

Florida Insights Review

Understanding Advocacy and Engagement in Florida

- Principles of Great Advocacy
- Implementing CSR in Communities
- Case Study: Storm Resilience



2019 FLORIDA INSIGHTS REVIEW

OUR GOAL

Ballast Research provides direct feedback from senior policymakers to government relations professionals, helping advocates make better use of policymakers' time and provide the resources most useful to those in government.

Our goal is to improve dialogues between communities, businesses, and organizations and the multiple branches of government involved in crafting laws and regulations for state and local governments.

OUR PROMISE

CONFIDENTIALITY:

All participation in our research is confidential and not for attribution.



OUR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

258

Online Study
Participants

37

Policymaker
Conversations

State Legislature
(e.g., Member, Chief of Staff, Committee Staff)

Executive Branch
(e.g., State Commissioner, Agency Secretary, Commission Staff)

Municipal Government
(e.g., Mayor, City Manager, Councilmember)

Policy Professionals
(e.g., CEO, Economic Advisor, Senior VP)

FEEDBACK ON OUR FEDERAL-LEVEL WORK

"I think insight is so important, and I'm glad that I could lend something to what you're doing. If we can help entities understand how to communicate better, perhaps we can fix a lot of the challenges we face. But if we continue down this path of not communicating or listening to one another, it's just going to hurt all parties involved."

-Policy Expert, Private Sector

"I'm always trying to increase the communication quality between the regulated community and the regulators. I think when we do a better job of that, we'll see better outcomes and better public policy being set. I only see this as a positive, so I'm happy to help."

-Senior Staff, Executive Branch

PRINCIPLES OF GREAT ADVOCACY

Our research studies how Florida policymakers want advocates to engage with them. Our 2019 research surfaced **three guiding principles** of advocacy to facilitate more productive meetings between Florida's policymakers and advocates.

WHAT POLICYMAKERS WANT:



USE RESEARCH AND DATA TO EDUCATE POLICYMAKERS

- ✓ Advocate from your position
- ✓ Outline the opposition's arguments
- ✓ Assuage concerns about perceived drawbacks to legislation

*"Good lobbyists will not only give you what you need to know, but **will arm you for whatever the frequently asked questions are or whatever the perceived drawbacks are.**"*

-Former Representative, R

*"You get a small group of activists on Facebook who get all angered up about something. They start asking me questions and, **if I'm not armed with good third party information, they will get even more torqued up.**"*

-Former Representative, R



KEEP CONTENT OF COMMUNICATIONS SIMPLE

- ✓ Provide clear and concise information with a concrete goal
- ✓ Convey only the most critical information

*"An effective presentation is one page with bullet points, not a lot of paragraphs, and very succinct. **Give me specific information that is critical to you.** Don't give me five pages of anything."*

-Senator, D

*"All of these advocacy groups assume that we're well-versed on their issue and we're not. So when someone comes in to talk to me about any issue, **they have to start at the beginning and don't assume that I know everything.**"*

-Representative, R



BUILD RELATIONSHIPS AND REPUTATIONS

- ✓ Make in-person visits
- ✓ Demonstrate corporate responsiveness through executive engagement

*"For me, **the most effective point of engagement is having an actual person on the ground in the field to help promote the message and be a source of information on that messaging.**"*

-Representative, R

*"**Whoever they have working for their government relations are doing an excellent job of creating relationships.** They're very outgoing, charismatic, just genuine people."*

-Representative, R

IMPLEMENTING CSR IN FLORIDA COMMUNITIES

Our research also found that policymakers are most receptive to corporate social responsibility programs that engage their constituents and are tailored to meet the economic and social needs of the community it serves.

WHAT POLICYMAKERS WANT:



DEVELOP PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

- ✓ Spend time in communities with local leaders and constituents
- ✓ Be honest and transparent to increase policymakers' willingness to engage with you

"Having that face-to-face time and taking the time to actually be there in the community translates well into good relationships with those local advocates."

-Council Member, D

*"It took us years before we developed those relationships, but once you do, the dynamic changes. **Without that interaction—that communication—things take so long to ever get done because you're not communicating on a regular basis.**"*

-Mayor, R



SPONSOR COMMUNITY AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- ✓ Adopt local schools and provide scholarships to community students
- ✓ Donate to local nonprofits that focus on economic development and education
- ✓ Purchase raw materials from local vendors to contribute to the community's economy

*"The Habitat for Humanity branch that's in our local area is strong. **Every time I turn around, they are getting a major monetary contribution from one of our local companies. To me, that says a lot.** There is something in that for the companies, too. When companies recruit talent from outside of the area and relocate down here, they can be assured that new employees will have real options for buying a home. **That's really meaningful to the private sector.** And it actually helps the city as well to be able to attract more businesses to the area."*

-Council Member, D



ENGAGE CONSTITUENTS

- ✓ Sponsor and operate community events that educate consumers about your product or service
- ✓ Engage decision makers so they understand the necessary information to create thorough policies

"At fairs, they give out information on how to reduce energy consumption and show how electricity works. The kids love that one. They also give them little plastic hard hats. They love that, too."

-Health Educator, D

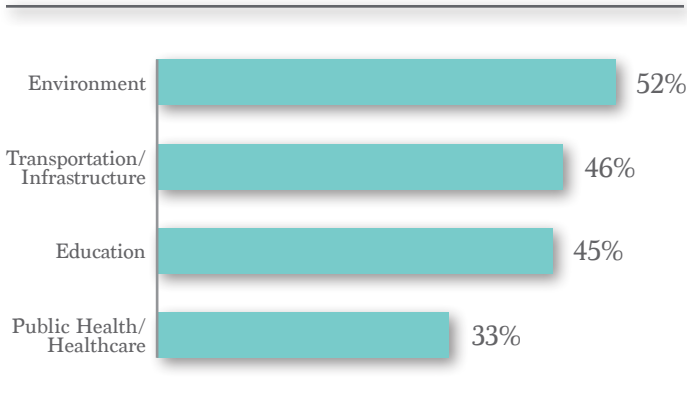
*"They need to go out of their way to make sure that they're educating the powers that be, the deciders, decision-makers at the local level. **And part of that is relational.**"*

-County Commissioner, R

CASE STUDY: STORM RESILIENCE

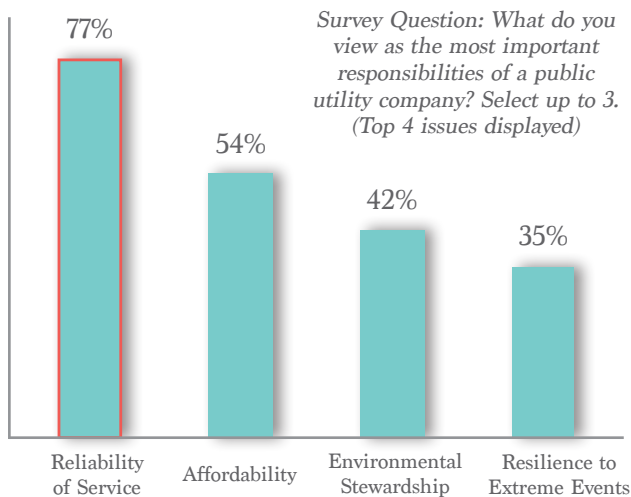


IN OUR ONLINE STUDY, FLORIDA POLICYMAKERS IDENTIFIED **ENVIRONMENT** AND **TRANSPORTATION/INFRASTRUCTURE** AS TWO OF THE MOST PRESSING ISSUES IN THE STATE.



WE LOOKED AT AN INDUSTRY AT THE NEXUS OF ENVIRONMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE: **PUBLIC UTILITIES.**

Specifically, we investigated the most important responsibilities of a public utility company in the eyes of Florida policymakers.



We found that **77%** of respondents viewed **Reliability of Service** as one of the most important responsibilities of a public utility company, while **35%** of respondents indicated **Resilience to Extreme Events**.



IN OUR CONVERSATIONS WITH FLORIDA POLICYMAKERS, MANY OF THEM EMPHASIZED **STORM RESILIENCE** AS A CORE PILLAR OF A PUBLIC UTILITY'S RELIABLE SERVICE.

"If you're a Floridian, storm recovery time means a lot to you. Our energy provider was really good about getting power back up. There was a huge difference in response times compared to our previous provider, and that made an impact on that whole area... it's a lot more efficient now in terms of recovery time."

-Municipal Agency Director, D

"When we had the storm last year, our energy provider was vital to the parts of town with the hospitals—we never lost power. They come by and maintain the lines. They trim the trees. The rates have gone up some, but having power during a hurricane when everything's getting blown over is a pretty good deal."

-City Councilmember, I

"FPL as a private company brought in 17,000 electrical workers in advance of Hurricane Dorian. That is the largest mustering of electrical resources by a private entity ever in the history of Florida Power & Light."

-Senior Staff, Executive Branch, I

BASED ON THESE FINDINGS, WE'RE ADVISING COMPANIES TO:

- ✓ Proactively develop storm resilience efforts
- ✓ Engage with policymakers in the executive branch to implement storm resilience policies

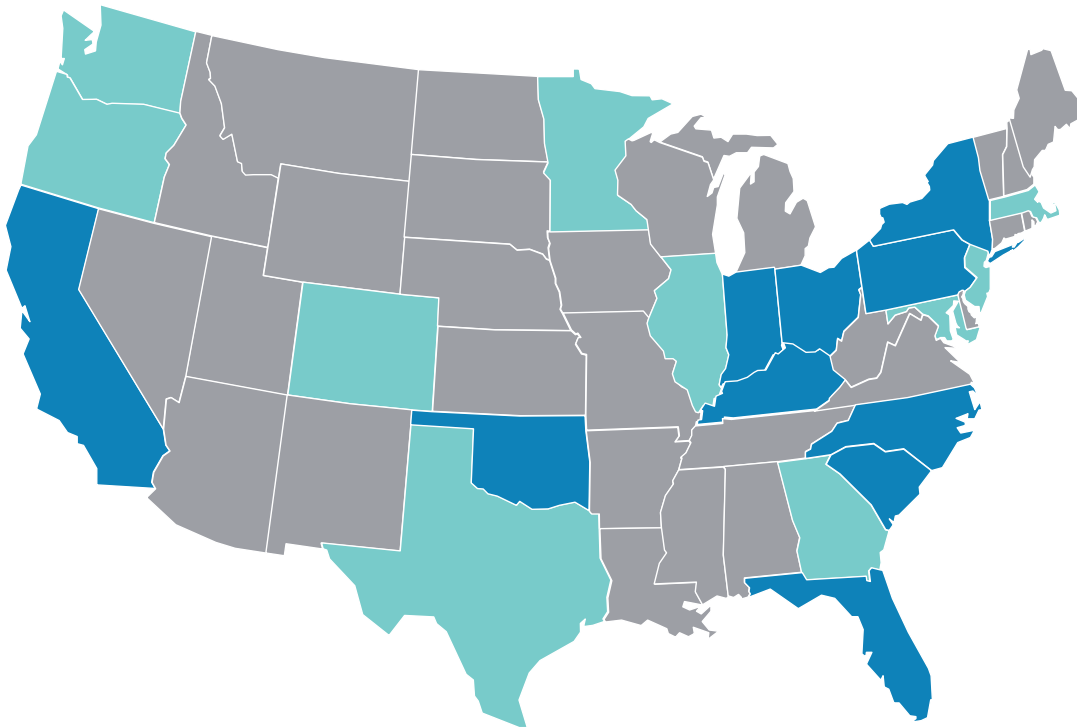


 **BALLAST**
RESEARCH

BALLAST RESEARCH'S STATES INSIGHTS REVIEW

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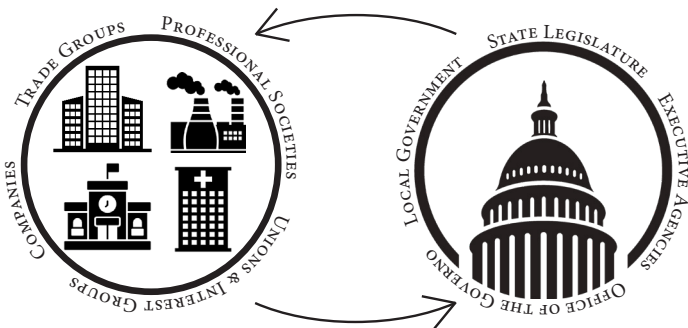
OUR PRESENCE



- CURRENTLY STUDYING:**
- | | |
|------------|----------------|
| Ohio | New York |
| Florida | Oklahoma |
| Indiana | Pennsylvania |
| Kentucky | South Carolina |
| California | North Carolina |

- CURRENTLY SCOPING:**
- | | |
|----------|---------------|
| Texas | Maryland |
| Illinois | Minnesota |
| Oregon | New Jersey |
| Georgia | Washington |
| Colorado | Massachusetts |

ABOUT BALLAST RESEARCH



Our clients are Fortune 500 companies, trade associations, and nonprofits looking to forge more productive partnerships with those in government. Each of our clients understands the value of policymakers' time and works with us to optimize every interaction. The result is more productive, mutually beneficial, and efficient engagement.

PARTICIPATE IN OUR RESEARCH

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OUR PROMISE: ALL PARTICIPATION IN OUR RESEARCH IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT FOR ATTRIBUTION.

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