# Public Hearing Tips

Find a Public Hearing in Your Area

* Check the website of the CCDF lead agency in your state (listed [here](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/occ/resource/ccdf-grantee-state-and-territory-contacts)), as well as the agency’s Facebook page and Twitter feed to find out the date and location of any upcoming public hearings.
* If no public hearing information is listed on the website, call the lead agency’s toll-free number. The number should be listed on their website.
* You can also check your local newspaper for announcements about upcoming public hearings. (Sometimes you can sign up through a lead agency’s website to receive e-newsletters and notices about public hearings in your area.)

Be Prepared

* Keep in mind the purpose of a public hearing. It is a forum for you to provide testimony about the contents of the draft State Plan.
	+ The public hearing is:
		- An opportunity to provide comments on specific items in the Plan. Each comment should refer to the section number, hearing, and page number in the Plan.
		- An opportunity to indicate support of; opposition to; or suggested changes, additions or deletions of specific items in the Plan. Any solutions offered should be constructive.
	+ The public hearing is not:
		- A forum to recommend changes to laws or regulations.
		- A forum to discuss how the state legislature allocates funds for child care and development programs.
		- A forum to describe general problems or concerns about the state’s child care and development services delivery system.
* Visit your state lead agency’s website, where the draft State Plan will be posted. Read it thoroughly in preparation for the public hearing.
* Know the issues. Many helpful background materials have been posted on the Child Care Aware© of America website. These include:
	+ [2015 State Fact Sheets](http://usa.childcareaware.org/statefactsheets) that report on family characteristics related to the need for child care, the use of child care, the supply of child care, the cost of child care, the child care workforce, and services provided by state Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) agencies.
	+ [Parents and the High Cost of Child Care: 2015 Report](http://usa.childcareaware.org/costofcare) provides detailed information about the cost of child care.
	+ [We Can Do Better](http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reports-and-research/we-can-do-better-2013-update/), which focuses on child care centers.
	+ [Leaving Children to Chance](http://usa.childcareaware.org/advocacy-public-policy/resources/reports-and-research/leaving-children-to-chance-2012-update/), which focuses on small family child care homes.
* Register for the hearing, if needed. Some agencies request that you register either to attend or to speak at the hearing. Check to see if you need to register before the date of the hearing in order to attend or make comments, just in case.
* Write down an outline or the full text of the statement you plan to make. Each testifier will be allowed a set length of time to speak (which should be posted on the website of your state’s lead agency).
* Practice giving your testimony until you are comfortable with your comment(s) and have determined you will not exceed your allotted time.
* Check your state lead agency’s website for any updates about the public hearing, or specific “rules of conduct” that may be posted.
* Get directions to the public hearing and research nearby parking or public transportation options.

Day of the Public Hearing

* Arrive early. You will almost certainly be asked to sign up to speak (if you did not sign up in advance), and there may be many others in line. If you signed up in advance, being early ensures you don’t miss your scheduled time to speak.
* Expect that testifiers will be called forward to speak in the order in which they signed in.
* If you can’t or don’t want to testify in person, many states will accept written testimony submitted by mail, fax, or e-mail. Check the lead agency’s website for details.