

## Planning Resource

# 2021 Session Prep Toolkit

Do you have a strategic plan in place to guide your state government affairs program in 2021? Here's a worksheet to help you plan your year. Visit [multistate.us/issues/2021-session-prep-toolkit](https://multistate.us/issues/2021-session-prep-toolkit) for more details and resources.

### Defining Your Big Picture

- **What policy issues are most important to your organization?** For each issue, have you developed a position statement to guide your advocacy efforts and defined “success?”
- **How are you planning to track activity related to these issues?** How will you monitor, record, and communicate executive, legislative, and regulatory activity?
- **What states are your biggest markets . . . or threats?** Where does your organization have the biggest footprint, or where would policy activity impact you the most?
- **Do you have in-house government affairs and compliance pros?** Are you supported by in-state contract lobbyists, considering travel limitations? How do you ensure full compliance with lobbying laws and regulations?

### Considering Political Landscape

- **What is the partisan control in your priority states?** Is one political party in control, or is the government split? How does this impact each of your priority issues?
- **Are there any supermajorities or trifectas to consider?** Does one party have outsized control in the legislature or the state as the whole?
- **Have there been any major leadership changes as a result of the 2020 Elections?** Is there a new governor or legislative leaders who might impact your goals?
- **Have you done a stakeholder analysis?** What are think tanks, policy influencers, industry associations, legislator groups, and others saying about your issues? Who are your allies and what obstacles do you face?

### Policy Preparedness

- **What is the state budget status in your priority states?** If the state has a poor budget picture, how might that impact your industry and organization?
- **What kind of pandemic response legislation might we see?** Have legislative leaders already set policy priorities?
- **What else might state policymakers pursue?** Are there other issues that may be prioritized by lawmakers? How do you make sure your issues get noticed?

### Logistics in the New Normal

- **When do sessions start and end?** In other words, how much time in the legislative session is there for you to accomplish your goals?
- **Are there any travel or other access restrictions in your priority states?** Will you be able to travel to states as you did before? If you can travel, will you be able to access policymakers in-person (are legislative buildings open)?
- **Have you considered all the aspects of virtual lobbying and advocacy?** Do virtual activities count as lobbying? Additionally, how will you combat policymakers' “Zoom fatigue” (you may need in-state representation)?
- **Where do you need to register prior to visiting or making contact?** Have you checked specific rules in each state to understand where you must register beforehand, and where you must register once you hit a certain threshold?