



Tips for Testifying Before the Joint Finance Committee (JFC) at State Budget Hearings

- Arrive early if you plan to **testify in person**. The hearings draw a big crowd and management at each of the venues will be monitoring capacity.
- **Register to testify**. To testify, you will need to fill out a registration slip (usually available on a staffed table just outside the room or from a legislative page). Fill out the form and return it to the staff. Depending upon when you register and how many people are in attendance, you may need to plan to stay the better part of the day.
- **When you are called to testify**, begin your testimony by greeting the co-chairs and committee members (“Good morning/afternoon Senator Marklein and Representative Born and members of the Joint Finance Committee”) and identifying yourself and your organization (if applicable). Relax, you have an important message that legislators need to hear. **Keep your comments brief (2-3 minutes) and to the point**. If other presenters have spoken on the topic you are speaking to, try to highlight new information instead of repeating points already made. Avoid using professional jargon. Provide plain language personal stories and examples to support your testimony.
- Help legislators understand why your issue is so important – not just to you, your agency, consumers and/or family members, but also to the state (and state budget).
- Generally, **committee members do not ask testifiers questions regarding their state budget comments**. If you are asked a follow up question, answer if you can and if you don’t know the answer, acknowledge the question and offer to provide follow-up information to the committee members.
- **Prepare written testimony to leave with committee** (bring at least 20 copies). Your written testimony can be longer and is an opportunity to share more detailed information than you had time to provide in your brief oral testimony. If you need to leave before you are called to testify, you may leave your written testimony with a page who will make sure the committee members receive it. Additionally, **it is good practice to also email your own state Senator and Assembly Representative a copy of your testimony**.

The JFC 2025-2027 State Budget Public Hearings will run from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The committee indicated they will stop taking testimony at the end time specified for the hearing. There are additional ways to provide input on the budget. If you are unable to attend one of the above budget hearings, written comments can be sent to the Joint Finance Committee via an

online portal at <https://legis.wisconsin.gov/topics/budgetcomment>, by email at budget.comments@legis.wisconsin.gov or sent via U.S. mail to: Joe Malkasian, Room 305 East, State Capitol, Madison, WI 53702. Individuals needing assistance, pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act, should contact Becky Hannah, Legislative Fiscal Bureau, One East Main Street, Suite 301, Madison, WI 53703 (608) 266-3847 • Fax (608) 267- 6873 • Email: Fiscal.Bureau@legis.wisconsin.gov.

Joint Finance Committee 2025-2027 State Budget Public Hearing Schedule

- April 2 – Kaukauna High School, Kaukauna
- April 4 – Wisconsin State Fair Park, West Allis
- April 28 – Hayward High School, Hayward
- April 29 – Northcentral Technical College, Wausau

The above budget hearings will take place between 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. See the hearing notice (<https://docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/raw/cid/1909520>) for further details.

For details and talking points on the Wisconsin Aging Advocacy Network's (WAAN's) budget priorities go to: <https://gwaar.org/api/cms/viewFile/id/2008488>.