

Contact Your City Council Members: A How-to Guide

Do Your Research:

Spend time learning through news media. Who is your councilmember, or do multiple councilmembers represent you? Don't forget the Mayor too. What issues are your elected officials the most vocal about? Spend time on the local government website learning about what it does. You can get to know local elected officials who represent districts other than yours too as an issue area expert.

Introduce Yourself:

Ask for an introductory meeting. Contact their office and ask to come in to meet with them and/or their staff. Make some small talk! In bigger cities where council members have staff, the staff are often very helpful to know. Tell them about yourself and your priorities and ask them about their priorities. Tell them you'd like to be a resource for them.

Engage with Them:

Continually develop your relationship. Stay in touch on an on-going basis. Help develop solutions when possible rather than only contacting them when you are opposed to something. Consider volunteering on a city board or commission. Follow the news and meeting agendas and keep an eye on what's going on.

Be A Resource:

Know your issue. When you are advocating for or against a change, back up your argument with facts and data. Bring a one pager (no more than one page!) to summarize your points and leave it with them. Offer to link them to other resources you know about.

Say Thank You:

Public service is hard. And it's often thankless. Even if you find yourself on the other side of an issue this time, you might be on the same side next time (and you might see your local elected official in the grocery store or at your kid's ballgame!) Keep an open line of communication for next time.

For more information check out equityagenda.org

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