisors designated boards, committees and commissions. Applicable County processes, legal parameters, and protocols that affect the business of County committees and commissions are covered in this guide. In addition, the guide details information on the role and duties of members of boards, committees, and commissions when conducting meetings, developing agendas, and advocating on legislative issues.

**Disclaimer:** This guide contains general information based on County policies and procedures and is intended for reference purposes only. Board policies, the County Strategic Plan, references and other content within the guide are subject to change without notice.

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## PREFACE

Welcome to the County of El Dorado. We thank you for your dedication to public service in facilitating the important work of the County through boards, committees, and commissions. This guide includes, among other things, a summary of your responsibilities and obligations as a member, information on the appropriate way to effectively engage with El Dorado County staff, guidance on how to communicate official recommendations and findings to the Board of Supervisors (Board), and other practical information to assist you in the conduct of your service.

Please take time to read through this guide to understand how business is conducted by boards, committees, and commissions. While each may have unique characteristics, all boards, committees, and commissions are guided by California law, the County Charter, Board policies and procedures, the County Strategic Plan, and other governing documents.

As an appointed member, you are expected to attend and participate in all regular and special meetings of your respective board, committee, or commission in a transparent, efficient, and professional manner. By accepting your appointment, you are also expected to abide by and embody the defining values of the Board, recognizing that your conduct is a reflection of both the Board and the County of El Dorado. Finally, thank you for agreeing to serve. Your expertise is a valued, essential factor in assisting the Board with reaching their goals and overarching strategic priorities for County government and the communities we serve.

## I. ROLE OF BOARDS, COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS IN COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Boards, committees, and commissions serve a vital role in County government by gathering and analyzing public input and recommending options to the Board. Some boards, committees, and commissions are authorized by the Board to take independent action supported by state statute (e.g., Planning Commission, Civil Service Commission, and Assessment Appeals Board); most others serve in a fact-finding or advisory role and are not authorized to take independent action. *(See also Section VI. Legislation and Public Officials)*

### A. Establishment

1. Boards, committees, and commissions are established to assist the Board with the varied duties and responsibilities of local government and to encourage citizen involvement, expertise, and participation.
2. Boards, committees, and commissions may be created by:
  - State or Federal Law
  - County Charter, Ordinance, Resolution, or other action of the Board of Supervisors

## II. MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

### A. Roles and Responsibilities of Members

1. Members are encouraged to take an active role in making progress towards goals and objectives.
2. Members are responsible for attending meetings to ensure a quorum and facilitate the business of the board, committee, or commission. Failure to regularly attend meetings may result in removal of the member by the Board.
3. It is the responsibility of members to provide advance notice of their absence from a meeting to the Chair of the board, committee, or commission, the executive director, liaison, or staff.
4. Members are responsible for reviewing meeting materials in advance of a meeting.
5. Members are expected to comply with the Ralph M. Brown Act (Brown Act) (California Government Code sections 54950, et seq.). (See Appendix C. *County Counsel's Guide to the Brown Act* and Appendix D. *League of California Cities Open & Public: A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act.*)
6. Members should have knowledge of the County's Strategic Plan and priorities of the Board. (See Appendix Section XII B. *County Strategic Plan*)
7. Members are expected to comply with the bylaws and other applicable governing documents or Board direction relating to the board, committee, or commission to which the Member is appointed.
8. Members shall not grant any special consideration, treatment, or advantage to any person beyond that which is available to every other person in similar circumstance. No person shall be favored or discriminated against with respect to the business of the board, committee, or commission because of family or social relationships, sex, race, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, age, physical disability, mental disability, medical condition, political opinion, or political affiliation.
9. As members of a committee or commission that serve in an advisory role to the Board, individual members shall refrain from speaking independently at Board meetings on issues or agenda items that fall within the scope of their committee or commission, unless authorized to do so by their board, committee, or commission.
10. Members should avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest even when the committee's or commission's decisions are advisory. Members should recuse themselves from decisions if they have a financial interest that would be affected

by the decision or recommendation. (California Government Code sections 81002(b) and (c).)

11. Members are expected to embody the Core Values and Characteristics of High Performing Boards, Committees & Commissions as identified and authorized by the Board. Failure to comply may result in removal from the appointed board, committee or commission.

### **Core Values**

1. **Accountability:** Responsible for our decisions and behavior. Creating a safe environment where we are answerable to our citizens, co-workers, superiors, direct reports, and other stakeholders.
2. **Collaboration:** Cross-functional teamwork, communication, and cooperation countywide while creating a silo-free organization.
3. **Integrity:** Doing what is right legally and morally at all times regardless of whether or not someone is watching.
4. **Service Excellence:** (Citizen-Orientated Service) – Provide comprehensive service to all citizens of El Dorado County while loyally doing our job without expectation of recognition or personal gain.
5. **Fiscal Responsibility:** Develop and maintain a fiscally conservative budget that ensures financial resiliency while meeting the capital and operational needs of the organization and the citizens of El Dorado County.

### **Characteristics of High Performing Boards, Committees & Commissions**

1. **Governing with a Unity of Purpose:** Unity of Purpose is a common focus of overarching goals, values and beliefs that board, committee and commission members share in common about the organization and the residents they serve that help them transcend their individual differences to fulfill a greater purpose.
2. **Governing within the role as a Board, Committee & Commission:** Effective boards, committees and commissions value and respect their essential roles as advisory to the Board, reach mutual agreement on their roles and strive to operate within them.
3. **Creating a positive governance culture:** Culture is the tone created by the way people in an organization treat each other. Teams have unwritten (implicit) or written (explicit) agreements about how they will behave. These behavioral ground rules (norms) enable teams to build and maintain a positive culture, or shift a negative one.

### **B. Member Orientation**

1. All Members are **encouraged** to attend an Implicit Bias class and an orientation coordinated by the Clerk of the Board covering topics such as the Brown Act, meeting protocols, Board goals and strategic objectives, and other responsibilities.
2. Members will receive Ethics Training (AB 1234 Ch. Stats. 2005, Ch. 700) in accordance with Board Policy E-7 and Government Code section 53234 et seq.

### C. Public Statements by Members to Media

To ensure the quality and consistency of information disseminated to media sources, the following policy shall be enforced:

1. All media inquiries are to be handled by the Chief Administrative Officer, Clerk of the Board, or County Communications Director, regardless of who the media representative is, whom he or she represents, or how innocuous the request.
2. All press releases or other promotional materials are to be approved by the Chief Administrative Officer or his or her designee prior to dissemination.

### D. Service at the Will of the Board of Supervisors

1. Except as otherwise provided in the statute, ordinance, or resolution governing a particular board, committee, or commission, members serve at the pleasure of the Board and may be removed by majority vote of the Board at any regular or special meeting.
2. The El Dorado County Charter provides that, to the extent permitted by law, the members of boards, committees, and commissions must be County residents and if a member ceases to reside in the County, the seat becomes vacant. Members are encouraged to provide as much advance notice as possible to the Clerk of the Board prior to vacating their seat.

### E. Process for Resigning

1. Written notification of resignation should be submitted to the Clerk of the Board and to the appointing Supervisor's office if the position is nominated by a specific District Supervisor or to the Chair of the Board of Supervisors otherwise. Notification of resignation should also include the date on which the resignation will become effective. As a courtesy, it is requested that the resigning member also notify the board, committee, or commission Chair, executive director, liaison, or staff.

### F. Process for Filling Vacancies

1. Government Code section 54974 requires the County to give public notice of unscheduled vacancies on boards, committees, and commissions. Notices of Vacancy are published for a minimum of 10 working days and contain information about the board, committee, or commission, position qualifications and appointment term. Contact the Office of the Clerk of the Board for additional information.



### III. OFFICERS

#### A. Duties of the Chair

Unless otherwise established in the governing documents, the duties of the Chair generally include:

1. Working with the executive director, liaison, or staff to prepare the meeting agenda in compliance with Brown Act standards and required timeframes.
2. Presiding over all meetings by:
  - a. Calling the meeting to order at the scheduled start time.
  - b. Verifying the presence of a quorum.
  - c. "Processing" all motions by ensuring the motion is clearly understood prior to taking a vote. This may include restating the motion just prior to the vote and announcing the result of the vote, specifying who voted in favor, who voted against, and any abstentions and recusals.
  - d. Facilitating meetings by staying on track and adhering to time constraints in respect of the members, staff, and others in attendance.
  - e. Conducting the meeting in a fair and equitable manner.
  - f. When necessary, reminding the members, staff, and public to observe order and decorum.
  - g. Maintaining neutrality, to the extent possible, to facilitate productive debate.
  - h. Ensuring the work of the board, committee, or commission is consistent with its intended purpose and scope.
  - i. Deciding questions of order subject to appeal to the entire board, committee, or commission.

*(See Appendix Section XII E. Rosenberg's Rules of Order as reference)*

#### B. Duties of the Vice-Chair (if applicable)

The Vice Chair's duties shall generally include, unless otherwise established by the bylaws or governing document(s) of the board, committee, or commission:

1. Assuming the role of the Chair in the absence of the Chair.
2. Working in collaboration with the Chair.
3. Staying apprised of activities and functions.

#### C. Election of Officers

1. As indicated in the corresponding governing document(s), each board, committee, or commission should organize the election of its Officers (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, etc.), typically at the first meeting of each new calendar year. In the event the governing document is silent on this subject, election of a Chair and Vice-Chair is common. The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be a primary member

of the board, committee, or commission.

## IV. ROLE OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS, LIAISONS, STAFF AND RELATIONSHIP WITH COUNTY DEPARTMENTS

### A. Executive Directors, Liaisons, Staff

1. Administrative support may be provided by the executive director, liaison, or staff most closely related to the scope and purpose of the board, committee, or commission. This individual is typically responsible for providing leadership and may assist with meeting agendas, minutes, and supporting documentation for agenda items. Administrative support may also include assistance with annual goals and objectives that align with the strategic priorities of the Board and/or County department. The executive director, liaison, staff, or in some cases the Office of the Clerk of the Board serve as the point of contact. Due to staffing limitations, not all boards, committees, or commissions are allocated administrative support staff.
2. Individual members of boards, committees, and commissions have no authority to direct any executive director, liaison, or staff.
3. A quorum of a board, committee, or commission may, by official action, make a request for information of the appropriate executive director, liaison, or staff, provided the request is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the board, committee, or commission.

### B. Relationship with Departments

1. County departments may be a resource to answer questions, provide data, clarify County policy, and generally assist with ensuring up to date, applicable information related to the County is made available to the board, committee, or commission.

## V. COMMUNICATING WITH THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

The Board is interested in facilitating the work of boards, committees, and commissions and welcomes any suggestions. Board members value information that alerts them to issues and concerns allowing them to respond proactively.

El Dorado County Charter section 211 provides that direction, recommendations, or instructions to boards, committees, and commissions shall be by formal action of the Board of Supervisors and not by an individual Supervisor.

Boards, committees, and commissions have various avenues of communicating and reporting their collective recommendations and findings to the Board, including a semi-annual report of activities and accomplishments.

### A. Formal Recommendations to the Board of Supervisors

1. Formal recommendations can be submitted to the Board via written correspondence (email, letters) for consideration. If the recommendation/topic is appropriate for a presentation or discussion with the full Board, consult with your executive director, liaison, or staff and the Office of the Clerk of the Board to request time at a future Board meeting.

### B. Engaging with Board Offices

1. In your role as a member of a board, committee, or commission, you may communicate directly with the office of your respective Supervisorial District office (if applicable) at any time. It is suggested that members work within the framework of the board, committee, or commission when information needs to be conveyed to, or obtained from, the Board as a whole.

### C. Annual Reports (once every year)

1. Pursuant to Board adopted protocols, applicable boards, committees, and commissions shall provide an update to the Board regarding its activities through an annual report. It is the board, committee, or commission's responsibility to prepare its report and the content thereof must be approved by the board, committee, or commission prior to submittal to the Board, Clerk of the Board, executive director, liaison, and staff. (*See Appendix sections XII A. Annual report*)

A. Recommending a Position of Legislative Interest to the Board

1. Boards, committees, and commissions may not take an official position on behalf of the County which has not been specifically approved by the Board. When recommending, that the County take a position on local, state, or federal legislation, a formal recommendation from the board, committee, or commission must be submitted to the Chief Administrative Officer and Clerk of the Board for review and direction *prior* to taking any other action. The Chief Administrative Officer will review the recommendation in accordance with Board of Supervisors Policy A-4.

B. Engaging with Other Jurisdictions and Public Officials

1. Boards, committees, and commissions must gain approval from the executive director, liaison, or Clerk of the Board prior to engaging with other jurisdictions such as other counties, cities, advisory bodies, and elected officials.
2. The board, committee, or commission Chair shall notify all members of the Board when there are plans to invite a state, federal, or other local elected official to attend a meeting or event.

## VII. TYPES OF MEETINGS AND AGENDA POSTING REQUIREMENTS

### A. Regular Meetings

1. In compliance with the Brown Act, the agenda for a regular meeting **must be posted no less than 72 hours** in advance of the meeting at a location freely accessible to the public that is at or near the location of the meeting as well as on the board, committee, or commission's County enabled website (if there is one). The executive director, liaison, or staff may assist in the preparation for, and posting of, the meeting agenda. Regular meetings are for the conduct of business such as receiving and filing reports and discussion and action pertaining to operations of the board, committee, or commission.

### B. Special Meetings

1. The Chair or a majority of members may call a special meeting if deemed necessary and will coordinate with the executive director, liaison, or staff regarding availability of staff and a meeting location. The agenda of a special meeting must be posted **no less than 24 hours** in advance of the meeting in compliance with the Brown Act.
2. As a matter of best practice, boards, committees, and commissions should *only* use a special meeting to address one or two specific topics, typically when time constraints on a particular subject determine that consideration of the item during a regular meeting is not feasible.

### A. Process for Developing the Meeting Agenda and Minutes

1. It is common for the Chair to work with the executive director, liaison, and/or staff to coordinate meeting agendas; however, the method by which the agenda is developed varies according to the procedures of the individual board, committee, or commission. In many cases, a member may request that an item be placed on the agenda by submitting a request to the Chair. The executive director, liaison, or staff, in collaboration with the Chair, will ensure that the agenda follows standard formatting, verbiage guidelines, and Brown Act requirements.
2. Agendas and Minutes will be generated in the Legistar program, published in PDF format and posted on the Board of Supervisors Legistar website.

### B. Common Elements of a Meeting Agenda

1. Each Agenda must:
  - I. List the full name of the committee or commission, and the specific time, date, and location of the meeting.
  - II. Provide an opportunity for public comment before an action is taken on each item.
  - III. Describe each item of business to be considered in specific terms. Agenda items cannot be considered if the description is not sufficient to identify the subject.
  - IV. Contain information about accessibility for the disabled.
  - V. Provide contact information for obtaining all public documents, including staff reports or other briefings, prepared for the meeting.
2. Meeting Agendas typically contain the following elements, in order:
  - I. Call to Order and Roll Call
  - II. Adoption of the Agenda
  - III. Approval of the Minutes
  - IV. Discussion Items (followed by a listing of each item to be discussed and in compliance with provisions in the Brown Act)
  - V. Member Reports
  - VI. Staff Reports
  - VII. Adjournment

3. A board, committee, or commission cannot discuss, deliberate, or take action on any item not listed on a meeting agenda.

### C. Quorum Determination

1. A quorum is the minimum number of members who are required to be present at the meeting in order to conduct business. Generally, a quorum is a majority of the members of the body, unless otherwise established by statute or bylaws which may specify a higher (but not a lower) number.
2. In the event a quorum is not met at the beginning of a meeting, the meeting **must** be adjourned. It is recommended that all parties present vacate the meeting room as soon as possible following adjournment due to the lack of a quorum. The announcement of an adjournment due to a lack of a quorum may be made by any present member, executive director, liaison, or staff.
3. In the event it becomes known in advance of a meeting that a quorum will **not** be in attendance, a “Canceled Meeting Notice” **must** be posted in place of the agenda. If a lack of a quorum is determined *after* the agenda is posted, a revised agenda **must** be posted in the same locations as the meeting agenda reflecting the meeting is cancelled. (See “Cancelling a Meeting” below.)
4. If a member of the board, committee, or commission leaves during a meeting with no intent to return and the departure results in the absence of a quorum, the Chair *must immediately* adjourn the meeting. All remaining agenda items must be continued to a future meeting.
5. If a member of the board, committee, or commission leaves during a meeting for an interim period resulting in the absence of a quorum, the meeting should be recessed until a quorum is reestablished.

### D. *Cancelling a Meeting*

Notice of cancellation or adjournment must be issued for any meeting that is cancelled or adjourned after the agenda has been published, including meetings that convene but do not achieve a quorum.

#### Checklist for Notices of Adjournment/Cancellation

- a. State that the meeting scheduled for (date) has been cancelled.
- b. Provide the date, time, and locations of the next meeting (if known). Also include contact information for the public to obtain additional information.
- c. Within 24 hours of adjournment, post the notice at the meeting location.
- d. Distribute the notice to all of the advisory body members, and to all other



parties or groups on the agenda subscription list (if one is kept).

e. Post the Notice of Adjournment/Cancellation on the advisory body's website (or the same website that published the Meeting Agenda).

#### *E. Closed Meetings*

Certain boards, committees, and commissions may hold closed meetings under very limited circumstances and must follow specific procedures. Prior to holding such a closed meeting, the Chair of the board, committee, or commission should consult with the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors and the County Counsel's Office.

## IX. CONDUCTING MEETINGS

### A. Business Conducted at Meetings

1. The application of parliamentary procedures is the best method to enable boards, committees, and commissions to help create a safe environment and balance between the rights of persons in the minority on specific issues to be heard with the rights of persons holding the majority position. Boards, committees, and commissions are advised to use *Rosenberg's Rules of Order* as a guide to conduct meetings in a fair and equitable manner. (See Appendix Section XII E. *Rosenberg's Rules of Order*)
2. Meetings are called to order by the Chair, or Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair. If neither is in attendance, the board, committee or commission may select a Chair Pro Tempore to conduct the meeting, provided a quorum is present.

### B. Hybrid Format Meetings and Recordings

In an effort to be transparent with the community, the Board of Supervisors has implemented a hybrid meeting format. Meetings will be held in person and live streamed, allowing the public to participate in person and remotely. Meetings will also be recorded and posted on the Board of Supervisors Legistar website. County Boards, Committees, and Commissions which have a broad Countywide impact will be required to hold their meetings in an approved facility. Those Boards, Committees and Commissions, which have more of a local impact, shall be able to meet in their respective communities in which they serve as long as the technology is available to support the hybrid format and live streaming.

### C. Public Comment

1. Pursuant to the Brown Act, members of the public must have an opportunity to comment on any matter **not** on a *regular* meeting agenda that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the Board, committee, or commission. This period of time is referred to as Public Comment or Open Forum on meeting agendas. It is advisable to clearly demonstrate time limits for public comment on all meeting agendas. The Chair should make a verbal announcement of the time limit at the beginning of each Public Comment or Open Forum period.
2. Pursuant to the Brown Act, before or during consideration of each agenda item, the public must be given an opportunity to comment on the item.
3. A three (3) minute per speaker rule is common and speakers are typically permitted to speak once during Public Comment/Open Forum and once per agenda item.
4. A member of the public is not required to identify themselves in order to attend a meeting. The Chair may request a member of the public to voluntarily provide their name.
5. A member of the public may record (audio/video) the meeting including their own testimony so long as the act of doing so is not disruptive to the meeting.
6. Written public comment regarding items appearing on the agenda or submitted

during a Public Comment period should be retained as part of the record.

D. Distribution of Materials

1. The Brown Act states that documents being distributed to or by the board, committee, or commission during meetings must be made available for review by the public. Documents distributed by staff must be made available during the meeting and documents distributed by a member of the public or some other person must be made available after the meeting. For example, if a member of the public submits a document to accompany his/her public comment statement, the board, committee, or commission, executive director, liaison or staff retains the document as part of the meeting record and have it available upon request following the meeting.
2. Documents distributed to the body less than 72 hours prior to the meeting must be made available for public inspection at the same time the document is distributed to all or a majority of the members of the body.

## X. TEMPORARY AND STANDING SUB-COMMITTEES

### A. Establishment of a Sub-Committee

1. A board, committee, or commission may choose to create temporary or standing sub-committees to assist with business needs and priorities, provided the adopted governing document(s) permit the establishment thereof.

### B. Membership and Scope of Temporary Sub-Committees

1. A temporary sub-committee must be composed **solely of less than a quorum of the members**, must serve for a limited or single purpose that is not perpetual in nature, and must be dissolved once its specific task is completed. Temporary sub-committees comprised **solely** of less than a quorum of the board, committee, or commission are **not** subject to the Brown Act. Temporary sub-committees are often referred to as *ad hoc* committees, a term not used in the Brown Act.

### C. Membership and Scope of Standing Sub-Committees

1. A standing sub-committee is defined as one that has continuing subject matter jurisdiction (i.e. is perpetual in nature) or has a meeting schedule fixed by formal action of the legislative body. A standing sub-committee, must be composed of less than a quorum of the members; however it may also have any number of non-members. Standing sub-committees are subject to the Brown Act. It is advisable to contact County Counsel or the Clerk of the Board in advance for advice regarding the establishment of a standing sub-committee.

## XI. MISCELLANEOUS

### A. Webpages

1. Most board, committee, and commission webpage links are available on a single webpage administered by the Office of the Clerk of the Board, accessible via the Board of Supervisor's main menu at [https://www.edcgov.us/Government/BOS/Pages/bos\\_main\\_info.aspx](https://www.edcgov.us/Government/BOS/Pages/bos_main_info.aspx). The webpage serves as the central location for access to membership rosters, governing documents, and other information.

### B. Contact Information

Questions, comments and correspondence as referred to throughout this guide may be directed to the following:

|                                  |  |              |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|
| District 1 Supervisor            | <a href="mailto:bosone@edcgov.us">bosone@edcgov.us</a>     | 530-621-5650 |
| District 2 Supervisor            | <a href="mailto:bostwo@edcgov.us">bostwo@edcgov.us</a>     | 530-621-5651 |
| District 3 Supervisor            | <a href="mailto:bosthree@edcgov.us">bosthree@edcgov.us</a> | 530-621-5652 |
| District 4 Supervisor            | <a href="mailto:bosfour@edcgov.us">bosfour@edcgov.us</a>   | 530-621-6513 |
| District 5 Supervisor            | <a href="mailto:bosfive@edcgov.us">bosfive@edcgov.us</a>   | 530-621-6577 |
| Office of the Clerk of the Board | <a href="mailto:edc.cob@edcgov.us">edc.cob@edcgov.us</a>   | 530-621-5390 |

## XII. APPENDIX

- A. Semi-annual Report
  - B. County Strategic Plan - [Follow this link to view the current Strategic Plan](#)
  - C. County Counsel's Guide to the Brown Act
  - D. League of California Cities *Open & Public: A Guide to the Ralph M. Brown Act*
  - E. Rosenberg's Rules of Order
  - F. Board of Supervisors Good Governance Handbook
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