



Advocacy in Action

Legislative Strategies for Success in 2015

Keeping You on Track for a Healthy Advocacy Checkup

As your "advocacy coach" for the summer, we're here to keep you focused and on track for perfect advocacy health by the start of the 2016 session!

Throughout the summer we've been sharing strategies to help you develop a successful advocacy plan. One component of that plan should include education. And by this we mean educating legislators about your community before they go back to Tallahassee for the 2016 session. So in this issue we'll address question five of our Advocacy Checkup:



Question #5 - Do you believe your legislators are better informed after the 2015 session about your city/town and local government?

If you answered "yes" to this question...congratulations! You've done an excellent job at increasing awareness about your city. If you answered "no" or "I'd like them to know more", below are some great strategies to keep you on the path to advocacy success.

Take them on a tour - If it's been awhile (or if you've never do so) take your legislator on a tour of your city. This is especially applicable if a lot has changed over the past few years. Whether those changes are positive or negative, they need to know about it and physically see what's been going on. This strategy is so beneficial for a variety of reasons:

- It provides your legislators a "mental picture" they can take with them and recall when it's time to vote on legislation affecting your city.
- It helps them understand and appreciate the multitude of services you provide your residents on a daily basis that affect their quality of life. This is home rule in action!
- It demonstrates how, how many and who benefits from the many programs you offer to your shared constituents. This is so important for them to know so when you talk about how potential legislation may result in the reduction or loss of these programs, they'll understand the implications.
- A tour is a **MUST** if you are asking for any state appropriations for project or program funding! Legislators need to see the project or program **AND** fully understand it so they can work on your behalf to secure the funding.

Schedule a meeting with your senior staff and police department - This can be done separately or in conjunction with the city tour. This strategy not only helps your staff build relationships with legislators, but provides both parties an opportunity to talk in-depth about issues such as development, service upgrades or expansion. your annual budget and any appropriations requests you want them to sponsor.

A meeting with your police chief is the perfect opportunity to talk about crime in your city, and what you're doing to combat it through officer training, new or expanded public safety programs, etc.

Focus your "education" on their legislative priorities - If you know what your legislator's priorities are (and you should, if you've been building a relationship), spend time showing them what your city is doing that aligns with those priorities. This demonstrates you are ready to work as partners to advance their priorities...as long as they don't negatively affect your city.

Share a copy of your city's Welcome Guide with legislators - This is a great resource for them to have readily available that highlights the services you provide and the contact information of key officials within your city.

Often, legislators have concerns that cities are not spending the public's tax dollars wisely. Educating them about your community will go a long way to overcome this misconception and prevent legislation resulting in unintended consequences that will affect your city.

HERE'S TO YOUR HEALTH!



Want to talk more about advocacy?
Contact: Allison Payne, Advocacy Programs Manager or
Kathy Till, Advocacy Programs Coordinator
Visit our web site at: www.flcities.com