

Advocacy





THE TOOLKIT - AN OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

United Ways - Centraides (UWs-Cs) have a long history of engaging in advocacy and participating in the public policy process. However, not all are comfortable with taking on an advocacy role and not all have the capacity to. It is important, however, that those who do engage in advocacy have the necessary information, knowledge, skills and support. It is also important to carefully assess both the potential benefits and risks to advocacy activity.

The **purpose** of this toolkit is, therefore, to:

- ☐ provide information, guidance and tools for UWs-Cs engaging in advocacy; and,
- ☐ present mechanisms for Movement-wide collaboration on issues that affect us all.

It may also help define a common language and procedures for working with community partners on initiatives related to advocacy and public policy.

The information relates primarily to advocacy activities directed at government. However, many of the tactics and approaches described could be used with other sectors.

HOW TO USE IT

Experience and expertise in advocacy varies across the Movement. This guide begins with the premise that the user has no knowledge about the subject. Consequently, there may be segments of the Kit and associated tools that are of little or no value for those well versed in the field. For this reason, the toolkit has been divided into segments so that users can select and download those which are most useful to them. For those who want the entire kit, a printable PDF version is available.



THE TOOLKIT - TABLE OF CONTENTS

Below is a brief description of each section.

Section 1 - [Introduction](#) - provides the context for this toolkit. It looks at changes regarding the voluntary sector in general and the United Way Movement in particular.

Section 2 - [Why engage in advocacy](#) - provides the rationale for voluntary sector organizations to participate in the public policy process. This may be useful to UWs - Cs which are entering into discussions with their board of directors about advocacy.

Section 3 - [The Rules](#) - covers off basic knowledge regarding the types of activities charitable organizations can engage in without jeopardizing their charitable status.

Section 4 - [How Governments Work](#) - contains general information about the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments as well as details about the policy process.

Section 5 - [The Players](#) - looks at the various players and their roles in the policy process including: government (at all levels); the judiciary; the media; and other stakeholders.

Section 6 - [The Policy Environment](#) - examines characteristics of the current policy environment, providing the context in which public policy is developed. The chapter closes with a discussion of the importance of securing internal support - the support of boards and staff - for engaging in this community building activity.

Section 7 - [Deciding What Action to Take](#) - walks you through the process of deciding whether you should engage in advocacy on a specific issue. It helps you to dissect and understand the issue, what can be done about it and what your role in that might be. It encourages you to look within your organization to see if you have the resources, assets and capacity to be successful. Finally, the chapter provides you with a list of external and internal factors that should be considered in deciding whether or not it's a go and discusses the importance of building internal support.

Section 8 - [Advocacy Planning](#) - provides practical information about how to develop an advocacy action plan and a corresponding communications plan. This may be the most valuable chapter for both those experienced with and novices to advocacy and the public policy process. A workbook in Section 12 provides a plan template.

Section 9 - [Communications](#) - provides information on developing a communications strategy and links you to practical information such as how to develop a communications overview and plan, as well as how to communicate with officials and the media.

Section 10 - [Implement and evaluate](#) - looks at why and how to evaluate advocacy activities.

Section 11 - [Advocacy and the United Way - Centraide Movement](#)

Section 12 - [Tools and Appendices](#) - contains documents designed to help you with your advocacy activities. You can access the document directly by clicking on the or through links in related sections of the toolkit.

The United Way - Centraide Movement

- a. [▶](#) UW-C Movement mission, aspirations and values
- b. [▶](#) The Strategic Alignment Process - Background Information

Public Policy Process and Advocacy

- c. [▶](#) Definitions
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- e. [▶](#) Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue - Highlights
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Tools

- i. [▶](#) Building and Assessing your Credibility
- j. [▶](#) Things that might help you to:
 - Tell your Story
 - Understand the External Environment
 - Build Relationships
- k. [▶](#) Advocacy Tactics - convening, communication, events, face to face contact.
- l. [▶](#) Cooperation, Coordination and Collaboration - How to tell the difference.
- m. [▶](#) Advocacy Planning Workbook - [downloadable template](#)
- n. [▶](#) Communications - preparing overviews and plans, [downloadable template](#)
- o. [▶](#) Communicating with the Media - tips and advice
- p. [▶](#) Communicating with Officials - tips and advice
- q. [▶](#) Pearls of Wisdom on Convening
- r. [▶](#) Dos and Don'ts
- s. [▶](#) Evaluation Template - [downloadable template](#)
- t. [▶](#) Additional Resources

Section 13 - [Stories](#) - provides you with case studies of advocacy initiatives in the Movement under each of the following categories:

- ☐ [Research-based Advocacy](#) presents cases where research played an important role;
- ☐ [Agency Advocacy](#) looks at a case where a UW - C intervened with the government on behalf of agencies.
- ☐ [Convening-based Advocacy](#) examines a situation involving the coming together of a community around a specific segment of the population.
- ☐ [Response-based Advocacy](#) looks at cases that involved advocacy on a particular issue that emerged as a result of government action.

Click here to see the [acknowledgements](#) section.

[PRINTABLE 2 SIDED VERSION OF THE TOOLKIT](#)





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SECTION 1 – INTRODUCTION

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

~ Margaret Mead

The voluntary sector is undergoing significant change both in Canada and globally. The sector has become more widely recognized as a valuable contributor to civil society, both as designer and deliverer of locally focused programs and services, and as a contributor to public policy from the local to the international level. In Canada, the Voluntary Sector Initiative and its corresponding [Accord and Codes of Good Practice](#) are evidence of this evolution.

The United Way - Centraide Movement is also undergoing significant change. United Way - Centraides are skilled and experienced at raising and investing resources. For the most part, we invest in organizations that respond to the current needs of individuals and neighbourhoods. In this way, we help strengthen and sustain a social service infrastructure that is critical to the health of communities. This approach worked when UWs-Cs described themselves in terms of what they did - fundraising and fund allocation.

Now, as UWs-Cs describe themselves as what they are - community builders - we also need to build capacities to impact communities at a systems and/or structural level. This requires developing insight into the policy process - identifying and understanding current and emerging policies and how they may impact on UWs-Cs, the organizations we fund and the people who live in our communities. This knowledge prepares us to affect changes at a systems level - changes that will allow us to work at improving conditions in our communities and to get at and undo the structural dimensions and root causes of issues our communities identify as being most important.

The United Way - Centraide Movement is a strong voice in Canada's voluntary sector and has a clear [mission](#): *to improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action*. Advocacy and contributing to public policy discussions is an important means of building communities - of advancing our mission and achieving lasting, positive impact in our communities. This fact was recognized during the [Strategic Alignment](#) process, when advocacy was identified as a key issue that would benefit from a more Movement-wide orientation. In addition, one of the [values](#) adopted by the Movement in May 2003 is to "provide non-partisan leadership in social change."



SECTION 2 - WHY ENGAGE IN THE PUBLIC POLICY PROCESS AND ADVOCACY

Voluntary organizations can act as intermediaries between citizens and governments by writing letters, making presentations to parliamentary committees and participation in policy-related discussions. They help turn private troubles into public issues - private concerns into public causes.

Sherri Torjman
Reclaiming our Humanity
Caledon Institute of Social Policy

The [Accord between the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada](#) recognizes that the voluntary sector has a legitimate, essential role in public policy development and implementation.

REASONS FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

For the voluntary sector, the basic reasons to engage in advocacy and to participate in the public policy process are:

- ☐ public policy can have direct (and sometimes unintended) impacts upon organizations (e.g. tax regulations, etc.) and the communities in which they work. It is preferable to engage in the development process as opposed to trying to effect change after.
- ☐ the sector has something to contribute to discussions -- experience, expertise, knowledge of our communities;
- ☐ governments have resources -- information, contacts, funding, etc. -- that can be accessed to help advance an organization's mission;
- ☐ in participating, organizations can identify opportunities to partner within the sector, with governments and others in all sectors to advance shared objectives; and
- ☐ the obligation that comes with good citizenship in a democratic society and which is vital to the health of that democracy.

REASONS FOR THE UW-C MOVEMENT

During the [Strategic Alignment](#) process, a working group discussed the UW - C Movement engaging in advocacy. A paper written to stimulate discussion on this topic suggested the following benefits:

- ☐ ensuring the views and perspectives of the United Way - Centraide Movement and its constituents across the country are heard. With the rise in the number of registered “charities” (from 76,000 in 1998 - to 78,000 in 1999 - to 80,000 in 2000), the voluntary sector is becoming increasingly crowded and potentially fragmented. As community builders and conveners, the UW-C Movement is in a good position to be a valuable and valued contributor to the public policy process;
- ☐ successful influence on public policy;
- ☐ stronger social service sector and funded agencies through achieved policy changes;
- ☐ higher profile in the community;
- ☐ positioning as an opinion leader;
- ☐ inclusion at important community tables;
- ☐ enhanced ability to perform a convener role;
- ☐ enhanced loyalty of social service sector; and
- ☐ viewed as an important ally and champion of the sector’s issues and causes.



SECTION 3: THE RULES

If charities' expertise is to serve the public, the information charities provide should enable the public to make an informed choice through the democratic process, by presenting issues in an informative, accurate and well-reasoned way.

Canada Revenue Agency (CRA)

Information Circular, 2003

Following the signing of the Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector in December 2001, [A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue](#) was developed. This tool is meant to deepen dialogue between the voluntary sector and the Federal Government in public policy development. Importantly, the Code recognizes the valuable contribution that the voluntary sector can make to developing better public policies and designing and delivering programs.

Recognizing this role focused attention on the rules around the involvement of registered charities' in political activity. Many in the voluntary sector felt that the current interpretation of the *Income Tax Act* was too restrictive - that it did not allow registered charities to inform the public about issues of concern or to participate adequately in the public policy process. Because of this, CRA undertook a consultation process and a review of recent case law.

The result was a [revised policy published by CRA](#) on September 2, 2003¹. This policy clarifies the rules around what charitable organizations can and cannot do when engaging in advocacy.

Under the *Income Tax Act* and related common law, an organization established for primarily political reasons cannot be considered "charitable". However, the revised policy reclassifies many activities previously considered political as charitable. For example, attempts to inform the general public on particular issues is no longer considered political, allowing charities to more effectively carry out public awareness programs.

Canada's *Income Tax Act* was not changed, nor therefore were the legislative limits that apply to political activities. As was previously the case, a charity may engage in political activities that are connected and subordinate to its purpose, but this must be limited to no more than 10% of its resources. The policy is more generous to smaller charities in calculating their political activities. It indicates that the registration of smaller charities will not be revoked for the excessive use of resources on political activities under the following conditions:

¹ IMPACS, the Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society, was instrumental in the review and revision of CRA's policies. This Canadian charitable organization, which is committed to the protection and expansion of democracy and to strengthening civil society, brought together a number of voluntary sector organizations in influencing the outcome of the review.

- annual income in the previous year of **less than \$50,000** -- up to 20% of resources can be devoted to political activities in the current year.
- annual income in the previous year of **between \$50,000 and \$100,000** -- up to 15% of resources can be devoted to political activities in the current year.
- annual income in the previous year of **between \$100,000 and \$200,000** -- up to 12% of their resources can be devoted to political activities in the current year.

Perhaps a little confusing at first glance, however, the following guiding principles and examples are meant to help clarify the 'rules'.

KEY GUIDING PRINCIPLES

When engaging in advocacy, there are a few fundamental principles that apply:

- ☐ Activities must relate to an issue that is connected and subordinate to the organization's mission.
- ☐ Information provided by the voluntary sector must be accurate, well reasoned, and well founded.
- ☐ A Voluntary Sector organization may invest no more than 10% of its resources in non-partisan political activities that directly help achieve its mission.

CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES

The CRA divides activities into three general categories:

1. **charitable** - non-political activity that promotes the mission of the charitable organization.
2. **political** - activity that seeks to retain, oppose or change the law, policy or decisions of any level of government, in Canada or a foreign country. Charitable organizations can invest a maximum of 10% of its resources in this type of activity.
3. **prohibited** - illegal and partisan political activity, i.e., direct or indirect support of or opposition to any political party or candidate for public office.

Click here for [examples](#) of activities considered charitable, political or prohibited.

Click here for a [worksheet](#) to keep track of [resources](#) used for political activities.



SECTION 4 - HOW GOVERNMENTS WORK

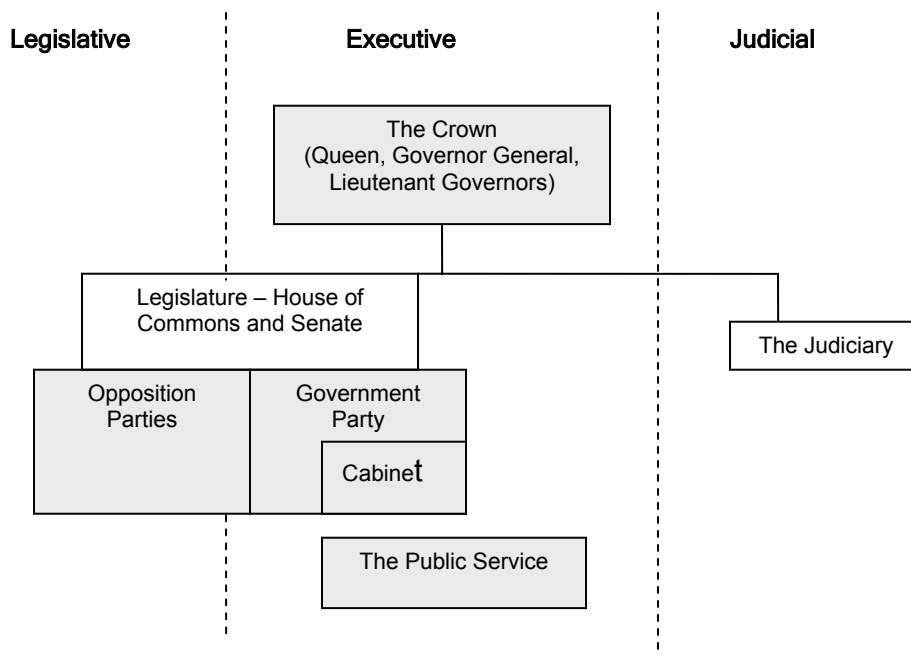
The stakes are much too high for government to be a spectator sport.

-- Barbara Jordan

Governing is about the art of the possible. It's about finding resources and solutions that address the needs and concerns of society. Sometimes changes resulting from government policy, legislation and programs may be unintended. Some groups may be more affected than others or than the majority of citizens. Some may even have been overlooked in the development process.

Governments are bound by many processes. The more you know about government and its processes, the better chance you will have to participate successfully in public policy development.

Both the federal and provincial governments follow the Westminster form of government and have three branches²;



- ❑ **Legislative** - Parliament, the legislative branch of government, is described as a bicameral model because it comprises two houses: the House of Commons and the Senate.
- ❑ **Executive** - The executive branch of government comprises those who propose policies and bills (Prime Minister and Cabinet) and those who carry them out (the Public Service).

² Based on information prepared by the Institute on Governance, which is housed on the website of the Public Service Commission of Canada.

- ❑ **Judicial** - has become more important in the post-Charter era. More often now, the courts are used to challenge public policy. The judiciary in Canada is independent of Cabinet, Parliament or of any other state institution. This impartiality allows the courts, and especially the Supreme Court, to interpret laws against the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Over time, the judiciary has played a key role in defining the division of powers between levels of government.

The **Northwest Territories** and **Nunavut** operate under the consensus system of government rather than the more familiar system of party politics. Within this system, all Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) are elected as independents in their constituencies. A Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, a Premier and Cabinet Ministers are elected by the MLAs. The consensus system of governing is more in keeping with the way that Aboriginal peoples have traditionally made decisions. Unanimous agreement is not necessary for decisions to be made, motions passed, and legislation enacted. A simple majority carries the vote. Members, who are not in Cabinet, become the unofficial opposition in the House.³

Local government mayors, reeves, councilors or aldermen, county wardens, etc. are elected on a basis prescribed by provincial legislatures. Most local governments follow the council-policy committee system. In this system, the council establishes policies for governing the city based on information provided by standing policy committees. These committees are composed of councilors or aldermen and are responsible for approving and recommending policies to City Council. Local governments usually have additional civic or advisory committees, boards and/or other authorities that help create policies in particular areas. In many instances, these ad hoc groups are made up of citizen volunteers. Smaller centres or rural areas may have a less complex system, however, the overall structure is similar.

³ Based on information provided on the NWT and Nunavut government websites.

THE POLICY PROCESS⁴

Public policy is usually a response to significant changes in the external environment. For example, a policy change might be motivated by public opinion, changes in public values, events with broad implications (e.g. the SARS outbreak of 2003), judicial rulings, etc. The policy process is often a negotiation among a range of players with diverging interests.

In making decisions about policy, government leaders may be influenced by:

- ☐ public opinion
- ☐ media coverage
- ☐ data, research, and other new evidence and technology
- ☐ advice and actions of the public service
- ☐ a leader, colleagues and staff
- ☐ community leaders
- ☐ personal values, ambitions and goals
- ☐ political platforms
- ☐ interest groups
- ☐ legal imperatives/legislative requirements

The public policy process has four basic steps. To participate in the process, it is important to understand these steps and how they can be used. This will help you to identify decision-making 'windows' and to take advantage of opportunities.

The four key stages to the policy process are:

1. Agenda setting
2. Policy design
3. Review
4. Approval

The public service or administration tends to drive stages two and four, while stages one and three are politically influenced.

At any point in the process, it is important to remember that governments prefer solutions to problems. Officials - elected or otherwise - would rather hear what they could be doing than what they shouldn't be doing. It's more useful, therefore, to advise them of the possible unintended consequences of planned actions and to offer workable alternatives.

To many, the public policy process seems chaotic - sometimes it is. Many players in government are involved in decision-making. They may have conflicting views and priorities. In some cases, information is scarce, contradictory and/or not shared widely. Decisions may need to be taken quickly, could require extensive public consultation, or may be delayed indefinitely.

Click here for more information on the stages in the [policy process](#).

⁴ The following information was collected from a range of sources, including the guides referenced later in this document.

THE CYCLES

Timing is everything. Priorities can change in importance quickly depending on current events. You can stay on top of political developments and get a sense of when windows of opportunity or threats might emerge by reading, watching and listening to the news and talking with a wide range of contacts. Another source of information is monthly synopses and assessments of government actions that are prepared and sold by some companies.

Initiatives at the federal and provincial levels that need cabinet decisions because they involve new resources, legislative approval or a change in policy and direction, follow set procedures and timing.

Regardless of what level of government you are dealing with, knowing about their operating cycles is particularly important to the timing of your advocacy activities. The most relevant of these are the legislative, electoral and budgetary cycles. Click here for more information on each of these [cycles](#).

For more detailed information on the decision making process at federal and provincial levels, refer to: *Decision-Making Processes and Central Agencies in Canada: Federal, Provincial and Territorial Practices*, The Privy Council Office, Government of Canada, 1998
http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/200/301/pco-bcp/decision_making_processes-e/decision_making-e.pdf

SECTION 5 - THE PLAYERS

LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Federal/provincial/territorial/municipal relationships are constantly evolving. Below is a general overview of their responsibilities, however, additional information can be found in publications and on websites. The Public Service of Canada Website contains an extensive bibliography as well as links to a number of relevant websites (http://www.edu.psc-cfp.gc.ca/tdc/learn-apprend/psw/hgw/menu_e.htm). Websites are also an excellent source of information on specific provincial, territorial and municipal governments.

Federal Government

- ☐ Has the power to make laws for “the peace, order and good government” of Canada.
- ☐ Has the power over anything not listed under provincial jurisdiction.
- ☐ Can use its spending power to influence provincial areas that it believes have national repercussions (e.g. homelessness).
- ☐ Jurisdiction includes inter-provincial relations, international relations, trade and commerce, national defence and criminal law.

Provincial/Territorial Governments

- ☐ Matters of a local or private nature
- ☐ Social security, health, education, employment, economic development, natural resources, child welfare and protection, environment and prisons.

Municipal Governments

- ☐ Cities, towns, villages, counties, districts, metropolitan regions - are set up by provincial legislatures, and have such powers as legislatures see fit to give them.
- ☐ The roughly 4,000 municipal governments in the country provide such services as water supply, sewage and garbage disposal, roads, sidewalks, street lighting, building codes, parks, playgrounds, libraries and so forth. Schools are generally looked after by school boards or commissions elected under provincial education Acts.
- ☐ Larger urban centres have increasingly become involved in social policy issues such as housing, social assistance, drug policy, homelessness services, etc.

GOVERNMENT PLAYERS

Politics is about people and people are about relationships. While bureaucratic processes are designed to be open, fair and non-discriminatory, building positive relationships with the right people is helpful. It is easier to ask for something from someone you know and who already has a positive impression of you than from a complete stranger.

The more you understand what motivates politicians, their staff and public servants, and their plans and priorities, the better able you will be to determine effective approaches to influence them. Find out as much as you can about those with whom you are dealing (e.g. training, background, educational institutions, responsibilities, activities, positions on issues, media reports, etc.)

Elected Officials

Elected officials include: members of Parliament, members of the legislative assembly, members of the provincial Parliament, members of the national assembly (Quebec), mayors, reeves, and municipal councillors or aldermen. Start with the representatives from your area or, if it is a national or provincial issue, with the Minister responsible. Elected officials can help bring attention to your issue by making statements, asking questions in the legislature or a town council meeting, or by lining you up with a minister or their staff. They can also help to get answers from the public service or give advice on how things work.

Click here for more information on [Communicating with Officials](#) - elected and non-elected.

Committees

Committees are important players in the public policy process at any level of government. They gather and analyze information and make recommendations to the government. Persons wishing to appear before a committee usually have to apply and prepare a written submission.

The federal government has a complicated committee structure that includes:

- ☐ **Standing Committees** (House of Commons or Senate) - These multi-party, long-term or ongoing committees monitor and work in a major public policy area like health, security, etc.
- ☐ **Standing Joint Committees** (House of Commons and Senate) - play the same role as standing committees but differ in their composition.
- ☐ **Special Committees** - are formed to deal with a very specific issue.
- ☐ **Legislative Committees** - study and make recommendations regarding specific acts or statutes.
- ☐ **Joint Committees** (House of Commons and Senate) - usually deal with administrative or investigative matters and may consider legislation.
- ☐ **Committees of the Whole** - involve either the entire House of Commons or the entire Senate.

Standing committees are also common at municipal and provincial/territorial levels. Provincial governments establish standing committees for such areas as public accounts, crown corporations,

education, forestry, agriculture, etc. They may also create ad hoc committees to deal with specific issues.

Municipal Governments may have standing committees to deal with such issues as operations, environment, finance, transportation, and community services. In addition, civic committees, boards, and authorities are sometimes established to create policies in specialized areas, such as parking, the preservation of heritage sites and buildings, and planning and development matters. Some municipalities create advisory committees composed of volunteers.

In addition to the committees described above, political parties form **caucus committees** to deal with specific issues. Caucus committees are composed of members of parliament from the same party (in power, opposition or other). Caucus committees, particularly those of the party in power, can have significant influence on Cabinet discussions and decisions.

Ministers

First and foremost, ministers are members of a legislature elected by constituents from a specific geographic area. They are influenced by: their constituents; party values and platform; citizens' groups; community opinion leaders; and the media.

Ministers are accountable to Parliament (federal) and to the legislature (provincial) for the actions of their ministry. They are selected by the prime minister or the premier, (or in the case of NWT and Nunavut, by members of the legislative assembly) and are not necessarily experts in the issues of their ministry. Ministers set the overall direction and priorities for the ministry based on the government's agenda. They tend to have a shorter-term perspective - one to three years.

Political Staff

Political staff work in a minister's office and are employed by the minister as opposed to the public service. Political staff can offer political advice on departmental and party matters. They serve as gatekeepers, helping to determine the minister's schedule, who the minister meets and how the minister might view people, issues and organizations. It can be helpful to develop a good rapport with staff responsible for your area of interest.

Political staff usually have political connections and have been active in politics or bring specific related expertise. They look out for their minister's interests (e.g. re-election, power and influence, constituency issues and party politics) and look at issues from the perspective of how they will be received by the media, public and stakeholders. Political staff can help get information from the public service, have an issue reconsidered or a decision reversed. They can also help you access the public service if you feel you are not being treated fairly.

Public Servants

Public servants provide support and are accountable to the government of the day. They:

- ☐ analyse, consult, advise, evaluate and formulate policies for consideration by the government;
- ☐ carry out government decisions;
- ☐ administer and enforce laws; and
- ☐ provide government services.

Public servants are hired and promoted on merit (the skills and qualifications needed for the job), which excludes favouritism and political affiliation. Position in the hierarchy and location (e.g. national, provincial capital, regional office) determine the different levels of accountability and decision-making. Public servants also serve different roles or functions (e.g. management, policy, operations, or specialist such as a legal advisor, scientist, etc.).

As each person may view an issue from a different perspective, it is important to find the right one in terms of function, level in the hierarchy and approach (e.g. whether they are willing to consider opportunities and alternatives, and remove possible barriers). You should not assume that discussions with one public servant will be shared with others.

Deputy Ministers

Deputy Ministers provide managerial, technical and financial advice to the minister and are expected to take a longer term, government-wide view (e.g. impact of decisions on society over the next 5 - 10 years). They are also expected to be politically neutral, yet politically sensitive.

It is important to know about the Deputy Minister's department. What is its mission? What are its priorities? What are some of its major challenges? Deputy Ministers can wield significant influence; however, they are sometimes difficult to access. If you are not on their radar or if the issue is not of critical importance to the deputy minister, you are unlikely to meet directly with them.

Click here for more information on [Communicating with Officials](#) - elected and non-elected.

THE JUDICIARY

Canada's judicial system is the basis of constitutional, criminal and civil law except in Quebec, which has its own civil code. Under the constitution, almost all courts are provincial. However, the federal government appoints Judges of the Superior, District and County Courts in each province (except Nova Scotia and New Brunswick in the case of the Probate Courts).

The Supreme Court is the final court of appeal. Most cases are brought to the Supreme Court on appeal from the provincial Courts of appeal and the Federal Court of Appeal. The Government of Canada, however, may refer questions for decision directly to the Supreme Court, bypassing the usual appeals process. The Court consists of nine judges (three of whom must come from the Quebec bar) including the Chief Justice. Judges are appointed by the Governor General on the advice of the federal Cabinet.

Although the provinces differ in their judicial practices, most tend to have the following types of courts: Court of Appeal, Trial Division, Provincial Court, and Small Claims Court.

THE MEDIA

Newspapers are widely read and news programs are monitored by politicians, their political staff and public servants. They use the news to gauge public reaction to, and the profile of, various issues. Some political analysts and commentators believe the media can actually drive the government's agenda. There is no doubt that public opinion is a powerful political influence and the media is can often have an impact on public opinion. For example, an issue appearing in the media is often a topic for the next day's Question Period.

It is important to establish a good working relationship with the media and to spend time demonstrating that your issue is important. Remember that reporters work to tight deadlines and that they often do not have time to do extensive research. Providing the media with interesting, factual, concise and well-presented information on an issue can increase the chances that the story will be told, increasing awareness among both politicians and the public.

Click here for more information on [Communicating with the Media](#).

OTHER STAKEHOLDERS

The more credibility, resources, connections and profile, the easier it is for a stakeholder to get attention. Governments often deal with alliances, coalitions and associations. These groups can serve as an intermediary for obtaining the perspective of many others with similar interests, and can offer a broader perspective than dealing with just one organization. The Canadian Coalition for the Rights of Children and the Canadian Coalition for Health and the Environment are two examples of groups and agencies coming together under one banner to advocate on a particular issue or set of issues.

Convening or collaboration becomes, therefore, an important tactic in approaching governments.

SECTION 6 - THE POLICY ENVIRONMENT

COMPLEXITY

Today's policy environment is more complex than ever before. Issues are interdependent and cross over jurisdictional and subject area lines. For example, health policy involves issues related to our physical environment, e.g. water and air quality, issues related to education (what we are teaching children about diet and exercise) and issues related to migration (the movement of people and importation of disease). This complexity requires a greater diversity of knowledge and viewpoints, resulting in a larger, more diverse group of players - governmental and non-governmental. The advantage is that more people participate in the policy process, and policies are more likely to be implemented successfully. The disadvantage is that the process becomes difficult to manage and takes longer to complete.

When engaging in advocacy or participating in the public policy process, it is important to keep an open mind about who might be interested or involved in an issue. There may be a potential for creating new and innovative partnerships that would lead to a 'whole issue' approach - addressing an issue from multiple perspectives.

PACE OF CHANGE

The rate at which the world is changing demands that policy is developed and managed to remain relevant. The landscape - players, viewpoints, concerns - around a policy issue is constantly shifting. In this environment, it helps to remain flexible and be open to new ideas.

CAPACITY

It is predicted that every sector is or will soon suffer from a deficit in policy capacity. This is linked, in part, to changing demographics. The impact this deficit may have includes an increased inter-reliance among sectors in the development of public policy. This presents an opportunity for UWs-Cs and the voluntary sector in general to engage in the process and contribute their knowledge and expertise.

CHANGING GOVERNANCE CONCEPTS

The approach to governance is changing in Canada and in fact globally. One of the most significant changes is the emerging importance of large urban centres - often referred to as city states. Cities are a rising force in national governance. As a result, relationships among our three levels of government are evolving and may lead to a new model of governance that is more inclusive of municipal governments.

We are also witnessing a changing role for business, i.e. an increasing role in the development and implementation of policy through public/private partnerships. This has implications for advocacy in terms of where efforts are directed.

Another relatively recent change is the rising importance of the voluntary sector, especially at the federal level. Government's focus on the sector as a key player in governing the country has increased expectations on the sector, without necessarily the investment in capacity that would be required to maximize the sector's potential.

POLITICAL CLIMATE

The current political climate should always be considered when engaging in advocacy as it can offer both opportunities and challenges. For example, an election may be pending, a political party may be about to change its leader, or the party in power may be beginning or ending its term in office.

All of these elements of the policy environment can have an impact upon your participation in the public policy process.

SECTION 7 - DECIDING WHAT ACTION TO TAKE

The purpose of this section of the Toolkit is to provide tools that will help you to determine whether or not you should engage/be involved in an issue. It begins with an analysis of the issue, an analysis of the organization's capacity and assessment criteria for determining whether it's a go. The information provided in this section is most applicable to a highly organized advocacy campaign, but parts of it can be used to guide ad hoc involvement in an issue, particularly in assessing the potential risks and benefits of your involvement.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISSUE

WHAT 'S THE ISSUE?

Issues arise in a number of ways. Some emerge as the result of a crisis. In some cases, the need for change builds from the grassroots, creating a swell of support for action. In others, an issue comes to public attention because of a well-publicized study or because a strong leader champions it.

Whatever the origin, it is important to begin the process of becoming engaged in an issue by understanding it. Questions like the following may be helpful in gaining a better understanding:

- ☐ Why is this a problem?
- ☐ What makes it important? What will happen if nothing is done? What will happen if something is done?
- ☐ What needs to/can be done about it? What are the options?
- ☐ Who else is implicated? Who are the other stakeholders?
- ☐ What is(are) the desired outcome(s)?

WHAT ARE THE ROOT CAUSES?

Social issues are so complex because they are interrelated and stem from other issues. To develop policy, program or legal options, it is important to get to the bottom of an issue. These questions may help:

- ☐ What does the research and data show about the people who are affected by this issue?
- ☐ What views, attitudes and ideas have been expressed on the issue?
- ☐ What is the scope of the issue - local, provincial, regional, national?

WHAT'S THE EVIDENCE?

One of the key underlying principles of voluntary sector involvement in the public issues is that it is based on accurate, well-reasoned, and well-founded information.

Find out as much as possible about what's going on. Potential sources of information include:

- ☐ Internet sites
 - Think tanks
 - Governments
 - Universities
 - Libraries
 - Other voluntary sector organizations
 - International organizations like the United Nations and World Health Organization
- ☐ Research reports
- ☐ Media reports
- ☐ Public opinion data
- ☐ Public officials
- ☐ Community tables and other forums
- ☐ Conferences
- ☐ Other contacts - develop as many contacts as possible to gain insight into how the issue is viewed by others.

TAKE STOCK OF YOUR ASSETS

What are your organization's strengths? What do you have to offer? What makes you a good partner and/or an important source of information and perspective in developing public policy or in dealing with a particular issue or set of issues?

Governments have many resources at their disposal, but they often find it challenging to stay on top of emerging issues, to be aware of the unintended consequences of policy changes and to balance competing interests. They recognize that voluntary sector organizations can help inform their work. Here are some ways voluntary sector organizations can contribute:

INFORMATION AND KNOWLEDGE

- ☐ Provide front line information that decision makers need and have trouble obtaining.
- ☐ Share ideas about what's working or not working, and offer alternatives.
- ☐ Generate new research-based information through member/participant surveys, focus groups and/or evaluation studies.

A VOICE FOR THOSE WHO MIGHT NOT OTHERWISE BE HEARD

- ☐ Describe and convey the challenges and needs of those who often have trouble being heard (e.g. newcomers, youth, children, low-income families, and the hard to employ, Aboriginal people).

INNOVATION/SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- ☐ Test out new approaches to address community needs.
- ☐ Mobilise resources, volunteers and community leaders from different sectors to create viable solutions for the common good.

CREDIBILITY

The more credible and effective the organization is the more policy makers will want to have you on their side.

[Click here for more information on how to build and assess your credibility.](#)

DECIDING WHETHER TO PROCEED

Now that you have a good understanding of the issue and your assets, it is time to decide whether you want to engage in the process. A number of factors can be considered in making this decision. Below are some that might help:

- ☐ **Values**
Does the issue relate to the values of UW-C and the personal and professional values of the Board and staff?
- ☐ **Magnitude and Urgency**
The more people affected and the more who will benefit, the easier it will be to get the attention of policy makers. If the issue is urgent, policy makers will be keen to entertain viable alternatives, however, they will have less time to consult.
- ☐ **Timing**
It is easier to advance an issue if: it is of widespread or increasing public concern; there is media interest; and opportunities exist to speak out and be heard.
- ☐ **Credibility and Track Record**
It is important to your credibility to speak about issues with which you have experience and knowledge. You are more likely to be listened to if you have solid evidence and are seen as a valuable resource and leader in the field.
- ☐ **Do-ability**
Is the issue so large and complex that it requires cooperation across levels of government and sectors? Will it require extensive investment? Will decision-makers want to tackle it? Remember, people are looking to achieve observable results.
- ☐ **Extent of Support**
Are you able to gain the support and involvement of others? Is there widespread concern about the issue? Have others spoken out about it? Strength lies in numbers - it is easier if others are reinforcing your position and supporting or collaborating on activities.
- ☐ **Number and Influence of Critics**
Know your potential opponents. Who might be opposed and what level of influence do they have?
- ☐ **Capacity to be Effective**
Do you have effective spokespersons? sufficient resources? the time?

☐ **Role**

Do you have a value-added role to play? Should it be a lead or supporting role? Is it a role of convener or participant?

☐ **Risk**

How might the outcome affect your organization? Do you have a little or a lot to lose if you succeed/don't succeed? The following questions may help assess the risk:

- How contentious is the issue?
- Do you know enough about the relevant political developments and environment?
- Will your position and actions be seen as biased and could this affect your organization's reputation and credibility?
- Are you clear on the bottom lines, i.e. how far you are able to go, how much time and resources you are able to dedicate?
- Have you assessed the possible unintended consequences?
- Is the potential benefit worth the perceived risk?

Voluntary Organizations Involved in Collaborative Engagement (VOICE) in health policy have developed a *Risk And Opportunity Assessment: Engaging in the Health Policy Process* which provides a number of other ideas on how to assess organization risk before engaging in advocacy activities. Click here to access this document: http://www.projectvoice.ca/Get_Involved_Demos_Risk_Assessment.htm

BUILDING INTERNAL SUPPORT

Advocacy takes leadership, time and resources. As a result, you need to build commitment and support within your UW-C - among board, staff and other volunteers. The more staff and volunteers understand about the important role advocacy can play in community building, the easier it will be to present a unified front and speak with one voice.

You can build support for advocacy in your UW-C by:

- engaging in discussions at meetings;
- inviting speakers to talk to Board members and staff about public policy and advocacy - to demystify the policy process and address concerns;
- including advocacy as part of your strategic plan and job descriptions; and,
- establishing an advisory group that can act as a focal point for monitoring, planning, sharing updates and developing strategies.



SECTION 8 – ADVOCACY PLANNING

Planning is an unnatural process; it is much more fun to do something. The nicest thing about not planning is that failure comes as a complete surprise, rather than being preceded by a period of worry and depression.

Sir John Harvey-Jones

DECIDE ON AN APPROACH

Different issues and different organizations require different degrees of planning. For example, the scale of the issue will impact upon the amount of effort you invest in it. Similarly, the size of your organization will impact upon the amount of resources to dedicate to advocacy.

If you do decide to proceed, however, the next step is to decide what to do. A starting point may be to find out:

- ☐ What is your goal? What outcomes do you want to achieve?
- ☐ What is already being done, by whom and with what results?
- ☐ Is there a role for government?
- ☐ What are the most appropriate approaches, tactics and levers for dealing with the issue (e.g. policy, programs, legislation, etc.)?

WHAT IS YOUR GOAL?

At this point, you have already done an analysis of the issue, it is now important to be clear about what you want to achieve with respect to that issue, who will make the changes, by how much and when. Start by reviewing those things that guide your activities, e.g. mission, values, aspirations, strategic plan, etc. Identifying and describing the goal, objectives and/or outcomes will help you to focus resources, time and effort. It is not necessary to do all three, however, it is recommended that you articulate an overall goal in combination with objectives or outcomes.

Goal

A goal is usually general - something you hope to achieve over the longer term (10-20 years). It could be viewed as a vision statement for a particular issue. One example might be, “to reduce/eliminate homelessness in the city of somewhere”.

Objectives

In addition to identifying a general goal, you may want to identify specific objectives. “An objective is an incremental and realistic step toward a larger goal or your vision ... (and) must focus on a specific action. ... An objective should be specific and measurable.” It is “what you want to change, who will make the change, by how much and by when.”⁵

An example of an objective would be, “To work with the municipal and provincial governments to increase affordable housing units by xx number in the city of somewhere.”

OUTCOMES

This refers to what you hope is different when you have concluded your work. It could include things like more of the public and/or elected and non-elected officials being informed about a particular issue; a change in public policy; a new piece of legislation; improved conditions for a particular group of people, etc.

WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE?

Knowing what is already being done on an issue can help you avoid unnecessary work, identify partners, understand where the gaps are, and assess what role you should be playing. You may want to look at what is being done by other organizations in the following areas:

- Programs
- Research
- Services
- Education, awareness, outreach
- Advocacy

IS THERE A ROLE FOR GOVERNMENT?

If an issue is not yet on the government agenda, you need to assess whether government has a role to play in helping you achieve your goals. The following questions may be helpful in making that assessment:

- ☐ Does the issue require a change in legislation or regulations, and/or a change to government policies and programs?
- ☐ Can government help to influence public behaviour or attitudes?
- ☐ Can government increase the importance of the issue in the minds of the public?
- ☐ Is increased public investment one method of addressing the issue?
- ☐ Can government help build consensus across sectors?
- ☐ Does government have useful information that could be of assistance?
- ☐ What would the impact be if the government changed its course?

⁵ *An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide*, Ritu R. Sharma

WHICH APPROACH IS MOST SUITED TO ACHIEVING CHANGE?

- ☐ **Low profile** - a low key, low risk approach, usually targeting mid-level public servants and possibly elected officials or focussing on public education using tactics such as:
 - writing letters or policy briefs directed at mid-level public officials and/or elected officials;
 - making phone calls;
 - having face to face meetings;
 - convening community dialogue sessions;
 - inviting officials to participate in events concerning the issue.

- ☐ **Medium profile** - an approach that focuses on more senior level officials using such tactics as:
 - Face to face meetings;
 - Appearing before committees (legislative, standing, senate, etc.);
 - Releasing research reports;
 - Meeting with members of parliament;
 - Forming coalitions with other organizations;
 - Sending letters to elected officials;
 - Involving the media.

- ☐ **High profile** - a very public, possibly high-risk approach that could involve:
 - public criticism of government;
 - releasing damaging information;
 - launching a media campaign; or
 - organizing a demonstration or rally.

When considering this approach, it is important to take into account the conditions that govern charitable organization involvement in advocacy. Click here for more information [The Rules](#).

CHOOSE YOUR TACTICS⁶

You now have an understanding of the issue and have selected an approach. It is time to decide on which tactics to use.

A key tactic used successfully in the United Way - Centraide context both in Canada and the United States is [convening](#). Other tactics fall under the categories of [communication](#), [events](#) and [face-to-face meetings](#). Advocacy practices that have proven most effective include:

- ☐ Approaching all political parties.
- ☐ Working in coalitions with partners within and beyond the voluntary sector, e.g. non-traditional partners from the private or public sector.
- ☐ Uniting grassroots action around themes.
- ☐ Involving policy makers with others in a study that results in policy recommendations.
- ☐ Using face to face contact.

⁶ Adapted from *Be H.I.P.P. (Have Influence on Public Policy)*, published by the YMCA with the support of Human Resources Development Canada

DRAFT YOUR ACTION PLAN

A document people can refer to - a plan - will help to ensure that the messages being delivered are consistent. It will also help you to keep focused on your goals and desired outcomes. Developing a plan is essential if you are convening a group of organizations and/or individuals around an issue. It is a useful tool in communicating about issues and how you intend to address them.

In proactive mode, a policy change may take years to achieve. Most advocacy action plans cover a 1-3 year period. The plan usually contains the following elements. (Note: Although presented as a list, many are mutually dependent and are developed simultaneously.)

Click here for an [Advocacy Planning Workbook](#)

Part A - The Issue

1. Describe the issue that you are working on.
2. What **goal(s)** are you hoping to achieve over the longer term?
3. Specifically, what are your **objectives** and/or what **outcomes** do you hope will result from your efforts? What will be different if you succeed? Some examples:

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Possible Goals</u>	<u>Possible Objectives</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term health, economic and social consequences of malnutrition among children.	<input type="checkbox"/> To reduce childhood malnutrition for the improvement of overall population health. <input type="checkbox"/> To increase awareness among at risk children of the importance of good nutrition. <input type="checkbox"/> To achieve policy and program changes that will address malnutrition.	<input type="checkbox"/> To increase government funding for breakfast programs in xx (location). <input type="checkbox"/> To change school curriculum. <input type="checkbox"/> To have the Ministry of Social Services support the roll-out of Success by 6® in xx (location).
<input type="checkbox"/> Rising incidence of homeless in xx (location) or among some group.	<input type="checkbox"/> To eliminate homelessness in a particular area or for a particular group. <input type="checkbox"/> To support policy and program initiatives that increase resources and priority given to homelessness. <input type="checkbox"/> To increase awareness among the general public on the plight of homeless people.	<input type="checkbox"/> To reduce the number of homeless people by xx number in xx time. <input type="checkbox"/> To influence government to change its policies regarding subsidised housing. <input type="checkbox"/> To significantly change public perceptions of homeless families in two years.

<u>Issue</u>	<u>Possible Goals</u>	<u>Possible Objectives</u>
<input type="checkbox"/> Long-term health, economic and social consequences of malnutrition among children.	<input type="checkbox"/> To reduce childhood malnutrition for the improvement of overall population health.	<input type="checkbox"/> Increase in the average minimum age for the onset of heart disease (long term outcome)
	<input type="checkbox"/> To increase awareness among at risk children of the importance of good nutrition.	<input type="checkbox"/> At risk children are making healthier food choices.
	<input type="checkbox"/> To achieve policy and program changes that will address malnutrition.	<input type="checkbox"/> More children are accessing healthy breakfast programs.
<input type="checkbox"/> Rising incidence of homeless in xx (location) or among some group.	<input type="checkbox"/> To eliminate homelessness in a particular area or for a particular group.	<input type="checkbox"/> Rate of homelessness has declined by x%.
	<input type="checkbox"/> To support policy and program initiatives that increase resources and priority given to this issue.	<input type="checkbox"/> xx (location) has x number of new affordable housing units that will be available by x date.
	<input type="checkbox"/> To increase awareness among the general public on the plight of homeless people.	<input type="checkbox"/> Homelessness is appearing in public opinion polling as one of the top 3 public policy issues.

4. What else is happening on the issue and who is involved?
5. What is your organization's **position** or are its views on the issue? Remember, your position should be constructive rather than critical. It could express the organization's concerns about the issue and what it views as the negative consequences.

Part B - Approach

1. Will you be taking a high, medium or low profile approach?
2. **Strategies** - What you will be doing, e.g. monitoring government activities, informing key decision makers, entering into partnerships with other organizations, etc.?
3. **Tactics/Activities** - What specifically, in relation to each strategy, will you undertake, e.g. scan government websites, prepare fact sheets, undertake research, etc.?
4. **Timeframe** - What amount of time can be allocated to the issue and what is the expected duration?
5. **Leadership and Roles and Responsibilities** - Assign and clarify roles and responsibilities.

Part C - Partnerships and Collaborations

1. With whom will you be working or will you seek to work within the Movement and with external partners?
2. Is there a role for government?
3. How will you manage your partnerships?

Click here for information on [three levels of working together](#): cooperation; coordination and collaboration.

Part D - Budget

1. How much money is available/will be needed to implement your plan and what are the sources of these funds?
2. What is the forecasted expenditure?

Click here for an [Advocacy Planning Workbook](#)



SECTION 9 – COMMUNICATIONS

Communication - good communication - is essential to any advocacy action plan. “You need to build a compelling story that brings a human face to the issue so that others can easily understand how the issue affects people.”⁷

How much effort you spend on developing a communications strategy is a factor of the approach you have decided to take (low, medium or high profile) and the tactics you intend to use. However, developing a strategic communications plan greatly increases the chances for success.

The purpose of a communications strategy is to guide actions, decisions and messaging around an issue. It will also ensure that messages are delivered in the context of the organization’s mandate and in a supportive and effective way. It is helpful to involve people with expertise in and knowledge about media relations, government relations, government agenda, and public perceptions.

Two types of plans can be developed depending on the complexity of your approach and how much detail you want to go into.

1. Communications Overview
2. Communications Plan (template)

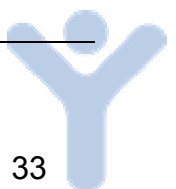
Click here for details on how to develop a [communications overview](#)

Click here for a [communications plan](#) template and details on how to complete it.

Click here for information on [communicating with the media](#) including writing press releases, letters to the editor and opinion editorials (op-eds).

Click here for information on [communicating with officials](#).

⁷ *Be H.I.P.P. : Have Influence on Public Policy*, published by the YMCA with the assistance of HRDC



SECTION 10 - IMPLEMENT AND EVALUATE

Evaluation has been defined as the systematic gathering and assessment of information to provide useful feedback about some object. In simple terms, evaluation is reviewing your progress periodically to assess whether you need to change your approach or tactics to achieve your goal and objectives/outcomes. It's asking yourself:

- ☐ How are we doing?
- ☐ Are we making progress on our objectives?
- ☐ Do we need to change our approach?

Why evaluate advocacy activities?

- ☐ To generate information that can help you make course adjustments during the implementation of your advocacy plan
- ☐ To demonstrate to board members, partners and the general public the impact your activities have had.
- ☐ To help you make future decisions about undertaking advocacy activities, the approaches that are most effective and the partners with whom you work the best.

What to measure?

Be sure to distinguish between:

- ☐ **Inputs** - what you invest into the activity/plan whether it be human or financial resources, e.g. assigned a staff person
- ☐ **Activities** - are what you do, e.g. hold a meeting
- ☐ **Outputs** - are what results directly from your activities, e.g. got a promise to hold further consultations, \$x dollars redirected by x government to the issue, a new piece of legislation, etc.
- ☐ **Outcomes** - are often more complex and difficult to measure as they are not always easily quantifiable, e.g. a changed attitude or behaviour, an improved situation. Outcomes helps you to answer the "so what" question.

Approaches to evaluating advocacy activities

The work that you have done to define the issue and what you want to do about it is critical to evaluation. Understanding ahead of time what you are trying to achieve (i.e. your objectives and/or outcomes) and how you plan to measure whether you have succeeded is the starting point. If you are not clear from the beginning how you will measure your success, you may not think to collect the information you will need to properly evaluate the effort.

If you plan to evaluate what is different as a result of your efforts, it is important to have a basis for comparison - i.e. baseline information. For example, if your ultimate goal is to eliminate homelessness and your objective is to reduce homelessness by xx number of people in xx amount of time, you will

need to know the level of homelessness at the beginning of your plan. Alternatively, you might use the development of new homelessness policy, the creation of a special task force or other factors as indicators of your success. All you would need to know in this case is whether such policies or groups existed previously.

In the case of a public education approach, taking the public's pulse on an issue before, during and after your plan has been implemented, may provide you with indications of how successful you have been.

Other indicators⁸ of success that have been used to mark progress and impact, particularly in situations involving [convening](#), include:

Public/Media Awareness

- ☐ Awareness of an issue increases
- ☐ Discussion about the issue is sustained elsewhere
- ☐ There is name recognition of the collaboration
- ☐ Major/positive mentions in the media increase

Innovation

- ☐ New solutions develop
- ☐ Breakthrough ideas and meaningful visions emerge

Relationships

- ☐ New strategic partnerships are formed
- ☐ Definition of roles and more effective relationships between government, business, and the voluntary sector is clearer
- ☐ Environment is established where key stakeholders are willing to learn and collaborate
- ☐ Partners believe in the power of collaborating after seeing their resources used to tackle complex problems with greater success

Influence

- ☐ The group that you're hoping to influence has adopted your agenda - "transporting the conversation from our boardroom to theirs"
- ☐ Influencing the outcome of political processes: bills are passed or recommendations adopted by the legislature

Organizational Leadership

- ☐ Organization emerges as an expert source, others seek your input
- ☐ Others adopt your language to describe the problem
- ☐ Media requests more interviews

Leadership

- ☐ New voices are heard
- ☐ New and more effective leadership emerges

Healthy Discourse

- ☐ Discussion stops being one-sided and becomes more balanced
- ☐ Alternative perspectives from the mainstream emerge

⁸ Extracted from *Achieving Community Impact through Convening*, A report prepared by Ruby Lam for the United Way of Greater Toronto, August 2003

Resources, Impact

- ☐ Monies on line items in government budgets increase
- ☐ Cuts to programs are prevented
- ☐ Specific goals on the business plan are advanced

Member Satisfaction (for membership-based organizations)

- ☐ Participation/attendance levels at planned events and meetings increase
- ☐ New members are recruited

Click here for an [evaluation template](#).

SECTION 11 - ADVOCACY AND THE UNITED WAY - CENTRAIDE MOVEMENT

This section is being developed



SECTION 12 - TOOLS AND APPENDICES



MISSION, ASPIRATIONS AND VALUES

MISSION

To improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action.

ASPIRATIONS

To do this, we *aspire* to:

- ☐ Energize and inspire people to make a difference.
- ☐ Provide meaningful opportunities for individuals to realise their potential by demonstrating volunteer leadership in service to community
- ☐ Reflect the diversity of the communities we serve
- ☐ Craft human care agendas within and across our communities
- ☐ Build coalitions around agendas
- ☐ Increase investments in agendas by expanding and diversifying our own resource development and fundraising efforts and supporting those of others
- ☐ Ensure investments have recognizable impact
- ☐ Strengthen the UW-C Movement, building on individual and collective strengths and abilities of autonomous, local UW-Cs.

VALUES

Our values are to:

- ☐ Provide non-partisan leadership in social change.
- ☐ Endorse innovation, partnerships and collective action
- ☐ Respect community wisdom and encourage citizen involvement
- ☐ Encourage and promote volunteerism and volunteer leadership
- ☐ Demonstrate trust, integrity, transparency, inclusivity and respect
- ☐ Embrace diversity.



THE STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT PROCESS

The Strategic Alignment Process began in 2000 with an environmental scan that identified the major factors driving change for the UW-C Movement. The Policy Group, in its report to the National Board of Directors, recommended changes under three streams: 1) mission, aspirations and values; 2) areas for Movement-wide change; and 3) changes at the national level around governance, leadership and service to members. Under stream two, six areas were identified that would benefit from a more Movement-wide orientation: advocacy, branding, technology, national corporations, nationally trademarked programs, and research.

Advocacy was identified during the Strategic Alignment process as an activity that could be worked on more collaboratively and collectively within the Movement. Participants in that process identified a number of **benefits** to engaging in advocacy including:

- ☐ achieving meaningful social change;
- ☐ strengthening the social service sector;
- ☐ raising the profile of United Way - Centraide in communities;
- ☐ positioning the Movement as an opinion leader;
- ☐ increasing opportunities for United Way-Centraide to be at important community tables - a critical factor to being successful in community building;
- ☐ enhancing the convener role of United Way - Centraide; and
- ☐ enhancing loyalty of the social service sector to the United Way - Centraide Movement.

They also identified **advantages**:

- ☐ combined resources and expertise of UWs-Cs across the country; and,
- ☐ many issues of common concern have a national focus and would benefit from having a national, UW-C voice/position.

And a series of **challenges**:

- ☐ achieving consensus within the Movement on a shared agenda or on positions on particular issues;
- ☐ constraints on advocacy imposed by the Income Tax Act;
- ☐ continuously taking a balanced, non-partisan approach to issues and yet being effective; and,
- ☐ staying on top of policy issues.



DEFINITIONS

Advocacy

Advocacy was defined through the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) as “the art of speaking or of disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct, or public policy and law.” It is part of the public policy process and an essential element to achieving social change.

Advocacy can be directed at any type of institution or individual and can be applied in both formal and informal decision-making environments. It can be a means of changing public policy, of securing funds for a particular purpose or of changing programs. Advocacy can be as casual as speaking to a city counsellor about a neighbourhood park or as formal as making a written submission to a Parliamentary Committee. It can be as direct as the two examples above or as indirect as attempting to change public opinion by sharing research findings and information.

Advocacy is not limited to the public policy process and not all activity related to public policy is advocacy. However, new or changes to existing public policy is one **result**, and advocacy is one means of **influencing that result**.

Corporate Policy

Corporations also develop policies on a wide range of issues from human resource management to charitable activities to community commitments, which can impact upon communities. Advocacy activities can also be undertaken to achieve changes to corporate policy for the benefit of the community.

Lobbying

To undertake activities aimed at elected and/or non-elected officials to influence them towards a desired action.⁹

Message

A concise and persuasive statement about your goal that captures what you want to achieve, why and how.¹⁰

Outcome

A variety of related terms are often used interchangeably including outcomes, results, and outputs. They all refer to the consequence of an action or set of actions, however, an outcome usually describes a change in condition, e.g. improved quality of life for a particular group, while a result or output is more specific, direct and easily quantifiable.

Outcomes are generally more complex and difficult to measure and are not always easily quantifiable. They may relate to changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviour, condition or status and can be described as immediate, intermediate or ultimate; direct or indirect; and intended or unintended.

Political Activities

Activities that seek to retain, oppose or change the law or policy or decisions of any level of government, in Canada or a foreign country.

An activity is considered to be political if it:

- ☐ communicates a call to action
- ☐ communicates to the public that a law, policy or decision should be kept, opposed or changed
- ☐ intends to incite or organize pressure on an elected representative or public official to keep, oppose or change a law, policy or decision¹¹

Public Policy

Public Policy is defined in the *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*, published through the Voluntary Sector Initiative, as “a set of inter-related decisions, taken by public authorities, concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them.” Public policy is developed at various levels of government usually with input from all sectors and citizens to deal with a host of domestic issues. In addition to its domestic responsibilities, the federal

⁹ *Be H.I.P.P.: Have Influence on Public Policy*, YMCA with the Assistance of HRDC, 2002

¹⁰ *An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide*, Ritu R. Sharma, Support for Analysis and Research in Africa

¹¹ *Information Circular*, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), 2003

Public Policy Dialogue

Public Policy Development

Resources for the purpose of the *Income Tax Act*

government develops policies to advance Canada's international goals. Public policy can be expressed in legislation, regulations, programs, funding, etc.

Not all activity related to public policy is advocacy and advocacy is not limited to the public policy process. However, new or changes to existing public policy is one **result**, and advocacy is one means of **influencing that result**.

Interaction between governments and non-governmental organizations at the various stages of the policy development process to encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience in order to have the best possible public policies.¹²

The complex and comprehensive process by which:

- ☐ policy issues are identified;
- ☐ the public policy agenda is shaped;
- ☐ issues are researched, analyzed and assessed;
- ☐ policies are drafted and approved; and,
- ☐ once implemented, their impact is assessed¹³

Though not defined in the *Income Tax Act*, the CRA views resources as including, "the aggregate of a charity's total financial assets, as well as everything the charity can use, such as its staff and volunteers including directors, its premises, and its equipment.

¹² *A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*, p.4

¹³ *Ibid*



ACCORD BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

In December 2001, an Accord between the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada was signed.

The stated **purpose** of the Accord is to:

- strengthen mutual ability to better serve Canadians;
- increase mutual understanding;
- provide a framework for the development and evolution of the relationship between the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada;

The Accord is based on the following:

Values:

- democracy
- active citizenship
- equality
- diversity
- inclusion
- social justice

Principles:

- independence
- interdependence
- dialogue
- cooperation and collaboration
- accounting to Canadians

The **Accord** commits to the following:

Shared	Government of Canada	Voluntary Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ act in a manner consistent with the values and principles in this Accord;▪ develop the mechanisms and processes required to put the Accord into action;▪ work together as appropriate to achieve shared goals and objectives;▪ promote awareness and understanding of the contributions that each makes to Canadian society.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ recognize and consider the implications of legislation, regulations, policies and programs on voluntary sector organizations, including funding policies and practices, to further develop the relationship and strengthen voluntary sector capacity;▪ recognize its need to engage the voluntary sector in open, informed and sustained dialogue so the sector may contribute its experience, expertise, knowledge, and ideas in developing better public policies and in designing and delivering programs;▪ address the issue of ministerial responsibility for the continued development of the relationship with the voluntary sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ continue to identify important or emerging issues and trends in communities, and act on them or bring them to the attention of the Government of Canada;▪ serve as a means for the voices and views of all parts of the voluntary sector to be represented to and heard by the Government of Canada, ensuring that the full depth and diversity of the sector is reached and engaged;▪ address the issue of responsibility for the continued development of the relationship with the Government of Canada.



A CODE OF GOOD PRACTICE ON POLICY DIALOGUE

In October 2002, a Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue was published as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative. This document, along with the Code of Good Practice on Funding, was designed to build on the commitments of the Accord between the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada. The code is described as “a tool for deepening the dialogue between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector at the various stages of the policy process in order to achieve better policies for Canadians.”¹⁴

The Code identifies the following desired **outcomes**:

- increased cooperation between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector;
- increased opportunity for dialogue throughout the public policy process;
- review by the federal government of major policy and program proposals using a “voluntary sector lens”;
- development and use of mechanisms for engagement in dialogue;
- increased availability of and access to information;
- increased mutual understanding of policy objectives and roles in furthering these objectives.

The Code is based on the following **principles**:

- the Voluntary Sector’s Value (i.e. the special perspective and considerable value of its activities)
- mutual respect
- inclusiveness
- accessibility
- clarity
- transparency
- responsibility
- accountability

Good practices included in the Code:

Both Sectors	Government of Canada	Voluntary Sector
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ engage in open, inclusive, ongoing dialogue throughout the public policy process;▪ identify and allocate resources and time to policy activities;▪ ensure appropriate and significant representation from across the sector;▪ develop and strengthen knowledge and policy capacity to promote more effective dialogue and deepen understanding of respective issues and processes;▪ be aware of the policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ develop ways to ensure departments and agencies recognize and consider the impacts and implications of new or modified legislation, regulations, policies and programs for the voluntary sector and its organizations;▪ develop ways to engage in regular dialogue, listen to concerns and issues identified by voluntary sector organizations, and make these methods of dialogue known;▪ draw on the full range of methods to engage in a dialogue with the voluntary sector at	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ develop and strengthen knowledge and policy capacity in their areas of expertise;▪ develop a better understanding of the Government of Canada’s formal and informal policy development process;▪ take specific steps to ensure that diverse groups within the sector are given an opportunity to consider issues and provide input;▪ represent the views of their constituents and articulate their position clearly on particular issues that they consider

¹⁴ A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue, p.2

Both Sectors	Government of Canada	Voluntary Sector
<p>implications of experiences and activities, and inform one another of important conclusions; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that assessment takes into account differing regional impacts of policies. 	<p>various stages of the public policy process;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to the fullest extent possible, make appropriate statistical and analytical information - such as survey data, research studies and policy papers - readily available in accessible and useable formats to enhance the voluntary sector's capacity to analyze and develop informed policy positions; ▪ respect and seek out the expertise and input of the voluntary sector and include it in the analysis and design of policy initiatives; ▪ make every effort to plan and co-ordinate policy dialogue with the voluntary sector on related topics, avoiding overlapping requests for participation in the same time period; ▪ ensure policy initiatives capture the fullest spectrum of views and give due consideration to all input received, paying particular attention to those likely to be most affected by policy proposals; ▪ include opportunities for the voluntary sector to discuss the rationale for and implications of decisions, thereby building understanding and trust; ▪ use appropriate means to ensure that information about the results of dialogue and consultations (e.g., final reports, approved policies) is made available to those engaged in the policy process, so they know how their input was used and its impact on federal government proposals or decisions. 	<p>important;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify whose views are represented when intermediary bodies express opinions on behalf of parts of the sector regarding issues of major importance to its members, supporters and users; ▪ where appropriate and possible, build consensus by improving co-ordination within the sector; ▪ perform an intermediary role on behalf of sector organizations by: using a range of methods to extend the dialogue's reach; canvassing an organization's members/ users/volunteers before presenting views on its behalf; and including a summary of the views of the groups consulted and the methods of consultation used; ▪ identify and maintain contact with policy-makers and actively seek opportunities to share policy ideas with them; and ▪ pursue opportunities to identify and raise emerging issues to the attention of the Government of Canada, including issues of local concern.



EXAMPLES OF CHARITABLE, POLITICAL AND PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES include:

- ☐ Responding to issues raised in an election campaign by analyzing and commenting on proposals as they relate to the mission;
- ☐ Raising public awareness on the condition that materials are educational, accurate, informative, reasoned and well-founded;
- ☐ Communicating with elected and public officials if the communication relates to an issue connected to the mission and is accurate and well reasoned (this includes seeking support from elected officials related to a grant);
- ☐ Releasing the text of a representation you will make or have made to an elected or public official as long as it is the entire text and is not accompanied by a call to action;
- ☐ Engaging in communication activities that are charitable activities, e.g. public awareness campaigns that provide useful information to the public to help them make up their own mind about the work of the UW-C Movement or an issue related to its work;
- ☐ Disseminating research results to the media, its members, other charities that share common objectives, the general public. Publishing the results on a website, in journals, a newsletter;
- ☐ Distributing a research report to all candidates in an election on an issue connected and subordinate to the organization's mission;
- ☐ Presenting research findings to a parliamentary committee and making recommendations based on evidence and a well reasoned position.
- ☐ Providing members of the House of Commons with a relevant, well-reasoned position on an issue connected and subordinate to the organization's mission;
- ☐ Participating in an international working group that **includes government policy makers**; and
- ☐ Joining an advisory panel with other related charities and public officials to discuss policy changes.

POLITICAL ACTIVITIES in which an organization can invest up to 10% of its resources include:

- ☐ Organizing and participating in lawful political demonstrations, rallies;
- ☐ Engaging in evidence-based media campaigns that advocate a particular policy position;
- ☐ Encouraging the public to contact elected and/or public officials to retain, oppose or change the law, policy or decision;
- ☐ Organizing conferences, workshops, seminars, etc. Aimed at changing a law, policy or decision;
- ☐ Taking out an advertisement that promotes a particular, well-reasoned position based on solid research on an issue connected and subordinate to the organization's mission;
- ☐ Organizing a public meeting, rally or lawful demonstration to gain support for its position regarding existing or proposed law, policy or decisions of any level of government in Canada or a foreign country on an issue connected and subordinate to the organization's mission;
- ☐ Engaging in a media campaign to highlight research findings and present a policy position. (e.g. an organization advocates that smoking be banned, rather than inform the public of the medical dangers of smoking.);
- ☐ Mail campaigns that encourage the public to write to elected and/or public officials on a particular issue that is connected and subordinate to an organization's mission; and
- ☐ Conferences and workshops designed to gain support for a point of view on an existing or proposed law, policy or decision.

PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES include:

- ☐ Any illegal activity;
- ☐ Supporting a political party or specific candidate;
- ☐ Engaging in propaganda;
- ☐ Distributing political literature;
- ☐ Financing political activities either directly or indirectly;
- ☐ Lending personal support to the re-election of a candidate;
- ☐ Distributing leaflets to the public during an election campaign that directly or indirectly supports or opposes any political party or candidate;
- ☐ Inviting political campaign organizers to a function that provides free food; and
- ☐ Not providing equal opportunity for candidates to discuss a particular issue, e.g. a fundraising dinner versus a poorly attended annual general meeting.

TRACKING RESOURCES USED FOR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

Under Canada's Income Tax Act and related common law, an organization established for primarily political reasons cannot be considered "charitable". However, a registered charity may have limited engagement (no more than 10% of its resources) in activities of a political nature to further its charitable mission. The policy also is more generous to smaller charities in calculating political activities: annual income in the previous year of **less than \$50,000** -- up to 20% of resources; annual income in the previous year of **between \$50,000 and \$100,000** -- up to 15% of resources; annual income in the previous year of **between \$100,000 and \$200,000** -- up to 12% of resources in the current year. It is important, therefore, to keep track of resources expended on political activities during the year. The table below is designed to assist you in this regard.

Year: _____

Limit of resources that can be used for 'political activities': _____

Activity/Item	Cost
Total	



STAGES IN THE POLICY PROCESS

1. AGENDA SETTING

This early planning stage of the policy process is a good opportunity to get your issues on the table. Ideas for the agenda come from a number of sources, (e.g. party platforms, ministerial statements, public servants, political advisors, party research bureaus, and central agencies). Other levels of government, government caucus, opposition parties, academic think tanks, voluntary sector organizations, key constituencies, lobby and interest groups, the media, consultants, colleagues, friends, research and task forces also contribute to decisions on priorities.

At both the federal and provincial levels, cabinet ministers, with the help of such central agencies as the Privy Council Office, agree on key areas. Departments feed into this process through a central agency. Priorities and commitments are then outlined in a Speech from the Throne. Once the Throne Speech is delivered, ministers turn to their department to begin implementation. Departmental officials assess:

- ☐ external demands against priorities;
- ☐ whether resources exist or new resources are needed;
- ☐ whether legislation needs to be changed or new laws and/or regulations drafted; and
- ☐ whether the minister has the authority to act alone.

Municipal priorities are usually derived from those expressed by interest groups or community associations or by staff who present initiatives to one of the committees. Committees then vote as to whether the priority should be brought to Council. If the vote is 'yes' it generally goes to Council for another vote. At election time, mayoral or councillor candidates will indicate their respective priorities some of which make it to Council.

2. POLICY DESIGN

Policy design is driven mainly by public service staff at any level of government. This is the most significant stage for stakeholder input. Most policy decisions are made in small steps, in consultation with interested groups. To get public input, a government may publish a discussion paper, conduct formal or informal consultations, or set up an advisory committee or task force.

Even when a government has made political commitments, there's room to influence the policy design process and how those commitments are met. *Governments are usually strongly committed to their goals, but are flexible on how to achieve them.*

At conclusion of the design process, a document is usually prepared for the federal or provincial Cabinet or for the municipal council to review and make a decision. This document usually contains a number of options and a recommended course of action. In the case of the federal government, it also provides ministers with background information, an analysis of the issue, a summary of the viewpoints of major stakeholders and a communications plan.

3. REVIEW

The most intense political scrutiny occurs at this stage. At the federal and provincial levels, Ministers assess the implications of a particular policy direction. They may ask themselves “will this achieve what we’re here to do?” Political staff ensure that the political implications have been considered (e.g. will this allow us to meet our promises? what sort of media attention will it get? will supporters agree? who will oppose and how influential will they be?).

Once the Cabinet or Municipal Council approves a policy direction, the department begins implementation, as long as resources are available. If the policy direction requires legislative and/or regulatory change, these are drafted and will require further review and approval.

4. APPROVAL

By this stage, a number of compromises have usually been made to take into consideration varying needs and to get as much support as possible. It is more difficult to make changes at this stage as the directions are set out in draft legislation, bill or policy statement. However, there are examples where major shifts and changes have occurred at this stage.



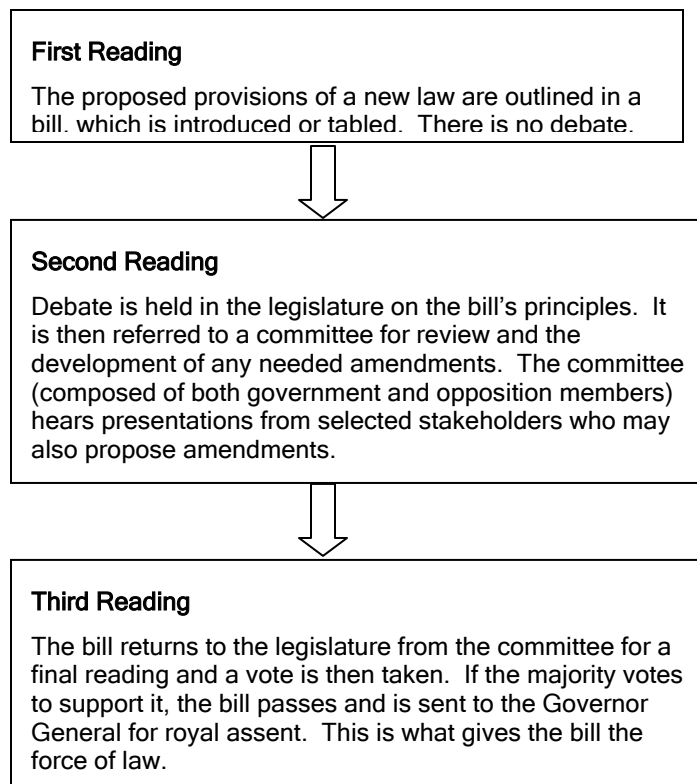
LEGISLATIVE, ELECTORAL AND BUDGETARY CYCLES

THE LEGISLATIVE CYCLE

Competition for an elected official's time is most intense when federal and provincial legislatures or municipal councils are in session. Their schedules are less predictable because current events may require last minute changes. Politicians are required to sit a certain number of days in parliament, the legislature or council, and to attend committee and/or caucus meetings.

Most government websites include copies of bills and a description of their status. Committee agendas, membership lists and proceedings are posted along with the contact information for the committee clerk who can advise on any upcoming topics and public hearings.

At federal and provincial levels, legislation follows a set process that includes first, second and third reading (see diagram below). Prior to first reading there is usually a period of consultation to assist in the formulation of the legislation.



In the federal parliament, a bill would also need Senate approval before going to the Governor General. The Senate rarely makes amendments to bills, but Senators can be influential allies and good political champions for your cause. Senators from your region, with work experience in your field, and/or a history of being politically active offer the best opportunity. In the case of provinces and territories, a bill needs royal assent by the Lieutenant Governor.

ELECTORAL CYCLES

Federal and provincial elections usually occur every 4-5 years and are called by the Prime Minister and Premiers respectively. The timing of municipal elections varies from province to province, but they usually occur every three years on the same day. For example, in Ontario, municipal elections are held every three years on the second Monday in November, in B.C. they are held every 3 years on the third Saturday of November and in Manitoba they are held every 3 years on the 4th Wednesday in October.

Governments tend to take risks earlier in their mandate. They are less likely to closer to an election. Pushing for more controversial changes may be much easier earlier in a government's mandate.

BUDGETARY CYCLE

Most new initiatives need to go through cabinet decision-making and the budgeting process before they can be implemented, unless existing resources are being used. Decisions made by cabinet then go to a Treasury or Management Board made up of selected ministers who review and decide on detailed budget plans. They consider:

- ☐ how much money will be needed;
- ☐ whether it will be spread over a number of years or be ongoing;
- ☐ whether new funds are required and warranted;
- ☐ how new funds will be spent; and,
- ☐ what the expected results and evaluation plans are.

Understanding the budget cycle can help determine when it's best to intervene. As governments allocate resources against priorities, even the best ideas can die if no funds are available. The federal and provincial governments operate on a fiscal year that begins April 1. The federal government's budget cycle usually unfolds as follows:

<i>March - June:</i>	Departmental business plans are prepared and reviewed.
<i>July - August:</i>	Cabinet reviews priorities.
<i>September - October:</i>	Budget consultations with key stakeholders.
<i>November:</i>	Departmental performance strategies are tabled.
<i>December - January</i>	Cabinet reviews budgetary strategy.
<i>January - February:</i>	Cabinet makes the final decision on the budget.
<i>February - March:</i>	Budget speech and tabling of budget estimates.

June to September offers a better window for influencing activities at the federal level than late fall and winter when decision have already been made. In addition, you will always face a challenge if you're looking for support for something that does not fit neatly into the mandate of one ministry or an existing program, policy, or funding criteria.

Provincial government budgetary cycles can vary. In Ontario, for example, the budget cycle rarely starts before the end of the calendar year. In addition, provincial budgetary processes are more nimble than federally, allowing for input closer to the date when the budget is to be delivered.

Municipal governments often operate on a calendar year basis; however, some also operate on a fiscal year that begins April 1. Municipal budget processes usually include the following steps:

- ☐ input by citizens, interest groups, councillors and staff;
- ☐ preparation and launch of a budget directions document or draft budget;
- ☐ public discussion through committee hearings and/or other methods (e.g. website discussion groups, town hall meetings, etc.); and,
- ☐ development of a final budget.

The timing of the steps in these steps depends upon the municipality's fiscal year and provincial requirements.



BUILDING AND ASSESSING YOUR CREDIBILITY

Build your Organization's Profile

Decision-makers want to meet with those they've heard good things about. Ongoing communication targeted at opinion leaders and decision makers will help keep you on their radar. Suggestions include adding their names to mailing lists for newsletters, annual reports, notices of activities, and invitations to special events.

A Community Connections Inventory

Build an inventory of connections by identifying your friends and allies - individuals who offer information, networks and advice. Be sure to assess their credibility to make sure the relationship will not put your organization at risk.

Cultivating and maintaining an extensive network in leadership positions in various sectors will open doors and ensure your interests are represented at other tables.

The Credibility Checklist

Are you aware of how community leaders would describe your organization? To assess the level of trust and value placed in your organization, consider the following questions:

- ☐ Are you seen as trustworthy, objective and valued by others?
- ☐ Are you known and/or respected by the policy makers involved?
- ☐ Is the information that you provide well-founded and well-reasoned?
- ☐ Will decision-makers be interested in hearing from your organization?
- ☐ Can you legitimately speak on behalf of those you say you represent or those affected by the issue?
- ☐ Have you spoken out before?¹⁵

¹⁵ Adapted from *CARE: Advocacy Tools and Guidelines, Promoting Policy Change, 2001*



THINGS THAT MIGHT HELP TO:

TELL YOUR STORY

- A strategic plan with clearly defined priorities.
- A 'one-pager' that describes the organization, its scope, impact and contributions to the community.
- Identification of volunteers, board members, and staff who can give a compelling presentation about how the organization achieves its charitable mission.
- Up-to-date data that give a good picture of the organization (e.g. number of members, program participants, volunteer hours, financial data).
- Evaluation data describing the impact of programs and services.
- Regularly training for volunteers, board members and staff to ensure they understand and can articulate the mission.
- Media training for the board chair, volunteers, staff so they feel comfortable dealing with the media.
- An inventory of political contacts among our volunteers or staff describing who knows people in positions of influence.
- An external relations/public policy committee.
- A strategy for influencing government as a means of forwarding the mission.

UNDERSTAND THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

- A list of the governments' (local, provincial and/or national) top three priorities.
- Information about:
 - a government's activities related to key areas of our organization's programs and services;
 - the levels and names of key people in the public service;
 - the municipal councillor, mayor, member of provincial legislative assembly, and/or MP;
 - issues of greatest concern to citizens in the community and/or the province;
 - the most influential community leaders from various sectors; and
 - who in the media covers areas linked to the mission.
- An assessment of the external environment and a list of the key stakeholders.
- An analysis of where there are opportunities to influence governments to advance the mission and ward off potential 'threats'.
- An analysis of current public affairs covered in the media (newspapers, TV, radio, magazines).

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

- Meet regularly with key elected officials and/or public servants to make sure they are aware of the organization's contributions and to hear about their plans and activities.
- Develop effective working relationships with public servants, elected officials and other community leaders.
- Partner with other organizations to achieve common goals.
- Have the Board Chair or Executive Director meet with key media contacts to ensure they are well informed about the organization.
- Give tours of the organization to key stakeholders.
- Have Board members and/or staff participate in public forums, committees, or task forces to discuss issues linked to the mission.
- Involve key stakeholders in the organization's activities.
- Know whom you can call on for advice and support in positioning the organization on public policy.



ADVOCACY TACTICS

CONVENING¹⁶

Convening is defined as the process of engaging stakeholders in strategic partnerships to solve multifaceted problems. Many United Ways have adopted the role of convener or “honest civic broker in bringing people together”. It is a key strategy of the United Way of America.

While not necessarily directly related to advocacy, convening is a method of achieving change that often includes advocacy activities. It is important to clarify the difference between these two terms and establish the parameters from the beginning as not all organizations are comfortable with engaging in advocacy. In other instances, advocacy is not possible as collaboration participants are unable to reach a consensus on what needs to be done. For many, however, convening is seen as a way to extend their reach and influence by working together on an issue.

Collaborations of this nature:

- ☐ Draw on the resources of the entire community;
- ☐ Seek to bridge sector and institutional boundaries;
- ☐ Seek systemic change and address root causes;
- ☐ Address broad issues not owned by any one organization;
- ☐ Focus on specific actions and measurable results; and
- ☐ Include an action plan.

The **benefits** of convening or collaborating include:

- ☐ ***the potential for*** better results at less cost;
- ☐ creative solutions;
- ☐ comprehensive action; and,
- ☐ strategic deployment of a community's assets.

Collaborations can bring together a diversity of agencies, individuals, corporations, labour groups, formal organizations, informal associations, institutions, systems, neighbourhood networks, faith-based groups, academics, and others. Convening might take the form of a meeting, a roundtable discussion, or a luncheon series for one of the following purposes:

- ☐ find solutions and develop public policy around a specific issue;
- ☐ network and lobby;
- ☐ learn and bring resources to an issue;
- ☐ tool for long-term and broad-based grassroots civic engagement; and
- ☐ seek agreement by government agencies to resolve policy disputes.

Deciding whether to convene around an issue requires the same type of analysis as deciding whether to engage in advocacy:

- ☐ Magnitude and Urgency
- ☐ Impact
- ☐ Timing
- ☐ Credibility as convener
- ☐ Do-ability
- ☐ Extent of Support - internal and external
- ☐ Capacity to be Effective
- ☐ Role
- ☐ Risk

Click here to view [Pearls of Wisdom on Convening](#).

¹⁶ This section is based entirely on *Achieving Community Impact through Convening*, A report prepared by Ruby Lam for the United Way of Greater Toronto, August 2003

COMMUNICATION

TACTIC	PURPOSE
Phone Calls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relay a simple message.• As a follow up to letters, concerns, and invitations.• Alert to upcoming actions.• Secure a meeting date.• Relay the importance of an issue.• Get information (e.g. identify the best person to deal with).
Letters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formalise invitations.• Formalise your interest in a meeting.• Raise a concern.• Give recognition or show appreciation.• Pass on congratulations or thanks.• Offer thanks after a meeting.
E-mails¹⁷ and Listservs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Uncomplicated, short messages.• Can reach several people instantly with the same message, making it easier to reply.• Useful for a quick reply for those comfortable with this technology.
Strategic Mailings: Quarterly Updates/ Newsletters	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise awareness, ensuring others know about your ongoing contributions to the community.• Keep your organization on the radar screen.• Create a positive, legitimate impression.• Don't create information overload by sending irrelevant information that appears unprofessional.

¹⁷ Concern about Spam e-mails and privacy is growing which may limit the effectiveness of this as a communications tactic.

TACTIC
**Sharing
Research
Findings**

PURPOSE

- Analytic Reports and Publications - studies and analytic reports that document problems needing attention by government.
- Fact sheets.
- Policy briefs.
- Adds legitimacy to your issue.
- Is essential to effective advocacy.
- Gets your issue on the government's radar screen.
- Reinforces messages with evidence, especially if it adds to existing evidence.

Websites

- Create a site or page on a particular issue to share information and present research.

**Local
Newspapers**

- Write an op-ed (an opinion piece appearing opposite the editorial page) to raise public awareness and understanding about your issue.
- Send a letter to the editor to correct inaccurate information or to show your organization's support for or position on an issue raised in the newspaper.
- Write a press release after a key meeting or event.

NOTE: Press releases must reflect exactly what you said at the meeting. Discretion is important when drafting press releases both because of the CRA's guidelines and because of the risk of offending the meeting partner(s).

EVENTS

TACTIC
**Organize a tour
or visit**

PURPOSE

- Raises awareness and understanding, and builds relationships.
- Invite politicians for breakfast or lunch, or to see part of your organization they normally wouldn't see.
- Allow people to see first-hand the impact of your work, especially if personal testimonials are included.

**Organize a
conference**

- May attract media attention.
- Useful for building constituencies and coalitions of advocates.

**Host a
Community
Forum**

- Positions your organization as a leader, and builds momentum.
- Draws in others and gains their commitment and support.
- Raises community awareness and concern.
- Provides a venue for those affected to speak to decision-makers.

TACTIC**Attend Public Hearings, Presentations or Consultations****PURPOSE**

- Opportunity to provide technical information and advice and share knowledge or research.
- Good for raising awareness and increasing support.

Mobilize Citizens/Lawful Rallies and Demonstrations

- Good for getting media attention, showing strength if other tactics are not getting desired attention.
- An effective but risky tactic. Careful consideration should be given to CRA guidelines.

FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT**TACTIC****Public Servants****PURPOSE**

- Gain information about what's happening and a better understanding of the constraints, concerns, and possible competing interests.
- Explores possibilities; raises profile; builds relationships.

Bring Program Participants to Meet Politicians (or vice versa)

- Helps politicians put a human face to the situation and to see first-hand the realities.
- Helps build greater commitment to addressing your issue.

NOTE: Making a politician uncomfortable may help your cause, but be careful not to take this so far that it is offensive.

Meeting with Politicians

- Provides a forum to make your views heard and to raise concerns.
- Enables you to find out more about the government's perspectives -- to hear first hand their concerns, priorities and interests.
- Helps identify common issues, win-win situations and opportunities for partnerships.
- Good opportunities to make your case and position your organization in the minds of politicians.

NOTE: Recognize that meetings rarely led to tangible commitments.

Meeting with Political Aides

- Can assist with securing a meeting with key people.
- Can help increase attention on the issue.
- Can help build internal supports or champions.
- Get advice on how to proceed, other contacts and possible strategies.
- Gain a political perspective for an issue raised in the newspaper.

Meeting with Leaders in Other Sectors

- Gather support and build allies by building cross-sectoral support for your issue.
- Raise awareness and increase understanding.
- Line up representatives from sectors that normally would not be involved, to speak out, showing how widespread and broad the support is.



COOPERATION, COORDINATION AND COLLABORATION

A TABLE DESCRIBING THE ELEMENTS OF EACH¹⁸

ELEMENTS	COOPERATION	COORDINATION	COLLABORATION
Vision & Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Basis for cooperation is usually between individuals but may be mandated by a third party. Organizational missions & goals are not taken into account. Interaction is on an as needed basis, may last indefinitely. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual relationships are supported by the organizations they represent. Missions & goals of the individual organizations are reviewed for compatibility. Interaction is usually around one specific project or task of definable length. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment of the organizations & their leaders is fully behind their representatives. Common, new mission & goals are created One or more projects are undertaken for longer term results.
Structure, Responsibilities & Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships are informal; each organization functions separately. No joint planning is required. Information is shared as needed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organizations involved take on needed roles, but function relatively independently of each other. Some project-specific planning is required. Communication roles are established & definite channels are created for interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New organizational structure \$/or clearly defined & interrelated roles that constitute a formal division of labour are created. More comprehensive planning is required that includes developing joint strategies & measuring success in terms of impact on the needs of those served. Beyond communication roles & channels for interaction, many 'levels' of communication are created as clear information is a keystone of success.
Authority & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority rests solely with individual organizations. Leadership is unilateral & control is central. All authority & accountability rests with the individual organization which acts independently. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority rests with the individual organizations but there is coordination among participants. Some sharing of leadership & control. There is some shared risk but most of the authority & accountability falls to the individual organizations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Authority is determined by the collaboration to balance ownership by the individual organizations with expediency to accomplish purpose. Leadership is dispersed & control is shared & mutual. Equal risk is shared by all organizations in the collaboration.
Resources & Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources (staff time, dollars & capabilities) are separate, serving the individual organizations' needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources are acknowledged & can be made available to others for a specific project. Rewards are mutually acknowledged. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources are pooled or jointly secured for a longer-term effort that is managed by the collaborative structure. Organizations share in the products; more is accomplished jointly than could have been individually.

¹⁸ Adapted from the works of Martin Blank, Sharon Kagan, Atelia Melaville and Karen Ray (provided by the UW of Saskatoon).



ADVOCACY PLANNING WORKBOOK [DOWNLOADABLE VERSION](#)

Part A: THE ISSUE

1. What is (are) the issues?

--

2. What are your goals?

--

3. What are the objectives or what are the expected outcomes? What will be different if you succeed?

--

4. How does ***your organization*** work on this issue promote the mission, aspirations and values of the Movement?

--

5. What is your position on the issue?

--

Part B THE APPROACH

1. What are your concerns and what are the negative consequences of not addressing them?

--

2. What approach will you take?

☐

Low profile

☐

Medium profile

☐

High profile

3. Activity Plan

STRATEGIES	TACTICS/ACTIVITIES	TIMING	BUDGET/ COST	RESPONSIBILITY

Part C PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

Internal

1. Who in the UW-C Movement needs to know what is being done on this issue?

- ☐ UWC - CC?
- ☐ Regional Vice-President?
- ☐ Other UWs-Cs?

2. Are other UWs-Cs involved and if so, what is the nature of their involvement?

3. Is there any opposition within the Movement?

4. Are there inter- and intra-regional differences that could come into play and if so, how can these be avoided/downplayed?

5. How will inter-Movement coordination be managed (if applicable)?

External

1. Is there a role for Government?

- ☐ Is the issue on the government agenda?
- ☐ Does the issue require a change in legislation or regulations, and/or a change to government policies and programs?
- ☐ Can government help to influence public behaviour or attitudes?
- ☐ Can government increase the importance of the issue in the minds of the public?
- ☐ Is increased public investment one method of addressing the issue?
- ☐ Can government help build consensus across sectors?
- ☐ Does government have useful information that could be of assistance?
- ☐ What would the impact be if the government changed its course?

2. What other organizations could you work with on this issue? What could they bring to the table / What role could they play?

Partner	Role/Contribution

3. How will the partnerships be managed?

- a. Do you need a partnership agreement?
- b. Will you form a steering committee?
- c. Who will make decisions and how?

--

4. Who are the **critics** and what is their position on the issue?

Critics	Position

Part D Budget

Anticipated Revenue

Source	Amount
Total	

Forecasted Expenditure

Item	Estimated Cost
Personnel: Salaries	
Sub-total	
Activities:	
Research	
Training	
Technology	
Web site	
Printing	
Telephone	
Postage	
Travel	
Meetings	
Events	
Administration	
Other	
TOTAL	



COMMUNICATIONS

COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

A communications overview is a concise document - usually a page or two - that provides a readable snapshot of the essential parts your communications plan. If you develop a more detailed communications plan, an overview can act as an executive summary that can be shared easily with members of your organization, partners or potential partners.

Here are a few suggestions on how to draft a communications overview:

- ☐ Do not crowd the overview with too much information. Be concise.
- ☐ Use everyday language that is easy to announce, remember and report.
- ☐ Avoid long sentences and paragraphs.
- ☐ Avoid technical terms, jargon and the use of acronyms.
- ☐ Stick to the main point - do not provide unnecessary details.
- ☐ Make every word count and portray your exact meaning.

CREATING A COMMUNICATIONS OVERVIEW

1. Communication goals

State precisely what objective(s) are going to be achieved through the communications plan.

2. Key Messages

Give three or four key messages using clear, succinct language that may include:

- What you want
- What the benefits are to your organization and the community
- Suggestions on how to make change
- What you expect of decision-makers
- Consequences of not implementing change

3. Links to Organization's Mission

Explain the link between the initiative and your organization's mission. Note any inconsistencies and briefly show how they can be addressed. Indicate whether there are any obvious links to the missions of other organizations, and note if partnerships with these organizations would take care of inconsistencies with your organization's mission.

4. Link to Government's Agenda

If possible, link your ideas to the government agenda. This is essential for the issue to be viewed as a priority. Good sources of information include the federal Speech from the Throne, budget documentation, and departmental websites.

5. Target Audiences and Reactions

Note the two or three most prominent target audiences and identify as best possible what their expected reactions will be. State which aspects of the initiative are expected to be accepted, which will be criticized, and by whom.

6. Key Communications Elements

- Indicate whether this approach is proactive, reactive, low, medium or high profile, national or regional.
- Note who will play a key role in this initiative. Who will give media interviews?
- List relevant pre-positioning activities.
- Outline briefly - without detail - your tactics and positioning strategy.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

A communication plan describes in greater detail how you intend to present and position your issue in both the short and longer term. Again, whether or not you develop a full-blown communications plan will depend on your approach, tactics and timeline.

If your approach to an issue is based primarily on public education and communication, you may want to use the communications plan template rather than the advocacy plan template.

If a communications plan is warranted, it should contain key messages and the tactics you expect to employ. It should be developed simultaneously to your overall Action Plan so that communication is factored into all aspects of the plan.

Below is an outline of the components of a comprehensive communications plan and what should be considered in each. Elements of this type of plan may not be applicable to each situation, however, they do help raise awareness of what to think about and monitor.

1. Communication Goals

- ☐ State precisely what goals are to be achieved through the communications plan.
- ☐ Frame goals in terms of achieving widespread understanding, gaining public approval, increasing awareness of UW-Cs intentions and community role, responding to threats and/or explaining apparent inconsistencies.

2. Public Environment - Government and Community

- ☐ Summarise current public perceptions and sensitivities about the issue, including known positions of key target audiences. Describe potential differences in opinion that may potentially arise between regional groups.
- ☐ Outline the position of (potentially significant) opposition groups.
- ☐ Outline the findings of any relevant studies, publications, reports, and public opinion research.
- ☐ Summarise national, regional and/or local media coverage, including editorials, and note any emerging trends.
- ☐ It is important in this section to profile the government because its agenda and its external pressures play a significant role in the development of public policy.
 - Note Parliamentary debates on the issue.
 - Note significant advocacy activities in this field. Include their apparent successes and failures.
 - Note recent and past government initiatives in the same area.
 - Note the laws or policies targeted by your campaign.

3. Key Messages

- ☐ Identify the overarching set of ideas to be communicated regarding the issue and the UW-C Movement's position. Avoid minor details. Ideally there should be three or four key messages.
- ☐ Messages should:
 - relate to the communications strategy and resonate with key target audiences; (*Do not lay out the whole storyline*).
 - be clear, concise, well-supported by research and *positive*.
 - be supportive of Movement's Mission, Aspirations and Values and role as a community builder.
 - reference (key) collaborators.
- ☐ The language and vocabulary used should be community centred and evoke the core values shared by Canadians.

4. Strategic Communications Considerations

- ☐ *Internal Factors:* Reference relevant initiatives and/or other advocacy campaigns underway in the Movement. Note briefly the level and nature of resources required in the context of overall budget.
- ☐ *External Factors:* Identify current external factors that will influence how the public, private and non-profit sectors and the general public will react to your messages.
- ☐ *Approach:* Outline the best approach - proactive vs. reactive, low vs. high profile, national vs. regional - based on communication goals, the nature of opposition, the current public environment and the government in questions' agenda.
- ☐ *Sequencing:* Decide when to release information to specific target audiences in a controlled manner. Indicate any need for pre-public consultations on the issue and your position. Also note the need to obtain any third-party support.
- ☐ *Opportunities:* Note widespread support from any tier of government, the public, the media, and/or interest groups. If possible, link communications to an event, offering appropriate symbolic support for the campaign to both the government and public.
- ☐ *Challenges:* To greatly improve your chances of success, challenges and threats must be dealt with quickly and appropriately. Remember to maintain a positive message. In the communications plan, note any media hostility, public indifference, issue complexities, or competing regional, sectoral interests.

5. Target Audiences and Reactions

- ☐ Target audiences are groups key to your advocacy action plan and include: decision-makers; groups affected by the policies; groups influential to policy-makers; and active, sympathetic portions of the population.
- ☐ Identify and prioritize key target audiences, usually two-to-four groups, and try to predict as best you can their expected reaction(s).
- ☐ List secondary audiences.
- ☐ Indicate how your action plan may impact/reflect upon the entire United Way Movement.

6. Activities and Vehicles

- ☐ Activities should focus on how the policy change will affect Canadians in general and what it means for them. They should also reflect what the policy change means to the organizations and their ability to be community builders.
- ☐ Choose communications vehicles appropriate to the target audiences.
- ☐ Describe in brief terms any planned events or meetings.
- ☐ Describe the contents and planned dissemination of any supporting material.
- ☐ Note who is leading and describe their role.
- ☐ Profile the spokesperson(s).
- ☐ Describe the role of other key players or partners.
- ☐ Note who is responsible for daily monitoring of the external environment.
- ☐ Note translation plans for announcements into both official languages.

7. The Movement and Horizontal Coordination

- ☐ Indicate what UW-Cs are involved and the nature of their involvement.
- ☐ Note the nature of any opposition from within the Movement.
- ☐ Indicate how regional differences could come into play and potential avoidance/ downplaying tactics.
- ☐ Indicate how inter-Movement coordination is managed.
- ☐ Describe links to other UW-C initiatives and how this initiative promotes the mission, aspirations and values of the Movement.

8. Partnerships

- ☐ Describe how partnerships external to the Movement will be managed.
- ☐ Describe how the UW-C's role will be ensured public visibility.

9. Sustaining a Communications Presence

- ☐ After the initial announcement(s), describe the sort of activities that are planned to enforce this message.
- ☐ Potential activities include: advertising, speaking tours, consultations, town hall meetings, brochures, booklets, direct mail campaigns, op-ed pieces, follow-up media interviews, Internet campaigns, call-in radio programming, and joint affirmation(s) with new partners as to the serious and pressing nature of the issue concerned.
- ☐ Describe the nature in which the full scope of the issue will be portrayed.
- ☐ Describe any potential role for public involvement.

10. Budget

- ☐ Note where funding is coming from.
- ☐ If activities are of a 'political' nature as defined by CRA, ensure the amount spent on these is under the stipulated 10% of total resources.
- ☐ Describe briefly foreseeable expenses.

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN TEMPLATE [DOWNLOADABLE VERSION](#)

COMMUNICATIONS GOAL(S):	
PUBLIC ENVIRONMENT	
Government	Community
KEY MESSAGES:	
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS: (Specific factors that need to be considered in developing the communications plan)	
<i>Internal</i> : Are there relevant initiatives and/or other advocacy campaigns underway in the Movement?	
<i>External</i> : What factors could influence how the public, private and non-profit sectors and the general public will react to this issue?	
<i>Approach</i> : What communications approach would work best? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proactive vs. reactive • Low vs. high profile • National vs. regional 	
<i>Opportunities</i> : Do you anticipate support from any tier of government, the public, the media, and/or interest groups?	

TARGET AUDIENCES	Reactions	Activities/Vehicles	Timing	Forecasted Cost
Total				



COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA

At some point, your advocacy strategy may include increasing public awareness about your issue, your position, or the work of your organization. As the media is a sprawl of networks with a virtually limitless audience, it is important that effective communication methods be carefully developed. You want these mediums to reinforce and support your cause and strategy. Establishing a good rapport with journalists and producers before your issue gains the limelight, will help secure public exposure while increasing the likelihood of a good portrayal of your organisation.

As it's the media's job to question and challenge, you'll want to be ready before you approach them. Your message should be cast in terms of how you've helped, why you're needed, why you matter, what you've accomplished and how you can make a difference. Have facts, statistics, analogies, anecdotes, and independent experts that can verify what you say.

Source: Summit Consulting Group

In recent history, social policy stories are few and far between. A number of factors have contributed to this - newspaper wars, all news channels, etc. Also, over the past years, both the Government and the Opposition have focused on fiscal policy with the result that these stories end up on the front pages. There are signs, however, that the media may pay more attention to social policy issues in the future. Opinion polls show that the public is becoming increasingly interested in social policy issues.

NOTEWORTHY TIPS FOR DEALING WITH THE MEDIA

Establish a Good Working Rapport with Media Personnel

- ☐ Identify reporters who are interested in social policy and cultivate a relationship with them. Meet with them even when there is no story.
- ☐ Have savvy, 'telegenic', strong spokespersons who can talk in clips or sound bites.
- ☐ Contact reporters about stories they have written - especially during political lulls (e.g. summer). Contact them on slow news days, i.e. Sundays.
- ☐ Op-Ed pieces written by well-known individuals may gain a reporter's attention and win their respect.

Convince the Media that your Issue is Important

- ☐ Find a 'news hook' - look at what is in the news and see if you can use it to advance your issue(s).
- ☐ Educate reporters about the issues - but do so in a time effective way. Do not give them large quantities of information. Give them facts they can use in a story. Provide good backgrounders with press releases as these can often provide the bulk of a story.
- ☐ Provide anecdotes and information on 'real' people.
- ☐ Try to demonstrate to reporters why it is good for them to write a story about your issue.
- ☐ Provide information in the format of a 'story', which is how reporters present articles.
- ☐ Leverage the fact that the public wants to know more about social policy issues.

Remember that:

- ☐ reporters work to deadlines - they have less and less time.
- ☐ there are fewer reporters with more generalists and fewer specialists
- ☐ many reporters work in more than one medium and are spread more thinly
- ☐ budgets and deadlines do not allow for deep research into issues.

Posing questions to yourself first is good way to prepare before contacting the media. These might include:

- ☐ Why is your issue so important when there are so many other issues and crises demanding attention?
- ☐ What public support do you have in your community?
- ☐ Why do you think that anyone beyond your community cares about this issue?
- ☐ If nothing changes, what impact will this situation have on the average citizen in your community?
- ☐ What specifically do you want people to do?

TIPS FOR HANDLING MEDIA INTERVIEWS

The Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS), is a registered charity working to strengthen communication between not-for-profit organizations, government and the media in Canada and internationally. Below is a summary of their tips for handling media interviews.

- ☐ Answer the question and stop talking. Don't worry about filling dead air.
- ☐ Be concrete, colourful, and anecdotal. It's easier to remember a story about real people doing real things.
- ☐ Be yourself. You'll be unconvincing if you try to be something you're not.
- ☐ Find the right person for the message.
- ☐ Breathe. It can help you calm down, slow your speech and make you appear thoughtful.
- ☐ Develop your 9.2 second quote. That's the average amount of time you'll get in an interview to deliver your message. Practice and fine-tune it.
- ☐ Don't make negative comparisons to others. Use your own knowledge and facts.
- ☐ Don't repeat negatives. You want your audience to remember the positives, what you are versus what you aren't.
- ☐ You don't have to answer every question.
- ☐ Listen carefully before you answer.
- ☐ Don't use jargon and acronyms. You'll lose your listeners.
- ☐ Don't use "no comment". Your listeners may interpret this as meaning you're guilty of something and the reporter may assume you're hiding something.
- ☐ Passion is contagious and smiling is underused.
- ☐ This is a business transaction, not a conversation. Stay focused and don't relax too much.

Definitions

Media Advisory	A notice that draws the attention of journalists to an upcoming event, usually for the purpose of getting them to attend that event.
Media/Press release:	an announcement you send to a newspaper, TV or radio station about something you want them to report on.
Public service announcement (PSA):	similar to a media/press release, except that you are asking for a free announcement about something that benefits the public.
Photo opportunity:	an event that's for good photography or videotaping, including famous people, large crowds, symbolic actions, activities and other visually interesting material.

HOW TO WRITE A MEDIA ADVISORY

A media advisory is somewhat different from a Media or Press Release in that it is usually shorter and used to interest journalists in attending an upcoming event. An advisory gives basic information, e.g. who, what, where, when and why and is normally sent out a few days before the event. Be careful not to scoop yourself, however, and give so much information that a journalist does not need to attend to get the story.

Style and Structure Pointers

- ❑ Type "Media Advisory" in the top left corner.
- ❑ Type the date underneath "Media Advisory".
- ❑ In the top right corner, type names and phone numbers of two contacts, making sure these contacts can be reached easily by phone. The contacts must be available and good at answering questions.
- ❑ Your **Headline** is vital and should be in **bold typeface**. It can be up to four lines, including a sub-heading. Try to keep it short and remember to use a large font that is eye-catching!.
- ❑ Provide a **brief** description of the event and the issue and if possible, create a mental image of what will happen.
- ❑ Tell them who will speak at your event.
- ❑ Answer such questions as:
 - what will take place?
 - why are you holding this event?
 - who will be there?
 - when and where is it?
 - how many people are participating and what will they be doing?
 - what do you expect to come out of the event?
- ❑ If there is a photo opportunity, be sure to mention it and send the advisory to the photo editors of local news outlets as well as to reporters because they don't always share information.
- ❑ Include a short description of your organization in the last paragraph.
- ❑ Type "####" at the end of the advisory to let journalists know this is the end.
- ❑ Type "MORE" at the end of page 1 if your advisory is two pages, and put a contact phone number and short headline in the upper-right hand corner of subsequent pages.
- ❑ Print your advisory on your organization's letterhead.

Distribution

- ❑ Aim to have the media advisory arrive at news outlets 3 to 5 working days before an event.
- ❑ Fax or mail (if time permits) your advisory to the appropriate reporter, editor or producer at each news outlet on your press list.
- ❑ Find out who has listings of upcoming events on their websites, newsletters, etc . that are reviewed by journalists and submit your advisory to them as journalists.
- ❑ Make follow up calls the day before your event, and have the advisory ready to be faxed.

HOW TO WRITE A MEDIA/PRESS RELEASE

A media or press release is usually used where there is actually no event, but you want to get a story out. For example, if you want to interest the media in a research report you are releasing or if you want to announce a new project.

Style Pointers

- ☐ 1 or 1 1/2 pages long, double spaced and typed.
- ☐ Use clear, concise language that is designed to grab the attention of the editor.
- ☐ Keep the text simple and short - easy to scan, short, punchy paragraphs.
- ☐ Use sentences that would make good quotes and give facts that capture interest.
- ☐ Think like a reporter.
 - Tell it like a news story, give your event a headline and an angle that you want them to use.
 - Why would an editor want to publish your news (what are the benefits)?
 - is it relevant?
 - is it interesting?
 - is it newsworthy?
 - answer: "Who? Why? What? Where? When? & How?"
 - Write so that text can be lifted and put into a publication with just a few simple edits.
- ☐ Use specific, powerful (and true) testimonials or convincing case studies.
- ☐ Use action words.

Lead-off information

- ☐ **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** should appear in the upper left-hand margin, just below the letter head.
- ☐ Your title is vital. The headline should be in **bold typeface** and no longer than 10 words. This is how you grab the editor's attention, so summarize the media/press release in **big, energetic language**.
- ☐ Add a dateline that provides the name of the city and the date.
- ☐ Cover what, how, why, when and who in the first paragraph.
 - The "why" is very important - why is this news? Give this information in 3 or 4 sentences.

Background information

- ☐ Provides more detailed information:
 - background statistics
 - a summary of the issue
- ☐ Don't drown them in details. If they are interested, you will have other opportunities to give them information.

Contact information

- ☐ At the beginning or end (or both) of the media/press release, provide:
 - name of the media contact (s), their phone number(s), pager numbers, e-mail address, etc.;
 - your logo.
- ☐ The contact must be available and good at answering questions.

Appendices/Backgrounders

Some media/press releases have appendices or backgrounders attached. Appendices may be used to provide the media with the names of experts they can contact for more information on the issue. Backgrounders may be used to provide information in greater detail than a media/press release can accommodate, for those who may want to write a more in depth story.

The same style rules apply to these attachments - short, simple, quotable, easily scanned. In the case of backgrounders, charts or tables that can be lifted from the document are useful to reporters.

Review your Media/Press Release

- ☐ Are there passive words that can be changed to active words?
- ☐ Be a ruthless editor. After each sentence, ask yourself "So what?" If you can't answer, delete the sentence.

Are you Ready?

- ☐ Will your media/press release be available on your website?
- ☐ Have you assigned media contacts?
- ☐ Do media contacts know what to say or do if a reporter calls?
- ☐ Do others in your organization know who to refer media calls to?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor are an important means of communicating your point of view as they constitute the most widely read part of publications, particularly by elected officials and their advisors.

Why write a letter to the Editor

- ☐ In response to a specific news story, editorial, letter, public statement, recent news event to:
 - correct or clarify information or perceptions;
 - provide more information;
 - give an opinion or point of view;
 - introduce or reinforce a message;
 - to compliment the media on balanced, accurate coverage of an issue.
- ☐ In deciding whether to write a letter to the editor, consider the impact that it will have. Will it only add fuel to the fire?

Getting ready

- ☐ Check the letter to the editor requirements of the publication to which you are submitting your letter.
- ☐ Read letters that have been published in the past.
- ☐ To ensure that you have correctly interpreted the information, talk to someone else about the article, news story, etc. that is prompting you to write.
- ☐ Collect your thoughts on paper.

Style pointers

- ☐ Refer, in your first sentence, to the article that caused you to write.
- ☐ Keep your letter brief - make one or two points and state your main point clearly, ideally in the first or second sentence.
- ☐ Use short sentences and paragraphs.
- ☐ Make your first line attention grabbing by making a play on words or using alliteration.
- ☐ Be forceful, professional and objective, not inflammatory or offensive - do not attack the writer, but rather challenge the facts of the argument.
- ☐ Give the story a human side - consider including a personal or organizational perspective or experience.
- ☐ Your letter should stand on its own as readers may not have read the original story.
- ☐ Don't use acronyms or jargon.

General Pointers

- ☐ Draft and redraft - read and reread your letters.
- ☐ Ask someone else to read the letter to make sure your meaning is clear.
- ☐ Make sure your facts are correct, and where you quote facts, be sure to provide the reference, e.g. "In their December 3rd Daily, Statistics Canada states...
- ☐ When possible, find others to write letters as well.
- ☐ Respond as quickly as possible - within 1 to 3 days.
- ☐ If you are sending your response by e-mail, include the text of the letter in the body of your message and not as an attachment.
- ☐ Write to different sections of the paper or directly to the journalist when it is appropriate. For example, if it is a factual error, you may want to point this out directly to the journalist.
- ☐ Provide your full name, address and phone number and sign hard copy letters.
- ☐ Do not write too often - choose your battles carefully.
- ☐ Follow up to make sure your letter was received. If it was published, take note of the parts that were edited out. If it was not published, you may want to follow up to find out if there was a specific reason.

OPINION EDITORIALS (OP-EDS)

Op-eds are very difficult to get published due to the limited number appearing in any one publication and the volume of submissions received by editors. However, when they are published they reach a wide audience, for like letters to the editor, op-eds are one of the most read sections of any publication.

Why write an Op-Ed?

- ☐ To raise public awareness, influence public officials, create dialogue and suggest solutions to issues.

Length and structure

- ☐ The recommended word count for an op-ed is usually between 600 to 800 words. Check the requirements of the publication(s) to which you intend to submit the op-ed.
- ☐ The structure should include:
 - A lead paragraph stating the purpose of the op-ed (what's the issue and what do you intend to say about it) and linking it to a recent event (suggested length - 40 words);
 - The main body of the op-ed which contains the bulk of information (550 to 650 words); and
 - The closing (25 words).

Style pointers

- ☐ Clearly state your point.
- ☐ Keep the language clear and simple.
- ☐ The first paragraph should grab the reader's attention. You may want to use a personal story or concrete example.
- ☐ Write in the active voice in a personal or storytelling way.
- ☐ Like in other communications, avoid acronyms and jargon.
- ☐ Give your op-ed a short title.

General Pointers

- ☐ Consider asking a well-known individual to write the op-ed on your behalf.
- ☐ Write a cover letter to briefly explain your subject, why it is relevant and why it will capture the interest of readers, and to provide your background.



COMMUNICATING WITH OFFICIALS

COMMUNICATING IN WRITING

Below are some suggestions to keep in mind when writing to elected or non-elected officials:¹⁹

- ☐ Keep it short and simple.
- ☐ Do not attach lengthy background information - instead, attach a one page, bullet form summary.
- ☐ State your purpose in writing in the first line, e.g. "I am writing to ..." or "The purpose of this letter is to..."
- ☐ State what you want and describe who you are in the second paragraph.
- ☐ Use the third paragraph to provide:
 - rationale for your request;
 - relevant facts;
 - supporting materials (e.g. support for your views); and/or
 - implications, impact, consequences.

MEETINGS²⁰

- ☐ Arranging a meeting with an elected official.
 - Call the constituency office and make an appointment.
 - Speak with the assistant - state who you are and why you are calling.
 - Offer to send advance information.
 - If the elected official is not available, meet with the assistant.
 - Once a date and time are confirmed, forward any advance information including who will be attending the meeting (name, title and short bio if appropriate).
- ☐ Before the meeting:
 - Research the elected official's background - know where they stand on issues (check their website or that of the party they represent).
 - Know the position of the elected official's party on issues.
 - Know the latest information on the issues you will be raising.
 - Use this knowledge to prepare topics of discussion. Are there linkages?
 - Focus on solutions.
- ☐ At the meeting:
 - Introduce your organization.
 - Explain its mission, goals and objectives
 - Describe the volunteers and those served by UW - C.
 - Introduce and explain the issues on the agenda.
 - Talk about your experience using examples to illustrate both problems and solutions.
 - Talk about solutions that are feasible at the community level.
 - Invite the elected representative to take a tour, participate in a function, etc.
 - Offer to provide your expertise when needed.
 - Take notes.
- ☐ After the meeting:
 - Evaluate the meeting.
 - Call and thank the elected official.
 - Write a letter of thanks.

¹⁹ Adapted from *Be H.I.P.P. : Have Influence of Public Policy* published by the YMCA with the assistance of HRDC

²⁰ Adapted from *Communicating with your MP: A How To Kit for Voluntary Organizations*, published by the Voluntary Sector Roundtable

- Write a brief press release for the local paper to reinforce the message you delivered to the MP (NOTE: The press release must contain exactly the same information as was provided to the elected official.)
- Put the elected official on your mailing list and forward regular updates.
- Set up a follow-up meeting to take place at an appropriate interval.

☐ Final Tips

- Be on time.
- Don't take more time than was allotted.
- Answer questions openly and honestly.
- Be a good listener.
- Ask good questions that keep the discussion focused.
- Plan a condensed version of your presentation in case the meeting time is reduced.
- Prepare an information package that you can leave behind including a one-page summary of your main points in large print.



PEARLS OF WISDOM ON CONVENING²¹

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLAYERS TO SIT AT THE TABLE

- Don't preach to the converted by inviting just the groups attached to the issue.
- Partners must have sufficient influence to align resources behind the problem and bring their constituents to the table.
- Government must be invited to the table to minimize the adversarial dynamic that often sets in between government and the social services sector. If properly facilitated, the group will *collectively* identify issues and solutions.
- Include people who are experiencing the problem, not just politicians and executive directors. It's a more dynamic mix, makes the table 'real' and possibly inspirational.
- Collaborations must involve public officials, but not be totally identified with any given public official. They must transcend partisanship.
- Select the chief bureaucrats (authorized decision- makers responsible for implementation) rather than the politicians.
- Partners must have genuine interest and commitment to the issue. It is preferable to lose an important organization than to fill a seat with someone who has been assigned there.
- A notable corporate or civic torchbearer gives the collaboration visibility and momentum. Some suggest that the most influential corporate donor be the Chair. This individual must be well-liked and respected by all parties.
- Business leaders are the unlikely messengers for social issues, and therefore perceived to be impartial and credible. Their involvement naturally draws media attention to the issue.
- Don't invite people to sit at the table (or don't join their table) if they can't present their argument in a strategic and respectful way. They will jeopardize your credibility.

DON'T BITE OFF MORE THAN YOU CAN CHEW

Carve out parts of the issue that have tangible solutions, rather than take on the whole issue. Set very focused objectives and outcomes and build a good business plan; it's about problem solving. Be clear about why you are convening and realistic about what it can achieve.

BUILD THE BUSINESS CASE FOR ADDRESSING THE ISSUE AND CONVINCE STAKEHOLDERS WITH DOCUMENTED FACTS

Decision makers, particularly business leaders, need strong incentives and supports to become involved. They must be shown with empirical data that addressing the issue is a good investment, and that collaborating on it is in their best interests. The ability to make a strong case is especially important during the early stages of convening when support from the right people is crucial for future success.

GET READY BEHIND THE SCENES

Work one-on-one with partners of the collaboration before the first meeting to clarify objectives, ascertain their views, and develop agreement about the basic issues. This saves time and helps assure that there is common sense of purpose by the first meeting. Start building an understanding of the areas that could be best allied to maximize impact.

TIMING IS EVERYTHING

You must be nimble to seize the window of opportunity on a current issue or to capture the public's interest. Beware that bureaucracies don't usually lend themselves to responsive convening.

²¹ Extracted from *Achieving Community Impact through Convening*, A report prepared by Ruby Lam for the United Way of Greater Toronto, August 2003

TRUMPET THE ISSUE, NOT UNITED WAY'S NEW ROLE

Avoid a big rollout of United Way's new role (people don't care). Communications should focus on how compelling and urgent the issue is, so much so that it necessitates an expanded role for United Way.

AVOID A "WE/THEY" DYNAMIC

For a collaboration to be successful, the group needs to evolve and work together. A polarized "we/they" dynamic where members of the collaboration are deeply entrenched in their positions squashes this. To avoid an impasse, include members who are not traditionally identified with the issue. These individuals (often business leaders) are removed from the tension, don't take things for granted, and tend to ask probing questions.

USE APPROPRIATE TACTICS

Rarely should frontal advocacy be employed. Whenever appropriate, conduct business collegially behind closed doors. Don't shame those whom you're trying to influence. Don't side openly with controversial advocacy groups. Criticize the government policy, not the government. Political activity is good, but partisan political activity isn't.



Do's AND DON'TS²²

Do:

- ✓ Present yourself as constructive, professional, well-prepared, well-connected, helpful, solution oriented. You are a key player critical to the solution, not to be ignored or left out.
 - Politics is the art of the possible, offer solutions.
 - Recognize that you have power and rights - the power to help or hinder the government achieve its goals - the right to be heard and treated in a timely and professional manner.
 - Put the consumer/voter first vs. your organization's own self-interest.
 - Be well prepared.
 - Check your facts.
 - Map out key messages.
- ✓ Recognize the importance of media, marketing and persuasive communications.
 - Tell stories that put a human face to your issue.
 - Start low-key, you can raise your voice later if necessary.
- ✓ Remember it's all about people and relationships.
 - Look for opportunities, listen to what's on decision-makers' minds.
 - Start at the bureaucratic level. Don't worry about going higher up within the public service, just let people know and give them a chance.
 - Create and cultivate opinion leaders.
 - Work with others, especially unexpected allies or people from other sectors.
 - Make sure you're knocking on the right door - the person or organization has the authority to do what you're asking.
 - Don't be swayed by titles. Those at lower levels in the public service can champion new approaches and help remove obstacles to change. Look for the social entrepreneurs to help you along the way.
 - Solidarity works. The more groups and sectors that are in agreement with you, the stronger your case.
 - Third-party endorsements are helpful.
- ✓ Avoid win-lose situations. It's easier to change things in government the earlier you intervene in the policy development process.
- ✓ Be:
 - prepared to compromise on strategies and priorities, but not principles.
 - flexible, the public policy arena can be unpredictable.
 - patient and persistent. Keep in mind that you are in this for the long haul.
- ✓ Work within the experience of your group members. Stick to issues that correspond to your experience and expertise (and mandate).
- ✓ Draw back or pull out if the timing is not appropriate or if you might damage your credibility.
- ✓ Recognize there are limited resources in government; the squeaky wheel does get heard; officials want to see an issue resolved and off their plate.

²² Adapted from *Be H.I.P.P. : Have Influence of Public Policy* published by the YMCA with the assistance of HRDC

- ✓ Express your case in terms of government priorities.
- ✓ Treat all the media fairly providing the same information at the same time.

DON'T

- ✗ Invest a lot of time and energy in something that's not a priority for your organization.
- ✗ Think you've been heard and you'll get action just because you had a meeting with the minister or mayor.
- ✗ Be surprised by unintended consequences.
- ✗ Weigh your agenda too heavily with self-interest as you'll be seen as a client of the government rather than a potential partner.
- ✗ Burn your bridges along the way or do end runs with politicians or public servants. Decision-makers can change positions and you never know who you may need on your side.
- ✗ Talk down to or belittle anyone.
- ✗ Repeat similar versions of the same argument.
- ✗ Let your emotions get the best of you.



EVALUATION TEMPLATE [DOWNLOADABLE VERSION](#)

Goal			
Objective/Outcome		Indicator	Measurement Method
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		

Goal			
Objective/Outcome		Indicator	Measurement Method
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		
	➡		

Publications

General

Accord between the Voluntary Sector and the Government of Canada, Voluntary Sector Initiative, December 2001

A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue, Voluntary Sector Initiative, October 2002

Decision-Making Processes and Central Agencies in Canada: Federal, Provincial and Territorial Practices, The Privy Council Office, Government of Canada, 1998

http://collection.nlc-bnc.ca/100/200/301/pco-bcp/decision_making_processes-e/decision_making-e.pdf

Advocacy

A Guide to Government Relations for Directors of Not-for-profit Organizations, Huw Williams and Lou Riccoboni, Canadian Society of Association Executives, 2003

Advocacy on the Agenda: Preparing voluntary boards for public policy participation, Volunteer Canada, 2003, with the financial support of Human Resources Development Canada

An Introduction to Advocacy: Training Guide, Ritu R. Sharma, Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA) Project operated by the Academy for Educational Development

Be H.I.P.P. : Have Influence on Public Policy: A Manual and Tool Kit on How Voluntary Organizations Can Influence Public Policy, YMCA with the Assistance of Human Resources Development Canada

Public Policy and Public Participation: Engaging Citizens and Community in the Development of Public Policy, produced by Bruce L. Smith of BLSmith Groupwork Inc. for Population and Public Health Branch, Atlantic Region, Health Canada (September 2003)

http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/regions/atlantic/pdf/pub_policy_partic_e.pdf

Risk And Opportunity Assessment: Engaging in the Health Policy Process, Voluntary Organizations involved in collaborative Engagement (VOICE) in health policy , 2003

http://www.projectvoice.ca/Get_Involved_Demos_Risk_Assessment.htm

The Lobbying and Advocacy Handbook for Nonprofit Organizations, Marcia Avner, Minnesota Council of Nonprofits, 2002

United Way of America Public Policy Handbook, United Way of America, 2003

Communications

Communicating with your MP: A How to Kit for Voluntary Organizations, Voluntary Sector Roundtable

Websites

Advocacy

- ☐ **NP Action** is “an online resource that supports capacity building for non-profit advocacy by collecting the best practices of seasoned advocates and engaging newcomers with a wide range of updated topics and tools.” <http://www.npaction.org/>
- ☐ **Community Works** is a free website for non-profit organizations looking for basic skills development on all aspects of non-profit management. <http://home.connection.com/~regan/index.html>

- ❑ **Non-Profit Good Practice Guide** is a project of the Philanthropic and Nonprofit Knowledge Management Initiative (PNKM) at the [Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership](#). The Johnson Center, a component of [Grand Valley State University](#), began in 1992 as a multidisciplinary university-wide center, developed with the support of the [W.K. Kellogg Foundation](#). With a strong focus on community service, we are dedicated to the study and teaching of philanthropy, volunteerism and nonprofit management. It provides links to numerous other websites. <http://www.nonprofitbasics.org/Default.aspx>
- ❑ **Community Toolbox** offers over 6,000 pages of practical information to support work in promoting community health and development. It is created and maintained by the Work Group on Health Promotion and Community Development at the University of Kansas in Lawrence, Kansas (U.S.A). Developed in collaboration with AHEC/Community Partners in Amherst, Massachusetts, the site has been on line since 1995. Information on advocacy can be accessed via the following URL <http://ctb.ku.edu/tools/advocateforchange/index.jsp>
- ❑ **Rural Communities Impacting Policy (RCIP)** is a three-year project involving a collaboration between the Atlantic Health Promotion Research Centre and the Coastal Communities Network. The goal is to help rural and coastal Nova Scotians take a more active role in policy development. The site contains practical tools and information to help people influence and develop policy that contributes to the health and sustainability of their communities. <http://www.ruralnovascotia.ca/index.asp>
- ❑ **Participating in Federal Public Policy** is a Guide for the Voluntary Sector, a resource to help voluntary organizations participate in the federal public policy development process. The guide also gives federal government departments insight into how to involve their voluntary sector counterparts more effectively. The development of this resource was funded by the Government of Canada through the Capacity Joint Table (CJT) of the Voluntary Sector Initiative. For more information on this announcement please go to: http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/policy_guide.cfm

Communications

- ❑ Redwood Peace Coalition, *Activist How To Media Guide*, http://redwoodpeace.org/media_guide.html
- ❑ Media Awareness Network - <http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/index.cfm>



SECTION 13 - STORIES

INTRODUCTION

United Ways - Centraides have been successfully engaging in advocacy for some time. These efforts have been usually undertaken by individual UWs- Cs or in some instances, by a coalition of UWs-Cs when the issue has broader implications.

The case studies presented here are good examples of the type of activities that UWs-Cs have engaged in, primarily on an individual basis. They do not necessarily reflect the degree of intra-Movement communication, cooperation and collaboration envisioned by the Strategic Alignment process.

The case studies are presented under four categories:

- A. The category **Research-based Advocacy** presents cases where research played an important role;
- B. **Agency Advocacy** looks at a case where a UW - C intervened with the government on behalf of agencies.
- C. **Convening-based Advocacy** examines a situation involving the coming together of a community around a specific segment of the population.
- D. **Response-based Advocacy** looks at cases that involved advocacy on a particular issue that emerged as a result of government action.



A. RESEARCH-BASED ADVOCACY

United Ways - Centraides have conducted research to:

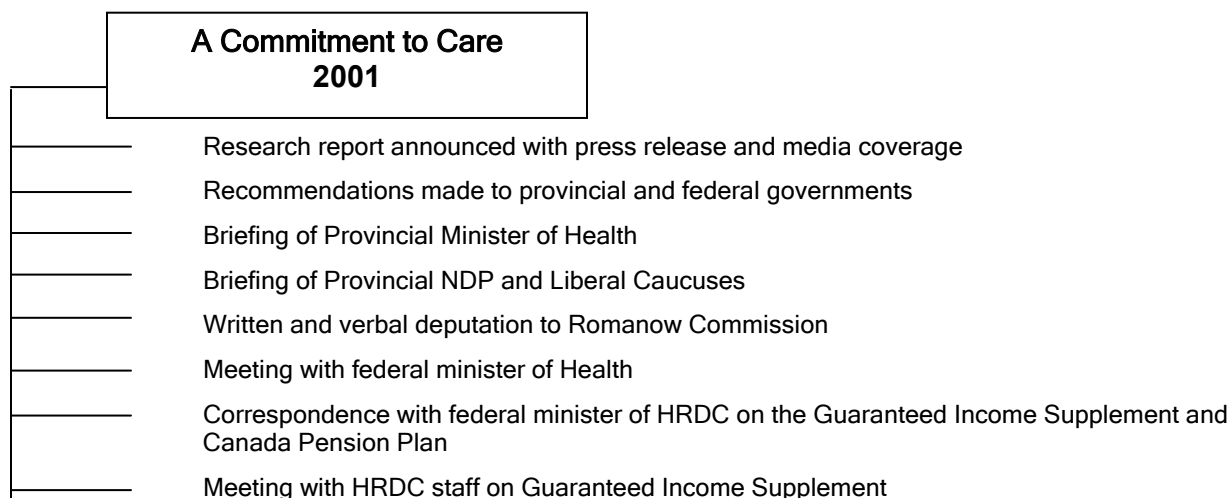
- establish funding priorities;
- track local socio-economic trends; and
- study key issues affecting the social service sector in their communities.

They have used this research to advocate for, and successfully bring about government policy and program changes.

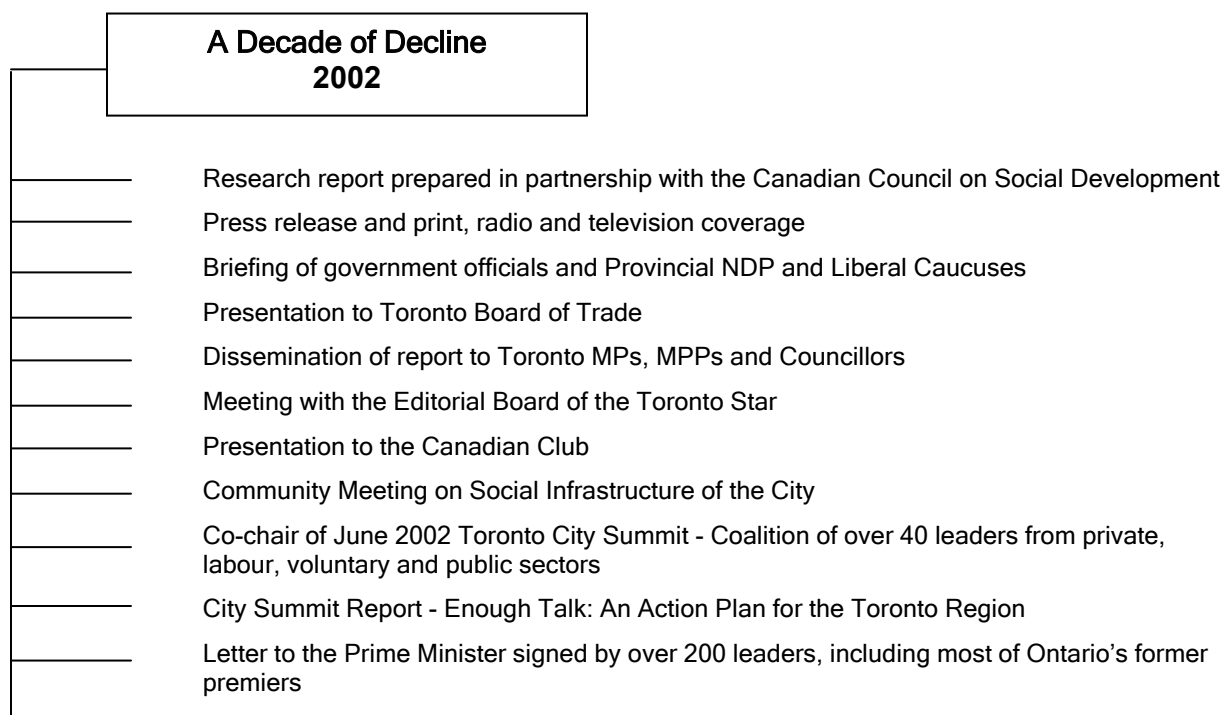
The following are examples of advocacy that arose from or were enhanced by research reports. They include:

1. UWGT - A Commitment to Care
2. UWGT - A Decade of Decline
3. Centraide Québec - The Fight Against Poverty

A COMMITMENT TO CARE - UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO²³



A DECADE OF DECLINE - UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO²⁴



²³ Discussion Paper on Advocacy for United Way of Canada, prepared by the United Way of Greater Toronto, May 2002

²⁴ Ibid

THE FIGHT AGAINST POVERTY - CENTRAIDE QUÉBEC²⁵

- ☐ Examination of major trends in philanthropy led Centraide Québec to reflect on their future and establish a new path.
- ☐ Study by the University of Laval examined social problems in the region and role of Centraide.
- ☐ Centraide Québec established Board of Directors Committee to evaluate current positioning and develop an action plan
- ☐ Board of Directors decides that focus of Québec Centraide's intervention efforts should be on the fight against poverty
- ☐ Three Strategies
 - ☐ Strategy 1: favour interventions that break the cycle of poverty
 - Identify five intervention areas
 - Review the allocation process
 - Partner with agencies
 - ☐ Strategy 2: increase awareness about poverty and its consequences
 - Developed key communications messages
 - Published a social assessment of the region
 - Published a document on the social costs of poverty *A Society that is Shooting Itself in the Foot*
 - Autumn 2003 - published *We are not Alone in the World*
 - Drafted and adopted a social platform
 - Conducted a survey of public perceptions about poverty
 - Governments
 - discussed changing the way that poverty is measured with the federal government
 - creation of Bill 112, *Act to fight poverty and social exclusion*
 - Lunchtime presentations on poverty by well-known individuals
 - ☐ Strategy 3: create and support the creation of concrete initiatives. Worked in partnership to:
 - Organize 3 anti-poverty rallies
 - Create sector work tables
 - Establish a thrift shop for used items
 - Create a business and social engagement award
 - Establish a day centre, children's forum, an access to credit program
- ☐ Communications
 - Created a special marketing brand
 - Tools: CentraidExpress bulletin; Web site
- ☐ Funding the fight against poverty
 - Created 39 funds
 - Percentage of allocation budget reserved for poverty interventions
 - Long term - implementation of planned donations dedicated to fight against poverty
- ☐ Impacts on poverty, Centraide Québec's role, public perception of poverty and Centraide, and relationships with all sectors

Click here for the full text of [Centraide Québec's story](#) in the Community Building Toolkit

²⁵ Adapted from a presentation prepared by Pierre Métivier for a meeting between the UWC-CC and the United Way of America, October 2003

UNITED WAY OF LONDON & MIDDLESEX PROTECTING CHILDREN IS EVERYBODY'S BUSINESS

1990 to 2001 - A dramatic increase is witnessed in number of referrals for service and admissions to Children's Aid Society (CAS) of London and Middlesex (70% increase from 1995-2000 with similar increases across Ontario).

2001 - CAS of London and Middlesex identifies a possible source of funding. CAS asks the United Way of London & Middlesex to apply to the city and the County of Middlesex for these funds for the purpose of conducting research on the issue. They also support UW's application.

Additional funds are provided by an anonymous donor and the UW.

2001 to 2003 - UW commissions a team of researchers from the University of Western Ontario to conduct a study to determine causes and impacts of increased number of CAS referrals for service and admissions on vulnerable children in the community. A lead researcher (psychology) is selected who engages two additional researchers (psychology and sociology). All are well respected and considered to be extremely knowledgeable in their fields of inquiry. To round out the research team, a graduate student is hired on a full time basis and six summer students are hired to review CAS files.

An Advisory Team is established to help guide the research. Members are from the health and social services areas of both the public (municipal government) and voluntary sectors. The Advisory Team proves to be instrumental in keeping the research on target and retaining its ultimate practicality. It also brings an added degree of neutrality to the process.

Researchers begin by exploring five popular hypotheses used to explain the increase in CAS referrals and admissions (e.g. lack of experience among new social workers). Once research proved these hypotheses had no basis in fact, researchers examine possible contributing factors.

The research demonstrates that there is no one cause, but rather a complex combination of factors that have contributed to the increases including: woman and child abuse, poverty, mental health issues, poor parenting skills and intergenerational CAS involvement.

Communications Strategy

The UW of London & Middlesex employed a "no surprises" approach to both its relationships and its communications strategy. Throughout the research period, data and information are shared with the city, as well as the CAS (e.g. presentations were made to key CAS officials).

Research results are also tested with a range of UW funded and non-funded agencies. The purpose of this is to:

- ensure there are no surprises when the report is issued;
- ensure organizations are comfortable with the findings and able to speak to them; and
- get feedback on potential solutions.

This process also helps confirm research findings. Initially, community practitioners did not see the value of the research since it proved what they already knew. However, they soon recognized the powerful statement made by the hard facts uncovered by the research.

October 2003 UW London & Middlesex releases:

- the Report, *Protecting Children is Everybody's Business*;
- a summary report
- a one-page fact sheet containing research highlights;
- a Challenge to the Community issued by the Project's Advisory Team; and
- a media advisory.

In addition, a CD-ROM is prepared with the Report's Executive Summary, the overview, Technical Reports and a PowerPoint presentation. Presenting the information in many formats enables other organizations to use the information in presentations, newsletters, bulletins, etc.

A comprehensive distribution list is developed and over 400 information kits are distributed.

All materials are made available on the UW and CAS websites.

Production savings are realized by involving staff and a student at the University of Western Ontario in formatting and reproducing communications materials.

The Results

London Free Press publishes a full week's worth of stories on report's findings, which are picked up by other media.

November 2003 - The local CAS director and Executive Director of London & Middlesex appear before the Social Services Committees of both the city and county. They were initially given a 15 minute time frame but committee members were so interested, the time frame was expanded. The city government asks the administration to prepare a report for the following January for further discussion. Media coverage followed the presentation.

December 2003 - The local CAS director and Executive Director of London & Middlesex speak at the provincial meeting of Children's Aid Societies.

At the time this was written:

- the report had been seen by newly elected Premier of Ontario;
- the new Labour Minister had had an informal meeting with Executive Director of UW of London & Middlesex with plans for a more formal meeting in future; other MPPs have also called to discuss the report.
- research results were used by CAS and nine other children's agencies in a meeting with local Members of the Provincial Parliament who indicated an interest in working with the group (there are plans for another meeting);
- the report was being used to brief new government ministers, e.g. the Ontario Children's Aid Society used it to brief the new Children's Minister;
- London's mayor included the report in her inaugural address and plans on emphasizing the importance of the report in her upcoming 'state of the city' address;
- Labour unions indicated they would be highlighting the report in their newsletters; and
- a local TV station had asked to do a current affairs show prior to the January 2004 meeting of the new council.

An Action Committee is established to guide future activities related to the research findings, to maintain the momentum generated by the research and to report back publicly on progress. The committee is looking into holding public forums of some type.

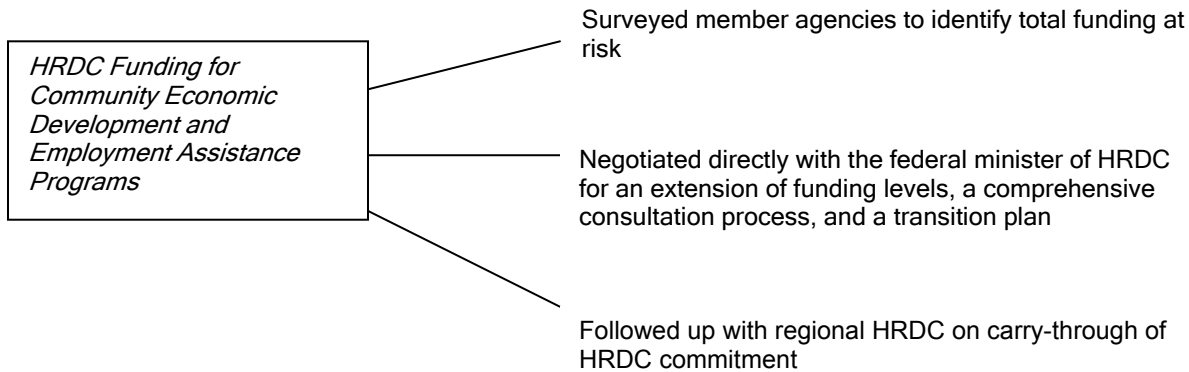


B. AGENCY ADVOCACY

The community agencies funded by UW-C often face issues that threaten the viability of their organizations and/or programs. Individual United Ways -Centraides in their communities, or collectively by provincial or regional United Way - Centraide bodies when the issues have had broader implications, have successfully taken up many of these issues.

LOSS OF HRDC FUNDING - UNITED WAY OF GREATER TORONTO²⁶

Member agencies were facing the loss of HRDC funding for Community Economic Development Programs as well as restrictions to eligibility for Employment Assistance Programs. In response, the UWGT:



²⁶ Discussion Paper on Advocacy for United Way of Canada, prepared by the United Way of Greater Toronto, May 2002



C. CONVENING-BASED ADVOCACY

UNITED WAY OF THE CENTRAL & SOUTH OKANAGAN/SIMILKAMEEN DEALING WITH POVERTY ISSUES: HOMELESSNESS AND TRANSPORTATION

- ☐ 1999 - Board members attend regional UW conference - return with community building vision and suggest that UW start viewing community needs through community building lens.
- ☐ UW becomes involved in Kelowna Poverty Task Force, established following a meeting on poverty convened by Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC). UW hosts a second meeting one month later resulting in emergence of a smaller Kelowna Poverty Task Force.
- ☐ October 2000 - Task Force sponsors poverty symposium to:
 - raise public awareness of poverty as an issue in our community;
 - bring organizations together to connect with each other and demonstrate their programs and services;
 - give people who live in poverty an opportunity to become more familiar with available services and programs; and
 - provide a platform from which the voices of the poor could be heard.
- ☐ Symposium receives significant media coverage, which raises public awareness about poverty and UW's awareness about related issues: homelessness and sub-standard housing, need for low-cost dental care, and need for accessible transportation.

Outcome in area of Homelessness

- ☐ UW executive director chairs homelessness steering committee, which develops community plan on homelessness and receives \$1.9 million in federal funding for implementation.
- ☐ Claudette Bradshaw, the federal Minister Responsible for Homelessness, visits Kelowna and in a community address, remarks on how lucky the community is to have UW at the homelessness table.

Outcome in area of Transportation

- ☐ October 2000 - Kelowna Poverty Task Force conducts poverty survey that reveals lack of transportation worsens challenges faced by people living in poverty. A lack of a \$1.50 bus fare can make it impossible to get to the food bank, a job interview, or a medical appointment.
- ☐ December 2000 - As chair of Poverty Task Force, UW executive director makes transportation proposal to City Council presenting statistics on the number of people living in poverty and explaining how lack of transportation adds to the problems of the poor. Task Force proposes that City provide transit tickets to front line agencies that work regularly with target clientele. UW designs the program and offers to administer it, monitor usage patterns and report back to the Regional Transportation Committee on a regular basis.
- ☐ City Council agrees on two conditions: 1) people who receive bus tickets must really need them, and 2) recipients would not otherwise use the transit system as paying customers.
- ☐ March 2001 - Regional Transportation Commission agrees on two conditions: 1) people who receive bus tickets must really need them, and 2) recipients would not otherwise use the transit system as paying customers, and Transit Assistance program comes into effect providing agencies with more than up to 350 transit tickets each month (later increased to 400, then 500 per month).

Outcomes for UW the Central and South Okanagan/Similkameen

- ☐ Profile is raised to such an extent that provincial government department asks it to distribute \$420,000 to support programs and services for children and families in Central and South Okanagan. Further increases public profile, adds to credibility, and creates opportunities to leverage dollars from other funders.

Lessons Learned and Recommendations:

- ☐ Keep lines of communication open, e.g. present periodic reports to City Council on key issues to inform and involve the municipality, and generate media coverage that informs broader community.
- ☐ Present problems in a neutral manner and propose solutions that are easy for governments and other partners to endorse and implement.
- ☐ If capacity is limited, concentrate efforts on bigger issues, larger tables, and places where UW reputation and resources can be leveraged. Take small steps and build incrementally on success.

Click here for the full text of the [Kelowna story](#) in the Community Building Toolkit.

UNITED WAY OF CALGARY AND AREA CALGARY CHILDREN'S INITIATIVE²⁷

- ❑ 1998 - UW of Calgary sees need for effort to deliver positive systemic changes for all of Calgary's children, rather than just continuing with band-aid programs.
- ❑ UW starts Calgary Children's Initiative (Calgary's version of Success by 6®) but triples age range, with one working group focused on ages 0-5; another on 5-12 and another on 12-Young Adults.
- ❑ Convenes Council of Champions - 25 high-level representatives from all three levels of government, health, education, faith and social services sectors - to marshal resources and generate support for early childhood development.
- ❑ Council takes first two years to learn how to work together, but eventually mounts a successful program that today receives wide support from community.
- ❑ UW seeds Initiative with \$1 million/year for first three years. Since then, initiative supported by anonymous donor. 4.8 program staff support the Children's Initiative.
- ❑ UW convenes three more tables around urban aboriginal youth and education issues, sustained poverty reduction and seniors.

Observations

- ❑ Decisions regarding which issue to convene on is technically taken up at Board committee level, but choice strongly guided by staff who know tolerances of Board members and public. In 2003, a priority-setting framework piloted in the Children's Initiative, which includes the following principles:
 - There is a proven need
 - Community consultations show the public's receptivity and readiness for United Way to address the issue
 - Key stakeholders say 'yes'
 - The issue falls within existing focus areas
 - The effort creates long-term sustainable change
- ❑ Despite active role in convening, UW has arm's length relationship to collaborative initiatives, e.g., The Council of Champions for the Calgary Children's Initiative, for instance, has responsibility for endorsing the overall business direction and investment plan of the Children's Initiative and, as such, does not report to the United Way Board (although the United Way President and Vice-President do sit on it). The Children's Initiative reports operationally to United Way.
- ❑ Board now creating a committee structure to oversee collaborative initiatives.
- ❑ Initiative embodies model where lead agency's convening activities are minimally governed by Board. Model illustrates a 'third way,' where an agency might take active leadership in convening or advocacy but distance itself from inherent risks.
- ❑ Whether to advocate and potentially increase community impact - yet risk losing neutrality - is a difficult question for social service agencies that are highly accountable to public. By separating out governance function, UW of Calgary model may alleviate Board's fears about taking on a convening or advocacy role.

²⁷ *Achieving Community Impact through Convening*, A report prepared by Ruby Lam for the United Way of Greater Toronto, August 2003

UNITED WAY OF PETERBOROUGH AND DISTRICT DEVELOPING A MUNICIPAL SOCIAL PLAN

- ☐ Executive Director meets city mayor and county warden on developing social plan.
- ☐ UW provides \$7,500, city and county each provide \$10,000 and Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC) provides funding for employment grant.
- ☐ Politically neutral project steering committee established including representatives from all partners.
- ☐ Three goals of steering committee:
 - determine status of current services and identify gaps;
 - identify top issues in community; and
 - develop plan of action that would create partnerships to work on solutions.
- ☐ Three-phase process to achieve goals:
 - phase one: identify community issues;
 - phase two: develop recommendations and start building partnerships to work on solutions; and
 - phase three: monitor progress, review plan and update as required.

Phase one

- ☐ UW takes administrative lead. Peterborough Social Planning Council conducts research and provides steering committee with social plans produced and processes used by other communities for consideration.
- ☐ Steering committee develops criteria for plan and drafts list of topics/social issues facing community - used to develop community survey of social priorities - residents asked to choose eight-ten most important issues.
- ☐ Respondents disagree with approach - cite interdependence of issues and need to address them together.
- ☐ Steering committee follows advice and creates twelve broad topics encompassing a wide range of social issues.
- ☐ Town hall meetings in city and eight townships - participants asked to consider list of topics, identify strengths and resources available in communities, and note major concerns or gaps.
- ☐ Background papers outline community capacity and challenges in four areas: access to arts, culture, and recreation; economic/income security; food security; and human rights and community involvement. Used in community round table discussions to draft goals and action strategies.
- ☐ Steering committee consulted on existing planning and research initiatives to develop goals and strategies in four areas: accessibility, child care and child development, housing, and safe communities.
- ☐ Steering committee issues report - *Peterborough County-City Municipal Social Plan*.

Phase two

- ☐ Social Planning Council assumes administrative responsibility for phase two - produces recommendations and action plan and starts building partnerships. Includes commitment to develop more formal relationship with local office of Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and GPAEDC Business Retention and Expansion Program.

Phase three

- ☐ Development of process to monitor plan implementation incorporated into formal city/county committee - Greater Peterborough and Area Economic Development Committee, with UW represented on Advisory Committee.

Outcomes

- ☐ UW develops five funding priorities - reflected in social plan:
 - Access to services for rural and isolated citizens
 - Poverty and its consequences among marginalized, vulnerable and abused individuals and segments of community's population
 - Increasing community education and direct action on programs and services leading to the prevention of serious health and social problems
 - Resources and services for frail/disabled, isolated and abused seniors
 - Services to support development, training and recognition of volunteers and community education about implications of increasing reliance on voluntarism
- ☐ UW working to shift funding to priorities - setting aside 2.5% of net campaign for new grant program targeting new and emerging issues.
- ☐ Campaign growth leading to funding of new member agencies - growth partly attributable to prominent community building role, increased visibility and new opportunities with corporations, groups and individuals.
- ☐ Director of city's social services offers government call centre as potential facility for future 211 site and considers allocating funding to needs in social plan.
- ☐ Townships incorporating issue topics in their own plans.

Lessons learned and recommendations

- ☐ Working with ten local governments to develop municipal social plan achieved level of buy-in that UW could not have achieved on its own.
- ☐ Town hall meetings and roundtable discussions revealed that issues facing townships and city are similar and that providing safe forum for people to discuss sensitive issues such as discrimination is important.
- ☐ Tips for working with government partners include: being open-minded, treating everyone equally, and making sure everyone understands a social plan is not a platform to debate political issues.

Click here for the full text of the [Peterborough story](#) in the Community Building Toolkit.

UNITED WAY OF SASKATOON GOVERNMENT FUNDING CUTBACKS (IMPACT OF CHANGES TO CANADA ASSISTANCE PLAN)

The Issue

- ❑ In 1995, the Federal Government re-defined the terms of reference for the Canada Assistance Plan; the funding vehicle under which transfer payments for health, social service and education are made to the Provinces. The first reductions took place in 1996, reducing the amount previously provided to Saskatchewan by approximately \$100 million: \$25 million of cuts to education, \$25 million to health and \$50 million to social services. Cuts to the province also resulted in cuts to transfer payments to municipalities.
- ❑ The United Way of Saskatoon is the largest non-government funder of health and social services in Saskatoon with funding levels to local agencies ranging from 1% to 77% of an agency's total budget. The United Way of Saskatoon Board of Directors and staff realized the impact in our community could be dramatic with some programs maintaining or even increasing their government funding and others seeing dramatic reductions in government funding. Some important programs in our community would not survive without government support.

The Process

- ❑ The issue was brought to the United Way Agency Liaison committee; a committee of United Way funded agencies, United Way Board members and the Executive Director. This group decided to convene a larger community table with local community-based organizations to:
 1. collect data on the funding impact of the cuts; and
 2. develop a strategy to address minimizing the impact of the cuts.
- ❑ Through this process a number of facts were discovered:
 - approximately 80% of United Way funded agencies also received annual operating grants from the City of Saskatoon Cash Grants program to health and social service agencies;
 - the United Way of Saskatoon and the City were major core funders of community-based organizations; and
 - the City of Saskatoon Cash Grants program would no longer be receiving matching federal dollars to invest in community agencies.

The Plan

- ❑ By consensus at the larger community table, the United Way of Saskatoon took the leadership role for several reasons:
 - 1) United Way would be perceived as a neutral spokesperson not advocating for one particular agency or program, but for an entire system of caring and support in Saskatoon;
 - 2) As a standing community member of the City of Saskatoon Cash Grants program and as a fellow funder, United Way had credibility in the broader community and with the local government; and
 - 3) Since the United Way was not itself providing direct service nor was in receipt of any government funding, United Way had the capacity and resources to lead the process.
- ❑ A strategy was developed with two main outcomes:
 - 1) To lobby City Council to maintain the current level of funding through Cash Grants i.e. not to reduce the fund by the reduction of federal matching dollars;
 - 2) To develop a communication tool to education donors, politicians, etc. with the facts on the impact of funding cuts including getting the message out of what it would mean in dollars for the charitable sector to fund the reduction i.e. an impossibility given current trends in charitable giving and the current tax and economic environment.

The Result

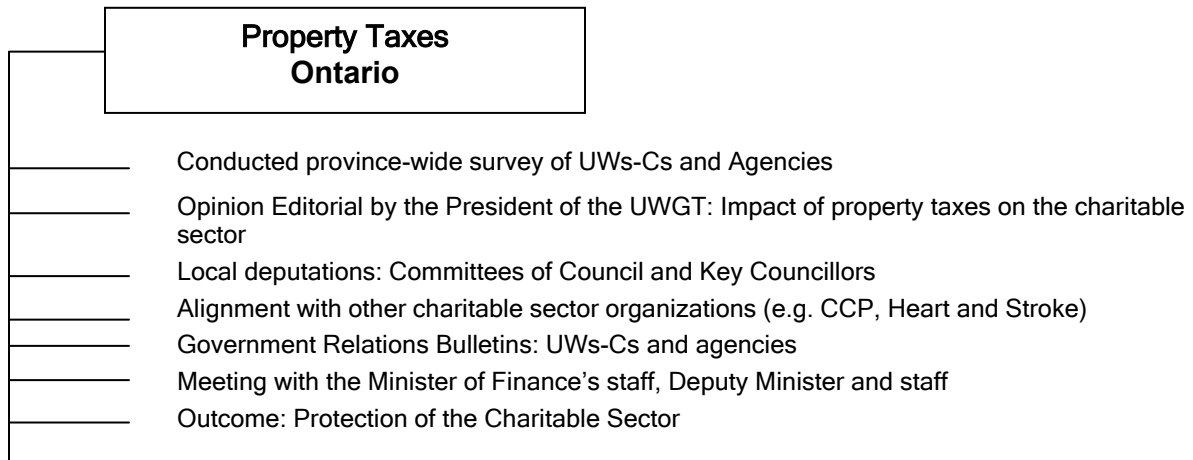
- ❑ Each City Councilor received a personal visit to share the facts about the impact of funding cuts. They were asked to support a motion at City Council to maintain current funding levels and put into place a formula of funding based on dollars per capita so the fund would grow as the City's population grew.
- ❑ The United Way of Saskatoon made a public presentation to City Council after the individual meetings were completed. The motion at City Council was passed.
- ❑ The Information Sheet on Government Cutbacks (communication tool) was shared with as many people and groups as possible. It became an important tool based on local research for agencies to use with their constituencies, including other levels of government. It was also an important tool for campaign staff to use when articulating the need in our community. And finally, it informed the United Way of Saskatoon's strategic planning process as we examined our role and re-affirmed our values around core funding.
- ❑ This was the United Way's first very public foray into advocacy and it has served us well with future activities around advocacy and public policy. Because of the success of this process, our organization, in particular the Board of Directors, is comfortable with an advocacy role, an important pre-requisite as we transform ourselves into a Community Building leader in our community.



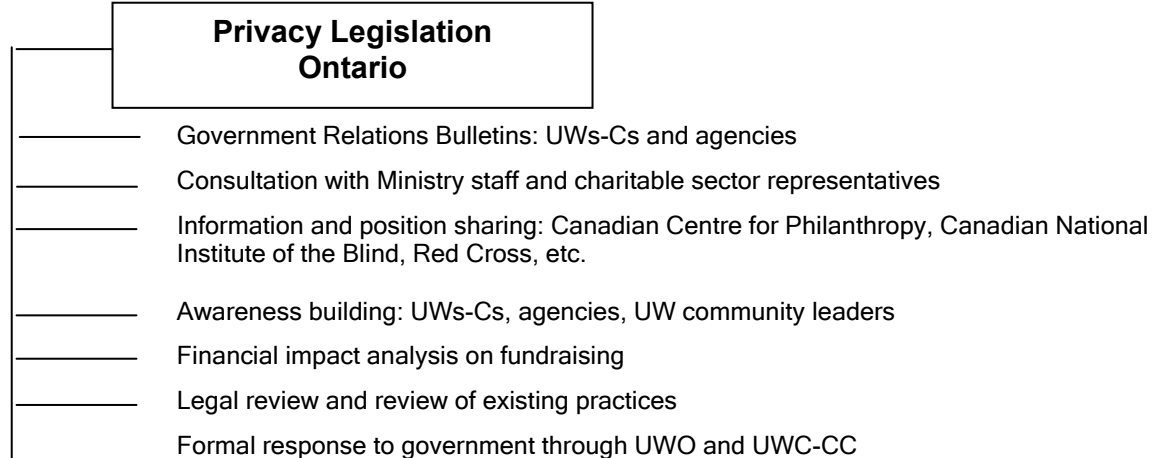
D. RESPONSE-BASED ADVOCACY

Major issues have emerged in each of our communities, which resulted in UWs-Cs taking a leadership role in advocating for solutions. The following are two case studies of response-based advocacy, both from the UWGT.

PROPERTY TAXES IN ONTARIO²⁸



PRIVACY LEGISLATION ONTARIO²⁹



²⁸ Discussion Paper on Advocacy for United Way of Canada, prepared by the United Way of Greater Toronto, May 2002

²⁹ Ibid



ACHIEVING COMMUNITY IMPACT THROUGH ADVOCACY IN THE PUBLIC, PRIVATE AND VOLUNTARY SECTORS

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Mission: "To improve lives and build community by engaging individuals and mobilizing collective action."