

**LEGISLATIVE
ACTION
NETWORK**

CREDIT UNION LEGISLATIVE ACTION NETWORK

One of the duties and responsibilities of the Legislative Forum Representative (LFR) is, "to plan, organize, and coordinate a chapter legislative action network, to encourage credit unions to send e-mails; post on social media, or make immediate phone calls or personal visits to lawmakers in case of a legislative emergency." To this end, this section has been developed to serve as an overview of the credit union legislative action network as well as to help identify the LFR's role within the network.

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The sole purpose of the Credit Union Legislative Action Network is to involve as many credit union members in as short a time as possible in a chain of communication to be activated in times of legislative emergency. Beginning at the League office, staff members contact Legislative Forum Reps, who in turn contact either: their Chapter officials; credit union managers within their chapters; or legislative key contact persons from their chapters. Depending upon the issue and the need for emails, phone calls, letters or social media, the Governmental Affairs Department will inform the LFRs which lawmakers to contact, prescribe the method of contact and the message to communicate. A legislative action alert will be distributed from the league office containing the details of immediate action necessary by the LFR.

To enhance the LFR network, on many occasions it is necessary for the Governmental Affairs Department to make direct contact with credit unions subsequent to going through the LFR system. Usually such cases involve high volume of contacts with a lawmaker utilizing credit unions throughout the state. In such cases, the LFR is still encouraged to contact credit unions within the chapter to reinforce the need for immediate action.

STRUCTURE & COMPONENTS OF LEGISLATIVE ACTION NETWORK

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE

The Legislative Committee of the Illinois Credit Union League is responsible for analyzing proposed and/or pending legislation that would impact member credit unions. It is the Committee's responsibility to develop and suggest League positions for consideration by the League Board of Directors with regard to all such legislation. The Legislative Committee has responsibility for the overall legislative agenda development for Illinois credit unions.

GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS STAFF

With regard to the Credit Union Legislative Action Network, Governmental Affairs staff has the responsibility for developing the political and legislative strategy necessary to carry out the legislative agenda as proposed by the Legislative Committee and approved by the League Board. Such strategy encompasses lobbying, organizing grassroots support, providing education to member credit unions with regard to proposed legislation and directing the political action network necessary to garner support for credit union legislative objectives.

LEGISLATIVE FORUM REPRESENTATIVES

To assist the Governmental Affairs staff in its efforts to organize an effective political action network of concerned, involved credit union members, the position of Legislative Forum Representative (LFR) was created. Each chapter of the League should appoint a Legislative Forum Representative. LFRs have the main responsibility for carrying out directives of the Governmental Affairs staff with regard to legislative alerts. They are, in effect, overseers of the legislative action network.

CREDIT UNION CHAPTERS

With regard to the credit union legislative action network, individual chapters have a role in enhancing legislative communications with local lawmakers. For example, many chapters invite local lawmakers to events such as: chapter legislator appreciation nights, a chapter family picnic or other such event. Lawmakers are already conditioned to hearing from local chapters of other associations; therefore local credit union chapters are included in the legislative action network. Specifically, if a chapter has chapter letterhead, it may be very effective to communicate as part of the legislative action network on this letterhead. This illustrates the important role that an individual chapter can play in the legislative alert network and the political process.

KEY CONTACTS

A key contact person is someone who has an extremely close association with a member of Congress or the Illinois General Assembly. A key contact is someone whose name is instantly recognized by the legislator and who would be willing to make a phone call or secure an emergency appointment for credit unions, if necessary. The Governmental Affairs Department should be provided contact information for each key contact. The key contacts will become a vital component of the credit union legislative action network as well as credit union campaign involvement and other political action programs.

LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMUNICATION TREE

The communication tree is a system whereby the League, LFRs, and credit union members coordinate efforts to inform and influence legislators with regard to specific issues of interest to credit unions. The communication tree is a key part of the entire legislative action network. It is to be activated when legislative matters of significant importance to credit unions are pending in the legislature that demands immediate attention on the part of legislators. It is designed to provide rapid communication between credit union members and their legislators in times of legislative alerts. The following details the way in which the communication tree should work:

1. Once League staff has determined that a legislative alert is necessary, Legislative Forum Reps will be contacted immediately, either by phone or e-mail. Forum Reps will receive information concerning the nature of the bill, its impact upon credit unions, its status and the desired action to be taken by legislators.
2. The Governmental Affairs Department will inform the LFR as to whom to contact. In certain cases a legislator may be targeted as an individual that needs a great deal of attention. In those cases, it may be desirable to contact a specific key contact person, rather than several people. In other instances, the more contacts made, the better. Each bill will have to be handled on an individual basis.
3. The LFRs must be able to contact as many credit union managers within their assigned areas as possible within as short a time as possible, such as by phone, fax and/or group e-mail group distribution list.
4. LFRs must impress upon the managers they contact the importance of the issue to the credit union or the credit union movement. They must request the manager to phone or email his or her legislator immediately (or post on social media if appropriate). LFRs must insure the manager has adequate information regarding a particular issue and the desired action requested of the legislator. Emails, phone calls, or other contact from credit union managers to legislators must be generated immediately in times of legislative alerts. Rapid communication is a must.
5. Of critical importance are the responses received from a legislator with regard to a specific contact via email, phone call, or social media. These responses should be relayed to League staff immediately.
6. A legislative summary/tracking sheet of League monitored legislation is available on the Illinois Credit Union League website www.iculeague.org. This information is updated at least weekly during the legislative session.
7. The Weekly Government News is an electronic newsletter designed to provide affiliated credit unions with weekly updates regarding the status of ICUL's state and federal legislative agendas. This communication is sent out by the ICUL every Friday (as events warrant) while the Illinois General Assembly is in session to provide the latest information regarding the status of bills, compliance and regulatory updates, and any other issues of interest to credit unions. When the Illinois General Assembly is not in session, this bulletin will be sent out to include congressional legislative issues as necessary.