



The elected officials' road map



Now that you are a city elected official, your work has just begun

AWC is here to help

Learn all about your new role, what your city does, and how you can inspire change that leaves a lasting impact on your community and future generations. To do this, you must familiarize yourself with a multitude of city issues.

AWC's many trainings, publications, and resources will help you navigate your time in office and grow as a municipal leader.

Use the elected officials' road map to navigate your first year in office

Get oriented

It is imperative that you understand your city's powers and services. You should know your city's:

- Form of government and classification
- Ordinances
- Services provided
- Boundaries, buildings, and facilities

Know your roles and responsibilities

Understanding your role is critical to ensure proper planning, oversight, and delivery. You should know:

- The difference between policymaking vs. administration, and who is responsible for what
- How your city's court is operated and the powers of the third branch of government

Understand the legal landscape

You may think of yourself as a law-abiding, ethical person, but there are many rules that will keep you on the right side of the law once you are elected. You should know:

- Ethics laws
- Open Public Meetings Act
- Public Records Act
- Appearance of Fairness Doctrine

Work as a team

To be effective, elected officials must work together as a team to enact local policies and laws, and establish a shared vision for the future. You should know:

- Types of council meetings
- How you are expected to work with advisory committees
- Parliamentary procedure

Engage the public

You are now a servant to everyone in your community, not just those who share your views or those who voted for you. You should know:

- How your city traditionally engages the community
- Which civic groups to meet with in order to listen, answer questions, and share your insight
- How to talk with the media
- Volunteer opportunities in your city

Implement policy

One of the most challenging tasks for city elected officials is policy development and adoption. You should know:

- Your city's budgets and the budget-adoption timeline
- How to set utility rates in order to manage capital assets and plan for growth
- Whether or not your city is required to plan under the Growth Management Act, and if so, what's contained in the comprehensive plan
- How state and federal environmental laws and regulations may impact your city

Advocate for your city

Part of the elected leader's role is to advocate for the city's needs with local, regional, state, and federal decision-makers. You should know:

- Who your city's legislators and congressional representatives are, and meet with them
- What your legislators and congressional representatives are doing to help or hurt your city
- What stories to share with media that illustrate your city's needs
- Whether or not your city has a legislative agenda

Work toward tomorrow

Despite the many things elected leaders do daily, it's important to stay focused on the future. This requires you to use your leadership status to move the city agenda forward, build trust, and create a civic culture of mutual respect. You should know:

- Your city's strategic plan and update process
- Plans for economic development and vitality
- How performance management can help your city chart progress and track results

Our education program prepares municipal leaders for success

Throughout the year, AWC offers conferences, issue-oriented forums, and eLearning that are relevant in today's fast-paced, dynamic world. Check our website for upcoming trainings and events. Signature trainings and events include:

Annual Conference

AWC's largest conference for elected officials and city management delivers a city-focused agenda with inspiring and informative general sessions, workshops, exhibits, and networking opportunities.

City Action Days

There's no better way to engage legislators than at this yearly event in Olympia. Rally around city priorities, learn about legislative issues, connect with other city officials, mobilize on the Capitol Campus, and meet with legislators and state leaders.

Labor Relations Institute

Get the latest human resources and labor relations legal updates and practical strategies. Focus on topics tailored for your work environment.

Municipal Budgeting & Fiscal Management Workshop

Learn new skills to enhance the city budget document by weaving in performance measures, understanding how to spot red flags early, and engaging residents to reflect community priorities.

Mayors Exchange

Mayors have a unique role at city hall, and who understands your challenges better than other mayors? This interactive forum provides mayors an opportunity to meet each other, discuss concerns, and glean best practices.

Regional Meetings

These regional forums offer an interactive venue for city officials to get the latest legislative news and AWC programmatic information.

Elected Officials Essentials

Attend this popular event to network with a group of your peers and examine real-world municipal scenarios with the help of an on-site city attorney. Learn your basic legal obligations and liabilities, understand your statutory roles and responsibilities, and explore what makes your work at city hall meaningful.



AWC's Certificate of Municipal Leadership (CML) program provides mayors and councilmembers the training they need to effectively operate within the law, plan for the future, secure and manage funds, and foster community and staff relationships.

Our resources are waiting to be explored



Publications

- Basics of Collective Bargaining
- Cityvision magazine
- Mayor and Councilmember Handbook
- Strong Cities, Great State Pocket Guide
- Public Employer Overtime Guide
- Small City Resource Manual
- So you want to be an elected official?
- Ten Commandments of Community Leadership



eLearning

- Budgeting Basics
- GMA Conversation Starters
- Open government eLearning
- Short Course on Local Planning



City data

- Open Data Portal
- Salary and benefits survey
- Municipal rates and fees

Want more?

Check out awcnet.org



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