

10 Tips For Cities Lobbying the State Legislature

1. **Become familiar with the legislative process.** Appoint a legislative liaison to track key legislation and work with your League regional public affairs manager www.cacities.org/regionalmanagers.
2. **Use the legislative tracking tool on the League's website** www.cacities.org/billsearch. This tool offers basic information about a bill (text, history, status, hearings, votes, etc.). Here you will find bills that the League is tracking, as well as the registered positions (Support, Oppose or Watch), sample letters and the legislative representative assigned to the bill. Note: The League's standard position on tracking legislation is "watch" until such time that we take an official position.
 - Write letters on legislation. Your letters and phone calls make a substantial difference. The League provides sample letters for cities on major legislation. www.cacities.org/billsearch.
 - *Navigating the Legislative Process* is another resource available on the League's website at www.cacities.org/legresources.
3. **Subscribe to *City Advocate Weekly***, the League's newsletter. Visit the League's website to subscribe www.cacities.org/cityadvocateweekly. Stay up-to-date on major issues impacting local government.
4. **Get to know your Senate and Assembly representatives** and their staff in both the district and Capitol offices. Understand their background and what motivates them. Become a resource to them in both the district and Sacramento. Educate them on the issues facing your city. Provide them with updates on a regular basis.
5. **Get to know your local press** and educate them about important city issues. Provide a local angle on pending state legislation. Legislators pay attention to their local press, and voters often care most about local issues. Notify your press when your city takes a position on an issue the League is advocating on for California cities.
6. **Know your numbers.** Understand how state decisions can affect your city's budget. Visit www.californiacityfinance.com to learn more about local finance issues.
7. **Build networks** with other groups in your community on key legislative issues: business groups, developers, unions, library groups, parks and recreation users, local chambers, etc. The League's regional public affairs managers specialize in building these networks. Share key local leaders/partners, who are working with you, with your league public affairs manager.
8. **Organize an internal process within your city for developing and proposing changes to laws** that will help your city. Legislators and their staff look for legislative ideas each fall. Engage your League public affairs manager to explore coalition-building opportunities around your legislative proposals.
9. **Adopt local policies on legislation** that enable your city to respond quickly to changes in the legislative process, and the League's Legislative Action Alerts. Explore options with your regional public affairs manager. Consider adopting the League's Guiding Principles as your city's principles. This document can be found online at www.cacities.org/summary.
10. **Use the League as a resource.** Contact your regional public affairs manager www.cacities.org/regionalmanagers for information and ideas, and let them know how you are willing to help. Visit the League's website www.cacities.org for frequent updates on the state budget and League priority legislation. The League is here to help you!