

# Advocacy Handbook

A quick guide to successful and fun advocacy



# Steps to Successful Advocacy

**First, it's the Issue** - this is central. It is only an issue that generates enthusiasm and interest, concern, a willingness to work on a project.

**Where does the issue come from?**

- A need in the community
- A concern anywhere
- A request from National or provincial Council

Here are some guidelines to help you plan for a successful Advocacy Campaign!

## 1. Research

This is the most important step. You need to understand the issue:

- What is at stake
- Who is involved, or who could be involved
- The history of the issue and the context it is situated in
- Who is making the decisions
- Which level of government is involved, if any

## 2. Policy

Check if there is CFUW policy, found in the Policy Book, to support you. ([www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org) click on Policy Book, under Advocacy/Policy)

- Also check your provincial resolutions
- If there is no policy, for a local issue, a club can pass its own resolution just as long as it does not conflict with CFUW policies.
- For a provincial or national issue, consider writing a resolution as the first step in advocacy.

## 3. Objectives

Be **SMART** about your objectives:

- **Specific** - are they clearly defined and comprehensible?
- **Measurable** - can each objective be measured in the evaluation?
- **Achievable** - considering other factors (e.g. budget and timescale) are they achievable?
- **Realistic** - are you being realistic given the resources you have?
- **Time** - when do you want to achieve the set objectives?

## Steps to Successful Advocacy Continued..

### 4. Identify Your Audience

Who are you trying to convince? Who is important to achieving your goal?

- The public, other community groups
- Elected officials and/or policy staff
- Your own members
- All the above

### 5. Identify Stakeholders and Allies

Who can you work with, who should be at the table. Find groups and people to help you make your message louder, and to share the work. Identifying stakeholders will also help you identify who the message must be directed to, groups who have a stake in the issue may be able to help you, or they may pose a challenge. Identifying them will help you shape your strategy accordingly.

### 6. Key Messages

What are the main points you want to get across? Outlining some key messages (simplified and concise) is important. How can you use these messages to achieve your objectives? Focus on your audience, and try to use a variety of media to reach out to new people.

### 7. Strategy

This is how you connect the previous 6 points into an overall plan. Working through these steps you will have determined what you need to do and several ways to do it, and who you are talking to. Putting these things into a chronological plan with a strategy to grow momentum and achieve the objectives is how you will create your strategy.

### 8. Double check

Make sure you know the CFUW guidelines for advocacy

- Advocacy action must be based on CFUW policy as found in the *CFUW Policy Book*.
  - If there is no policy a club can pass a local resolution.

## Steps to Successful Advocacy Continued..

- Clubs write to their local elected officials - municipal, provincial and federal; provincial Councils - provincial ministers; national - federal ministers.
  - If an advocacy campaign needs to be directed to other levels or other representatives, that level or club needs to be involved.
- Letters must be sent out under the signature of the club President, or designated member of the executive, on club letterhead.
- The individual club member is encouraged to write to any politician, but she may not write “on behalf of CFUW”, or use letterhead.

### 9. Tactics

Tactics are the actions you take. The most effective campaign includes a number of different tactics.

Don't rule out anything, but be sure to use tactics strategically and in an order that makes sense.

#### √ Meetings – a CFUW strength

- ⑩ Organize special events such as program nights, town halls, public meetings, forums, speaker series, film screenings, art shows, luncheons. Raising awareness is a valuable form of social action.
- ⑩ Attend public meetings. Be visible!

#### √ Work with others

- Work with others – there is strength in numbers
- Join coalitions or start one
- Work with political parties. While CFUW is nonpartisan, it is not non-political. Join the party of your choice, and bring with you our policies and resolutions.
- Start a local group of a national or provincial organization, or support the work of one

#### √ Write, write, write

- Letters to the Editor: Be specific, be brief, and use CFUW guidelines.
- Op-eds
- Briefs to local authorities
- Articles for your club's newsletter, and
- The most basic and still most effective – letters
- Start a letter-writing group similar to Amnesty International.

## Steps to Successful Advocacy Continued..

### √ **Writing powerful letters**

A letter, especially a legible hand-written one, is a forceful form of advocacy.

- The information should be current, well-researched and accurate.
- Know who to write to and how - federal, provincial, municipal, regional or county level.
- One page if possible. State your concern; what action you want. Ask a question, then you might get an answer.
- Follow CFUW guidelines if the letter is coming from the club.

### √ **Meet with politicians**

- Officially at their office annually when you are presently to them the adopted policy resolutions; and
- Quickly (a 7 minute meeting has been suggested) just before an important vote.
- Invite them to banquets and fundraisers.
- Invite them as a speaker.
- Remember that you represent the community and are a good source of information.

### √ **Other tactics**

- Press releases, especially to community newspapers
- Canvassing your neighbourhood
- Post card campaigns
- Books and publications
- Petitions – the Government has to respond
- Protests – yes, they still work
- Social media campaigns
- Failing all of this, **run for office**

## **10. Evaluation**

Take stock of what you did that worked, what you need to improve on and what you wouldn't do again! Taking a bit of time to debrief the event will help you do better next time, or if it is an ongoing campaign, readjust your messaging, tactics or strategy to be more successful as you move on.

## CFUW Advocacy: Who Does What?

<b>National Office/ Board</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Prime Minister</li> <li>•Ministers</li> <li>•National Issues</li> <li>•Signed by National President</li> </ul>
<b>Provincial Council/ VP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Premier</li> <li>•Provincial Ministers</li> <li>•Provincial Issues</li> <li>•Signed by Regional VP or Council President</li> </ul>
<b>Local Clubs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Local Member of Parliament</li> <li>•Local Member of Provincial Legislature</li> <li>•Any jurisdiction of issue to local reps only</li> <li>•Signed by Club President</li> </ul>

**Members are always encouraged to contact their MP or write letters to government, but we ask that members follow this system when writing on “behalf of CFUW.”**

## Tips for a Successful Meeting with your Legislator

Meeting with your elected officials at any level can be a successful way to put your issue on your legislator's radar.

Even if they are on the opposite side of some CFUW issues, working to build a relationship can be helpful on the issues where there is some common ground.

1. Take a bit of time before your meeting to familiarize yourself with the legislator, get to know a bit about their background and personal life.
2. Thank them for meeting with you.
3. Introduce CFUW and how it serves the community.
4. Present the issue you're concerned about.
5. Tell them what you want them to do, but do not attack them, try to work with them.
6. Give them the political news from your area.
7. Leave with your issue briefs for them to reference after the meeting.
8. Thank them again.
9. Exchange Business Cards.

### Points to Keep in Mind:

- They want to like you.
- You might not always get to meet with the head honcho, but take any meeting you can get. Lower level legislators and even staff can be very influential.
- Be prepared to be told it's not their jurisdiction, that they'll think about it, etc. Find a way to involve them in the issue.
- Community, community, community! Remember to stress how this is an important issue to the community.

For more information on meeting your politician see CFUW's Dealing with Politicians Guide.

## Letters to your MP or MLA/MNA/MPP

It is important for your elected official to hear from you, often they will take into consideration constituents' views on controversial issues.

Look up your MP via your postal code:

<http://www2.parl.gc.ca/Parlinfo/Compilations/HouseOfCommons/MemberByPostalCode.aspx?Menu=HOC>

More tips for letter writing:

- Keep it simple and short (as close to one page as possible)
- Be direct and concise
- Try to link it to how it will impact your community
- Where possible, know the policies of the person to whom you are writing, or federally and provincially the policy of the party of the representative.
- Have contact information available in the letter, not just on the envelope.
- Email is particularly appropriate for time-sensitive situations – just before a vote or an important discussion in caucus. Do remember, email is not private. It can be easily forwarded to others or misdirected accidentally.
- Use CFUW resources! We have lots of sample letters on our website at [www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org).

Letters to MPs can be sent postage free to:

[MP NAME]  
House of Commons  
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6



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