

GETTING INVOLVED 2016 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Want to get more involved in the legislative process? Start cultivating relationships with your local legislators. Below are a few tips to get started. The highlighted items have proven to be especially effective strategies for county leaders:

I. BEFORE THE SESSION STARTS

Review the ACCA's legislative priorities. Make copies of the priorities and share them with local legislators to ensure they are aware of county issues BEFORE the session starts.

Make sure you have cell phone numbers and email addresses for local legislators.

Schedule meeting with local legislators about any ACCA bills or local bills of interest that you want them to support or oppose during the upcoming session.

- Consider scheduling a lunch discussion or meeting them at their local office to discuss upcoming legislative issues.
- **NOTE: These relationships are important, not only for the ACCA, but for the influence they allow county leaders in passing local legislation.**

II. DURING THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Follow what is happening during the legislative session by reading the ACCA Legislative Reports that are emailed on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Keep up with how your legislators vote on county issues—both in committee and on the House/Senate floor. If they tell you they are going to vote one way, but end of voting another way—reach out to them to discuss why they changed their mind.

Call or email legislators on any bills listed as *ACTION ITEMS* in the Legislative Reports. To feel more comfortable making contact with legislators, do the following:

- Before you contact a legislator, review the 'blue sheet' summaries of each bill provided by the ACCA staff.
- If you have any questions about the bill, contact a member of the ACCA staff's policy team for clarification.
- If a legislator asks you a question you don't know, don't panic. Tell them, "I'm not sure about that, but I will find out and get back in touch with you." Then contact a member of the ACCA staff for additional information.
- Be sure to share any feedback you receive from legislators with a member of the ACCA staff.

Contact local legislators ahead of important floor votes to ensure they are supporting the position of county government.

Always be aware of which committees your local legislator sits on. If your legislator sits on a committee that will review an ACCA bill or a DANGER bill, contact the legislator and speak with him/her about how the bill would impact counties. Then ask them to support your position.

Keep the lines of communication open with your local legislators **throughout** the legislative session—by phone, email, and face-to-face contact. Keep the ACCA staff informed about where your legislators stand on county issues.

Develop a game plan to repair any strained relationships with legislators.

ACCA County Days are a critical component of the advocacy process for county governments. Attendance provides county leaders a good opportunity to network with legislators.

- NOTE: To make the most out of ACCA County Day, contact the legislator(s) you want to meet with at least ONE WEEK prior to your visit to ensure they schedule time to meet with you.

III. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Follow up with legislators to thank them for their support. Engage them about their overall impression of the legislative session.

Express interest to an ACCA staff member about participating a 2017 Legislative Workgroup.