AWC Advocacy Academy 2019
Candice Bock & Brandon Anderson

Agenda

1. Why should you advocate at the state level?
2. Navigating the legislative process
3. Using your power
4. Effectively advocating for your city
5. Questions & Answer
Why Should You Advocate at the State Level?

Legislators enact policies that impact your city’s operations and your residents’ daily lives:

2019 Policy Bills
- Density
- Behavioral health
- Sidewalks
- Law enforcement
- Liability
- Elections
- Public records
- Local levies . . .
SS2  Take out why and make this a statement.
Sharon Swanson, 6/4/2019
Many of the decisions made by legislators in Olympia have a direct financial impact on cities, towns, and their residents.

In short, legislators decide who gets what... and who pays for what.

- **Shared revenue:**
  - Liquor profits and liquor taxes
  - Marijuana excise tax
  - Streamlined sales tax
  - Criminal justice
  - 6050
  - Annexation sales tax credit
  - Fire insurance premium

- **Funding (or lack of funding) for city budget priorities and obligations:**
  - Pension costs
  - Law enforcement and public safety
  - Housing programs and grants
  - Infrastructure grants and loans
  - Transportation infrastructure and maintenance
  - Behavioral health projects
  - Capital project funding

Since 2011

$$169 \text{ M}$$

City shared revenues diverted

Since 2009

$$1.2 \text{ B}$$

Public Works Trust Fund diverted

City shared revenues

In 2017-19

$$225 \text{ M}$$
BA1  Numbers need updating
Brandon Anderson, 6/13/2019
By taking an active role in advocacy, city leaders can:

- Help maintain local revenues
- Stop policies that harm cities or limit local control
- Ensure city interests are key in policy debates
- Shape political narratives
- Influence policy outcomes
- Improve the lives of city residents

“Politics is like water, it follows the path of least resistance”

Navigating the Legislative Process
The Legislative Process

Navigating the legislative process can seem intimidating
• Full of jargon and acronyms
• Can seem complicated (and it often is)
• Can come off uncomfortably formal
• Where do I start?

You don’t need to be a lobbyist or lawyer to engage and have your voice heard
• In fact, effect participation in the legislative process is critical for cities and city leaders
• No more complicated than the local legislative process – just a little different
• AWC has staff, resources, and tools to make engaging in the legislative process easy and accessible for you!

The Washington State Legislature

• Washington has a bicameral (2 chamber) legislature which convenes the second Monday in January of each year

• Sessions are constitutionally limited to 105 days during odd numbered years and 60 days in even years

• The Legislature passes the two-year budget during odd number years

• The Senate has 49 members; the House has 98 members

• Representatives are elected to a two-year term and stand for re-election during the General Election held in even-numbered years

• Senators are elected to four-year staggered terms with about one-half of the membership stand for election during the General Election in even-numbered years
How a Bill Becomes a Law

- Idea is drafted into bill form
- Sponsored by legislator
- Introduced and referred to committee
- Public hearing in policy committee
- Voted out of policy committee
- Public hearing in fiscal committee
- Voted out of fiscal committee (if applicable)
- Rules Committee
- Majority puts it on calendar for vote
- Floor vote
- Process begins in opposite chamber
- Passage of identical measures
- Signature or veto by Governor

Hundreds introduced each year - most die before becoming law

Major Categories of State Revenue

- Retail sales & use Taxes (51%)
- Business & Occupation and Public Utility Taxes (22%)
- State Property Taxes (13%)
- All Other Taxes (14%)

Unlike most states, Washington does not have either a personal or corporate net income tax
Using Your Power

What is Political/Legislative Power?

- Simply put, power is “the ability to get what you want”
- Organizational power, in terms of politics, generally consists of the ability to access resources and/or people
- For most organizations, power in action usually takes one of three forms:
  - Giving decision-makers something they want
  - Depriving decision-makers of something they want
  - Helping elect a decision-maker who supports their issues
Who are the decision makers in Olympia?

• Majority leadership
• Committee chairs
• Caucuses
• Individual legislators
• The Governor
• Legislative staff
• Media
• Special interests/ Lobbyists
• Voters

What do legislators want?

1. Legislators want to be reelected
   • Primarily: Win votes
   • Secondarily: Money/volunteers that can help reach voters; earned (unpaid) media that can influence voters
   • Timing: Most effective prior to an election

2. Legislators want to pass their bills
   • Primarily: Organizations to work to help draft and move their bills
   • Secondarily: Organizations to actively support their bills
   • Timing: Most effective to begin prior to session
Your power as a city leader

As elected officials and city leaders you hold a significant amount of power to influence decision makers.

• Provide access to constituents and key relationships
• Ability to give endorsements and publicity (Op. Eds, LTEs etc.)*
• Capacity to provide election assistance (organizing volunteers, fund raising etc.)*
• Provide expertise or public testimony on issues
• Ability to mobilize people for or against an issue
• Power to unite 281 cities in support or against an issue (AWC)

* Always in compliance with PDC rules

Effectively Advocating for Your City
Legislative Advocacy: A Year Round Job

• Begin building a relationship with your legislators during the summer and fall before session begins (bonus points if they are up for election)

• Participate in legislative elections
  • Do your research and hold a face-to-face meeting before offering your endorsement
  • Publicly thank legislators who have helped your city and be candid about those who haven’t
  • Help organize volunteers for legislative candidates you support and be visible

• Develop your city’s legislative agenda
  • Keep it short and simple - one page only
  • Include AWC’s legislative priorities
  • Make it public and share it (FB, Twitter, Website, etc.)

• Other ways to engage
  • Volunteer for AWC’s legislative priorities committee
  • Work with other cities and towns in your region
  • Ask AWC for help

Session Advocacy (Session Begins in January)

• Take advantage of opportunities provided by AWC
  • Attend City Action Days (Jan. 28-29) and AWC Lobby Day
  • Read AWC’s Legislative Bulletin
  • Respond to AWC action alerts, requests for information and feedback

• Schedule a one-on-one meeting with your legislators early in session
  • Meet with your legislators in January to discuss specific bills or budget priorities and tell stories about real impacts on your constituents
  • Leave AWC one-pager and your contact information behind
  • Offer legislators your expertise (written or public testimony, personal story, etc.)
  • Follow up with legislators often
  • Build relationships with your AWC lobbyists

Don’t wait until session to have your first face-to-face meeting!!!
10 Advocacy Tactics Ranked by Effectiveness

2. Face-to-face meetings during interim
3. Face-to-face meetings during session
4. Hand written letters
5. Personal emails
6. Phone calls
7. Public testimony
8. Attending legislative town-halls
9. Social media posts
10. Form letters or emails

AWC: Providing Access to Effective Advocacy

- AWC’s City Action Days (Jan. 28-29, 2020)
- Mayors’ Exchange (February 2020)
- Legislative Bulletin Updates
- AWC “Calls to Action”
- Legislative directory
- AWC Lobbyists
Advocacy Tools: AWC has you covered

Public Disclosure Commission Rules

- Elected officials' in-person lobbying not required to be disclosed, except if spending on individuals lobbied is over $25 of non-public funds - the amount and purpose must be disclosed

- May not spend public funds as a direct or indirect gift

- Must disclose if you hire contract lobbyist

- In-house lobbyists and staff who spend, in aggregate, more than four days a quarter lobbying the legislature in-person likely need to report

- For more information visit the AWC and PDC websites
Review

1. We understand the importance of city leader advocacy and it’s role in impacting legislative outcomes

2. We navigated the legislative process

3. We have a better sense of our own power to influence the process

4. Ready to use what we’ve learned and the tools provided by AWC to effectively advocate for our cities!

Questions?

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