

CCAP 2019 Legislative Priorities

County Planning Guide



CCAP 2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES PLANNING GUIDE

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The Power of CCAP Legislative Priorities at the County Level

To inspire action, decision makers must hear the county story from all corners of Pennsylvania

The legislative priorities elected each fall by CCAP members are not just CCAP priorities – they are truly county priorities. And what better way to share county priorities than by having *counties* take an active role in announcing them to the public, to the media and to legislators?

Over the past year, counties promoted the 2018 priorities in a variety of ways, such as adopting resolutions, posting on social media, meeting with legislators and working with local media. As a result, counties have successfully advocated against cuts to human services funding in the FY 2018-2019 state budget, saw even greater attention focused on the opioid crisis, built and renewed partnerships with state government, and have had a significant voice at the table with the legislature and Administration in discussion on voting machines. The need for county input and advocacy at the Capitol remains critical as we look ahead to 2019.



GET EXCITED – GET INVOLVED

At the 2018 Fall Conference, the 2019 legislative priorities, highlighting those issues of greatest importance selected by counties, will be revealed during the closing general session on Tuesday morning. From that point, every county has an opportunity to get involved and take ownership of their priorities, harnessing our collective power to achieve our common goals.

From there, CCAP is encouraging all counties to take an active role in announcing the 2019 priorities using at least three of the activities in this planning guide to create a buzz about your county and what is important to you, as well as the services you provide.

For instance, throughout December and January, counties might hold a roundtable with their legislators to discuss the priorities and how the state and counties can partner to achieve them. Or, as counties work to finalize their 2019 budgets, there may be opportunities to tie CCAP’s priorities to what is happening locally, sharing with constituents how state policies affect the services they receive from counties on a daily basis. Others might choose to hold a press conference or to send an editorial to their local newspaper.

But announcing the 2019 priorities announcement efforts is just the first step. With all 67 counties working together, counties will continue their collective efforts to advance those priorities throughout the year, building on the interest generated across the commonwealth to add others to take action with them.

2019 Legislative Priorities Timeline

NOVEMBER 2018

Begin planning your county's activities to announce the 2019 legislative priorities. We encourage you to choose three of the activities listed in this planning guide to engage legislators, the media, the public and county staff.

NOVEMBER 18, 2018

CCAP policy committees meet at the CCAP Fall Conference to develop their 2019 work plans. CCAP members choose the 2019 legislative priorities at the Committee of the Whole.

NOVEMBER 20, 2018

2019 legislative priorities are revealed at the closing general session of the CCAP Fall Conference.

LAST WEEK OF NOVEMBER

Your county will receive a fact sheet, sample news release/editorial, talking points and other tools to use in your 2019 priorities announcement activities.

DECEMBER THROUGH EARLY JANUARY

It's time to execute your county's chosen 2019 priorities announcement activities! Let CCAP know how you will be sharing the priorities by contacting PACountiesGR@pacounties.org.

EARLY 2019

With the official swearing in of the 2019-2020 legislative session, CCAP will begin engaging legislators, the Administration and their staff at the Capitol. But county efforts are still very important throughout the year, and CCAP will be sure to highlight other opportunities for counties to engage all of their audiences on key policy and priority issues.

Want to get your county involved but not sure where to start?

Check out the ideas in following pages, or contact the CCAP Government Relations team at PACountiesGR@pacounties.org for assistance and feedback.

What Can You Do Now?

Even though counties have not yet chosen the 2019 legislative priorities, you can begin taking steps now to plan for how you will share the priorities and what they mean to your county throughout December and early January.

CHOOSE YOUR AUDIENCES

With whom will you share the 2019 priorities?

- **Legislators** are key decision makers who can advance the policies that are important to counties.
- **Media** – from newsprint to television to radio – can provide a forum for you to tell your story and why the counties' priorities are *your* priorities.
- **Public** – your constituents, your clients, local businesses and organizations, county staff and other partners want to know how you are taking action to improve the county and the well-being of its citizens.

CHOOSE YOUR ACTIVITIES

How will you share the 2019 priorities? See pages 6 through 10 for a variety of ideas for reaching your chosen audiences; some of the suggested activities may even serve a dual purpose in reaching multiple audiences at once. We encourage each county to choose at least **three** activities to announce your priorities.

CHOOSE YOUR TIMING

When will you share the 2019 priorities? CCAP is focusing on December through early January for a concentrated effort across the state for counties to announce their priorities. You can start now to pick dates for events (such as legislative meetings) and issue invitations, reach out to your local media representatives and build anticipation for your activities.

KNOW WHO YOU NEED

Who will help you craft your local story and what the 2019 priorities mean to your county? Identify the county staff who are subject matter experts that you will turn to if you need local information on a particular issue, such as human services, taxes or county budgets. Other staff may be able to assist in drafting a local media release or editorial, preparing a county resolution, posting social media messaging, or setting up a legislative roundtable. Get them involved early so you can hit the ground running once the 2019 priorities are selected.

CONTACT CCAP FOR ASSISTANCE

Additional resources can be found in this planning guide, or you can contact Lisa Schaefer, CCAP Director of Government Relations, lschaefer@pacounties.org or Ken Kroski, CCAP Director of Media and Public Relations, kkroski@pacounties.org.

LET CCAP KNOW WHICH ACTIVITIES YOU ARE CHOOSING AND WHEN YOU PLAN TO IMPLEMENT THEM

Have your plans in place for the 2019 priorities announcement already? Let us know how you will be sharing the priorities by contacting PACountiesGR@pacounties.org.

Announcing the 2019 Legislative Priorities ... to Legislators

Your legislative delegation can introduce and cosponsor bills that advance county priorities, and they have important votes in the House and Senate. Your education and advocacy will help legislators to be effective advocates on behalf of your county, and help to create a critical mass of legislators talking about county issues at the Capitol.

ACTIVITY: SCHEDULE ROUNDTABLE OR INDIVIDUAL MEETINGS WITH LEGISLATORS

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority
- Sample presentation that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Legislative schedules fill up quickly, so choose a date now for your roundtable and extend the invitation to your delegation. Note that members of the General Assembly should be in their district offices until the new session is convened in January.
- Identify key county staff who will be able to assist with crafting an agenda, providing county information for priorities and preparing any handouts that may be needed.
- Consider whether a tour of county facilities could be added to your meeting.

ACTIVITY: SEND A LETTER TO YOUR LEGISLATIVE DELEGATION

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Sample letter that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Plan ahead – gather mailing or email addresses in advance
- Identify key county staff who will be able to assist in customizing your letter with county information and sending the complete letter and fact sheets to legislators

Announcing the 2019 Legislative Priorities ... to the Media

An effective media strategy can build understanding about the role and responsibilities of county government to a wide variety of audiences at once, and create positive coverage for your county and the 2019 priorities. Numerous options exist for you to tell your story.

ACTIVITY: SEND A NEWS RELEASE TO LOCAL MEDIA

Materials you will get:

- Sample news release that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- If your county does not already have a list of key media outlet representatives (newspaper, radio and TV) in your area, begin compiling contact information.
- Identify key county staff who will be able to assist in customizing your press release with relevant statistics and stories, and with sending the press release to your identified media contacts.

ACTIVITY: SEND AN EDITORIAL TO YOUR LOCAL NEWS OUTLETS

Materials you will get:

- Template for a draft editorial that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- If your county does not already have a list of editorial board contacts for local newspapers, begin compiling contact information.
- Enlist your county's subject matter experts to provide clear, succinct information, including relevant stories and statistics that are meaningful to your audience.
- Identify key county staff who will be responsible for producing the final version of your editorial and sending to local newspapers.

ACTIVITY: USE YOUR LOCAL RADIO/TV CONNECTIONS

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority
- Sample news release/editorial that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Schedule time to ask for individual meetings with key media representatives to educate them on the issues and tell your story. Nothing beats face to face. Direct contact by email and phone also works well to share information and related documents.
- Reach out to your local radio and/or TV outlets to request time on local talk shows or news programs.
- Identify individuals who will participate in the program or interviews, and begin to consider who would be best suited to speak on certain issues.

ACTIVITY: HOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority
- Sample news release/editorial that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Consider whether local media representatives would attend a press conference.
- Choose a date and location, and begin thinking about an agenda/script.
- Enlist key speakers and identify other subject matter experts who could be available for interviews to help relate the big picture and the details.

ACTIVITY: SCHEDULE AN EDITORIAL BOARD VISIT

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority
- Sample news release/editorial that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Schedule a meeting with your local paper's editorial board or primary editor.
- Identify individuals who will participate in the meeting, and begin to consider who would be best suited to speak on certain issues.

Announcing the 2019 Priorities ... to the Public

Sharing the priorities in a way that is relevant to your community will bring a better understanding of who your county is and the services you provide to your residents.

ACTIVITY: INCLUDE THE TOPIC AT COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority
- Sample resolution supporting the 2019 priorities that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Place the priorities on the agenda for existing community meetings.
- Plan for written materials to disseminate to attendees.
- Identify your county's subject matter experts who can provide clear, succinct information, including relevant stories and statistics that are meaningful to your audience as you tell your county's story.

ACTIVITY: ENLIST OTHER VOICES

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority
- Sample resolution supporting the 2019 priorities that can be customized with local information

What you can do now:

- Identify partners and those affected by issues surrounding the legislative priorities who may add information and a human touch as another voice to help tell your story.
- Prepare and schedule emails and phone calls in order to share information with community leaders who may be able to assist with messaging.
- Plan to inform all county staff via email or staff newsletter about the priorities and your local story so they can communicate with others.

Announcing the 2019 Priorities ... to Multiple Audiences

Many activities can have a broader reach to multiple audiences. Consider the following for maximum visibility with a single effort.

ACTIVITY: DISCUSS THE PRIORITIES DURING YOUR COMMISSIONERS' MEETING

Materials you will get:

- Fact sheets providing an overview of each priority
- Talking points related to each priority

What you can do now:

- Consider upcoming agenda items to which you could tie the 2019 priorities – for instance, when your county reviews or votes on your 2019 budget, are there programs or services in your budget that can be highlighted in context of the priorities?
- Identify your county's subject matter experts who can provide clear, succinct information, including relevant stories and statistics that are meaningful to your audience
- Invite media representatives to attend and conduct interviews.

ACTIVITY: ADOPT A COUNTY RESOLUTION

Materials you will get:

- Sample resolution supporting the 2019 priorities that can be customized with local information and shared with media and legislators

What you can do now:

- Select a meeting at which you would like to adopt your resolution.
- Identify key county staff who will be able to assist in customizing your resolution with county information.
- Plan ahead – prepare mailing labels and envelopes in advance, or gather email addresses so that you can send a copy of your resolution to legislators.

ACTIVITY: USE YOUR COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

Materials you will get:

- Social media templates and graphics that can be incorporated into county and individual social media feeds
- Links to fact sheets on CCAP website

What you can do now:

- Identify key county staff who can incorporate information prominently on your county's website, social media accounts, emails, newsletters and other constituent communications.
- Enlist partners and those affected by issues surrounding the legislative priorities who may add information and a human touch as another voice to help tell your story on their communications platforms.

General Resources

CCAP Priorities Web Page

<http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Pages/Priorities.aspx>

Grassroots Toolkit

<http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Documents/LegislativeGrassrootsToolKit.pdf>

Guidelines for Organizing Legislative Visits

<http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Documents/OrganizingLegislativeVisits.pdf>

Engaging Legislators and Building Relationships

http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Documents/Engaging_Legislators_and_Building_Relationships.pdf

NACo Media Relations Guide for Counties

http://www.naco.org/sites/default/files/documents/Media_Relations_Guide.pdf

Mission Achievable: Planning and Delivering Successful Media Interviews

http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Documents/Planning_and_Delivering_Successful_Media_Interviews.pdf

Pennsylvania Counties Are Fact Sheet

<http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Documents/CountiesAreFactSheet.pdf>

Pennsylvania County Human Services Are Fact Sheet

<http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Documents/CountiesHumanServicesAreFactSheet.pdf>

2019 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES Planning Checklist

HAVE YOU ...

- Chosen at least three activities in this planning guide to announce the 2019 legislative priorities?
- Talked to your key county staff to engage them in developing messaging that will show why the priorities are important to your county?
- Shared your chosen activities with CCAP's government relations team at PACountiesGR@pacounties.org?
- Bookmarked <http://www.pacounties.org/GR/Pages/Priorities.aspx> for the most up-to-date information and resources about the 2019 priorities?
- Gotten excited to get involved and join your fellow counties in announcing the priorities?

