

Cal Cities Partner Webinar

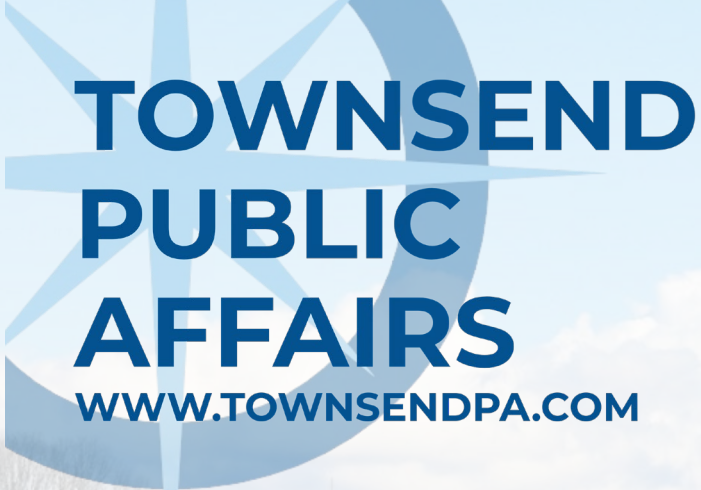
Wednesday,
September 16, 2026



LEAGUE OF
**CALIFORNIA
CITIES**

Strengthening California Cities
through Advocacy and Education

From Meetings to Money: How Strategic Advocacy Delivers Funding and Policy Wins



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FROM MEETINGS TO MONEY: How Strategic Advocacy Delivers Funding and Policy Wins

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WEBINAR OVERVIEW

Objective: Demonstrate how thoughtful advocacy before, during, and after meetings translates into policy victories, funding opportunities, and long-term relationships with decision-makers.

Today's Panelists



Casey Elliott

Chief Strategy Officer
Townsend Public Affairs



Joseph Melo

Federal Advocacy Manager
Townsend Public Affairs



Marc Mondell

City Manager
City of Tulare



Niroop Srivatsa

City Manager
City of Lafayette



THE ADVOCACY LANDSCAPE



Changes in D.C.

Election dynamics are shifting. It's vital to understand the evolving priorities of the Administration and Congress, especially as they change post-November elections.



Sacramento Shifts

With a new Administration in Sacramento, agencies must rapidly adapt to and understand the newly established budget and shifting policy priorities.



Intense Competition

There is significantly increased competition for limited grant funding and state investments. Standing out requires targeted, relationship-driven strategy.

Proactive Strategy: You cannot afford to wait. Successful agencies are relationship-driven and strategic, regardless of who holds the majority.



ADVOCACY IS A CYCLE

Common Misconception: Advocacy isn't checking a box by attending a meeting. A meeting is just one touchpoint in a much longer strategy.



The quality of your preparation determines the outcome long before you walk into the room.



EFFECTIVE MEETINGS: PREPARATION

1. Start with a Clear Ask

Every meeting must answer key strategic questions:

- What exactly are you asking for?
- Is the request realistic given the budget?
- Does it align with majority party priorities?
- Is the timing appropriate?

Examples of Asks:

- Budget requests or Grant support
- Legislative amendments
- Agency assistance or Letters of support

If your ask cannot be summarized in one sentence, it isn't ready.

2. Prepare Elected Officials

Successful meetings require preparation, not surprises. Provide your officials with:

- Key talking points & local impacts
- District-specific benefits
- Anticipated questions & supporting data
- Clear leave-behind materials

Pre-Meeting Discussion:

- Who speaks?
- Who tells the story?
- Who makes the clear ask?



STORYTELLING & RELATIONSHIPS

Tell a Story Supported by Data

Balance community impact with measurable financial returns. Move beyond raw statistics to explain:

- Why this specific issue matters
- Who directly benefits in the community
- Why action is needed immediately

Build Relationships, Not Transactions

The goal isn't simply to secure one single "yes". It is to become:

- A trusted local resource
- A credible, long-term partner
- The first call legislators make when relevant issues arise





CASE STUDY: SB 79 (CITY OF LAFAYETTE)

Strategic Advocacy in Action: Navigating housing and transit policy interacting with local planning dynamics.



Background

SB 79 proposed upzoning near transit hubs. It would allow dense development near impacted evacuation routes in high fire severity zones. Lafayette, regional leaders and other stakeholders recognized the critical impact on local safety.



Advocacy Strategy

The city utilized early engagement, regional relationships, trips to Sacramento, and consistent legislative education. They leveraged multiple touchpoints with state leaders to adapt messaging safety planning.



Lessons Learned

Preparation, education, and persistence led to a vital amendment exempting non-urban counties. Success relied entirely on adapting the narrative and managing relationships throughout the legislative process.



AFTER THE MEETING

The Most Important Part

Effective Follow-Up (Within 24-48 hours):

- Share the information requested during the meeting
- Reinforce your key overarching messages
- Answer any previously unanswered questions

Continue the Conversation

Keep legislators informed by providing consistent touches:

- Project updates and funding milestones
- Groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, and success stories
- Press coverage and invitations to community events

Stay engaged even when you don't need something.





TURNING ADVOCACY INTO WINS

Strategic advocacy creates clear, measurable outcomes for local agencies.

Funding Success

Effective engagement opens the door to financial resources that build communities:

- Securing highly competitive grants
- Targeted State budget investments
- Federal appropriations for local projects
- Exclusive agency funding opportunities

Policy Success

Advocacy ensures that legislation works for, not against, your jurisdiction:

- Drafting and passing bill amendments
- Securing regulatory improvements
- Influencing administrative actions
- Cultivating long-term legislative champions

Funding rarely results from one meeting; it comes from sustained engagement, credibility, and consistent follow-through.



FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS

- ✓ **Create Opportunities:** Don't wait for opportunities to come to you—be proactive and create them.
- ✓ **The Clear Ask:** Every single meeting should have one clear, realistic ask.
- ✓ **Preparation is Everything:** Preparation determines success before you even enter the room.
- ✓ **The Power of Follow-Up:** Follow-up is exactly where long-term relationships are built.
- ✓ **It Is an Ongoing Process:** Strategic advocacy isn't a one-off event; it's an ongoing process that leads to lasting funding and policy results.



Questions?

Thank you for attending today's webinar!



Casey Elliott
Chief Strategy Officer
CElliott@TownsendPA.com



Joseph Melo
Federal Advocacy Manager
JMelo@TownsendPA.com

California Advocacy | Federal Advocacy | Grant Writing

www.TownsendPA.com | (949) 399-9050