

INTRODUCTION TO OGR: WHO WE ARE & HOW WE CAN HELP

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS

- The Office of Governmental Relations (OGR) oversees the U of I System's strategic engagement with federal, state and local governments, officials, and staff.
- Reporting to the President of the U of I System, OGR works with leadership, faculty and staff to develop and advocate for the system's governmental agenda and interests.
- OGR monitors issues and activities in Springfield, Illinois, and Washington, DC, pertaining to higher education.
- OGR works to develop and maintain strong and productive relationships with elected and appointed officials and their staff.
- OGR staff have extensive experience working in and with the federal and state governments, and maintain offices in Springfield, Chicago, Urbana, and DC.

HOW YOU CAN WORK WITH OGR

- Inviting federal, state or local officials to visit campuses or participate in university-related events.
- If you're planning to visit Washington, D.C. or Springfield, OGR can assist with setting up/staffing meetings with legislators/staff that help advance the system's legislative agenda (e.g. discussing research projects, sharing feedback on legislation, or promoting important funding priorities).
- If you hear about newly introduced legislation that is of interest to you or your department, and would like more information or to explore ways to advance or strengthen the bill.
- If you have questions about specific competitive grant opportunities, emerging federal priorities, or funding trends.
- OGR also regularly helps secure the participation of campus experts in panel discussions, briefings, and testimony opportunities.

INTERACTING WITH GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS

- In 2018, the Council on Governmental and External Relations (COGER) was established to enhance coordination of government-related activities with the three universities. OGR leads COGER, which consists of representatives from across the system whose portfolios include government relations.
- Please let OGR and your university government relations lead know about university-related interactions with government officials.
- You can find more information in our [advocacy guidelines](#).



STATE & LOCAL RELATIONS

- State and local relations staff work closely with the Illinois General Assembly and local officials.
- They are based in Springfield and Chicago.
- Major issues/priorities include:
 - ▶ budget and appropriations
 - ▶ higher ed policy
 - ▶ regulatory relief
 - ▶ healthcare and hospital funding
 - ▶ capital funding
 - ▶ procurement
 - ▶ pensions
 - ▶ economic development

FEDERAL RELATIONS

- Federal relations staff work closely with the U.S. Congress, federal agencies, the White House, and higher education associations and advocacy groups.
- They are based in D.C. and Illinois.
- The federal relations team also collaborates with [Lewis-Burke Associates](#), a government relations firm that has deep expertise in agencies and scientific/education areas.
- Major issues/priorities include:
 - ▶ budget and appropriations
 - ▶ higher ed policy (HEA reauthorization)
 - ▶ tax policy
 - ▶ healthcare and hospital funding
 - ▶ immigration

ADVOCACY

- Advocacy staff manage the Illinois Connection grassroots advocacy network for the U of I System. Staff engage alumni, students, faculty, staff and supporters to advocate for the U of I System in the local, state and federal governments.
- They are based in Urbana and Chicago.
- Major projects include:
 - ▶ Annual state and federal advocacy days with alumni and students.
 - ▶ Small-group advocacy days in Springfield.
 - ▶ In-district meetings and events to engage alumni with state and federal legislators.
 - ▶ Call-to-Action email and phone campaigns to engage alumni on state and federal issues.

ENGAGE WITH US!

Our office is active on social media and distributes e-newsletters to provide legislative updates on local, state, and federal government issues impacting the U of I System, as well as D.C. and Springfield visitors and events. Follow us on Facebook and Twitter:

Contact the state relations team:

Jennifer Creasey Senior Director	✉ jcreasey@uillinois.edu
	☑ (217) 649-3548
Angelica Anfaro Associate Director	✉ aanfaro@uillinois.edu
	☑ (312) 391-4417
Nolan Drea Assistant Director	✉ ndrea2@uillinois.edu
	☑ (217) 823-0636

Contact the federal relations team:

Paul Weinberger Director	✉ paulw3@uillinois.edu
	☑ (217) 300-4739
Melissa Haas Associate Director	✉ mshaas@uillinois.edu
	☑ (217) 244-4815
Grace Hart Federal Relations Specialist	✉ gkhart2@uillinois.edu
	☑ (309) 798-9222

Contact the advocacy team:

Marissa Brewer Associate Director	✉ mccord3@uillinois.edu
	☑ (309) 310-6357
Mitch Dickey Advocacy Coordinator	✉ mdickey2@uillinois.edu
	☑ (217) 300-5997
Theresa Thomas Advocacy Specialist	✉ tthoma36@uillinois.edu
	☑ (217) 244-6436