



10 Tips For Cities Lobbying the State Legislature

- 1. Appoint a legislative liaison** to track key legislation and work with your League Regional Representative. Become familiar with the legislative process, by regular use of the Legislative Tracking tools on the League's website www.cacities.org/billsearch. In addition to offering all of the basic information about a bill (text, history, status, hearings, votes, etc.), the League's website tells you the League's position on a bill, the lobbyist tracking it, and provides copies of any letters the League has sent on the bill.
- 2. Sign up for the League's *Priority Focus*** newsletter on the League's website www.cacities.org/priorityfocus.
- 3. Get to know your Senate and Assembly representatives**, and their staffs at 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. Use the League's online Advocacy Center (www.cacities.org/advocacycenter) to identify or contact your legislators.
- 4. Get to know your local press**, educate them about city issues. Provide a local angle on pending state legislation. Legislators pay attention to their local press, and voters often care more about local issues. Use the League's online advocacy tool www.cacities.org/advocacycenter to research and access media in your area.
- 5. Know your numbers.** Understand how state decisions can affect your city's budget.
- 6. 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. League regional representatives specialize in building these networks.
- 7. Organize an internal process within the city for developing and proposing changes to laws** that will help your city. Legislators and their staff look for legislative ideas each fall. Involve your League regional representative to explore coalition-building opportunities around your legislative proposals.
- 8. Adopt local policies on legislation** that enable your city to act quickly to changes in the legislative process, and the League's Legislative Action Alerts. Consider adopting the League's Guiding Principles as a base.
- 9. Write letters on legislation** featured in *Priority Focus*. Your letters make a difference. Use the League's online advocacy center www.cacities.org/advocacycenter to access sample letters or talking points on League priority bills. With this tool you can also write and send letters online, by fax, or download and send through standard mail.
- 10. Use the League as a resource.** Contact your regional representative (www.cacities.org/regionalrep) for information and ideas, and let them know how you are willing to help. Visit the League's website for frequent updates on the state budget or League priority legislation. Learn about effective advocacy by taking the LeagueE-Campus course at www.cacities.org/ecampus. The League, and its staff, are here to help you!