



COMMISSIONER TO  
COMMISSIONER

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MENTOR TOOLKIT

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# LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear Fellow Commissioner,  
Thank you for answering the call to serve — not just your county, but your colleagues. By joining the inaugural class of the Florida Association of Counties Commissioner to Commissioner Mentor Program, you are doing something that matters deeply: you are choosing to make someone else's beginning a little less daunting than your own.

We all remember what it was like that first year in office. The learning curve is steep, the decisions are consequential, and the weight of public trust settles on your shoulders well before you feel fully ready to carry it. You were figuring out how to balance your ambitions for your community with the realities of what public office actually allows — the politics, the process, the relationships, the setbacks, and the unexpected wins. It is in that spirit that I ask you to approach your time as a mentor.

Think back to those early days. What did you wish you had known? How might you have approached the job differently with a year or two of experience behind you? Who showed up for you — a senior colleague, a county administrator, a fellow commissioner from across the state — and what did their guidance mean? Now you have the opportunity to be that person for someone else.

Your role as a mentor is not to have all the answers. It is to listen well, share honestly, and walk alongside a newer commissioner as they find their footing. The questions you ask may matter as much as the wisdom you offer. The time you give — even a phone call, a shared meal at a conference, or a candid conversation about a difficult vote — can shift the trajectory of how a colleague leads and how a community is served.

Florida's counties are as diverse as its communities, and the challenges facing county commissioners are growing more complex each year. When we invest in one another, we strengthen not just individual leaders but the institution of county government itself. I am grateful for your willingness to show up in this way. It reflects the very best of what we do — public service that doesn't stop at the borders of our own counties.

With appreciation and respect,

Rene Flowers  
Pinellas County  
2026-2027 FAC President





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COMMISSIONER

# WELCOME TO THE C2C PROGRAM

The Florida Association of Counties and Institute for County Government are proud to launch the Commissioner to Commissioner Mentor Program, connecting experienced commissioner leaders with newly elected commissioners following the November election.

As a mentor you are expected to fulfill five key responsibilities:

- Begin by reaching out to your newly elected commissioner mentee through a call, email, or in-person visit to establish that first connection.
- From there, focus on building a genuine relationship — one rooted in trust and open communication.
- Be an active listener and help your mentee navigate the complexities of the county environment, offering guidance as they find their footing.
- Make a point to attend FAC events together, as shared experiences strengthen the mentoring bond.
- Finally, take time to show your mentee how to engage with FAC's resources, including the member portal, email communications, and social media channels.

This toolkit is designed to be your resource guide throughout the mentor relationship. It includes:

- Best practices and tips for effective mentorship, drawn from peer-reviewed research
- A calendar of upcoming FAC events where you and your mentee can connect in person
- Instructions for accessing the FAC member portal through YourMembership (YM)
- How to connect with FAC on social media and sign up for newsletters and legislative updates

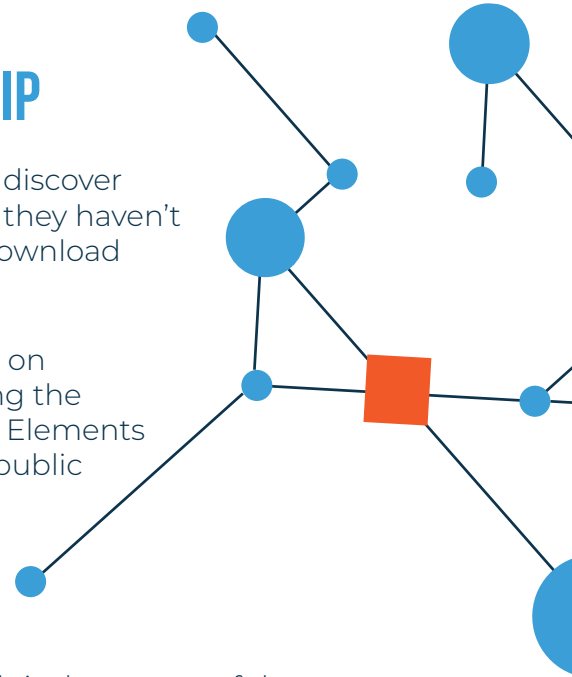
Your participation in the mentor Program brings invaluable knowledge of county government, the legislative process, and the FAC community — knowledge that can make an enormous difference in the effectiveness and confidence of a new commissioner in their first year.

Thank you for your commitment to the next generation of Florida's county leaders.

# BEST PRACTICES FOR EFFECTIVE MENTORSHIP

Being a mentor is a broad role that involves helping someone discover their own answers, build confidence, and navigate challenges they haven't encountered before. Your role is to unlock potential, not just download your experience.

The following guidance is drawn from peer-reviewed research on mentorship in professional and public sector settings, including the work of the National Research Mentoring Network, MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring™, and published studies in public administration and organizational development.



## 1 SET CLEAR EXPECTATIONS FROM THE START

One of the most consistent findings in mentorship research is that successful relationships begin with an explicit conversation about expectations. Before diving into substantive topics, take time to discuss logistics and goals: How often will you meet, and in what format? What does your mentee most want to learn or accomplish in the first year? What can you realistically offer as a mentor? Establishing these norms early prevents misunderstandings and gives the relationship a clear foundation to build on.

## 2 LISTEN MORE THAN YOU TALK

Effective mentors ask probing questions before offering advice. Rather than prescribing a course of action, skilled mentors help their mentees think through challenges, recognize their own strengths, and develop their own judgment. Your experience is valuable — but the goal is to build your mentee's independence, not reliance on you. Try asking “What have you already considered?” or “What's your instinct here?” before sharing your own perspective. Listen to your mentee without judgement or preconceptions. Practice hearing what is NOT being said — listen for those gaps in information sharing and pose questions that prompt critical thinking.

## 3 REMEMBER THAT MENTORSHIP IS A TWO-WAY STREET

Research consistently describes mentorship as a reciprocal relationship — one that benefits both parties, not just the mentee. Approach the relationship with genuine curiosity. Your mentee brings fresh perspectives, new ideas, and experiences that can broaden your own thinking. Mentors who enter the relationship with this mindset tend to be more engaged and more effective. Create a “safe space” for discussion.

## 4 TAILOR YOUR APPROACH TO WHAT YOUR MENTEE ACTUALLY NEEDS

Not every newly elected commissioner arrives with the same background, gaps, or goals. Some may be experienced public servants stepping into a new role; others may be entirely new to government. Ask before you assume. Early in the relationship, take time to understand your mentee's professional background, what drew them to this role, and where they feel least confident. The most effective mentors adapt their style and focus to what the individual in front of them actually needs. Personalize your guidance.



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## HELP YOUR MENTEE NAVIGATE THE PUBLIC SECTOR LANDSCAPE

County government operates within a complex web of legal requirements, budgetary processes, intergovernmental relationships, and public accountability. Research on public sector mentoring identifies this unique context as one of the most important areas where experienced colleagues can add value. Beyond sharing political wisdom, help your mentee understand how county government actually works — the structural, procedural, and relational dimensions that don't appear in any orientation packet.

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## CREATE SPACE FOR HONEST CONVERSATION

Some of the most valuable mentoring happens when a mentee feels safe enough to admit what they don't know, ask a question they'd be embarrassed to ask publicly, or think through a difficult situation without fear of judgment. Your role is to be a trusted sounding board. What's said in the mentoring relationship stays there. Psychological safety isn't a soft concept — research shows it's a prerequisite for learning. Offer insight, rather than advice.

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## SHOW UP CONSISTENTLY

Good intentions don't substitute for consistent presence. Research on effective mentoring programs points to regular, structured meetings as one of the strongest predictors of a successful relationship. Life gets busy — especially in elected office — but sporadic contact undermines trust and momentum. Commit to a standing meeting cadence and protect it. Even a 30-minute monthly call is far more valuable than an occasional hours-long conversation. Bring selflessness to the table.

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## CONNECT YOUR MENTEE TO THE BROADER NETWORK

Some of the most lasting value a mentor can provide isn't knowledge — it's access. Introduce your mentee to other commissioners, FAC leaders, and professional resources. Help them understand that the relationships they build through FAC are a career-long asset, not just a first-year orientation. The professional network you help them enter may ultimately be more valuable than any single piece of advice you give.



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## REFLECT ON YOUR OWN PRACTICE

Even experienced mentors benefit from periodic self-assessment. Ask yourself: Am I making space for my mentee to lead our conversations, or do I dominate them? Am I offering relevant guidance, or defaulting to my own stories? Am I checking in on what my mentee needs now, or assuming it hasn't changed? Research on mentoring effectiveness highlights self-monitoring and reflection as habits that meaningfully improve the quality of mentoring relationships over time. Strike a balance between sharing and questioning.

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## EMBRACE THE EVOLVING NATURE OF THE RELATIONSHIP

Mentoring relationships change over time — and that's a sign of success, not drift. As your mentee grows more confident and capable, the nature of your conversations will shift. What begins as guidance and reassurance may evolve into collegial exchange and peer collaboration. The best mentoring relationships don't end; they mature. Be open to that evolution, and recognize it as a reflection of your mentee's growth.



### NEED MORE INFORMATION?

There are many online articles that provide in depth guidance on being a mentor. Scan the QR code for more resources!

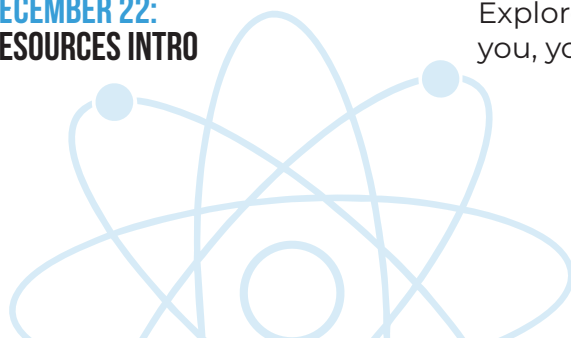


# COMMUNICATING WITH NEW COMMISSIONERS

FAC will communicate regularly with new commissioners during their first year in office. These dates let you know when those communications will be sent and can perhaps be used to tailor your communications with your mentee as well.



<b>ANNUAL CONFERENCE JUNE 2026: C2C MENTOR PROGRAM LAUNCH!</b>	The Commissioner-to-Commissioner Mentor Program officially launches at the FAC Annual Conference. A milestone moment for county leadership across Florida.
<b>AUGUST 18, 2026: PRIMARY DAY – GET OUT AND VOTE!</b>	Primary Day is here. Encourage your community to participate and make their voices heard.
<b>AUGUST - OCTOBER: COMMUNICATION WITH MENTORS AND MANAGERS</b>	Throughout the summer and early fall FAC will be communicating with C2C mentors and county managers to help prepare them for the upcoming new commissioner onboarding.
<b>NOVEMBER 3: ELECTION DAY</b>	Election Day! Get out and vote!
<b>NOVEMBER 6: MAIL NEW COMMISSIONER PACKETS</b>	New Commissioner Packet will be mailed to new commissioners and mentors, with key information and resources to get started.
<b>NOVEMBER 24: WELCOME EMAIL</b>	A welcome email with important information, next steps, and other resources will be sent to mentors, mentees and county managers.
<b>DECEMBER 1–3: NEW COMMISSIONER BOOTCAMP</b>	A bootcamp designed to prepare newly elected officials for success. Mentors should plan on attending!
<b>DECEMBER 8: ICG, COUNTY GOVERNMENT GUIDE, CCC</b>	Get familiar with key resources including the ICG, the County Government Guide, and the Florida Association of Counties (CCC).
<b>DECEMBER 15: ADVOCACY INTRO</b>	Learn how advocacy works, why it matters, and how counties come together to strengthen local voices in Tallahassee and beyond.
<b>DECEMBER 22: RESOURCES INTRO</b>	Explore additional resources available to support you, your county, and your community.



# FAC EVENTS: OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT IN PERSON

One of the most valuable aspects of the FAC mentor-mentee relationship is the opportunity to connect face-to-face at FAC conferences and events. These gatherings bring together commissioners and county staff from across Florida and offer an ideal setting for mentors and mentees to meet, attend sessions together, make introductions, and strengthen their working relationship. While mentors and mentees are encouraged to cultivate their relationship year-round — through calls, emails, and other touchpoints between events — a key feature of the C2C Mentor Program is that formal connection opportunities are built directly into the 2026–27 FAC event calendar. These structured touchpoints are designed to bring mentor-mentee pairs together without requiring significant additional planning or effort on either side. Below is a calendar of major FAC events for the coming year, with designated connection points noted. Mentors are encouraged to review the timeline, confirm which events they and their mentees will both attend, and take advantage of the programming planned with them in mind.

**2026  
LEGISLATIVE  
CONFERENCE**  
**DECEMBER 2-4**  
**SAWGRASS MARRIOTT**  
PONTE VEDRA FLORIDA  
*St Johns County*

## 2026 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

**DATES: DECEMBER 2–4, 2026**

**LOCATION: SAWGRASS MARRIOTT, ST. JOHNS COUNTY**

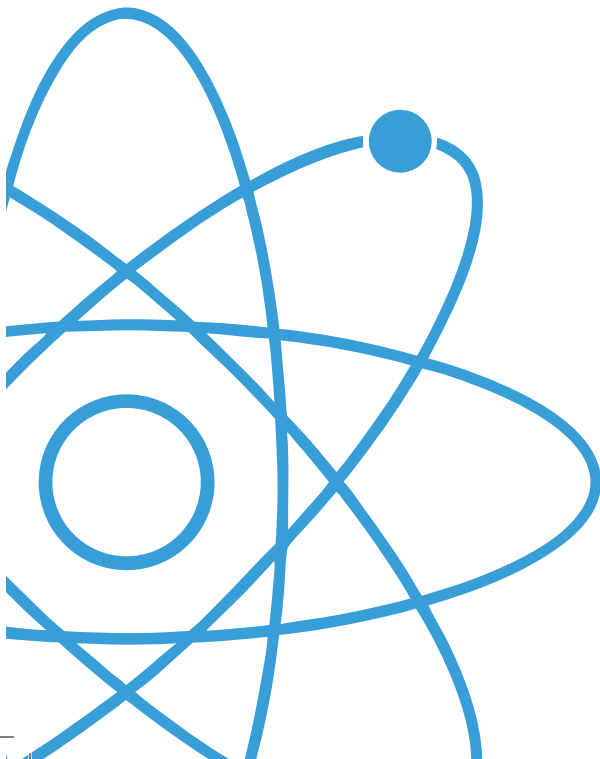
The Legislative Conference is the final opportunity for FAC members and Legislative Policy Committees to weigh in on the policies FAC will lobby during the upcoming session. On the final day, commissioners vote to adopt FAC's official policy positions. For new commissioners, attending alongside a mentor is an excellent way to understand how FAC's policy process works and to begin engaging meaningfully in it.

**Connect in Person:** Mentors and Mentees will have reserved seating during the closing breakfast Friday morning during legislative conference. Make sure to join your mentee to celebrate their success in completing the New Commissioner Bootcamp and encourage them to engage in future FAC events.

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Your role as a mentor is not to have all the answers. It is to listen well, share honestly, and walk alongside a newer commissioner as they find their footing.

”



## **NEW COMMISSIONER BOOTCAMP**

**DECEMBER 1-2, 2026**

**SAWGRASS MARRIOTT  
PONTE VEDRA FLORIDA**

*St. Johns County*

## **NEW COMMISSIONER BOOTCAMP**

**DATES: DECEMBER 1–3, 2026**

**LOCATION: SAWGRASS MARRIOTT, ST. JOHNS COUNTY (HELD IN CON-  
JUNCTION WITH THE LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE)**

Held alongside the Legislative Conference, the New Commissioner Bootcamp is designed specifically for commissioners who are new to elected county office. This intensive program provides a foundational orientation to county government, FAC's role in the legislative process, and the tools and resources available to commissioners through the Association.

**Connect in Person:** The Bootcamp represents one of the most important early touchpoints in the mentor-mentee relationship. There will be scheduled opportunities for you to participate with your mentee during the New Commissioner Bootcamp. This event is an opportunity to make introductions, provide context and help your mentee get the most out of the experience.

## **2027 LEGISLATIVE DAY**

**MARCH 17**

**TURNBULL CENTER  
TALLAHASSEE FLORIDA**

*Leon County*

## **LEGISLATIVE DAY**

**DATE: MARCH 17, 2027**

**LOCATION: LEON COUNTY**

Each year during the legislative session, FAC hosts a day in Tallahassee for commissioners and staff to participate directly in lobbying efforts on behalf of Florida's counties. The day includes a legislative briefing and afternoon meetings with local delegations, followed by an evening reception. For a newly elected commissioner, experiencing Legislative Day with an experienced mentor can be invaluable.

**Connect in Person:** During this event there will be reserved seating during the legislative briefing for you and your mentee to connect and spend time together.

## **2027 ANNUAL CONFERENCE & EDUCATIONAL EXHIBITION**

**DATES: JUNE 22–25, 2027**

**LOCATION: HILTON ORLANDO, ORANGE COUNTY**

FAC's signature event, held for more than 95 years, brings together hundreds of commissioners and county staff for continuing education, critical networking, and a 100+ booth educational exhibition featuring tools and products from vendors across the country. This is the single best opportunity of the year for mentors to introduce their mentees to the broader FAC community. There will be reserved seating at some of the general sessions so mentors and mentees can plan to sit together.



CONNECTING COUNTIES LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE 2024

**Terry**  
Terry Burroughs  
Commissioner  
Schobee County

COMMISSIONER/  
COUNCILMEMBER

BOARD OF  
DIRECTORS

IMMEDIATE  
PAST PRESIDENT

CONNECTING COUNTIES LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE 2024

**George**  
George Kruse  
Commissioner  
Manatee County

COMMISSIONER/  
COUNCILMEMBER

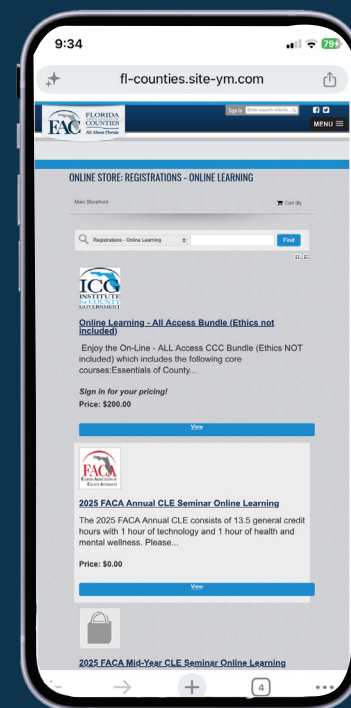
The Institute for County Government, In partnership with UF/IFAS Extension, ICG provides county commissioners and their teams with premier training and research — empowering them to lead their communities and build a brighter future for every Florida county.

ICG offers several certification and education pathways, including the Certified County Commissioner (CCC) Program, the County Government Education (CGE) Program for county staff, and the Advanced County Commissioner (ACC) Program. Continuing Education courses are also offered throughout the year at FAC events, providing advanced instruction on topics such as emergency management, public works, flood plain management, and hazard mitigation.

## HOW TO REGISTER FOR ICG CLASSES REGISTRATION FOLLOWS FOUR STEPS:

- Visit the FAC Online Store at [fl-counties.site-ym.com](http://fl-counties.site-ym.com)
- Purchase the Required Programs — in the store, look for and purchase the “Online Learning All Access Bundle (Ethics Not Included)”
- Access the Online Learning Portal — once the purchase is complete, an email will be sent with instructions on how to log in to the ICGs online learning portal
- Attend In-Person Sessions (if applicable) — for ACC Level I & II, in-person seminar attendance is required for program completion.

“The time you give — even a phone call, a shared meal at a conference, or a candid conversation about a difficult vote — can shift the trajectory of how a colleague leads and how a community is served.”



# HELP YOUR MENTEES GET CONNECTED TO FAC!

## GETTING INTO THE PORTAL

Navigate to [fl-counties.site-ym.com](http://fl-counties.site-ym.com) and click Sign In in the upper right corner. If you are unsure whether you already have an account, contact Kaprie Lee before creating a new profile — duplicate accounts can cause access issues.

- Email: [klee@flcounties.com](mailto:klee@flcounties.com)
- Phone: (850) 922-4300

First time logging in or need a password reset? Click “Forgot your password?” on the sign-in page and follow the prompts. FAC staff are available to assist if you encounter any difficulty.

## UPDATING YOUR PROFILE INFORMATION

Keeping your profile current ensures that fellow members can find and contact you accurately, and that FAC communications reach you at the right address. Once logged in:

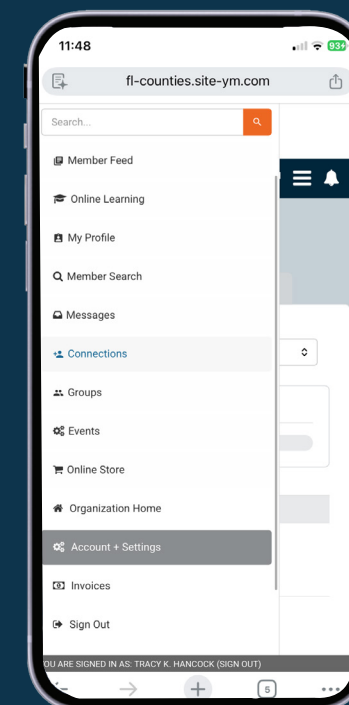
- Click your name or profile icon in the upper right corner.
- Select Edit Profile or My Profile.
- Update your contact information, title, county, and any other relevant fields.
- Save your changes before navigating away.

*It's a good idea to review your profile when you first join and again any time your contact information or role changes.*

“

Think back to those early days. What did you wish you had known? How might you have approached the job differently with a year or two of experience behind you?

”



## ACCESSING MEMBER RESOURCES AND THE DIRECTORY

The portal provides access to FAC's member directory and a range of member-only resources, including the annual FAC Directory of county officials.

### TO ACCESS THE MEMBER DIRECTORY:

- Log in to your account at [fl-counties.site-ym.com](http://fl-counties.site-ym.com).
- Navigate to the Directory section from the main menu or the quick links at the top of the page.
- Search by name, county, or title to find fellow commissioners and FAC contacts.

Additionally, commissioners are able to upload and access their annual ethics Certificate of Completion through the portal — a requirement for incumbent and former county commissioners and staff.

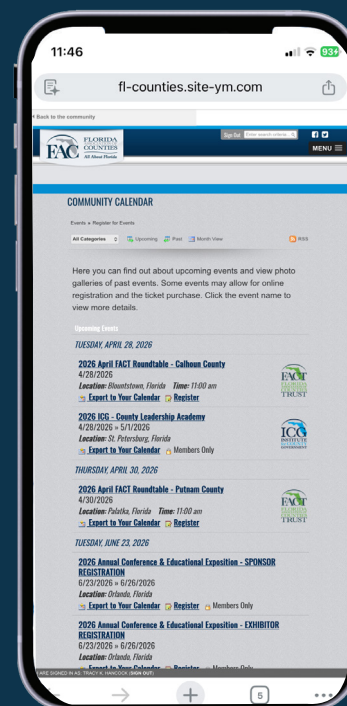
### REGISTERING FOR EVENTS THROUGH THE PORTAL

All major FAC conferences and events can be registered for directly through the member portal, often at member rates.

- Log in at [fl-counties.site-ym.com](http://fl-counties.site-ym.com).
- Select Events or Calendar from the navigation menu.
- Find the event you wish to attend and click on it for details.
- Follow the registration prompts, selecting appropriate registration type and session options.
- Complete payment if a registration fee applies.

Registration confirmations are sent to the email address on file in your profile — another good reason to keep that information current.

*For assistance with portal navigation or event registration, contact FAC at (850) 922-4300.*



## STAY CONNECTED: FAC ON SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL

Staying connected with FAC between events ensures that you and your mentee are always informed on the issues, resources, and conversations that matter to Florida's counties. FAC communicates across several platforms — here's where to find us and how to sign up.

### EMAIL NEWSLETTER AND LEGISLATIVE UPDATES

FAC's email communications are the most direct way to stay current on legislative developments, policy updates, event announcements, and member news. To subscribe:

- Visit [fl-counties.com](http://fl-counties.com) and click Subscribe in the top navigation menu, or
- Scroll to the bottom of any page on the FAC website and look for the newsletter signup.

Once subscribed, you will receive regular updates including legislative alerts during session — essential reading for any commissioner who wants to stay ahead of issues affecting Florida counties.





## FACEBOOK

@flcounties — facebook.com/flcounties

FAC's Facebook page features news, event highlights, member spotlights, and updates on county issues from across the state. It's a good place to see what's happening in the FAC community and to share content with constituents.



## X (TWITTER)

@flcounties — x.com/flcounties

FAC's X account is particularly active during the legislative session, providing real-time updates on bills, committee hearings, and advocacy efforts. If you want to follow what's happening in Tallahassee as it happens, this is the place to do it.



## LINKEDIN

Search Florida Association of Counties on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is FAC's most professional platform and a strong tool for networking with commissioners, county administrators, and public policy professionals across Florida and beyond. Following FAC on LinkedIn also surfaces member news and organizational announcements in a professional context.



## INSTAGRAM

@flcounties — Search on Instagram

FAC's Instagram presence highlights events, member communities, and the work Florida's counties are doing across the state — a visual complement to the other platforms.

## FAC MOBILE APP

TripBuilder Mobile 365™ — Available free on the Apple App Store and Google Play

The official FAC mobile app puts the Association's resources at your fingertips year-round. Use it to view the FAC events calendar, access event details and schedules for FAC conferences, find the latest organizational news, and connect with member resources — all from your phone. To download, search "FAC Florida Counties" in the App Store or Google Play, or search for TripBuilder Mobile 365.

**Mentors:** Consider following FAC across platforms and encouraging your mentee to do the same early in their term. Sharing relevant posts or tagging your mentee in content related to their county or committee work is a simple way to stay connected and help them build their presence in the FAC community.





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(850) 922-4300

[flcounties.com](http://flcounties.com)



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