



Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership Guidelines for Government and Political Affairs

The purpose of these guidelines are to provide a basis for the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership (SCCDP) and its Board of Directors to proactively engage in local, state, and federal government related issues and to cultivate positive and productive working relationships with elected officials to create a healthy climate for the Seward County business community.

As a 501(c)(6) organization, the SCCDP may perform activities dedicated to improving the conditions of businesses and their industry, including lobbying, promotion, and advocacy. As such, the SCCDP has implemented a government affairs program headed by both the organization's Government Affairs Director and President & CEO.

Although each request for the SCCDP's involvement on an issue will be reviewed on its own merits, consideration will also be given to the goals and priorities established in the current vision statement and guiding principles. Also, the demand on current resources, both personnel and financial, to honor ongoing commitments and proposed new programs and commitments will be considered.

The following questions will be examined before any action is taken by the SCCDP's government affairs program:

- Are the goals, objectives, or purposes consistent with SCCDP policies, position statements and priorities including, but not limited to, those in the current vision statement and guiding principles?
- Will it positively impact the members of the SCCDP and best interests of business and industry in Seward County, Nebraska?
- What potential negative impacts will it have on the SCCDP, members, or business and industry in Seward County, Nebraska?
- Will it be discriminatory in any way?
- Will there be meaningful involvement of SCCDP representatives, where feasible?
- Is there potential to provide positive public awareness of members, local businesses, communities in Seward County, or the SCCDP?
- Can the SCCDP participate as requested with their available resources or will additional resources need to be provided for the SCCDP to be involved?

Organization & Legislative Priority Agenda Formation

The SCCDP Government Affairs Director will primarily work with the President & CEO and the restructured Business & Government Affairs (BGA) Working Group to provide proper direction and facilitate appropriate action on issues that directly impact the Seward County business community in a clear and timely manner. The BGA Working Group shall follow Working Group/Committee guidelines as set forth in the most recent copy of the SCCDP Bylaws.

In addition to working on business development activities, the BGA Working Group will bring forth potential business sensitive or legislative issues that they would like the Government Affairs Director and President & CEO to address with the appropriate government official or office.

The Board of Directors shall be updated each month of all activities and/or legislative positions approved by the BGA Working Group, with a full report being delivered by the Government Affairs Director at each quarterly Board meeting.

At the end of each calendar year, the BGA Working Group will start developing a Legislative Priority Agenda (Agenda) for the local, state, and federal levels of government. Any items outlined in the Agenda shall be put through a vigorous examination process to ensure issue falls within the goals and priorities established in the current vision statement and guiding principles.

Furthermore, the following questions adapted from a West Virginia Law Review Publication, *A Policymaking Checklist for the Legislative Process*, will be considered for each Agenda item:

1. How does SCCDP define the issue being addressed?
2. Why is the issue important now and how does it impact the Seward County business community?
3. Is legislative action the best means of addressing the matter?
4. If legislative action is in order, what is the purpose or intent of the SCCDP proposal and at which level should the process start (e.g., local, state, or federal)?
5. How can SCCDP's proposal be informed by comparable actions taken on this or similar issues?
6. Are there potential negative "spill-over effects" or "unintended consequences" of SCCDP's proposal that can be identified and addressed now?
7. What is SCCDP's time frame for adopting the proposal as policy?
8. Does SCCDP's proposal take into account the realities of the legislative arena?
9. Does SCCDP's proposal complement existing policies, institutional arrangements, and practices?
10. Specifically, what types of "policy tools" are part of SCCDP's proposal that will influence and alter behavior toward desired ends?
11. Does SCCDP's proposal contain well-defined objectives and benchmarks that will allow for future policy review and assessment?
12. Is SCCDP's proposal superior to others?
13. Does the proposal meet SCCDP's advocacy objectives?

After an agenda is created, the SCCDP Government Affairs Director and President & CEO will present the Agenda to the Board of Directors. Following approval, it will be distributed to member base and forwarded on to all government official offices. Any agenda items that were unaddressed or in progress during the previous year will remain on the Agenda, unless otherwise instructed by the SCCDP Board.

Process for Quickly Addressing Issues Not on Agenda

At any point during the year, SCCDP reserves the right to amend or change its Agenda to reflect a shift in priorities or rapidly changing legislative environment. SCCDP may also add issues to the Agenda at any point during the year so long as issues do not fall outside the organization's priorities as outlined above. Any additions will be forwarded to the BGA Working Group for consideration.

The following process will be followed for any issues brought to the attention of the SCCDP and BGA Working Group from an individual or business who holds membership with the SCCDP.

1. An individual/organization submits a written request to any SCCDP BGA Working Group member, the Government Affairs Director, or President & CEO.
2. Request will include a brief written summary and description of the issue and how it directly impacts/affects the Seward County business community. Additional information including websites, articles, etc. may be included with request.
3. The specific action being requested to address the issue (e.g. write letter, speak on behalf of issues, send out email blast, information only, etc.).
4. The timing being request for such action, including whether any specific dates/deadlines are applicable.
5. A list of any current supporters, endorsements, etc.
6. An opportunity for individual or organization to make a brief presentation to the Government Affairs Director and President & CEO, as they so choose.
7. Request will include specific contact name, email address, and phone number for further questions and/or information.

Once the issue has been reviewed and a decision on action has been voted upon, the individual or business will be notified by either the Government Affairs Director or the President & CEO at the earliest opportunity.

If the issue does not fall within the SCCDP's goals and priorities as established in the current vision statement and guiding principles, is voted down by the BGA Working Group, or is shown to not have a significant impact on the Seward County business community, as determined in the sole and absolute discretion of SCCDP, either the Government Affairs Director or the President & CEO will notify the individual or business making the request that SCCDP will take "no position" on the issue.

Given the fast-paced nature of policy making, the SCCDP Government Affairs Director and President & CEO should be granted the power to make unilateral decisions on moving forward with advocating or endorsing any issue that is reasonably supported by any item listed in the SCCDP Legislative Priority Agenda and falls within the SCCDP's goals and priorities.

Political Involvement and Endorsements

The SCCDP supports strong civic engagement for a healthy community and business climate. We work hard to provide nonpartisan information for civic engagement in the Seward County area, including information about elections.

From time-to-time, the SCCDP will be asked to formally recognize a project, position statement, program, public vote or bond issue, product, policy, or service with endorsement and with which SCCDP will be publicly identified. Examples of endorsements include committing SCCDP support for a position statement, program, project, product or service, with which the SCCDP will be publicly identified.

All programs, position statements, projects, products, and services endorsed by the SCCDP will include the official SCCDP logo, the web address of the SCCDP, and the words "endorsed by the Seward County Chamber & Development Partnership." Any costs and fees will be identified in a Memorandum of Understanding.

Endorsement of projects, position statements, programs, public votes or bond issues, products, policies, and services are limited to those that relate to SCCDP's exempt mission and will not constitute or rise to the level of SCCDP's primary purpose and have been reviewed and recommended by the SCCDP BGA Working Group. Endorsements shall be for a specific length of time, which shall be determined during the vote of the SCCDP Board of Directors.

As a matter of policy, SCCDP shall not endorse, oppose, or take any action whatsoever, related to the political campaigns of individual political candidates. Additionally, SCCDP marketing channels and other SCCDP resources shall not be used in furtherance of or connection with the political campaigns of any individual political candidates.

Administration and Record Keeping

Following each quarter, SCCDP must report on its lobbying activities to both the state and federal governments on all lobbying expenses including travel expenses related to lobbying activity and the cost of staff hours dedicated to lobbying. The SCCDP Government Affairs Director and President & CEO will ensure all 501(c)(6) IRS reporting guidelines are followed for lobbying activities.

The SCCDP Government Affairs Director and President & CEO will annually work with their accountant and/or legal counsel to ensure all lobbying and political involvement expenditures and federal, state, and local reporting requirements, notices, and disclosures are timely made, accounted for, and documented. Any reasonable method may be used to document expenditures including calculating time spent lobbying allocation of overhead costs to lobbying activity, and actual lobbying expenses (e.g., travel, payments to outside consultants, publications, etc.).