

BLUEPRINT FOR CHANGE

A YOUTH ADVOCACY GUIDE

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Executive Summary

This report serves as a guiding framework for youth to advocate effectively for policies that address their needs and aspirations. Developed by the Youth Engagement Team of the Ontario Council for International Cooperation's (OCIC) Youth Policy Hub (YPH), the report offers a strategic blueprint known as PLAD (Plan, Learn, Align, Deliver).

OCIC

OCIC stands as a dynamic community hub within Ontario, uniting organizations, institutions, and individuals dedicated to global social justice and human dignity. With a mission to foster collaboration and collective action, OCIC provides a platform for advocating meaningful change on the global stage.

YPH

Within OCIC, the YPH serves as a catalyst for youth empowerment and engagement in international cooperation policy processes. Led by passionate advocates, the YPH amplifies the voices of diverse youth from across Ontario, providing them with tools and opportunities to shape policies aligned with their aspirations. Through innovative initiatives and strategic partnerships, the YPH drives forward OCIC's vision of a more just and equitable world, where youth voices are integral to policymaking.

This initiative was undertaken with the financial support of the Government of Canada, through Global Affairs Canada.

Canada 



Contributor Bios



Dael Vasquez

Dael Vasquez is an award winning leader and scholar. He is the co-founder of Engage, a youth-led NPO specializing in civic education and open-source research.

Throughout his career, Dael has been a Young Diplomat, Anti-Money Laundering advocate, and most recently works as a government relations consultant in the financial industry,



Lian Sayno

Lian Sayno is a development professional with over eight years of experience across the non-profit and government sectors in the Philippines and Canada. Specializing in program and partnership development, Lian has dedicated her career to improving the well-being of vulnerable groups as well as amplifying the voices of youth in decision-making spaces.



Ian Joshua Pango

Ian Joshua Pango is an emerging graphic and layout artist known for his creative contributions to projects and campaigns that promote sustainable development, public engagement, and youth advocacy. With a keen eye for design and a passion for visual storytelling, Ian's work played a crucial role in inspiring actions towards each campaign.



INTRODUCTION

In the realm of societal transformation, the voices and aspirations of youth are undeniably powerful catalysts for change. Empowering young individuals to advocate effectively to government officials demands more than impassioned rhetoric; it necessitates a comprehensive strategy.

This strategic blueprint rests upon four key pillars, each carefully designed to navigate the intricate landscape of government relations: Plan, Learn, Align, and Deliver (or PLAD). When implementing the PLAD framework, advocates may find themselves entering into the realm of lobbying.

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To ensure effective compliance with Canadian lobbying regulations, this guide offers comprehensive insights into the responsibilities of the advocate.

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(P.L.A.D) FRAMEWORK

1 Plan: Identifying Goals with Precision

At the heart of any impactful advocacy effort lies a well-considered plan. To advocate for the youth effectively, it is imperative to define specific and measurable goals.

This involves identifying the key stakeholders within the government, discerning desired outcomes, meticulously planning the execution of initiatives, and choosing the most opportune moments for engagement.

Our strategy navigates the intricacies of the political landscape, ensuring that advocacy efforts are not only targeted but also strategically aligned with critical decision-making junctures.

2 Learn: Gaining In-Depth Insights into Decision-Makers

Understanding the nuanced intricacies of the officials you seek to influence is paramount. Our approach emphasizes an exhaustive learning phase, delving into the personal interests, policy goals, voting records, and campaign promises of decision-makers.

This granular understanding serves as the bedrock for tailoring advocacy messages with a precision that resonates with the unique values and priorities of each official.

3 Align: Forging Strategic Synergy with Decision-Makers

Aligning advocacy goals with the broader policy objectives of decision-makers is the linchpin of success. This involves not only demonstrating how youth initiatives complement overarching policy frameworks but also strategically presenting opportunities for mutual benefit.

While refraining from overt threats, our strategy encourages advocates to subtly imply the potential consequences of non-compliance, fostering a constructive dialogue that centers on positive collaboration rather than punitive measures.



(P.L.A.D) FRAMEWORK

4 Deliver: Strategic Presentation for Maximum Impact

The manner in which advocacy goals are presented can significantly influence their reception. Our strategy offers a nuanced approach, considering the advantages and trade-offs of various modes of delivery.

Whether through direct meetings, public demonstrations, or campaigns, the choice is guided by a strategic assessment of urgency, available resources, and the potential impact on decision-makers.

Effective communication in these engagements is underscored by the emphasis on mutual benefit, clarity on consequences, and a commitment to building trust.

5 Compliance

Finally to prepare advocates for any paid advocacy work they undertake - a move which crosses into lobbying (whether intentional or not) - this guide offers a comprehensive look into the essential principles and guidelines governing ethical lobbying.

Emphasizing the importance of adherence to legal frameworks and ethical standards, readers will gain insights into navigating the complex landscape of public affairs with integrity and responsibility.

This foundational understanding of compliance sets the stage for the subsequent exploration of strategic photo communication, empowering participants to amplify their voices and messages in the realm of public affairs.



ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) PLAN: IDENTIFY GOALS

1.1 Engagement Targets

To effectively advocate for youth, it is imperative to identify and target key stakeholders within the government. Begin by pinpointing specific officials, committees, or decision-makers who have the authority to influence policies or allocate resources related to youth issues. This could involve engaging with members of relevant committees on youth affairs, liaising with government departments responsible for youth programs, and reaching out to elected officials who have a track record of championing youth causes.

1.2 Desired Outcomes

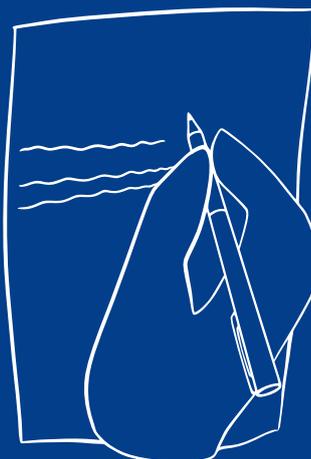
Clearly defining the goals of your advocacy efforts is paramount. Whether the aim is to secure increased funding for youth education programs, advocate for policy changes that address youth unemployment, or push for legislative measures supporting mental health services for young people, the objectives should be specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART). Each goal should be accompanied by a detailed rationale, illustrating why it is crucial for the well-being and development of the youth population.

ADVOCACY TIPS



Engage Early

Advocacy efforts should commence early in the decision-making process to have a meaningful impact.



ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) PLAN: IDENTIFY GOALS

1.3 Execution Plan

Crafting a detailed execution plan involves mapping out the entire advocacy process. This includes establishing a timeline that aligns with key decision-making moments within the government, such as budgetary cycles or legislative sessions. Determine the most effective channels for communication – whether it's through direct meetings, public demonstrations, or targeted campaigns. Additionally, strategize the allocation of resources, both human and financial, ensuring that the advocacy initiative is adequately supported throughout its duration.

1.4 Initiative Planning

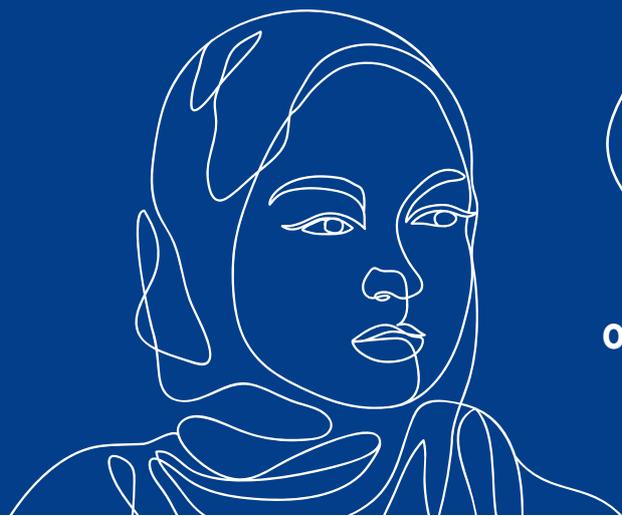
Consider the nuances of planning initiatives, taking into account the political climate, public sentiment, and potential competing priorities. Timing is crucial, and initiating advocacy efforts during opportune moments – such as during the drafting of new policies or the review of existing ones – can significantly enhance the chances of success. Moreover, assessing the socio-political landscape for potential allies and adversaries will inform the development of a more nuanced and effective strategy.

ADVOCACY TIPS



Adaptability

Be flexible and ready to adjust your plans based on evolving political landscapes, emerging issues, or shifts in decision-makers.



ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) LEARN: GAINING IN-DEPTH INSIGHTS INTO DECISION MAKERS

2.1 Personal Interests

To build a persuasive case, delve into the personal interests, hobbies, and activities of the officials targeted for advocacy. This involves thorough research into their public profiles, interviews, or any available information that sheds light on their extracurricular engagements. Establishing a personal connection can foster a more genuine and cooperative relationship during the advocacy process.

2.2 Policy Goals

Understanding the policy goals of the targeted officials is crucial for aligning youth advocacy efforts with their broader agenda. Analyze speeches, policy documents, and official statements to grasp their priorities. This knowledge will allow for the framing of advocacy messages in a way that demonstrates clear alignment with their policy goals.

ADVOCACY TIPS



Tailor Your Message

Use acquired insights to tailor messages that align with the official's values and priorities.



ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) LEARN: GAINING IN-DEPTH INSIGHTS INTO DECISION MAKERS

2.3 Voting Record

A comprehensive analysis of the voting record provides valuable insights into the official's stance on various issues. Identify patterns, consistency, or shifts in voting behavior, especially regarding matters related to youth. This information serves as a foundation for tailoring advocacy messages that resonate with their demonstrated positions.

2.4 Campaign Promises

Reviewing campaign promises is essential for holding officials accountable to their commitments. By comparing promises made during election campaigns with their actions in office, you can leverage any discrepancies to emphasize the importance of youth-related issues and the need for their continued support.

ADVOCACY TIPS



Identify Common Ground

Highlight areas where your advocacy aligns with their objectives.



ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) ALIGN: FORGING STRATEGIC SYNERGY WITH DECISION-MAKERS

3.1 Strategic Alignment

Aligning youth advocacy goals with the official's policy agenda is a strategic imperative. This involves a scrupulous examination of how the proposed initiatives fit into the broader policy framework. Clearly articulate the ways in which supporting youth causes can contribute positively to the official's overarching policy objectives.

3.2 Opportunities for Mutual Gain

Identify specific opportunities where supporting youth initiatives can enhance the official's political standing or public image. This could involve highlighting the potential for positive media coverage, increased public support, or recognition for championing a socially significant cause.

ADVOCACY TIPS

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Constructive Framing

Never threaten, rather frame consequences positively as missed opportunities for advantageous public relations or electoral gains.

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ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) ALIGN: FORGING STRATEGIC SYNERGY WITH DECISION-MAKERS

3.3 Implicit Consequences

While refraining from direct threats, imply the potential consequences of non-compliance. Emphasize the electoral ramifications, the risk of public backlash, or the potential damage to the official's reputation. Constructive framing is key, emphasizing missed opportunities for positive public relations rather than punitive consequences.

ADVOCACY TIPS



Build Synergy

Showcase how supporting youth initiatives contributes to a positive public image and fosters goodwill.



ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) DELIVER: STRATEGIC PRESENTATION FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

4.1 Strategic Choices

Deciding how to present your goals is a critical aspect of the advocacy strategy. Direct meetings provide an opportunity for in-depth discussions, relationship-building, and personalized communication. Public demonstrations and campaigns, while resource-intensive, have the potential to apply substantial pressure. The choice should be strategic, considering the urgency, resources available, and the potential impact on decision-makers.

4.2 Timing and Resources

Consider the timing and resources required for each mode of presentation. Meetings may offer immediate engagement but lack the public visibility of larger-scale initiatives. Demonstrations and campaigns, on the other hand, may require more extensive planning and resources but can garner significant attention and support.

ADVOCACY TIPS

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Leverage Multiple Channels

Integrate various communication channels, including legacy and social media, for maximum impact.

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ADVOCACY STRATEGY

(P.L.A.D) DELIVER: STRATEGIC PRESENTATION FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT

4.3 Effective Communication

In meetings, the effectiveness of conveying goals lies in highlighting mutual benefit and outlining potential consequences of non-cooperation. Clearly articulate how supporting youth causes aligns with the official's goals, the positive outcomes for their constituency, and the potential negative consequences of not taking action.

ADVOCACY TIPS

Utilize Public Pressure

Public demonstrations and campaigns can apply substantial pressure, but they require careful planning and execution to avoid unintended consequences.

Build trust

Establish trust through consistent messaging, transparency, and maintaining a constructive tone.





LOBBYING COMPLIANCE

When advocacy intersects with lobbying, it brings forth a set of compliance requirements, particularly when engaging with public officials.

The primary criterion for distinguishing advocacy from lobbying lies in the receipt of payment for communication with these officials.

If compensation is involved, adherence to lobbying laws becomes imperative to maintain transparency and legality in your advocacy efforts.



Disclaimer: The compliance criteria outlined in this guide pertain specifically to communications with public officials in the federal government.

However, the principles and lessons derived from these guidelines can be interchangeably applied across various levels of government in Canada.



RECORDING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOBBYING REGISTRY



A crucial aspect of remaining compliant with Canadian lobbying laws is the diligent recording of specific activities in the lobbying registry. This ensures transparency and accountability in all interactions with public officials. The following activities should be documented:

RECORDING ACTIVITIES IN THE LOBBYING REGISTRY



1 Development of Legislative Proposals

Any involvement in the development or amendment of legislative proposals by the Government of Canada, members of the Senate, or the House of Commons should be recorded. This encompasses contributions to the creation of bills or resolutions.

2 Financial Transactions

Any involvement in the development of legislative proposals by the Government of Canada, members of the Senate, or the House of Commons should be recorded. This encompasses contributions to the creation of bills or resolutions.

3 Government Contracting

All engagements related to the introduction, passage, amendment, or defeat of a bill or resolution in the federal Parliament, or in a provincial parliament, should be thoroughly documented. This includes any involvement in the parliamentary processes that shape legislative outcomes.

4 Facilitating Meetings

Arranging meetings between public office holders and any other person to discuss the subjects mentioned above is a crucial aspect of lobbying. Document the facilitation of such meetings, including details of participants and topics discussed.

MEETING DESIGNATED PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS (DPOH)



If advocacy efforts involve communication with DPOHs, it is necessary to prepare a comprehensive report for the Lobbying Commissioner. DPOHs include:

MEETING DESIGNATED PUBLIC OFFICE HOLDERS (DPOH)



- A minister of the Crown or a minister of state and any person employed in his or her office.
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- The leader of the Opposition or the senior staff in the offices of the leader of the Opposition, both in the House of Commons and the Senate.
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- A member of Parliament and any person on their staff.
-

- A senator and any person on their staff.
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- Any public office holder who occupies the senior executive position in a department - whether by the title of deputy minister, chief executive officer, or by some other similar title.

- An associate deputy minister or an assistant deputy minister, or a person who occupies a position of comparable rank.
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- The chief of the defence staff, the vice-chief of the defence staff, the chief of maritime staff, the chief of land staff, the chief of air staff, the chief of military personnel, or a judge advocate general.
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- Any position of senior adviser to the Privy Council to which the office holder is appointed by the governor in council.
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- The Comptroller General of Canada.
-

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The report prepared for the Lobbying Commissioner should encompass the following details:

Name of the DPOH

Clearly state the full name of the DPOH with whom the communication occurred.

Position or Title of the DPOH

Specify the official position or title held by the designated public office holder.

This includes ministerial positions, senior public servant roles, or any other relevant designation.



Branch or Unit and Department

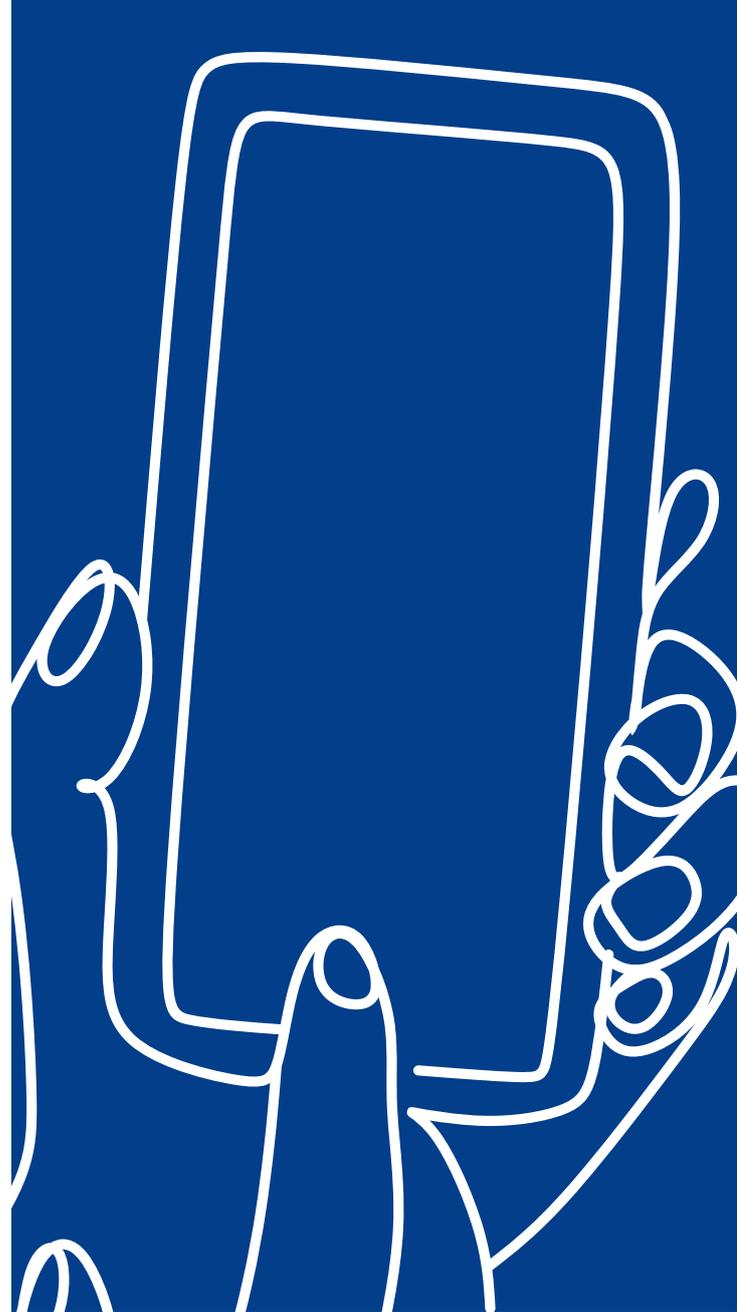
Provide information on the specific branch or unit and the name of the department or governmental organization in which the DPOH is employed.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The report prepared for the Lobbying Commissioner should encompass the following details:

Date of Communication

Record the date on which the communication with the designated public office holder took place. This ensures a clear timeline of engagements.



Subject Matter of Communication

Clearly articulate the subject matter of the communication. Include key topics discussed, issues addressed, or objectives outlined during the interaction.

To effectively capture the subject of the communication, you should respond to the following four questions:



SUBJECT MATTER OF COMMUNICATION



What am I lobbying for? What am I seeking from the Ontario government on behalf of my client or my organization/company?



What is the intended outcome I hope to achieve as a result of my communications with the Ontario government?



If you are not seeking a change or you do not have a specific 'ask' of the Ontario government, why are you communicating with a public office holder?



For consultant lobbyists, what are your client's lobbying goals? E.g., A consultant lobbyist's 'goal' may only be to arrange a meeting between their client and a public office holder but what is the meeting about?

EXEMPTIONS FROM LOBBYING REGISTRATION: NAVIGATING EXCEPTIONS WITH TRANSPARENCY



While lobbying registration is a crucial aspect of maintaining transparency and accountability, it's important to note that not all lobbying activities necessitate formal registration. Recognizing these exemptions is vital for a nuanced understanding of lobbying dynamics. Here are instances when lobbying activities may not require registration:

EXEMPTIONS FROM LOBBYING REGISTRATION: NAVIGATING EXCEPTIONS WITH TRANSPARENCY



Limited Cumulative Lobbying Activities

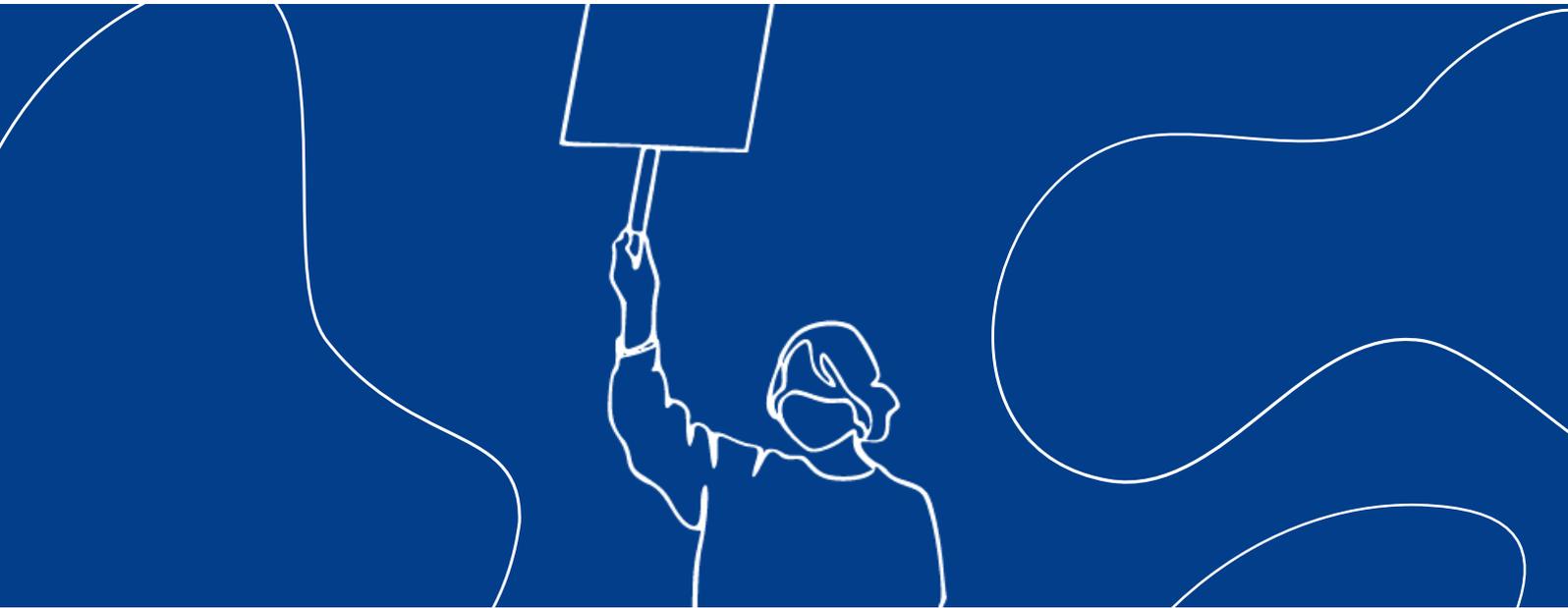
Corporations and not-for-profit organizations may engage in lobbying activities without registration if the cumulative lobbying efforts of all employees do not constitute 20% or more of one person's duties over a period of a month. This allows for routine communication without triggering registration requirements.



Voluntary Contributions

Volunteers, who are not remunerated for their efforts, are exempt from the registration mandate. This recognizes the valuable contributions made by volunteers in various capacities without imposing administrative burdens.

EXEMPTIONS FROM LOBBYING REGISTRATION: NAVIGATING EXCEPTIONS WITH TRANSPARENCY



Individual Advocacy

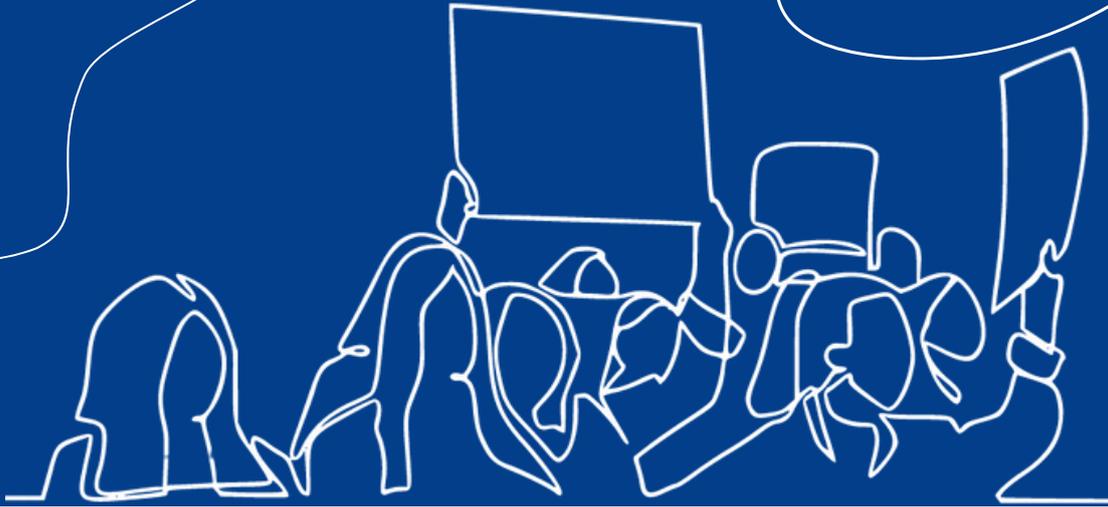
Individuals advocating on their own behalf enjoy an exemption from registration. This recognizes the right of citizens to communicate with government officials directly, acknowledging the importance of individual voices in the democratic process.



Specific Communication Scenarios

Specific types of communications with public office holders, such as requests for information, seeking the interpretation of Canadian law, or making oral or written submissions to a parliamentary committee, are exempt from the registration requirement. This recognizes the diversity of interactions that may not align with traditional lobbying definitions.

EXEMPTIONS FROM LOBBYING REGISTRATION: NAVIGATING EXCEPTIONS WITH TRANSPARENCY



Special Categories

Certain individuals, such as members of other levels of government, members of an Indigenous government or band council, and diplomatic officials, are exempted from the registration mandate. This acknowledges the unique roles and responsibilities of individuals in these special categories.

Convenience Documents Start Below

The following templates, links, and lists will help you organize your advocacy efforts effectively.

POLICY TOPIC

WHY should the policy topic be implemented/ discouraged?

--

Has this rationale been applied before?

		IMPACT
YES	NO	

HOW can you engender support/opposition towards the policy topic?

--

Has this strategy been applied before?

		CONTEXT
YES	NO	

POLICY TOPIC

WHO should you target to advance/ block the policy topic?

--

Are the same actors involved from a similar policy topic?

		WHO	PREVIOUS INVOLVEMENT
YES	NO		

Based on your findings, determine where and when you should deliver your advocacy?

WHERE	WHEN

SOURCES: PARTIES*

FEDERAL	PROVINCIAL
<p><u>NDP</u></p>   	<p><u>NDP</u></p>   
<p><u>LIBERALS</u></p>   	<p><u>LIBERALS</u></p>   
<p><u>CONSERVATIVES</u></p>   	<p><u>CONSERVATIVES</u></p>   

*parties shortlisted based on national representation and performance (top 3 by historical elections)



PARLIAMENT

STATUS OF BUSINESS

Useful for monitoring progress on legislative items of interest and parliamentary debates.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Useful for tracking meeting activity, publications, and upcoming work

COMMITTEES

- [HUMA](#) (HoC - housing and social policy)
- [SOCI](#) (Senate - social policy)
- [HESA](#) (HoC - healthcare)
- [FINA](#) (HoC - complementary for all policy areas - especially during budget season)
- [NFFN](#) (Senate - complementary for all policy areas - especially during budget season)

MINISTRIES

- [Health Canada](#)
- [Infrastructure Canada](#)

AGENCIES/ CROWN CORPORATIONS

- Housing
 - [CMHC](#)
- Healthcare
 - [Canadian Institute for Health Research](#)
 - [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)

QUEENS PARK

STATUS OF BUSINESS

Useful for monitoring progress on legislative items of interest and parliamentary debates

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Useful for tracking meeting activity, publications, and upcoming work

COMMITTEES

- [Social Policy \(Encompasses health, education, and everything to do with the human experience\)](#)
- [Public Accounts \(reviews Auditor General's findings\)](#)

MINISTRIES

- [Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing](#)
- [Ministry of Health](#)

AGENCIES/ CROWN CORPORATIONS

- Housing
 - [Housing Services Corporation](#)
 - [Landlord and Tenant Board](#)
 - [Greenbelt Council](#)
 - [Housing Supply Action Plan Implementation Team](#)
 - [Building Code Commission](#)
- Healthcare
 - [Ontario Health](#)
 - [Public Health Ontario](#)
 - [Council of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario](#)
 - [Council of the College of Nurses of Ontario](#)
 - [Council of the College of Psychologists of Ontario](#)
 - [Council of the College of Registered Psychotherapists and Registered Mental Health Therapists of Ontario](#)