

The Ten Commandments of Effective Legislative Relations

February 20, 2025

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1 - Become aware of legislation

- Realize that as a municipal official, you must dedicate time to understanding proposed legislation.
- Legislative action and intergovernmental relations are crucial aspects of your job.
- The Statehouse Report, emailed weekly during the legislative session, serves as an effective tool to stay informed about current state legislative activities.
- Designate someone to monitor legislation and review League materials. The League provides legislative updates via email to interested municipal officials. Please let us know if you'd like to receive these updates.



2 - Get to know your legislators

- Make the effort to meet your legislators informally and get to know them on a first-name basis. They are easily accessible and value your input as a municipal official.
- Attend district events sponsored by your legislators to strengthen your personal relationship with them.
- A strong bond between your municipality and your legislators is invaluable.



3 - Be well informed on the issues

- Approach your legislators with comprehensive information to articulate your arguments, respond to questions, and counter the opposition.
- The League should be your primary source of information.
- Ensure your contact is precise and concise.
- Whenever possible, quantify the impact of a proposed bill and explain how it will affect specific projects in your city or town. This type of information is valuable to legislators and appreciated.



4 - Communicate regularly and be persistent

- Consistent communication with your legislators is crucial. Maintain regular, year-round contact with them, not just during emergencies.
- Engage your legislators in community events, such as ribbon-cutting ceremonies for new facilities. Invite them to spend a day at the municipal building.
- When attempting to influence the outcome of a vote with your legislators, be persistent but never resort to abuse, badgering, bullying, or threats.
- A personal visit is the most effective form of contact, followed by a telephone call, email, or letter.
- While resolutions can be useful, avoid overusing them.



5 - Work with outside groups

- The media, service clubs, community organizations, and your local Chamber of Commerce all value your involvement in legislative matters.
- Keep them updated on your positions and concerns, and don't hesitate to seek their endorsement.



6 - Coalitions can work but be cautious

- There are frequently other organizations that are interested in the same issue and want your support. Be careful.
- Coalitions come apart as quickly as they come together, and the goals of the other organization(s) may not be the same as yours.



7 - Always say thank you

- Don't forget to express your gratitude to your legislators.
- When your legislators support your efforts, a heartfelt thank-you note, or other special recognition can significantly strengthen your relationship.



8 – Act quickly

- This is a crucial rule of effective legislative relations. If you delay taking action, a bill might pass or fail before your city or town has an opportunity to provide input.
- It's essential to be involved in the process before a decision is already made.



9 - Keep the League informed.

- When scheduling meetings with your legislators or sending them letters, please take the time to inform CML.
- We appreciate receiving copies of letters related to legislative matters.



10 - Remember your ABCs.

- **A**ccuracy, **B**revity, and **C**ourtesy are three crucial qualities to remember when interacting with legislators.
- Provide accurate and concise information.
- If you're unsure about an answer, admit it. Don't shoot from the hip.
- Never provide false information.
- Be brief and to the point, and don't ramble. Practice your "30-second elevator speech."
- Legislators are besieged with information. They appreciate someone who gets right to the point and will follow up with questions if they have any.
- Courtesy means treating your legislators as you would like to be treated by your own constituents.



The Bottom Line

- Cities and towns do not operate in a vacuum. What one municipality does with its powers can impact all other cities and towns.
- Municipal officials have a responsibility to acknowledge this reality, especially when a local issue becomes contentious.
- Many a bill have been drafted and introduced because of the actions of one municipality.
- CML's success depends upon you, your participation, and your informed engagement.



Thank you!



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