

MeCA Public Policy Chair Description of Duties

The Public Policy Chair of the Executive Board of the Maine Counseling Association (MeCA) is a service position nominated to the board, seated by appointment of the sitting president and affirmed by the vote of said executive board. The Public Policy Chair leads the standing committee of Public Policy established in Article VII, Section 4 of the MeCA by-laws, serving a term of indeterminate length with the annual appointment of the sitting president and affirmation of the Board.

The duties of the Public Policy Chair are as enumerated below:

1. The Public Policy Chair (PPC) is tasked with attending to legislative issues impacting the profession of counseling and by extension the well-being of those we serve. The PPC attends board meetings as scheduled and presents a report at each meeting to the Board, and presents a report to the general membership at the annual conference. The PPC endeavors to keep the members of the board apprised of significant national, state, and local legislative developments impacting our profession and clients by tracking, prioritizing, and directing organizational response to such events. The PPC also maintains communication with the membership at large, using such platforms as available (e.g., email, social media, newsletters, regional gatherings) to assist counseling professionals with keeping abreast of impactful issues and developing grass-roots response.
2. The PPC maintains working relationships with the Government Affairs department of our parent organization, the American Counseling Association (ACA), coordinating efforts and/or requesting assistance as needed to advance priority federal legislation. The PPC also maintains contact with the Government Relations Chair of the Maine School Counselor Association (MeSCA) and with the Legislative Affairs Chair of the Maine Mental Health Counselors Association (MeMHCA), seeking out opportunities for collaboration on issues of mutual concern.
3. The PPC advocates for counselors and clients with respect to legislation and organizational policy. Examples of this work include:
 - a. Determining in conjunction with the Board priority issues for submitting formal MeCA testimony, opinions, or position statements. The PPC works with the Board to develop a course of action in response to items of significant priority. In those circumstances in which rapid response is required (e.g., little advance notice of a legislative session of significant importance), the PPC may work with the “executive trio” of MeCA officers (president, past-president and president-elect) to obtain assent to proceed with formal communications.
 - b. Drafting testimony on key legislative items and provides written testimony to the appropriate committees of the state legislature. The PPC may provide in-person testimony to appropriate committees of the state legislature in circumstances deemed to be of paramount importance.

- c. Maintaining contacts with staffers of Maine's congressional delegation to provide information and/or testimony in situations requiring federal legislative action.
 - d. Educating federal, state, and local legislators by providing factual information regarding the role of counseling professionals as well as making our legislative priorities known to them. The PPC offers the knowledge and resources of the Maine Counseling Association to assist legislators in better understanding our profession.
4. The PPC works with other members of the Board to comprehend situations involving public perceptions of counselors in Maine and participate in developing appropriate plans of action. These situations (to name only a few) may be represented by errant media depictions of counselors, representations of the profession by individual counselors acting without authority or without adherence to our ethical guidelines, or misconceptions about the scope or practice of counseling by members of the public or professionals working alongside counselors in various health care, educational, or other settings.