Stay committed, stay focused...you’re almost there!

When "life" gets in the way, it can sometimes be difficult to be engaged in advocacy. This is especially true before and after session. However, those that stay the course quickly realize how important it is to their overall advocacy health.

Now that the League has developed their 2016 Action Agenda, you can focus your advocacy on those specific issues. However, if you don't quite feel up to the challenge, or confident in your knowledge of the issues, we're here to help. In this edition we'll address part two of question six of our Advocacy Checkup, which focuses on issue education.

**Question #6 - During the interim, do you think you need to:**

1. **Become more educated on the issues?**

Each session thousands of bills are filed in Tallahassee; many affecting local government. Often, it can be quite daunting to stay abreast of so many issues and effectively communicate your message with legislators. The good news is there are some great strategies that will help you target your efforts so you can be a successful advocate now, and throughout the upcoming session.

**Concentrate your advocacy on only a few issues.**

- If you're new to advocacy, start with one or two of the FLC Legislative Priorities. For our veteran advocates, that might be three or four. The goal is focusing on the number of issues you're comfortable with.
- Prioritize how you select the issues. Focus on those that - will directly affect your city, such as the Relocation of Utilities; Is an issue where you have professional expertise; Is an issue you're passionate about; or is an issue that's important to your legislator(s).
- Focus on responding to the League's Legislative Alerts. They provide great background information, talking points and key legislators to contact on the issues.

**Once you've determined your issues:**

- Make time to attend the upcoming Legislative Conference November 19-20 to learn advocacy strategies and more about the League's 2016
Legislative Priorities.

- Spend time talking with a FLC lobbyist. They are experts, ready and willing to help you!
- Read the FLC Issue Briefs and become familiar with the talking points.
- Make time to participate in or review any past FLC webinars related to the issues.
- Sign up to track legislation related to the issues through the House and Senate legislative tracker.
- Review current and archived FLC Legislative Bulletins to become familiar with previously filed or current legislation related to the issues.
- Read the Staff Analysis for the current or past legislation related to the issues you've chosen. You can find this through the House or Senate websites or by clicking on the link in the FLC Legislative Bulletin at the start of the bill summary.
- Take advantage of the resources and data provided by the FLC Center for Municipal Research.

In a previous edition of *Advocacy in Action*, we talked about the four most important questions legislators want answered when making a decision on whether to support or oppose legislation. Target your research and spend time with your staff reviewing the issues you've selected, preparing your message to answer those questions:

- Who in my district will be affected? (Blackwell, 2007)
- How will they be affected?
- How many will be affected?
- How many care they will be affected?

By focusing your time and energy on a select number of issues, you'll quickly become very confident in your knowledge and message delivery. And THAT means you'll be in perfect advocacy health by the start of the 2016 session.

**HERE’S TO YOUR HEALTH!**

Want to talk more about advocacy?
Contact: Allison Payne, Advocacy Programs Manager or Kathy Till, Advocacy Consultant
Visit our web site at: www.flcities.com