**MOVING FORWARD ON ADVOCACY ACTION, or**

**the Who? What? Where? When? And How?**

This is **quick guide for an advocacy campaign within your community**. For more detailed advice, see **the *CFUW Advocacy*** ***Book*** available on our website – [www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org) - Advocacy – Tools for Advocates.

While much of below involves advocacy action, this might be of use for planning any community service project.

**CHECK OUT the CFUW Advocacy Guidelines**

Clubs work locally, Provincial Councils provincially and National federally; any request for action is based on policy as found in the Policy Book; Presidents sign letters.

For a more detailed explanation, the Guidelines are found on the CFUW website in the Advocacy section, under Tools for Advocates.

It is also important that your Club executive and your Issues and Action committee discuss advocacy actions, especially if both groups are dealing with requests from the national and provincial levels. Many Clubs have found that it is best to either have a representative of the Issues committee on the executive, or have the CFUW liaison on the Issues committee. This helps alleviate confusion and speeds up action when necessary.

**CHECK OUT the Policy Book,** [www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org) under Advocacy to check whether we have policy.

**DO YOUR RESEARCH:**

Well-researched facts, which can be developed into potential arguments and talking points, are the first step. Why are you interested? Which level of government is involved, if any; who is making the decisions; who else is involved currently; who else could be involved; who can you partner with; when are decisions being made? the basic questions of **why? what? who? when? where? how? need to be answered**. Check your sources and your facts.

**DETERMINE YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE either to educate, or to affect a decision:**

* One of our most important audiences is **our own membership.** Information and knowledge travels**.**  Make sure your members know and have information about the concerns and what your club is trying to do.
* The **public** and **other community groups** with the same concerns are also very important. Coalitions with like-minded groups are extremely effective.
* **Elected officials** are the traditional object of most forms of advocacy and lobbying by groups and individuals. These are the ones making many of the decisions affecting us.

**MUNICIPALITIES**

**Councillors are the ones who make the decisions. The mayor has only one vote, but does have a great deal of influence. The Council’s main work is done within the Committees that are open to the public. From there the issue goes onto the agenda of the Council.**

**DETERMINE YOUR MESSAGE:**

**Long term** – what is your goal? **Short term** - What is your “ask” in your immediate actions?

For your local representatives, have relevant real-life stories, local information and statistics.

**DETERMINE YOUR STRATEGY AND YOUR ACTIONS:**

**1. Meetings:**

* Organize **public education and awareness** opportunities such as program nights, public meetings, forums, film nights with discussion. **Raising awareness is a valuable form of social action.**
* **Attend public meetings**. Be visible! It’s also an opportunity to network and ask questions.

**2. Work with others:**

* Join **coalitions** or work with other organizations who have similar concerns and policies. If necessary, start your own coalition with other like-minded groups.
* Speak to **other CFUW Clubs**. Your Regional Director can help you with this.
* **Work with political parties**. While CFUW is non-partisan, it is not non-political. Join the party of your choice, and bring with you our policies and adopted resolutions.

**“The commodity of politics is information.”**

CSAE,

*Government Relations*

**3. Write articles and briefs:**

* Speak to our own members. Write articles for your **Club’s newsletter**.
* Write **Letters to the Editor**: Be specific, be brief, and use CFUW Guidelines.
* Write **Op-eds** for local community newspaper and online blogs as well.
* Write and present **briefs** to local authorities.
* And **the most basic and still most effective** – **letters**.

**4. Writing effective letters and emails:**

* **A letter, especially a legible hand-written one, is a forceful form of advocacy**.
* **Know who to write to** – is the concern at the federal, provincial, municipal, regional or county level or an issue with ramifications at all levels? 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, and write sections of the letter accordingly.
* **Letter**  - one page if possible, following CFUW Guidelines on Advocacy -
	+ Should be on letterhead, using a “boilerplate” description of the Club and of CFUW the first time you write to a person.
	+ Use a subject line with the topic, e.g. Council agenda item or Bill number.
	+ State your concern; use 2-3 well-researched points and what action you want. **Ask a question, then you might get an answer.**
	+ Signed by the President, or a designated member of the Executive.
* **Email is good for:**
	+ **Time-sensitive situations** – just before a vote or an important discussion/decision, or
	+ When you don’t want an answer, **e**.g. letter of congratulations – remember to do those.
* A phone call is excellent for time-sensitive situations or when you want a connection with either the representative or the office.

**A good letter is succinct, states your position, and sticks to the issue**

with information that is current, well-researched and accurate.

**5. Meet with elected officials and policy makers – municipal, provincial, federal:**

* Invite them to events. Getting to know them socially may help when you need to connect with them officially.
* Invite them as a speaker. This is especially true for local politicians and school board officials who understand and know your own area.
* Meet with them officially at their office
	+ Annually – introducing yourself and the new Executive, and the newly adopted resolutions – only those relevant to the appropriate level of government.
	+ Quickly (a 7 minute meeting has been suggested) just before an important vote.
* **Making the appointment**
	+ Tell them who you represent and what you would like to discuss at the meeting.  Send an introductory letter if possible.
* The meeting
	+ The President will normally lead the delegation, limit the delegation to 4
	+ **Know the work of the person that you are meeting**
	+ Bring information such as a brief, adopted resolutions, handouts, brochures with you, have copies for your elected representatives and any staff members present.
	+ Be succinct, and relevant to the topic. You are one of the connections to the community, but also one of many. Be respectful of their time.
	+ Once you have outlined your club’s and CFUW's concerns, ask for their position and that of their party. If possible, have solutions.
* **After the meeting**
	+ Thank the assistant and your representative thanking them for their time and reinforcing the key points made at the meeting. Report back to your Executive; write a report of your meeting for the Club newsletter. Send a report to your Regional Director.

**6. Brainstorm with your committee about possible tactics**

* While writing, public forums and meetings are essential, there are other tools
* Be creative – demonstrations never go out of style!

**7. Evaluation** – don’t forget to evaluate your strategy, making changes when necessary

For more information, see the CFUW website, [www.cfuw.org](http://www.cfuw.org) Tools for Advocates under Advocacy.

Do tell us what you are doing. We can tell others, we can tweet it, facebook it, and most important, we can connect you with others that might be working on the same topic.

We can also help – so do tell us, and your Regional Director.

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