

DES Government Relations

Protocol for interacting with legislators and legislative staff

As a general rule, DES staff should refer all legislative contacts to Government Relations.

Decisions regarding legislative activity often require input from the DES Director, Corporate Council, Assistant Directors and other members of the Leadership Team. It is critical for the Government Relations program to know all the information that is being requested from and provided to legislators and legislative staff.

The DES Government Relations contact is:

- Ann Larson, Director of Government Relations, (o) 360.407.8275, (m) 360.485.7145

How do I handle a request from legislators or legislative staff for information?

1. Immediately forward the request to Government Relations. If the request is for budget or financial information, also forward the request to Lynne McGuire, Chief Finance Officer and Ashley Howard, Budget Manager. If the requested information is readily available, please include it with the notification of the request.
2. Let the person making the request know you are forwarding the request to Government Relations and provide contact information to the requestor.

If you provide information that is already publicly available (i.e. the DES public website), immediately notify Government Relations of the contact and the information provided.

How quickly do I need to respond to legislative contacts and/or requests?

Urgency is part of the legislative process. An initial response to any request is expected within 12 to 24 hours (even if the response is not complete and additional time is needed). Please be sure your Outlook out-of-office and voicemail greetings reflect your absence when needed.

How do I handle a request for a meeting or testimony at a legislative hearing or work session?

Coordinate all requests for meetings or testimony through Government Relations. DES subject matter experts may be called upon to attend meetings or provide testimony to the Legislature, but these activities are coordinated by Government Relations.

How do I participate in DES legislative team meetings?

Weekly DES legislative team meeting are held every Friday during legislative session. Subject

matter experts and legislative coordinators are encouraged to attend the 10:00 am weekly staff meetings to discuss bills and hearing schedules. The Corporate Council, Leadership Team and/or their delegates are expected to attend the 2:00 pm leadership meeting to discuss legislative and agency strategies.

How do I engage in the legislative process as a DES employee?

Government Relations coordinates all legislative meetings, the attendance of DES staff at public hearings and work session and DES testimony to the Legislature. You must get approval by your supervisor and Government Relations prior to attending any legislative meetings, work session and/or public hearing.

You can monitor legislative hearings, floor debates and other legislative processes via TVW (<https://www.tvw.org/>). Please check with your supervisor if this is part of your assigned work activities.

How do I engage in the legislative process as a concerned citizen?

As a concerned citizen and on your personal time, you can write or call your legislator, talk with lobbyists and/or testify on bills that are personally important to you. In other words, as a citizen, you have all avenues available to you to express your views and communicate your message.

However, it is important to remember you are also a DES employee and your personal views, opinions or position cannot be communicated as DES views, opinions or position. Please adhere to the following ground rules when communicating with the legislature as a concerned citizen:

- You must do this on your personal time.
- You cannot use state resources (e.g. send written communication using DES logo or using the state email system).
- You should avoid wearing clothing that has the DES logo when meeting with legislators or legislative staff or when testifying in a hearing. If you are wearing a DES uniform or logo you must state that you are communicating as a private citizen and not as a DES representative.
- You should avoid identifying yourself as a DES employee unless you also make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of DES.
- You cannot sign into a committee hearing as a DES employee.

You cannot represent DES at legislative hearings, work sessions or other legislative meetings unless directed to do so by Government Relations.