

North Carolina Secretary of State IT

Public Meetings Calendar

KB Website Manual

April 8, 2024

Version 1.0

About the Public Meetings Calendar Manual

This manual gives an overview of all the pages and features of the Public Meetings Calendar section of the KB website.

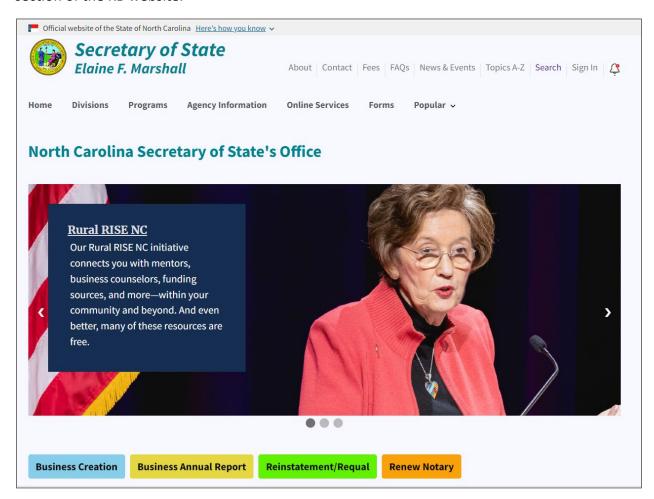


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Public Meetings Calendar

This manual gives an overview of the pages and features of the **Public Meetings Calendar** section of the Secretary of State's new KB website.

Go to the North Carolina Secretary of State's Office website at: https://sosnc.gov.

Select Agency Information.

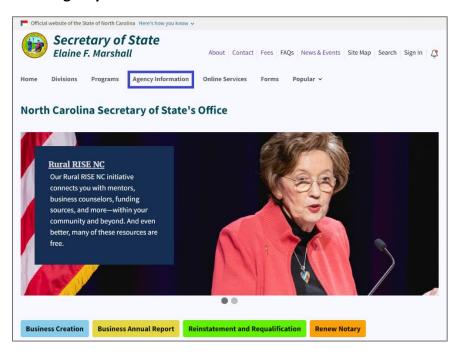


Figure 1. Agency Information menu highlighted

This takes you to the **Agency Information** page.

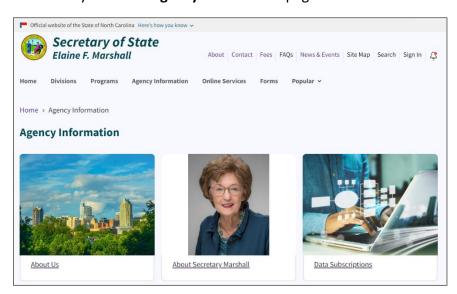


Figure 2. Agency Information page

Select **Public Meeting Calendar**.



Figure 3. Red arrow pointing to the Business Registration link

This link takes you to the **Public Meetings Calendar** page.

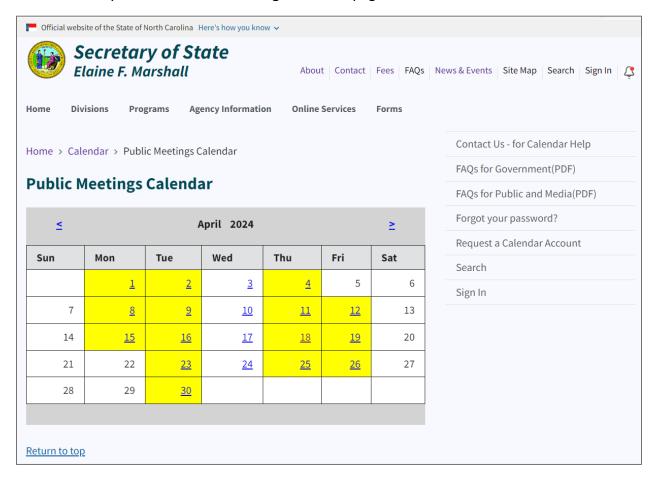


Figure 4. Public Meetings Calendar

The North Carolina Secretary of State's Office also provides a Public Meetings Calendar that includes notices for specific statutory public bodies and advisory committees, ensuring transparency and citizen participation in government proceedings.

The interactive calendar displays linkable days of the month. You can click on the days that appear as active links.

Public Meetings Calendar							
	April 2024				≥		
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
1	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	5	6		
<u>8</u>	9	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	13		
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	20		
22	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	27		
29	<u>30</u>						
	Mon	Mon Tue 1 2 8 9 15 16 22 23	Mon Tue Wed 1 2 3 8 9 10 15 16 17 22 23 24	April 2024 Mon Tue Wed Thu 1 2 3 4 8 9 10 11 15 16 17 18 22 23 24 25	Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri 1 2 3 4 5 8 9 10 11 12 15 16 17 18 19 22 23 24 25 26		

Figure 5. Visual and interactive calendar with date links

Select one of the dates on the calendar. See Figure 6.



Figure 6. A red arrow points to an active date link

The date link takes you to the search results. See **Figure 7**.

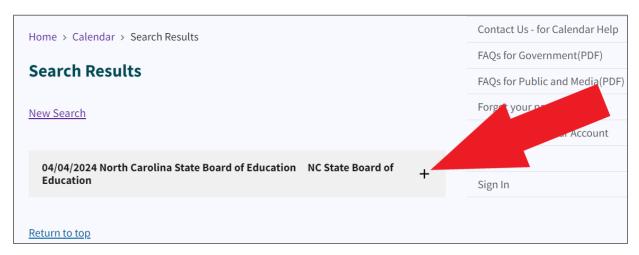


Figure 7. A red arrow points to the plus sign beside the meeting name

When you click on the **plus sign (+)** beside the meeting name, the tile expands, displaying meeting details and links.

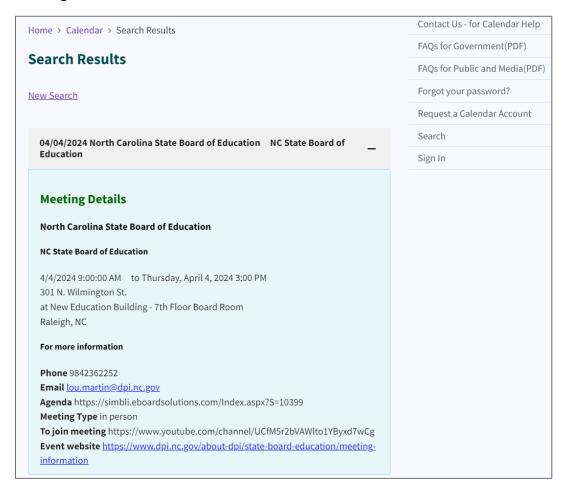


Figure 8. Expanded tile displaying meeting details

Contact Us—For Calendar Help

Select the Contact Us link on the sidebar of links.

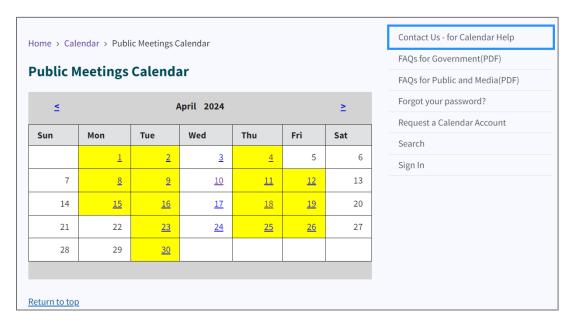


Figure 9. Contact Us link on the right side of the screen

When clicking on the Contact Us—For Calendar Help link, you activate the email address for the Public Meetings Calendar team.

Email: calendar@sosnc.gov

FAQs for Government (PDF)

Select FAQs for Government (PDF) link in the sidebar of links.

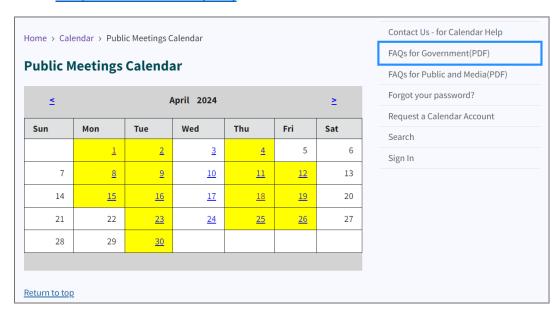


Figure 10. Select FAQs for the Government (PDF) link

The PDF contains thirteen questions and answers about public meetings.

FAQs for Government About Filing Public Meeting Notices with the Secretary of State

Here are answers to questions we receive frequently about filing notices of regular public meetings with the Secretary of State. We provide this for informational purposes only. It does not constitute legal advice.

NOTE: In these FAQs, we use "agency" to refer to all of the different kinds of <u>State</u> agencies, commissions, advisory committees, boards, etc., which are included in the broad definition of "public body" in the Open Meetings Law. Click <u>here</u> to read the Open Meetings Law.

Do we have to file?

- 1. Is there a list of agencies which have to file meeting notices with you?
- 2. Does my agency have to file a regular public meeting notice with you?
- 3. We post our meeting notices on our website. Why do we have to send them to you?
- 4. We're a local government agency. Do we have to file meeting notices with your office?

What do we have to file?

- 5. We've changed our regular meeting schedule. Do we have to file a new notice with you?
- 6. Is there a list of information I have to include in my notice of regular meetings?
- 7. Can we file notices of special meetings with you?

Figure 11. FAQs for Government PDF

You can find a link to the <u>Article 33C Meeting of Public Bodies law</u> in the second paragraph of the PDF. See **Figure 11.**

Article 33C.

Meetings of Public Bodies.

§ 143-318.9. Public policy.

Whereas the public bodies that administer the legislative, policy-making, quasi-judicial, administrative, and advisory functions of North Carolina and its political subdivisions exist solely to conduct the people's business, it is the public policy of North Carolina that the hearings, deliberations, and actions of these bodies be conducted openly. (1979, c. 655, s. 1.)

§ 143-318.10. All official meetings of public bodies open to the public.

(a) Except as provided in G.S. 143-318.11, 143-318.14A, and 143-318.18, each official meeting of a public body shall be open to the public, and any person is entitled to attend such a meeting. Remote meetings conducted in accordance with G.S. 166A-19.24 shall comply with this subsection even if all members of the public body are participating remotely.

(b) As used in this Article, "public body" means any elected or appointed authority, board, commission, committee, council, or other body of the State, or of one or more counties, cities, school administrative units, constituent institutions of The University of North Carolina, or other political subdivisions or public corporations in the State that (i) is composed of two or more members and (ii) exercises or is authorized to exercise a legislative, policy-making, quasi-judicial, administrative, or advisory function. In addition, "public body" means the governing board of a "public hospital" as defined in G.S. 159-39 and the governing board of any nonprofit corporation to which a hospital facility has been sold or conveyed pursuant to G.S. 131E-8, any subsidiary of such nonprofit corporation, and any nonprofit corporation owning the corporation to which the hospital facility has been sold or conveyed.

(c) "Public body" does not include (i) a meeting solely among the professional staff of a public body, or (ii) the medical staff of a public hospital or the medical staff of a hospital that has been sold or conveyed pursuant to G.S. 131E-8.

(d) "Official meeting" means a meeting, assembly, or gathering together at any time or place or the simultaneous communication by conference telephone or other electronic means of a majority of the members of a public body for the purpose of conducting hearings, participating in deliberations, or voting upon or otherwise transacting the public business within the jurisdiction, real or apparent, of the public body. However, a social meeting or other informal assembly or gathering together of the members of a public body does not constitute an official meeting unless called or held to evade the spirit and purposes of this Article.

does not constitute an official meeting unless called or held to evade the spirit and purposes of this Article.

(e) Every public body shall keep full and accurate minutes of all official meetings, including any closed sessions held pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11. Such minutes may be in written form or, at the option of the public body, may be in the form of sound or video and sound recordings. When a public body meets in closed session, it shall keep a general account of the closed session so that a person not in attendance would have a reasonable understanding of what transpired. Such accounts may be a written narrative, or video or audio recordings. Such minutes and accounts shall be public records within the meaning of the Public Records Law, G.S. 132-1 et seq.; provided, however, that minutes or an account of a closed session conducted in compliance with G.S. 143-318.11 may be withheld from public inspection so long as public inspection would frustrate the purpose of a closed session. (1979, c. 655, s. 1; 1985 (Reg. Sess., 1986), c. 932, s. 4; 1991, c. 694, ss. 1, 2; 1993 (Reg. Sess., 1994), c. 570, s. 1; 1995, c. 509, s. 135.2(p); 1997-290, s. 1; 1997-456, s. 27; 2011-326, s. 8; 2020-3, s. 4.31(b).)

Figure 12. PDF of Article 33C, Meetings of Public Bodies law

According to **Article** 33C, open meetings are important because "public bodies that administer the legislative, policy-making, quasi-judicial, administrative, and advisory functions of North Carolina and its political subdivisions exist solely to conduct the people's business" and, therefore, "it is the public policy of North Carolina that the hearings, deliberations, and actions of these bodies be conducted openly."

The FAQs for Government (PDF) addresses common questions about filing notices of regular public meetings with the Secretary of State. It's important to note that this information is provided for **informational purposes only** and does not constitute legal advice.

Throughout the FAQs, the term "agency" refers to various State entities, including agencies, commissions, advisory committees, and boards, all falling under the broad definition of a "public body" as defined in the Open Meetings Law.

Remember to consult official sources or legal counsel for specific guidance related to your agency's obligations.

Who has to file?

Question 1. Who has to file meeting notices with you?

The Open Meetings Law defines "public body". The law says that public bodies that are part of State government have to file a schedule of regular meetings with us. Read the Open Meetings Law.

Question 2. Is there a list of agencies that have to file meeting notices with you?

No, there is not a list. The reason is that the definition of "public body" is very broad. Read the Open Meetings Law.

Question 3. Does local government have to file their meeting notices with you?

No, the law has other requirements for local governments. Read the Open Meetings Law.

Question 4. Who decides if an agency has to file regular meeting notices with you?

The individual agencies decide. They may consult their attorney or the Attorney General to help decide if notices have to be filed with us. For more information, you may find the Attorney General's FAQs and Guide to Open Government helpful. Visit the Attorney General's website.

What do we have to file?

Question 5. We've changed our regular meeting schedule. Do we have to file a new notice with you?

Yes, you should file the new schedule with us at least 7 days before the first meeting under the changed schedule. Click here to read the law.

Question 6. Is there a list of information I have to include in my notice of regular meetings?

We suggest you think about it like an invitation. What do you need to know to decide if you're going to accept an invitation? That's the kind of information you may want to include in your public meeting notices. To help you, we've provided a table showing the parallels between an invitation and a public meeting notice. If you use our electronic calendar and e-file, it works like an e-form. There are mandatory items you have to fill in, marked with an asterisk. There's also space for optional information.

Note: There's an optional information space for contact information if someone has questions about the meeting. If you don't put anything in that blank, it will enter your contact information as a default. That's because people need to know who to call or email if they have questions about a meeting.

For more information, you may find the Attorney General's FAQs and Guide to Open Government helpful. Visit the <u>Attorney General's website</u> for more information.

Question 7. Can we file notices of special meetings with you?

Yes. We'll accept any meeting notices you want to file with us including:

- Special or called meeting notices
- Public hearing notice

How do we file?

Question 8. What are the advantages of e-filing our Calendar notices of meetings?

- You control not only what gets posted on line but when it gets posted.
- You'll be able to add or edit meetings on line at any time of day or night (which may help with meeting deadlines).
- Your meeting notices will be quickly posted online.
- Your meeting notices will be searchable by clicking on a calendar, by entering dates, locations or your agency's name.
- You can send a link to the calendar and meeting notice out to people interested in your meetings.
- You provide better customer service to citizens and interested parties.

Question 9. Do we have to use your e-filing system and file online?

Yes, the old way of posting meetings is no longer available.

Question 10. I want to e-file our meeting notices. How do I do that?

Step 1. Check to see if your agency already has been set up in our system. If not, follow the steps to "request a new entity".

Step 2. Request an account for yourself (if you don't already have one).

Step 3. After both you and your agency have accounts, you can begin to add meeting notices to the Calendar.

Visit the **Public Meetings Calendar**.

Question 11. Can I set up recurring meetings on the electronic Calendar?

Yes, you can set up recurring meetings. You can even set up recurring meetings with some different elements. For example, if all meetings except November and December are on the 3rd Thursday, you can do that. First, create the recurring meetings. Then go back and edit the November and December meetings to change the date.

Question 12. My agency has created some new committees. I have to file meeting notices for those committees. Can I do that on line?

Yes, you can do that. There are two different ways to approach e-filing those committee meeting notices:

- You can set up each committee's meeting under your agency. Create the meeting the same way you would an agency meeting. Name the meeting with the committee's name. We recommend that you consider trying this method.
- You can set up the committee as a new entity and then create the meeting for it.

Question 13. Is there a form I can use to file the public meeting schedules with your office?

No, we do not have a form for filing paper, email or fax meeting notices

FAQs for Public and Media (PDF)

The <u>FAQs for Public and Media PDF</u> provides information about public meeting notices filed with the NC Secretary of State. It answers common questions for both the public and media. These notices inform people about upcoming meetings, their agendas, and other relevant details. The goal is to promote transparency and ensure everyone stays informed about important events.

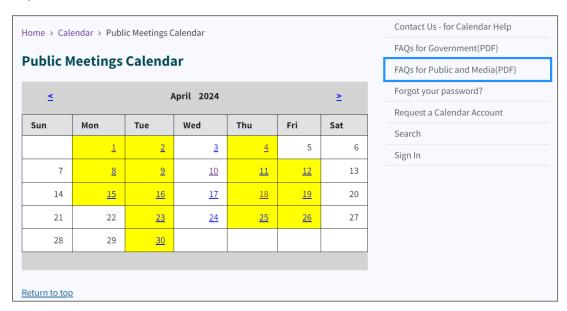


Figure 13. Link for FAQs for Public and Media (PDF)

The FAQ document contains twelve questions and answers about the public meetings calendar.

FAQs for the Public and Media About Public Meeting Notices Filed with the Secretary of State

NOTE: In these FAQs, we use "agency" to refer to all the different kinds of agencies, advisory committees, boards, etc., which are covered by the definition of "public body" in the Open Meetings Law. Click <u>here</u> to read the Open Meetings Law.

Who Has to File?

- 1. Who has to file meeting notices with you?
- 2. Is there a list of agencies that have to file meeting notices with you?
- 3. Does local government have to file their meeting notices with you?
- 4. Who decides if an agency has to file a regular meeting notice with you?
- 5. Do agencies file notices of special meetings with you?
- 6. Do agencies have to have regular meeting schedules?

If Meeting Notices Aren't Filed

- 6. I know an agency that isn't filing meeting notices with you. Can you make them file?
- 7. What are the penalties for not filing a meeting notice with you?

The Secretary of State's Electronic Calendar

8. <u>Does your electronic calendar include all of the agencies that have to file meeting notices with vou?</u>

Figure 14. FAQ document for the public and members of the media

The twelve questions are as follows:

Question 1. Who has to file meeting notices with you?

The Open Meetings Law defines "public body". The law says that public bodies that are part of State government have to file a schedule of regular meetings with us. Click here to read the Open Meetings Law.

Question 2. Is there a list of agencies that have to file meeting notices with you?

No, there is not a list. The reason is that the definition of "public body" is very broad. Click here to read the Open Meetings Law.

Question 3. Does local government have to file their meeting notices with you?

No, the law has other requirements for local governments. Read the Open Meetings Law.

Question 4. Who decides if an agency has to file regular meeting notices with you?

The individual agencies decide. They may consult their attorney or the Attorney General to help decide if notices have to be filed with us. For more information, you may find the Attorney General's FAQs and Guide to Open Government helpful. Visit the Attorney General's website.

Question 5. Do agencies file notices of special meetings with you?

Some agencies choose to file notices of special or called meetings or public hearings with us.

Question 6. Do agencies have to have regular meeting schedules?

We don't have the authority to interpret the Open Meetings Act, so we can't answer that question. For more information, you may find the Attorney General's FAQs and Guide to Open Government helpful. Visit the Attorney General's website.

Question 7. I know an agency that isn't filing meeting notices with you. Can you make them file?

No, we don't have the authority to make an agency file regular meeting notices. You may want to contact the agency directly. You may also want to consult with an attorney.

Question 8. What are the penalties for not filing a meeting notice with you?

We don't have the authority to penalize an agency for not filing a meeting notice with us. For information on penalties read the Open Meetings Act (click here). You may also find the Attorney General's FAQs and Guide to Open Government helpful. Visit the Attorney General's website.

Question 9. Does your electronic calendar include all of the agencies that have to file meeting notices with you?

We don't know. We set up the electronic calendar to include all of the agencies that filed meeting notices with us in calendar year 2014/2015. There may be other agencies that didn't file notices during that time for some reason. For example, an agency may not have had a public meeting and so may not have filed a meeting notice. In addition, new agencies are often created by the General Assembly or by agencies themselves. For example, a principal department head might decide to create an advisory committee which would then need to file notices.

Question 10. I looked up a meeting in your e-calendar. It doesn't include information I'm looking for. Why not?

Agencies are only required to enter the information required by the Open Meetings Act. Click here to read the Open Meetings Law. Our e-calendar has space for agencies to enter optional information but we can't make them do that. There should be contact information for every meeting so you can call or email and ask questions about the meeting. DO NOT call or email the Secretary of State's office to ask questions about a meeting. We will not know the answers. The only information we have about meetings is what you see on our website.

Question 11. Why do I have to look in two places on your website to be sure I find the information about a meeting?

There are two places on the website with meeting notice information: the E-Calendar (click here) and the legacy meeting notice site (click here). Some agencies filed meeting notices for this year before the E-Calendar was on our website. We don't have the staff to be able to go back and add the information about those meetings to our E-Calendar.

Question 12. Where can I get more information about what the law requires with regard to public meetings?

You can get more information about the Open Meetings Law from many different sources. For example, you can get information from the Attorney General's website.

There are websites outside of State government which are also possible sources for information about the Open Meetings Law. Please note that the websites listed below are not part of the Secretary of State's office. We offer this information in an effort to be helpful.

Public Records Law for North Carolina Local Governments by David Lawrence, is a book published by the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Although the book mainly deals with Public Records Law and local government, it includes some information about State government and open meetings. Visit the School of Government website.

The School of Government also has a blog, Coates Canons, which includes postings about the Open Meetings Law.

Some nonprofit organizations post information about the Open Meetings Law. For example, Elon University has a Sunshine Center where some information about the Open Meetings Law is posted.

Forgot Your Password?

Select Forgot Your Password from the sidebar of links.

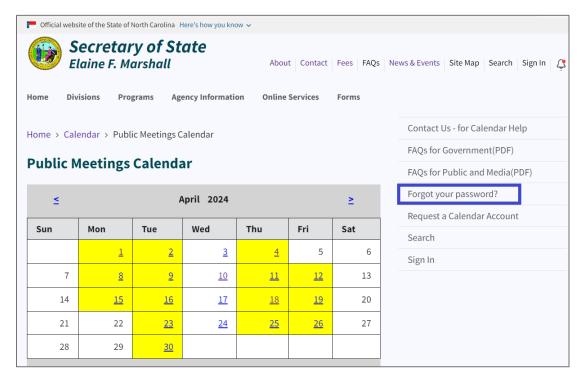


Figure 15. The "Forgot your password?" link highlighted

This link takes you to the **Forgot Password** page.

Enter your email.

Click Reset Password.

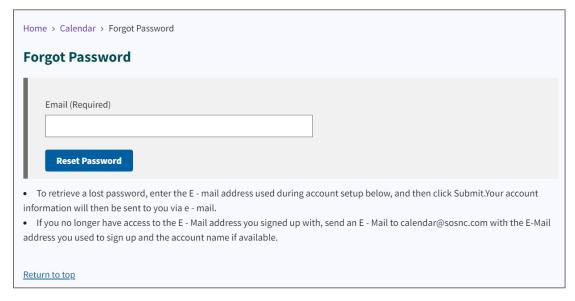


Figure 16. Reset password page

Request a Calendar Account

Select Request a Calendar Account link.

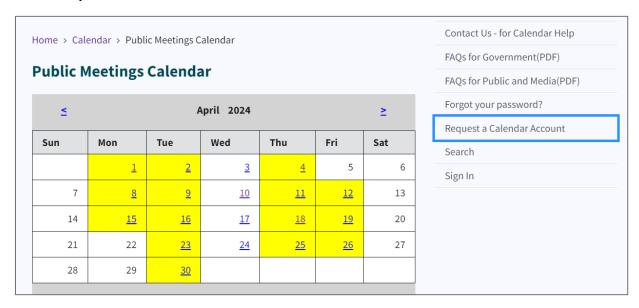


Figure 17. Request a Calendar Account link highlighted

This link takes you to the **Edit Account** page.

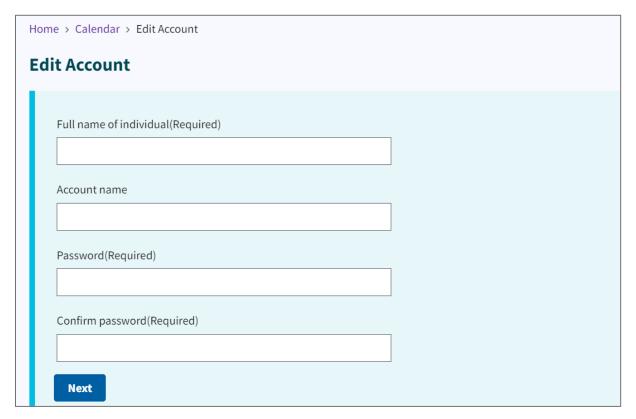


Figure 18. Edit Account page with entry fields

Enter your Full Name, Account Name, and Password.

Click Next.

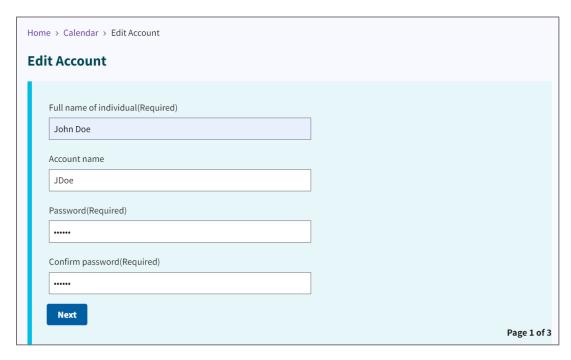


Figure 19. Account name and password

Click Next.

Enter your address.

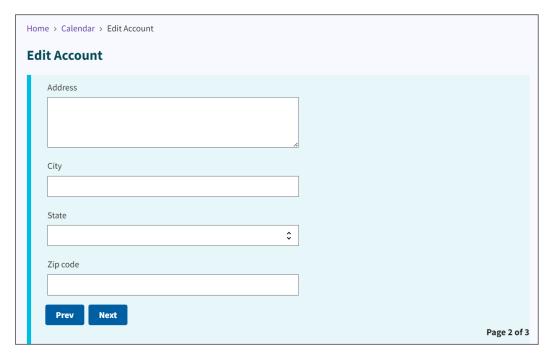


Figure 20. Address entry fields

Click Next.

Enter your **phone number**.

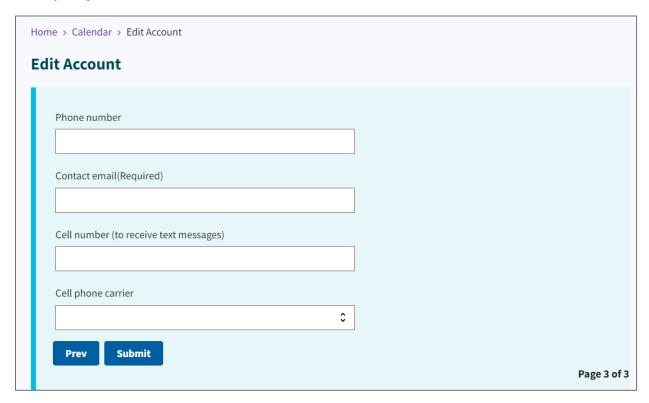


Figure 21. Phone number entry fields

Click Submit.

The Success page confirms that your account request has been submitted. You will receive an email and/or text confirmation, too.

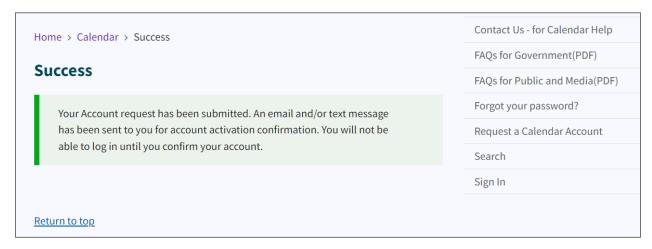


Figure 22. Success page

Search

Select Search.

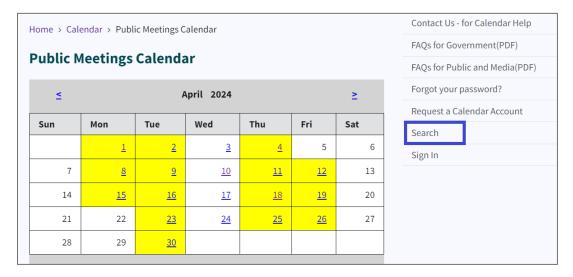


Figure 23. Search link selected

The link takes you to the **Search** page.

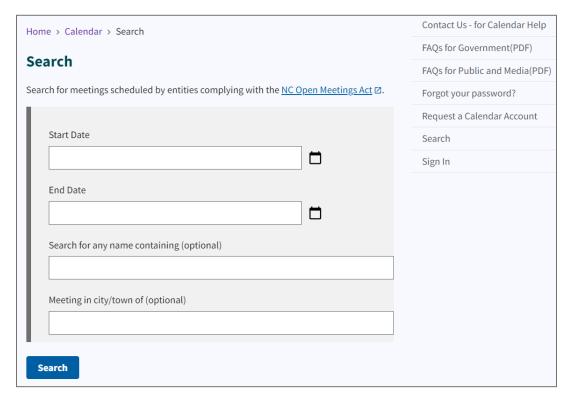


Figure 24. Search page

Enter the **Start** and **End Dates**.

Enter the two optional entry fields if needed.

For this example, we selected 04/01/24 to 04/08/24.

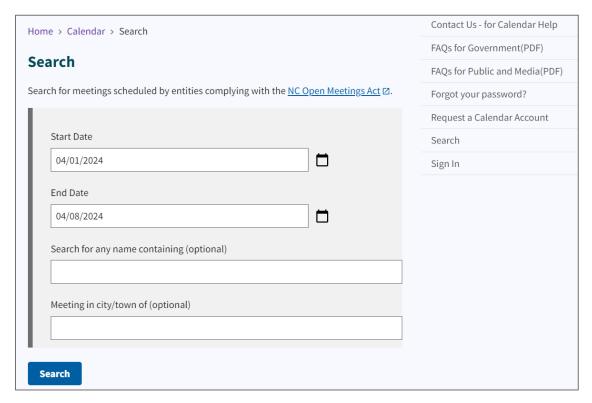


Figure 25. Start and End Date fields for example

Click **Search**.

The **Search Results** list all of the meetings that match your search requirements.

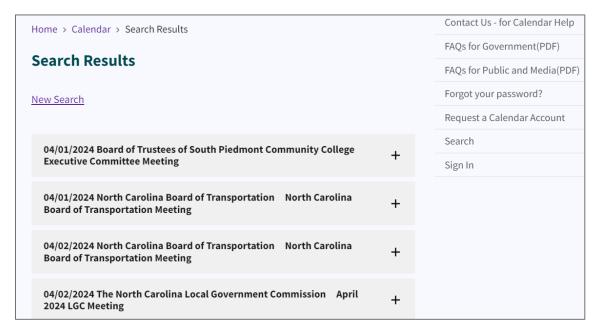


Figure 26. Search Results

Click the **plus (+) sign** at the end of the meeting name row. This will expand the tile to reveal **Meeting Details**.

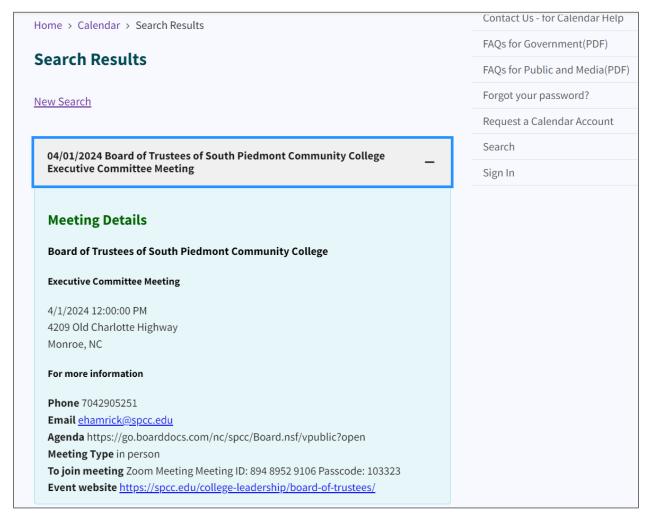


Figure 27. Meeting details

Sign In

Select Sign In.

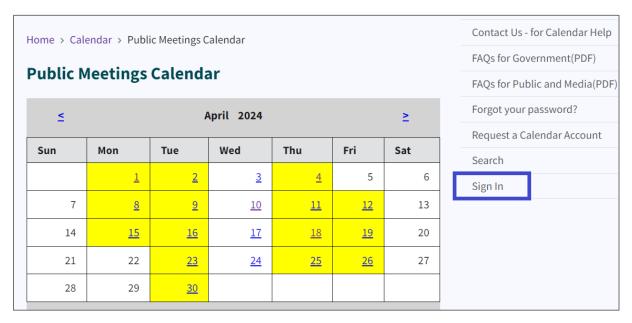


Figure 28. Sign In link highlighted

This link takes you to the Calendar Sign In page.

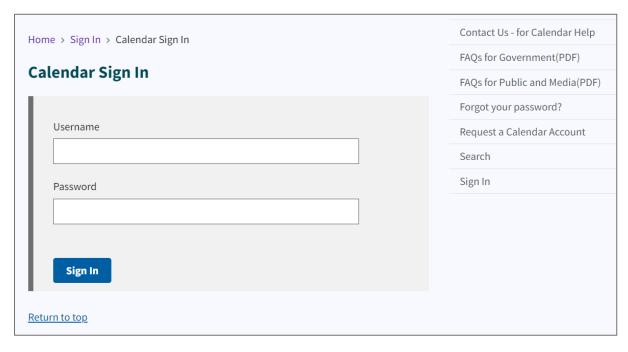


Figure 29. Calendar Sign In page

Enter your **Username** and **Password**.

Click Sign In.