

## TACC Government Affairs Rules and Procedures

The Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce's goal is to ensure these events are fair, informative, and respectful. While specific rules can vary depending on the event type, venue and length of event, here are our general guidelines:

1. **Non-Partisan Approach:** These events are to be non-partisan and impartial. The goal is to provide a platform for all candidates and elected officials to present their views without favoring any person or party by the host.
2. **Equal Opportunity:** Each candidate or elected official will be given equal time to speak and respond to questions. This helps ensure fairness and allows voters to hear from all participants on an equal footing.
3. **Moderator Rules:** The moderator shall refer to the Tahlequah Area Chamber of Commerce and staff as "us" and "our". A neutral moderator will be selected to manage the event's flow, enforce time limits, and ensure that all participants are treated fairly. The moderator will not express personal opinions or biases. The moderator reserves the right to ask follow-up questions, including asking the candidates to clearly answer the questions asked. The moderator may also ask questions not submitted by the audience that the Chamber deems important to our membership, the local business climate, or other community concerns.
4. **Question Format/Audience Participation:**
  - a. Town Hall Meetings/Community Conversations: Specific procedures regarding questions will depend on each elected official. The TACC will work with each official ahead of time to determine the procedures for questions before the Town Hall Meeting/Community Conversations. Those procedures will be made available to the public when they are finalized.
  - b. Candidate Forums: Questions will be in written form, accepted through the evening from guests in attendance, to be reviewed by an independent moderator for relevance and fairness and asked directly to each candidate for response. This will also help limit multiple questions on the same topic. Each candidate will have the same opportunity to answer the same question.
  - c. Legislative Briefings: After opening statements, microphones will be available by TACC staff for audience members to take turns asking direct questions to elected officials. Each person may ask one question at a time. Individuals may ask another question, if time permits, after all others have spoken.
  - d. Tahlequah Area Roundtable: Questions will be collected in advance of the event to allow community leaders and other important figures to address local concerns. Attendees can also submit written questions during the event. Additionally, community leaders may propose discussion topics.
5. **Time Limits:** Opening statements will have a 3-minute time limit. Closing statements will have a 2-minute time limit. Answers to questions will be limited to 60 second responses.
6. **No Personal Attacks:** No personal attacks or derogatory comments will be made to anyone for any reason. This includes audience members, candidates, and elected officials, in any way. The purpose and focus of these events should be on the issues and policies rather than personal characteristics or past actions.
7. **Petition Solicitation Policy:** To ensure a welcoming and comfortable environment for all attendees, petitioners are not permitted to solicit signatures at any Government Affairs Series event. While general discussion or informational conversation about a petition is acceptable, actively requesting signatures is not allowed. This policy is in place to prevent guests from feeling pressured or uncomfortable and to maintain the intended purpose and flow of the event.
8. **Candidate/Elected Official Participation:** All invited candidates and elected officials are to be given the Rules and Procedures of the TACC Government Affairs Committee. Any requests or changes to these rules must be approved ahead of time and made public prior to the event.
9. **Follow-Up:** All candidates and elected officials have been asked to provide a means of communication to be given to the public to follow up with clarifying or expanding their answers. Those communication channels will be shared by the TACC at event and post event.