

OKLAHOMA INSIGHTS REVIEW

Understanding Advocacy and
Engagement in Oklahoma



2019 OKLAHOMA 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.

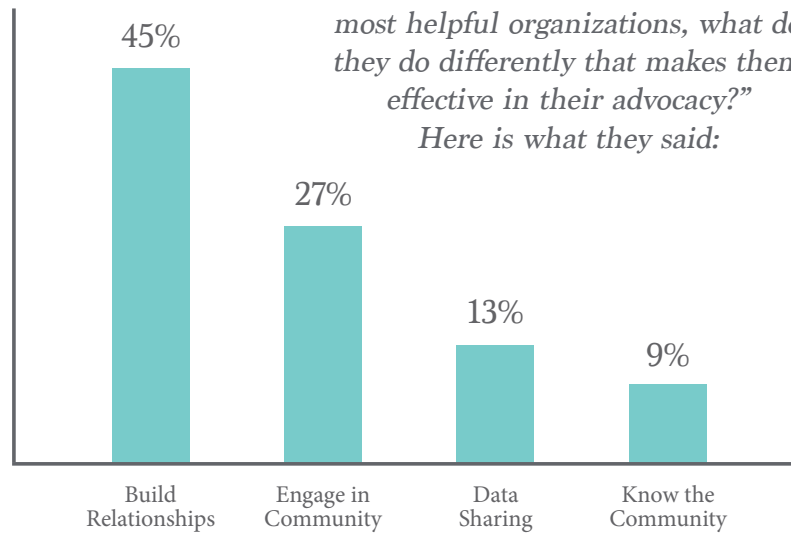
Our goal is to improve dialogues between communities, businesses, and organizations and the multiple branches of government involved in crafting laws and regulations for state and local governments.

WHY OKLAHOMA?

Our previous research across states suggests non-government organizations struggle to engage with state and local policymakers.

We asked policymakers across Oklahoma "As you think about the most helpful organizations, what do they do differently that makes them effective in their advocacy?"

Here is what they said:



Strong public-private partnerships are important to Oklahoma. Through our research, we investigated what specifically goes into cultivating healthy relationships within Oklahoma, and we surfaced **two guiding principles of great advocacy** to bring policymakers and industry leaders together.

THE CHALLENGE

Building healthy relationships between non-government organizations and policymakers.



OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ Leverage informed constituent voices
- ✓ Demonstrate active community engagement

GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF GREAT ADVOCACY

Oklahoma policymakers want community-oriented advocacy grounded in informed constituent voices and active community engagement.

POLICYMAKERS WANT. . .

1 TO HEAR FROM INFORMED CONSTITUENT VOICES

Policymakers want to hear informed constituent voices more than facts and figures. The quality of these voices takes precedence over their quantity. Additionally, organizations that understand their communities will be more helpful and persuasive to policymakers.

We Recommend Advocates. . .



Build Trusted Coalitions of Informed Voices

Policymakers prefer to work with individuals who understand policy issues and know about the community.



Engage Policymakers in Small Working Groups

A small group of informed constituents conversing and collaborating with legislators is more effective than a large group.



“Data is very helpful, but what is even more helpful is having a coalition of voices that are trusted in the community. Oklahoma is often about relationships and proximity. The more you can get trusted folks recommending something together, the more likely it is to catch on.”

-Municipal Director, Northeast Oklahoma

2 TO SEE ACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Policymakers prioritize supporting their respective communities and thus place higher value on relationships with organizations that show consistent engagement with their constituents.

We Recommend Advocates. . .



Engage With the Local Community

Engage with the local community through projects and solutions that go beyond the typical scope of business models.



Listen to Policymakers’ Perspectives

Use the unique perspectives policymakers bring to community engagement work and emphasize their impact on local communities.



“From a community engagement standpoint, not everybody calls to discuss something with us. Not everybody realizes that we’re approachable.... That frustrates me.”

-Agency Director, Executive Branch

CASE STUDY: OIL AND NATURAL GAS INDUSTRY

Oklahoma's economy relies on its oil and natural gas reserves. As states across America diversify their energy portfolios, oil and natural gas companies maintain a vibrant presence in the Sooner state. This is largely due to their ability to build relationships with policymakers by leveraging constituent voices and demonstrating active community engagement throughout the state.

BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH POLICYMAKERS

Oil and natural gas industry advocates dedicate significant time and effort to cultivate friendships with local elected officials and state legislators. Their longstanding ties in Oklahoma give them a reputation of trust and respect.

*"The people in the oil and gas industry are the most effective advocates that I know. I will always call them my friends and ask them what they think. **My first call is going to be to people I know.**"*

-Senator, State Legislature, R

LEVERAGE INFORMED CONSTITUENT VOICES

Oil and natural gas industry leaders gain policymaker's trust through constituent satisfaction. Their responsiveness to constituents' needs keeps them in policymakers' good graces on both sides of the aisle. Thinking of constituents as customers helps create strong partnerships. In turn, companies and government officials have a mutual interest in their customers'/constituents' well-being.

*"They do a really good job with their legislative liaisons because in Oklahoma we have crazy weather... My liason is so helpful in getting the information of what is going on on the ground, so I can relay that information to my constituents. **I'm always more likely to make time for those helping me get things done for my constituency.**"*

-Representative, State Legislature, D

DEMONSTRATE ACTIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Companies that create a brand of quality relationships and meaningful community engagement increase their influence; however, this does not mean that every policy decision will result favorably for them. Despite occasional legislative defeats, oil and gas industry advocates maintain a strong reputation in the eyes of policymakers.

*"The oil and gas community are a little bit divided because we did raise the gross production tax. They were upset about it, but they licked their wounds, we did raise GPT, and **they have continued to stay involved, engaged, and invested as an industry.**"*

-Representative, State Legislature, R

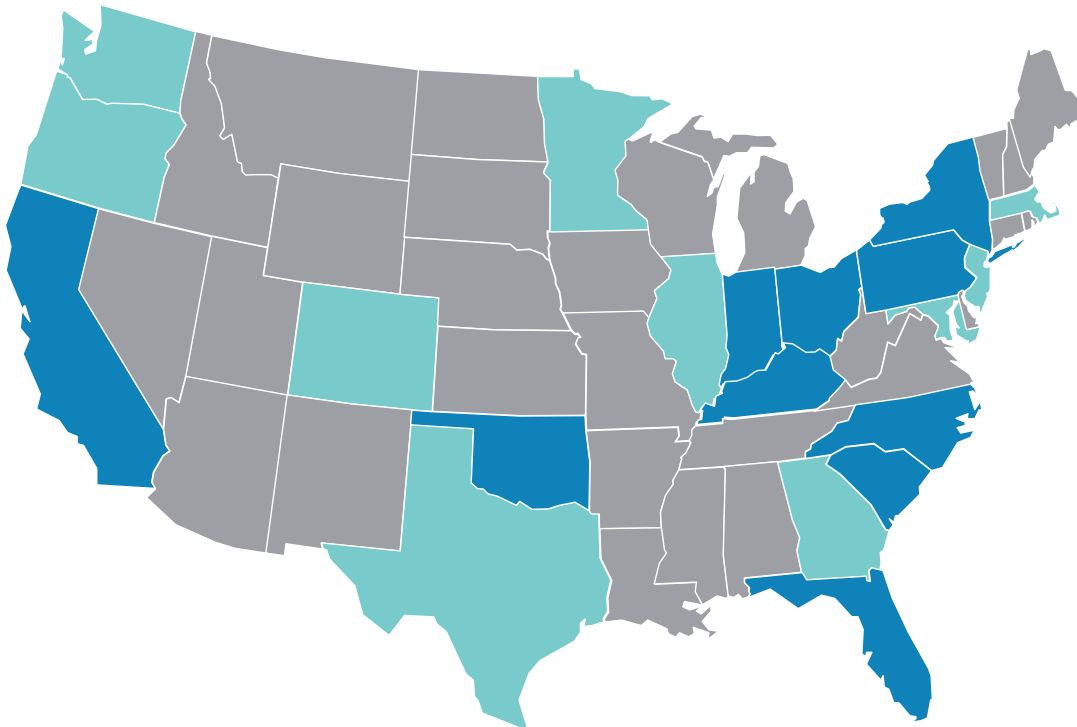


 **BALLAST**
RESEARCH

BALLAST RESEARCH'S STATES INSIGHTS REVIEW

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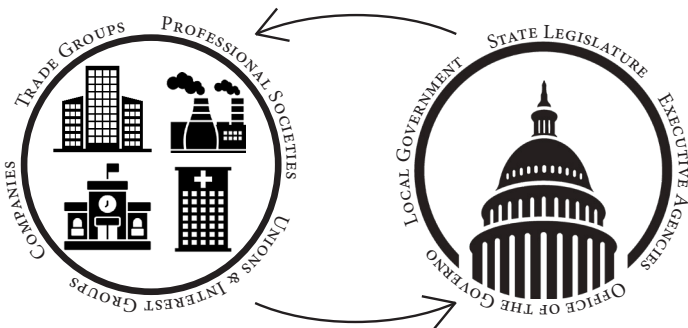
OUR PRESENCE



- 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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