State Councils

State Councils provide the mechanism for Empowerment of the Compact process within each state

The Commission regulates interstate operations and affairs for the ICAOS. Each state however is required by statute to establish a state council for overseeing its intrastate affairs dealing with the Compact. An active State Council can have a positive influence on each state’s compact operation. Specifically, the Council can serve as an advocate when seeking resources, improving operations, resolving disputes and conducting training.

By establishing a State Council, an appointed group who oversees the interests of all three branches of government, states can ensure that officials are aware of the Compact and that the state is taking full advantage of the Compact’s structure and benefits.

Forming State Councils

Each state determines the structure, composition and budget of their State Council. Generally, a State Council includes at least one representative from the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government, victim groups, other community interest groups and the Compact Administrator. Before deciding on specific appointments, review your state’s legislation.

Making Appointments

Appointing individuals who have a demonstrated interest in the Compact and are influential in the public safety arena is critical.

The appointment process is often cumbersome and lengthy. Governors, legislators and judges are responsible for many appointments to any number of boards, councils and advisory groups and don’t always have a list of candidates ready at hand. By taking the initiative to recommend suitable candidates for appointment, the Compact Administrator may be able to speed up the appointment process. Factors to consider when recommending appointments include:

- Is the candidate willing to serve on the council?
- Does the candidate have a demonstrated interest in the Compact process?
- Is the individual well known in the criminal justice community?
- Is the candidate influential?

When contacting possible candidates for appointment to the Council it is helpful to be prepared to share your views and expectations. In advance of asking an individual if they are willing to be considered for appointment it may be helpful to prepare an information packet to include a copy of relevant statues, policies, procedures, the Commission’s latest annual report, By-Laws, rules, etc. Prior to considering a commitment, candidates will often have questions you should be prepared to answer. Examples of questions which may be asked include the following:

- What is the role of the Council?
What other individuals and groups are represented on the Council?
How long is the term?
How often will the Council meet?
What are the statutory requirements and obligations?
What is the time commitment?

"Ensuring State Council members are educated on the importance of ICAOS toward community safety is critical to the Council's motivation and acceptance of the role each member plays in successfully implementing policy. The training and assistance provided by the National Office was extremely helpful in making our members aware of the public safety issues the Interstate Compact faces. Don't overlook this invaluable resource"

Gary Tullock, Tennessee Commissioner

Council Activities

The compact statutes in every state typically address the Council’s formal responsibilities; however the practical uses for a State Council are just as important.

Organization and leadership are the key components for creating and maintaining an effective, energized State Council. The Council is essentially a communication and support mechanism to assist with the development of statewide policy, acquiring critical resources and the operation of the Compact Office.

One of the first activities of a newly appointed council is to develop the Council’s mission statement as well as short and long term plans, goals and objectives. In the beginning the Council should establish either formal or informal meeting procedures. For example, how often will the Council meet, how will meeting notices be publicized, who will take meeting minutes, who can vote and how will votes be taken and recorded, etc.

As time goes on keeping energized can be a challenge. Projects that are both helpful to the Compact office and suitable for engaging the Council includes:

- Developing a dispute resolution policy and procedure
- Assess Compact Office workload and equipment needs
- Recommending changes in Compact Office business process and procedures
- Designing a training curriculum and schedule training for field officers, judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, victim advocates, etc
- Present on the Compact at state conferences and other gatherings
- Recommend legislative changes and lobby legislative groups
- Recommend changes to the Compact rules

“As an advocate for victims of crime it is refreshing to be a member of Arizona’s State Council and to be able to voice the concerns and have the rights of crime victims considered when dealing with interstate compact—none of the least of which includes the rights of victims to be informed, involved, and included in the criminal justice process.”

Dan Levy, Arizona Victim’s Representative