



THE ARIZONA CENTER
— FOR ECONOMIC PROGRESS —

ADVOCACY TOOLKIT

**Find Your District and Your Local,
State and Federal Elected Officials**

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**Meet with Your Elected Officials in
Their Office or in the Community**

**Find Other Policy Avenues Besides
the Arizona and U.S. Capitals**

Meet with Your Elected Officials in Their Offices or in the Community

Most members of Congress, state legislators, the Arizona Governor, city council members and other officials will hold constituent meetings in their communities. This is a good way to introduce yourself and learn more about the issues without having the intensity of a one-on-one meeting in an office (and also probably less rushed). Community meetings are also good ways to stay informed about the progress of on-going issues and to meet other voters in your district.

Your first step is to visit the web pages of your respective elected leaders and sign up on their e-mail lists for community announcements. If they don't have an e-mail list, call their office to see if they host regular events. If s/he doesn't and you're feeling enthusiastic, you can volunteer to host one in your home or local coffee shop.

With increasingly busy schedules, it's becoming more difficult to find time to meet personally with your state or federal officials but that doesn't mean you shouldn't try. You may want to organize a small group of constituents to meet instead of asking for a one-on-one or ask an advocacy or community group to help you get a meeting.

If you do get a personal meeting with your elected official, follow these guidelines:

Before the Meeting

If you want to discuss a particular piece of legislation, have the bill number available. Develop an agenda or talking points for the meeting. Decide on the key talking points for the meeting and determine the order in which you'd like to present your information. If you attend the meeting as a group, designate one or two people who will "lead" the conversation. This will help keep your message and the presentation of information clear and organized. Ensure that everyone in the group supports and will deliver the same message.

At the Meeting

Prepare to answer questions on the point(s) you address. If your elected official asks you questions to which you don't have the answers, simply say you will look into the issue and reply back right away. This also gives you another opportunity to contact the office.

Provide informational documents that support your position. Leave a fact sheet or other materials that reinforce your position and the action(s) you would like to see taken.

Ask the elected official where she/he stands on the issue you are discussing. Ask the elected official if you can count on his/her support on the issue(s) you discussed. If your elected official or their staff disagrees or is noncommittal, don't threaten or argue with her/him because it is

counterproductive. Try to find common ground or areas of compromise. Talk about the value of your issue to your personally or to the district.

If you can't find common ground or get your elected official on board, you may want to schedule another meeting with different constituents to show broad support for your position or sending a packet of letters from constituents. If the elected official is unfamiliar with the legislation/issue, ask her/him to review the materials you are leaving behind and say that you will follow-up in two weeks for their response.

Verify follow-up information. Confirm proper contact information for the person with whom you should follow up.

Following the Visit

Send a "thank you" for the opportunity to meet. Write a thank you letter to the elected official for taking time to meet with you and listening to your concerns. Enclose any documentation you had agreed to provide to bolster your position and briefly restate your views and what you would like him/her to do.

Follow your elected official's position and actions on the issue. Monitor how the elected official votes and send him/her your thoughts on their position. If the elected official votes with your position on the issue, recognize that vote with a written "thank you." If the elected official votes against your position, write or call to express your disappointment and urge reconsideration of the issue the next time it comes up for a vote.

As always, the Arizona Center for Economic Progress is glad to help. If you would like contact information, ideas or suggestions, or just to talk with someone about a planned meeting, call us at 602-266-0707.

Arizona Appointed and Elected Officials

Federal and state governments are not the only avenues to create policy change. Advocates can engage with city and county government; state boards and commissions; school boards; and special districts to advance issues affecting children and families.

County Government

www.countysupervisors.org for general information

Arizona has 15 counties, each with their own Board of Supervisors. County supervisors provide regional leadership over policy areas that ensure safe communities, protect public health, promote economic development, and plan and manage land use for sustainable development. Supervisors also provide oversight of county operations, including overseeing strategies to promote sound fiscal management and to develop a high-quality county government workforce.

Maricopa County, for example, funds nearly 15,118 positions to serve the public in areas of public health and health care; transportation infrastructure construction and maintenance; flood control; law enforcement and courts; education; parks and recreation facilities; libraries; animal control; economic and community development; and elections.

City Government/Town Government

www.azleague.org for a listing of Arizona cities and towns

City governments generally consist of a mayor and council. Some mayors are elected separate from the council members; other mayors are selected from within the sitting council. The city government is responsible for public health and health care; transportation; trash collection; infrastructure construction and maintenance; law enforcement; parks and recreation facilities; libraries; economic and community development; and elections. Cities also have appointed commissions similar to the State Boards and Commission (see below). Refer to your city or town website for more information about local boards and commissions.

State Boards and Commission

www.azgovernor.gov/bc for general information

www.azgovernor.gov/bc/documents/GovAppointments.pdf for a directory

A Board or Commission is an independent body consisting of members who are appointed by public officials, usually the Governor. Boards with Gubernatorial appointments are created in two ways, either by statute enacted in the State Legislature, or by a Governor's Executive Order.

There are two types of boards and commissions: regulatory and advisory. Regulatory boards are those that oversee the licensing, handle complaints, and enforce disciplinary actions of individuals or industries that fall within the jurisdiction of the board's authority. For example, a complaint filed by a patient against a physician would be reviewed, investigated, and appropriately acted upon by the Arizona Medical Board.

The second type of board or commission, the advisory board, develops policy and makes recommendations to public officials on how to address specific issues. For example, the Civil Rights Advisory Board investigates and holds hearings on infringements of Arizona civil rights laws and then advises the civil rights division of the Attorney General's Office. Here are some examples of commissions that address children/youth issues:

Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission

The Arizona Juvenile Justice Commission provides leadership to state and local communities to develop and maintain a coordinated, best practice approach to juvenile justice prevention, intervention and public safety. The commission advises the Governor and the Legislature on matters related to the improvement of the juvenile justice system, and its services to youth and families. It also develops policies to improve the quality of juvenile justice and conditions for children in care and advocates for youth involvement in both the planning and implementation of projects and encourage parental involvement in delinquency prevention and intervention programs

Arizona Parents Commission on Drug Education and Prevention

The Commission funds programs that will increase and enhance parental involvement and will increase education about the serious risks and public health problems caused by the abuse of alcohol and controlled substances. The Commission also contracts for administrative and professional services with a not-for-profit organization or government entity with expertise in substance abuse education and prevention.

Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women

The Governor's Commission to Prevent Violence Against Women develops legislative and policy recommendations on violence against women. The Commission supports successful prevention initiatives, as well as the expansion of services for victims of domestic and sexual violence.

School Boards (also called Governing Boards)

www.azsba.org for the Arizona School Board's Association

The school board, with extensive involvement from the staff and community, is responsible for envisioning the future of the public schools in their community. After setting the vision and mission for the district, the governing board works collaboratively to establish strategic goals to move the organization toward the community's vision for its schools.

As the community's representative in the local schools, the board is responsible for ensuring that the schools are well run – that resources are used wisely and that high standards for academic performance are set. The board as a whole needs to monitor performance to meet established goals – academic, financial and operational.

Board policies and goals establish the structure and create the environment for ensuring that all students are served. The board provides support by ensuring that resources are adequate and aligned to meet established goals. Support also is provided by recognizing and encouraging excellence throughout the organization.

First Things First

www.azftf.gov

First Things First is a government agency that is funded through the tobacco tax. While the state legislature has broad oversight over FTF, its funding is not allocated by the legislature and it operates under the direction of its own Board of Directors. FTF funds early childhood education in Arizona, and dollars are distributed to local communities through the direction of the First Things First Regional Partnership Councils.

The dedicated volunteers who make up the Regional Councils are responsible for working with their communities to determine what kids five years old and younger in their area need to arrive at school healthy and ready to succeed.

Visit the individual Regional Council pages on the FTF website to learn, about the services funded for kids in your community, and how you can become involved with your local council.

Tribal Government

<http://itcaonline.com> for the Intertribal Council of Arizona

Native American tribes possess the right to form their own governments, to enforce laws (both civil and criminal) within their lands, to tax, to establish requirements for membership, to license and regulate activities, to zone and to exclude persons from tribal territories. There are 21 federally recognized tribes based in Arizona. (The Pueblo of Zuni have a small territory in Apache County that is not adjoining to the main reservation in New Mexico.)

Each tribe has its own elected leadership and elections many not always coincide with non-tribal elections. Some tribes are districted; others are not. Only recognized members of the tribe can vote in their elections. Native Americans do vote in legislative, statewide (including ballot initiatives) and federal elections.

Tribes can operate their own K-12 primary and secondary education systems and some have their own higher education programs. They receive federal grants and engage in contracts with the federal government and do not need the approval of the state legislature to allocate those dollars. Tribes manage social services, natural resources management on trust lands, economic

development programs, law enforcement and detention services, administration of tribal courts, implementation of land and water claim settlements, housing improvement, disaster relief, replacement and repair of schools, repair and maintenance of roads and bridges, and the repair of structural deficiencies on high hazard dams.

Tribal government revenues are not taxed, just like state and local government revenues are not. Like state and local governments, tribal governments use their revenues to provide services for their citizens. Unlike state governments, tribal governments are not in a position to levy property or income taxes. Income from tribal businesses is the only non-federal revenue source.

State governments can collect excise taxes on sales to non-members that occur on tribal lands, so long as the tax does not fall directly on the tribal government. States and tribes have developed a variety of methods for collecting these taxes, which most often take the form of intergovernmental agreements or pre-taxing at the wholesale level.

Individual American Indians and Alaska Natives and their businesses pay federal income tax just like every other American. The one exception is when an Indian person receives income directly from a treaty or trust resource such as fish or timber, that income is not federally taxed. States also cannot tax tribal members who live and derive their income on tribal lands.

Special Districts

Special districts are organized entities, possessing a structural form, an official name, perpetual succession, and the rights to sue and be sued, to make contracts and to obtain and dispose of property. They have officers who are popularly elected or are chosen by other public officials. Unlike most other governments or full service governments, special districts usually provide only one or two functions. The U.S. Bureau of the Census defines special districts as:

“independent, limited purpose government units, which exist as separate entities with substantial administrative and fiscal independence from general purpose local governments.”

School districts are considered special districts. Other special districts in Arizona include:

active management area water agricultural improvement

ambulance

community facilities (finance schools) community park maintenance

county free library

county improvement districts

county television improvement (television translator and relay facilities) drainage 'and flood protection' domestic water improvement

electrical

irrigation and water conservation irrigation water delivery

jail

multi county water conservation municipal improvement

pest abatement and control

power

regional public transportation authority regional transportation authority

rural road improvements
sanitary (sewer and garbage disposal) school technology
fire
flood control
general public improvements
health service
(medical clinic in medically underserved areas) hospital

Others

special health care (nursing care center, urgent care, clinics)
special road
street and highway bonds
stadium
water oriented development
Other elected offices, such as a homeowner's associations, precinct committee person in a political party, or non-profit Board of Directors can shape public policy.