



Idaho Association of Counties

LEGISLATIVE GUIDE





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IDAHO LEGISLATURE

The Idaho Legislature, composed of 70 House members and 35 Senators, meets annually beginning on the Monday closest to January 9th. The Governor can also call the legislature into a special session any time during the year. With approval from 60 percent of the House and Senate bodies, the Senate President Pro Tempore and Speaker of the House may also call a special session.

SENATE

The Lieutenant Governor is the President of the Senate and has general control and direction of the Senate floor while presiding.

The Senate body elects the President Pro Tempore (Pro Tem). The Pro Tem has control of the Senate Chamber, passages, and corridors of the Senate. The Pro Tem designates committee chairs and vice chairs, makes committee assignments, and determines which committees bills will be routed to.

The Senate Majority Leader, elected by the majority party members in the Senate, runs the floor determining the order to debate the bills.

HOUSE

In the House, the Speaker of the House serves as the presiding officer. House Members elect the Speaker. The Speaker makes committee assignments, including chairs and vice chairs, and refers bills to committees.

The House Majority Leader, elected by the majority party members in the Senate, runs the floor determining the order followed to debate the bills.

AT THE CAPITOL

The IAC policy staff are available to help county officials navigate the capitol building. The team can arrange meetings with legislators and provide information regarding opportunities to testify in committee hearings.



COMMITTEE PROCESS

Once a bill has been assigned to a committee, the committee chair will have jurisdiction over whether or not the bill will receive a full hearing. In order to make your testimony as effective as possible, consider the following tips:

Before the hearing:

- **Prepare:** Familiarize yourself with the issue and identify which legislators are already knowledgeable about the matter. It's important to know your allies, as well as those who may oppose you.
- **Share Concerns:** Meet with committee members prior to the hearing to share important information. If you oppose a bill or have specific concerns, make sure to address them with committee members beforehand. Ensure that they are aware of how the bill could impact your county, whether fiscally or otherwise.
- **Manage Time Wisely:** Plan on spending a full morning or afternoon at the Capitol, depending on which committee the bill is assigned to. Arrive early so that you can sign up to testify.
- **Sign Up to Testify:** Depending on the committee chair, you may be able to testify remotely. Regardless, you will need to provide your first and last names, email and physical address, the organization you represent (if any), and whether you're testifying in person or virtually. Be sure to indicate whether you are "for" or "against" the legislation.
- **Plan Your Pitch:** Make sure you thoroughly consider and know your position. Develop, rework, and refine your stance in advance, not as you are presenting to the committee. Include everyone involved in the presentation to avoid dissension and duplication among your delegation.

During the hearing:

- **Testimony Logistics:** When the committee chair calls on you, use the following protocol:
 - Thank the Chair and committee for the opportunity to testify
 - Identify yourself and who you represent
 - State your position clearly and concisely
 - When closing, thank the Chair and members of the committee again for the opportunity, then say that you are willing to stand for questions.
 - When questions come, address the questioner through the Chair (i.e. Mr. Chairman/Madame Chair, Senator/Representative...).
- **Be Brief:** Expect time limits. Keep your testimony succinct. Be prepared to keep your testimony 2-3 minutes long.
- **Be Honest:** Your reputation is everything. If you do not know the answer to a question, offer to get one. Do not lie or try to bluff your way through the conversation.
- **Be Courteous:** Like you, members of the Legislature are human and deserve common courtesy. Do not scoff or roll your eyes during the hearing whether or not you are testifying or just observing the hearing.
- **Anticipate Questions:** Always try to anticipate and prepare for questions from legislators.
- **Practice, Practice, Practice:** Repeat your presentation over and over until it is a work of art. Nothing is more impressive than a smooth and professional presentation. Nothing is less impressive than going in unprepared and stumbling through your case.

HOW TO BE EFFECTIVE



OUR REPUTATION

Over the years, the Idaho Association of Counties (IAC) has built a strong reputation in the Statehouse for its advocacy work. With a focus on securing policies, legislation, and funding that support Idaho counties, policymakers often rely on IAC for valuable expertise, research, and resources.

To maximize our effectiveness, IAC members are encouraged to work closely with the IAC policy team to engage and collaborate with legislators and other stakeholders proactively. Through this united front, we can address the needs and concerns of counties while promoting sound governance principles.

By fostering a culture of unity and collective action among county officials, IAC encourages innovative solutions and a practical problem-solving approach to working with the legislature.

ADVOCACY RESOURCES

In addition to this guide, IAC provides a host of other resources to ensure that members are well-informed. These include weekly Legislative Bulletins dispatched every Monday and weekly Zoom Legislative Updates for county elected officials every Friday.

When expedited action is necessary for a particular issue, IAC staff will email Legislative Action Alerts to the relevant county elected officials. To stay current on county-specific bills, visit IDCounties.org and browse the IAC Bill Tracker, which is updated frequently during the Legislative Session.

If you have any questions or comments about the legislative process in Idaho, feel free to contact Sara Westbrook, IAC's Director of Government Affairs.

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GENERAL LEGISLATIVE ADVICE

MEET WITH LEGISLATORS

To effectively engage with your legislators, familiarize yourself with their background, voting history, interests, and previous support for local government.

Developing a rapport with your legislators beyond the legislative session is also crucial. You can invite them to lunch or your IAC District meetings to extend your relationship beyond the political landscape. This helps legislators understand your role in the county and the expertise you bring to the table.

Finally, it's essential to communicate your concerns and priorities to legislators before the session. Sharing IAC's objectives for the year provides them with a clear sense of what to expect and helps establish a constructive dialogue moving forward.

OUTREACH

During the legislative session, lawmakers receive numerous emails on a daily basis. While email is a valuable tool for transmitting data and research that must be accurate, combining it with another form of communication – such as face-to-face conversation or a phone call – will make it more effective. Here are a few tips to consider:

- When you meet with your legislators, provide them with your cell phone number and encourage them to call or text you if they have any questions regarding policies that could impact counties.
- Take the initiative to reach out to them and offer your assistance when you call. This will establish you as a valuable resource for them.

LEAVE A GOOD IMPRESSION

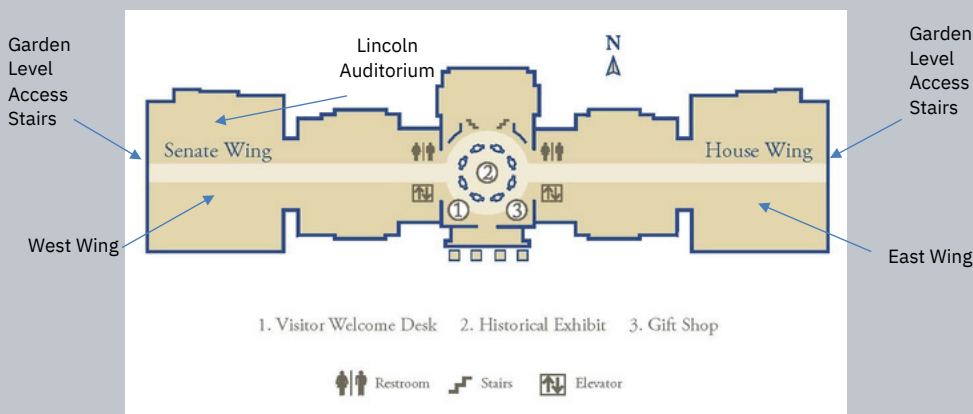
Preparing to meet with your legislator can be nerve-racking, but it doesn't have to be. Here are some tips to help you get the most out of your appointment:

- Research your legislator's background before the meeting to find common ground.
- Narrow down your topics of discussion to one or two, and be concise.
- If you need more information, reach out to a member of the IAC policy team for aid.
- Provide a brief packet of information outlining your views.
- After the meeting, send a personal note to thank the legislator for their time and reinforce your position on the issues discussed.

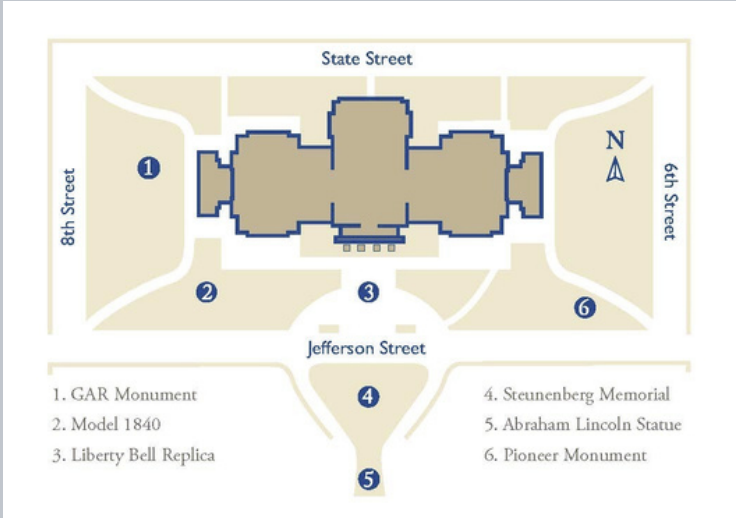


CAPITOL
MAP

Garden Level Overview



Climb the grand staircase on the north side of the garden-level rotunda or use the elevators to access the first floor.



CONTACT US

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

County officials are welcome to use the IAC Legislative Office's resources, which include meeting rooms and a parking lot, during the legislative session.

Additionally, the Idaho Legislature's website offers a wealth of information. Check out bills, committee schedules, contact information for legislators, legislative calendars, and much more.

Visit: legislature.idaho.gov

