

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 to enact local policies and laws and establish a shared vision for the future. You should know:

- Types of council meetings
- How 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