

# CFUW ADVOCACY HANDBOOK

## A guide to advocacy

### About this Booklet

This booklet is a guide to advocacy within CFUW, which can also be used for any type of advocacy project or campaign you wish to tackle.

#### What is Advocacy?

##### Advocacy for CFUW:

- Responding to the annual Adopted Resolutions
- Responding to Advocacy Requests from CFUW National and Provincial Councils
- CFUW – Who Does What

##### Advocacy for your Club and community

- Responding to Local Needs and Concerns; What projects could your Club work on?

##### Steps in an Advocacy Campaign for CFUW

- The Issue?
- What do you want to do about it?
- Checking for CFUW Policy and Advocacy Guidelines
- Decide if you need to do a resolution
- Do Your Research
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- Check the CFUW Advocacy Guidelines again
- Determine Strategy
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- How to Develop CFUW Resolutions
- CFUW Advocacy Guidelines
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  - Writing Powerful Letters
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##### Available online – plus many others

- Connecting with Local Politicians and Partners
- Working with Local Media

# What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favour of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others

Bolder Advocacy/Alliance for Justice

“Advocacy, in general terms, can be defined as the act of speaking or of disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct, or public policy and law. Advocacy often occurs in the context of activities intended to educate and inform, while at other times it could be described as a political activity. There is a widely shared view that the act of advocacy, as a form of free speech, is an essential part of democracy”.

*Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative: Report of the Joint Tables*

Advocacy can be defined as “ public support for or recommendation of a particular cause, policy, etc.”

Canadian Oxford Dictionary

Advocacy is the art of effective persuasion.

Public Interest Advocacy Centre, Ottawa

**Advocacy is about influencing people and institutions** - particularly decision makers (political, corporate or organizational) and the general public to support a cause or a course of action. **It’s about change.**

**It’s about helping people** – as an advocate for an individual person requiring access to supports and services, or as an advocate for a cause affecting a number of people.

**For CFUW**, as noted in our Purpose, CFUW and its members “advocate for the advancement of the status of women, human rights and the common good locally, nationally and internationally.” CFUW has been involved in advocacy at the national, provincial, local and international levels since its founding in 1919, and the founding Clubs have been involved in the community since 1903.

CFUW advocacy is guided by the policies voted on by CFUW members every year at our Annual General Meeting. These policies come from the grassroots of our organization in the form of resolutions and are the result of extensive research, debate, and consultation. At the national level, we monitor federal legislation and policies and stay in contact with the Government of Canada and other government officials to communicate our members’ views.

# Advocacy for CFUW

## Responding to the annual Adopted Resolutions

At each National Annual General Meeting (AGM), resolutions, that have been developed, studied and amended by the Clubs, are voted upon. After adoption, an advocacy package is created for the Clubs. This includes template letters and handouts to be used for communications with federal Members of Parliament (MPs). The package also includes a number of community based actions, and where relevant, suggestions for speakers and films.

It is hoped that Clubs will connect with their federal MPs about our new policies.

Some provincial Councils also pass resolutions. This advocacy would involve the provincial legislators.

## Responding to Advocacy Requests from CFUW National or Provincial Councils

From time to time, CFUW National or one of the Provincial Councils will ask Clubs and individual Club members to participate in campaigns to exert pressure on local politicians - to pass or oppose certain legislation, get an issue on their agenda, and/or raise public awareness about issues.

Federal and provincial politicians respond to their communities, to their local voters and organizations. There are times when your help and assistance is vital. Clubs are best placed to raise awareness about issues and get more community members involved in campaigns.

These requests will normally come by email through either an emailed letter to Issues groups, or through CFUW newsletters that have advocacy information. In order to receive the appropriate emails, **please ensure that your Issues Committee leaders, along with the President and CFUW Liaison, are listed on the CFUW Membership site, and have subscribed to the newsletters.**

The requests for action from CFUW are based on policy and will come with template letters and/or suggested actions (e.g. holding a film screening, or hosting a town hall meeting, etc.) for Clubs to use. Take these letters and adapt them to your local needs.

When multiple letters echoing the same message are sent to politicians across the country or province, it helps strengthen our collective voice on issues.

**Your support is much appreciated!**

## CFUW – Who Does What

Local Clubs	<p>Responds to issues of national, provincial, and local concern by contacting/meeting local politicians and decision makers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mayors, reeve, warden</li> <li>• Local School Board</li> <li>• Local Members of Parliament</li> <li>• Local Member of Provincial Legislature</li> <li>• Materials (e.g. letters) should be approved and signed by local Club Presidents.</li> <li>• Partner with local organizations and groups working on similar issues of concern (could also be a local chapter of a national organization CFUW National is working with).</li> </ul> <p><b>If a Club wishes to expand its advocacy and action beyond the local, please connect with your Regional Director or the National Office. They can help.</b></p>
National Board and Office	<p>Responds to Issues of National and International Concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corresponds and meets with federal level politicians and their staff, including the Prime Ministers, Ministers, (in particular Status of Women Canada) and opposition critics and their staff</li> <li>• Participates in United Nations processes including United Nations Commission on the Status of Women and the Human Rights Council</li> <li>• Respond to IFUW requests for advocacy action.</li> <li>• Letters to the PM, Ministers and opposition Critics are signed by National President</li> <li>• Alerts Clubs to national issues, prepares template letters to be sent to Members of Parliament, circulates petitions, and generally encourages participation in national level campaigns</li> <li>• Partners with other national organizations and groups seeking to address similar issues as CFUW.</li> </ul>
Provincial Councils	<p>Responds to issues of Provincial concern</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sends letters and briefs to their respective provincial governments, including Premiers, Provincial Ministers and opposition critics,</li> <li>• Materials are signed by Regional VP or Council President</li> <li>• Alerts Clubs to provincial concerns</li> <li>• Partners with provincial organizations and groups to respond to issues of similar concern</li> </ul> <p>If a Council wishes to expand its advocacy and action beyond the provincial or local, please connect with the National Office, so that things can be coordinated.</p>
Individual members of Clubs	<p>Can respond to issues at any level of government, but please do not write “on behalf of CFUW”, or use CFUW letterhead.</p>

# Advocacy for your Club and Community

## Responding to Local Needs and Concerns – Steps in an Advocacy Campaign for CFUW

### 1. First, it's a concern

For example, a women's shelter in your community may be closing due to funding cuts, or there may not be adequate resources available to women survivors of violence. Perhaps there are water problems in your community, or your group have concerns about local health care, child care or elder care.

### 2. Next, what do you want to do about it?

What projects could your Club work on? There can be a number of ways to tackle the problem and you may want to utilize more than one:

#### a. Community Outreach

**Helping others directly**, such as **fundraising or volunteering** for the local women's shelter, book donations and volunteers to schools and literacy programs, music festivals, Battle of the Books and many more. Many clubs are also involved in **partnerships** with other local organizations and agencies. The National Initiative on Violence against Women and Girls has been for many Clubs a community outreach project, assisting wherever the members can.

If your Club would like to undertake **community service or outreach project**, this should reflect the mission and purpose of CFUW. As with anything, it must be authorized by the Club executive, and if the project requires any funding, it may require support from the Club members as well.

**For CFUW clubs, advocacy includes social action.  
It is truly the power of women working together.**

Doing community outreach only requires the support of your Club executive. Depending on the project, especially if it requires any funding, support may be required from your Club members as well.

CFUW Clubs have worked on a myriad of projects. We have offered money, volunteers, and/or organizational help. In the 2013 CFUW survey, *New Beginnings*, 88 of the 102 clubs responding were involved in some form of community outreach.

## b. Public Awareness Campaigns

For CFUW, there are always two forms:

- **with your own Club members**, such as monthly meetings, articles in the Club's newsletter, and
- **for the public**, creating awareness of issues through articles in the local newspapers, letters to the editor, websites, social media, and public events, such as public forums, lectures, film showings.

For public awareness campaigns, you can find many ideas in the [Event, Issues and Program Ideas](#).

## c. Advocacy

**Getting changes in public policy**, such as fighting the location of a power plant or a shopping centre, supporting the creation of a women's shelter or a local school programme, creating a poverty reduction strategy, violence prevention, support for public broadcasting like the CBC, support for health care, child care and elder care.

If your Club wants to conduct public awareness campaigns and/or advocacy, this needs to be based on **CFUW Policy** (national and/or provincial) and then follow **CFUW Advocacy Guidelines**.

## 3. Before you start: Checking for CFUW policy and the CFUW Advocacy Guidelines

**If you are starting your own advocacy or public awareness campaign**, it must be based on CFUW public policy, which are the resolutions adopted at the Annual General Meetings. A record of these can be found in the **CFUW Policy Book** on the national members' website [www.cfuwadmin.org](http://www.cfuwadmin.org). For Log In information, check with your Club President or the National Office. As well, do check your provincial resolutions to see if any of them will support your cause.

Many of the policies are very broad, and at first glance they may not appear to support your issue, but in fact they may. If you are not sure, contact the National Office, at [cfuwadvocacy@rogers.com](mailto:cfuwadvocacy@rogers.com) for clarification.

## 4. There is no policy. Decide if you need to do a resolution

For a **Community Outreach** project, there is **no need for policy or a resolution**, only support by the Executive and/or the Club membership.

For a **Public Awareness or an Advocacy** Campaign, there is a **need for policy**.

**For a *local issue***, a Club can pass its own resolution as long as it does not conflict with established CFUW policies. A local resolution must also be consistent with CFUW's purpose and mission.

For a ***provincial or national issue***, you may want to consider writing a resolution as the first step in advocacy. Please consult the [CFUW Resolution Guidelines](#) for more information. Also available is [How To Develop CFUW Resolutions](#) (Appendix), which in conjunction with the Resolution Guidelines will help you present your proposed resolution to the CFUW Resolutions Committee.

## 5. There is CFUW public policy. What to do:

### a. 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.

- **What** are the facts? Know where to find reliable, up-to-date information; is there data and research available?
- **What** is the history of the issue and the context it is situated in?
- **What** has been done on the issue already?
- **What** is the current legislation/bylaw? Is it being changed, amended, repealed?
- **Who** is involved, or who could be involved? Can you join a coalition of groups already working on this issue, or support the work of another group?
- **Who** else sees this as a problem? What do they feel are the solutions? Ask their opinions.
- **Which** level of government is involved, if any?
- **Who** is making decisions related to your issue? Know the decision makers and their interests; don't forget their staff.
- **How** are the decisions being made?
- **What** is the policy process?
- **When** will decisions be made? **What** other pressures are on the government or Council?
- **Where** is your issue in their agenda?
- If relevant, know of **international studies and comparisons**, even for some municipal projects.
- Do you have **credible information from reliable sources**?

Your goal should be to gather as much background information as possible about the issue, who you want to influence, and how you might want to frame your "ask" to decision makers.

For sources of information, nowadays people generally start with web-based research (do check the validity of resource), but don't forget the others - local newspapers, local library (they can also give you guidance on what and how to research), the legislative libraries such as the Library of Parliament, also talk to those involved including local elected officials (do this with the knowledge of your President).

Get local stories and local examples to bolster your argument.

Research as advocacy: questions can always be asked both verbally and in writing in order to develop policy.

If you find while doing your research that you wish to expand your advocacy nationally, please connect with the National Office, copying your Regional Director. There is a National Campaign process available for Clubs. The National Office can help you connect to others who might be working on the topic, connect you with members of the Board who can connect you with Ministers and Critics. Let us know, so that we can help.

## b. Identify your audience

Who are you trying to convince? Who is important to achieving your goal? *Connecting with local politicians and partners* will help.

- 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.
- **Media**, both traditional and social, is the messenger.
- **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. Don't forget the policy staff. They are the ones affecting the decisions.

In the case of many community problems, the local government (either municipal or regional) is the responsible level. For example, municipalities are involved with transportation, recreation, schools, courts, fire, sewer, water, libraries, hospitals, social services, child care centers, historical societies, community centers, home care social assistance, and social housing.

Of course, many of these government services are also under the responsibility of provinces and territories, particularly education, health and social services.

- **All of the above**

### 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.**

## c. Identify stakeholders and allies

- **Who is affected by the issue?** Have they already started an initiative to try to address it? If so, get in touch and tell them that you are also concerned and would like to work them. Be sensitive to the needs and wishes of those affected, if the issue does not involve you directly.
- **Find groups and people** to help amplify your message, and to share the workload. Who do you need for your team? Find people with key skills.



- **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.
- **Find your champion**, a respected member of the community or elected body, the person who believes in your campaign. Also don't forget the staff, they can be excellent supporters and sources of information.
- **Who is your opposition?** What is their position? Can you counterbalance their position, or do you see their side of the issue?

#### **d. Determine your message**

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

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, who are they and who do they trust. Develop a narrative, using personal stories when possible. Use “edutainment” if necessary. Try to use a variety of media to reach out to new people.

For your local representatives, have relevant real-life stories, local information and statistics. Storytelling has become an important form of advocacy.

For politicians, try to frame your position as a solution.

#### **e. Check the CFUW Advocacy Guidelines again before determining action**

Check the full [CFUW Advocacy Guidelines](#) but there are some general guidelines that are easy to follow:

- Advocacy action must be based on CFUW policy as found in the [CFUW Policy Book](#), as found online.
  - If there is no policy for a local issue, a club can pass a local resolution.
- 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.

**If you find while doing your research that you wish to expand your advocacy nationally, please connect with the National Office, copying your Regional Director. We have a National Campaign process available.**

## f. Determine strategy

Time to put this all together and determine the possible actions and the timeline for this action. Know your objectives and plan how to create that necessary momentum. Analyze your support base – geographic, demographic and linguistic and determine what will work for whom.

Determine your financial situation. What are the costs? Who will support you financially? Do you need donations? How to find them? How to organize them?

## g. Determine action

The most effective campaign includes a number of different actions and activities. Don't rule out anything, but be sure to use them strategically and in an order that makes sense.

- **Special Events and Meetings** – a CFUW strength
  - 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!**
  - **Event, Issues and Program Ideas** will give you some good ideas, along with advocacy packages on adopted resolutions and advocacy alerts.
  - Attend public meetings and events. Be visible!
  
- **Work with others**
  - Work with others – there is strength in numbers
  - Speak to other CFUW Clubs that are working on the same issue. Your Regional Director can help you with this.
  - Join coalitions with other organizations who have similar concerns and policies, or start a coalition.
  - Some questions to consider before partnering:
    - Are the values of the organization compatible with CFUW?
    - Is the partnership long-term or for a single event?
    - Will the partnership be formal or more casual?
    - Who in the Club reviews and manages the partnership?
    - How are the members involved?
    - Is there a written contract or is it verbal?
    - How is the partnership terminated?
    - How do the representatives/volunteers report to the Board?
    - Will there be newsletter articles or reports to the members?
  - Start a local group of a national or provincial organization, or support the work of one.
  - Work with political parties. While CFUW is nonpartisan, it is not non-political. Individual members can join the party of their choice, and bring with them our policies and resolutions.
  
- **Write, write, write**
  - Articles for your Club's newsletter
  - Letters to the Editor: Be specific, be brief, and use CFUW guidelines

**"The commodity of  
politics is information."**  
CSAE  
*Government Relations*

- Op-eds (i.e. an opinion piece that represents an informed view of an outside contributor to a newspaper on a newsworthy topic)
- For more information [Working with Local Media](#)
- Briefs to local authorities, and
- The most basic and still most effective – **letters**; start a letter-writing group similar to Amnesty International.
- For more information [Writing Powerful Letters](#)

**A good letter is succinct, states your position, and sticks to the issue with information that is current, well-researched and accurate**

➤ **Get to know your elected representatives**

- Determine which elected representative(s) are best placed to help you advance your issue. Does your issue fall under federal, provincial or municipal jurisdiction, or all three?
- If your issue is currently on the “political agenda” (i.e. there are motions, legislation or Committees currently addressing the issue), try to set up meetings with your elected reps before important votes in Council, the Legislature or the House of Commons to express your views as community members.
- Follow them on social media, including Facebook and Twitter. This is a great way to find out more about them, including their interests, they perspective on issues, and what community events they will be attending.
- Invite your elected representatives to events and fundraisers you organize
- Invite them as a speakers to meeting and events
- In general, try to develop a good rapport and relationship with your elected representative even if you do not always agree on issues.
- For ideas on how to connect with local politicians at all levels, see [Connecting with local politicians and partners](#). This also has sections on meeting with and writing to elected representatives

➤ **Other local actions**

- Press releases, especially to community newspapers
- Canvassing your neighbourhood
- Books and publications
- Protests – yes, they still work

➤ **Other actions for provincial or national campaigns done in conjunction with provincial Councils or CFUW National, consulting with your Regional Director**

- Post card campaigns
- Online petitions
- Petitions to Legislatures and Parliament – Members have to deposit and the Government has to respond
- Social media campaigns
- Telephone campaigns – have members Inundate their elected representatives with phone calls, especially on the weekend

- Ask MPs/MPPs/MLAs/MNAs to put forward motions in the House of Commons
- Ask for meetings with elected officials before caucuses, or doing holidays at home
- Ask for studies to be done at Committees

➤ **Failing all of this, run for office**

## h. Evaluation

Take stock of what you did. What worked? What do need to improve on? And what would you never 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, actions or strategy to be more successful as you move on.

**Remember advocacy takes time.  
It becomes a game of persistence and patience  
BUT you never know when that “tipping point” occurs.**

### In Summary:

First, there is **an issue or a concern**, such as:

- A local need in your community or elsewhere
- A request for action from CFUW National or Provincial Council

What do you want to do about it:

- **Community service** project, perhaps volunteering or fundraising, or a partnership with other like-minded organizations – no CFUW policy needed
- **Public awareness campaign** – needs to be based on CFUW public policy
- **Advocate** to change public policy – needs to be based on CFUW public policy

First steps for advocacy and awareness campaigns:

- Check for **CFUW public policy** as found in the *CFUW Policy Book* and
- Refer to the **CFUW Advocacy Guidelines**

If there is **no CFUW public policy** to support your cause:

- For **local issues**, **clubs may pass their own resolution**, following CFUW vision and not conflicting with CFUW policy.
- For **national and provincial issues**, **write a resolution** following the CFUW resolution guidelines.

**Research** the issue/concern- this is the most important step.

- You need to understand the issue, its facts, the decision makers, the timeline and how you can help
- The basic questions of **why? what? who? when? where? how?** need to be answered. Check your sources and your facts.

Identify your **audience**

- Your Club membership
- The public and other community groups
- Media
- Elected officials
- All of the above

Identify **stakeholders and allies**

- Find groups that can help
- Who is affected by the decision?
- Is there a champion to help?

Determine your **message**

- Long term – what is your goal
- Short term – what is your “ask” for immediate action. For politicians, frame it as a solution
- Story-telling is an important form of advocacy

Check the **CFUW Guidelines for Advocacy** again before determining action.

Determine **strategy**

- Time to pull together all the research, resources – financial and human – to determine next steps

Determine **action**

- Suggestions from writing letters to protests

**Evaluate** – do this along the way with every stage

## RESOURCES

### ATTACHED

- *How to Develop CFUW Resolutions*
- *CFUW Advocacy Guidelines*
- *Connecting with Local Politicians and Partners, including:*
  - *Writing Powerful Letters*
  - *Meeting with Elected Representatives*

### RESOURCES Available online – plus many others

- *Connecting with Local Politicians and Allies*
- *Working with Local Media*

# How to Develop CFUW Resolutions

Consult the **CFUW Resolutions Guidelines** for current dates and methods of submission found on our website.

A Resolution must have resolved clauses, background and bibliography

## THE GOOD RESOLUTION

- Makes a statement that becomes CFUW policy and is used as a basis for action.
- Has one topic: a resolution, when read straight through, forms a single complete sentence
- Respects the purposes and interests of CFUW – should further **education, women’s (and girls’) equality, human rights or the common good**
- Initiates new policy; expands existing policy
- Is a concern anywhere in Canada or internationally
- Is non-partisan, clear, concise, unambiguous and free of all jargon
- Is never negative.
- Provides well-researched and balanced information

## RESOLVED CLAUSES:

- Begin with “RESOLVED, That”. CFUW uses background material instead of Whereas Clauses.
- Address the relevant level(s) of government. Most CFUW resolutions are directed at federal, provincial and territorial governments of Canada, and on some occasions municipal.
- Must be able to stand alone and be understood without the accompanying background. The vote is taken only on the Resolved Clauses and never on the background.
- During the vote, the resolved clauses may be separated for voting, with each clause being ratified separately
- Robert’s Rules suggests wording for lists, such as “including, but not restricted to.”
- Robert’s Rules, latest edition, is the final authority on the wording of the resolved clauses.

## BACKGROUND:

The background material summarizes the research from which you developed the resolution and explains and supports the resolution. Good background material is helpful to Clubs and to later advocacy and contains:

- An overview, summary and a conclusion about the topic
- Well-researched information from more than one source
- Support for each resolved clause with documentation noted in the Background.
- A discussion of the situation across the country (or internationally where appropriate)
- Both sides of the issue in a carefully reasoned, succinct and logical manner
- Objective scientific data that supports the resolution (if appropriate)
- Statistics and definitions of terms; a glossary (if necessary)

**BIBLIOGRAPHY:**

- Uses APA format (American Psychological Association) - see Appendix E for guide to APA
- Includes both primary and secondary sources
- Indicates the sources; demonstrates the variety, quality and depth of research; and provides sources for others to read and to research.
- Web-based research should include:
  - References to primary sources, especially when discussing reports, laws, Bills
  - The full URL and the date of retrieval
- Keep a printed copy in case the page is no longer available at the time of club study.

**FORMAT**

Use this format to electronically submit the Draft proposed resolution to Resolutions Committee:

- Arial; 12 point, 8.5x11 page
- Single spaced
- Justified left margins
- Please do not use Header and Footer.
- 4 page maximum for Resolved and Background
- 2 page maximum for Bibliography
- Do not send PDF files
- Preferred Dictionary: Barber, Katherine: *Canadian Oxford Dictionary (2 ed.)*: Oxford University Press, 2004.

# CFUW Advocacy Guidelines

Adopted May 2011

⊕ When writing, or speaking, “on behalf of CFUW” and asking for some action, this **must be based on CFUW policy** as found in the *CFUW Policy Book*.

- If a club needs to react to a local situation when there is no policy, a vote shall be taken of its membership before committing the club to any course of action. Any action must be consistent with CFUW purposes and policy.
- When there is no policy, letters may be written asking for information only – “Our club is studying ...”

⊕ **Local clubs write to their local elected officials and local MPs/MPPs/MNAs /MLAs**, but not to the Premier, the Prime Minister or Cabinet Minister (unless he/she is the local MPP or MP).

- Dealing with your own MPs and provincial legislators is what creates the momentum and potentially adds to the pressure. These are discussed in caucuses.

⊕ If your Club invites a Cabinet Minister to a social event or to speak to a meeting, tell your Regional Director, who might want to give you a package of information for the Minister.

⊕ Clubs, Councils and National CFUW write to elected officials within **their own jurisdictions**. If they wish to contact someone elsewhere, they need to consult with the Club or, if it is a provincial matter, the provincial Council and/or provincial Regional Director in consultation with the Regional Vice President.

- National and Councils may send letters, etc. to Ministers and Critics without necessarily notifying the local Club.
- If letters are being sent to elected officials where there is no CFUW Club, do explain to the recipient why they are receiving the letter from you.

⊕ **Letters must be sent out under the signature of the Club President, or designated member of the executive, on Club letterhead.** The Club President or designated member of the executive committee should have the support and authorization of her executive.

- If the President has a conflict of interest or is uncomfortable signing, she must excuse herself, discuss the matter with her Board, and if necessary delegate someone else to sign.

The **individual Club member** is encouraged to write to any politician on any issue about which she has a concern. She may use information from CFUW sources, but she may not write “on behalf of CFUW”, or use CFUW letterhead.



# Connecting with local politicians and partners

## About this booklet:

- Connecting with partners
  - Reasons for connecting
  - Some questions to consider before partnering
- Levels of government and responsibilities
- How to contact politicians and decision makers?
- Why and when to meeting with politicians and decision-makers?
- Meeting with elected officials
- Writing powerful letters

## Connecting with partners

### Reasons for connecting with others

#### Do partner with other organizations:

- As community outreach - to work on community needs, to assist with community projects;
- As part of an advocacy campaign - to find a champion, to amplify your message, to share the workload, to create a coalition of groups.
- Become visible and get new members.
- Go to community meetings, offer to speak to other groups

Most cities and towns have a community information service or the local library, which can direct you to potential partners. Also articles in the local community newspaper might also help. Members are an excellent source of information of projects, programmes or organizations that the club might wish to become involved with.

### Some questions to consider before partnering

- Are the values of the organization compatible with CFUW?
- Is the partnership long-term or for a single event?
- Will the partnership be formal or more casual?
- Who in the Club reviews and manages the partnership?
- How are the members involved?
- Is there a written contract or is it verbal?
- Are there Terms of Reference for coalitions?
- How is the partnership terminated?
- How do the representatives/volunteers report to the Board?
- Will there be newsletter articles or reports to the members?

## Levels of government and responsibilities

### Municipalities

Three major forms of local governments:

- Towns, cities, villages and townships - Mayor or Reeve, Councillors or Aldermen
- Counties – Warden
- Regions – Regional Chair

This level of government, **closest to the people**, is **responsible for water, public transit, zoning or land use, libraries, museums, parks, recreation, waste collection, sewage, emergency services, police services. In some provinces, child care services management.**

### Provincial

Elected members of the provincial legislatures are Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), except

- Ontario - Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPP)
- Québec - Members of the National Assembly (MNA)
- Newfoundland and Labrador - Members of the House of Assembly (MHA).

**Provincial governments** are responsible for areas such as education, health care, social services, municipalities, some natural resources, road regulations.

### Federal

Elected members are Members of Parliament

Federal government is responsible such things as finance, especially items that transfer money to people and/or provinces, justice, especially the Criminal Code, defense, communications, citizenship, aboriginal affairs including education, among others

### Band Councils

Similar responsibilities to municipalities but are connected to the federal government via the Indian Act, rather than the provincial governments.

### School Boards

Each of the provinces has school boards (in New Brunswick, these are called District Education Councils) that provide community input and governance to local schools. These can include separate Boards for Catholics, as well as ones for English and French.

## How to contact local politicians and decision-makers?

Before you contact any official, if you are doing this on behalf of CFUW, **please check out the CFUW Advocacy Guidelines.**

## Municipalities

### **Contact information:**

Check the website for your town, city, county or region for contact information for the elected officials, meeting times.

### **Writing:**

When writing to Council - address it to Mayor (Reeve/Warden/Regional Chair) and Councillors. In order to go on Agenda, check with the City Clerk or Town Clerk. Also check the timing of meetings, so that the information is sent in appropriate time to reach the Council.

### **Attend meetings:**

Check the website for meetings, (both Council and Committees), for agendas and minutes, and for any public consultations.

### **Deputations:**

Deputations, or oral presentations, to Council concerning specific issues on the agenda, request to appear as a delegation – check with your City Clerk or Town Clerk

### **Petitions:**

Again check with your local government and the Clerk; address to Council and request an action; have this copied on each page; have signatures and address; electronic ones must also include valid email address; suggestion to include a disclosure statement on every page of the petition

### **Other advice:**

Google Search on deputations to city council will bring up a number of guides, including

- Federation of Canadian Municipalities - [https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/International/Your\\_Guide\\_to\\_Municipal\\_Institutions\\_in\\_Canada\\_EN.pdf](https://www.fcm.ca/Documents/tools/International/Your_Guide_to_Municipal_Institutions_in_Canada_EN.pdf)
- Perth, Ontario also has some good guides which you will find in the drop down under Council [http://www.perthcounty.ca/county\\_council](http://www.perthcounty.ca/county_council)

## Provincial

### **Contact information:**

Elected members of the provincial legislatures are:

- Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), except
- Ontario - Members of the Provincial Parliament (MPP)
- Québec - Members of the National Assembly (MNA)
- Newfoundland and Labrador - Members of the House of Assembly (MHA).

To find your member, Google the name of the province, plus the name of legislator, e.g. BC MLA. Some of the municipalities list all the elected representatives in their districts on their websites.

### **Writing:**

When writing to your local provincial legislator (MLAs/MPPs/MNAs/MHAs), follow suggestions as found in “Writing Powerful Letters” as found either in the *CFUW Advocacy Handbook*, or in this booklet.

**Meetings:**

More information concerning interviews can be found in “Meeting with Elected Representatives” in the *CFUW Advocacy Handbook*, or in this booklet.

**Visiting:**

At the Legislatures, the Public Galleries are open usually on a first-come-first-serve basis. It is best to check with your provincial representative, in case reservations are required. With Committee meetings that you might be interested in, also check with your legislator’s office.

**Consultations:**

For the provinces, this can mean either oral or written briefs. Your provincial Council may send out speaking points or templates. If not, and you want to present, speak to your Regional Director or Regional Vice President concerning this.

**Petitions:**

The websites of the provincial Legislatures will have information concerning petitioning the Legislatures. Again do this in conjunction with your Regional Director and/or the Regional Vice President

## Federal

Your Club may have a number of MPs depending on the geographic size of the Club. You also might be sharing MPs with another Club, depending on how the ridings overlap.

Find your MP by Postal Code:

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

Alphabetical list of all Members of Parliament (includes their constituency):

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/MembersOfParliament/MainMPsCompleteList.aspx?Language=E&TimePeriod=Curent>

For maps of electoral districts, as of August 2015

<http://www.elections.ca/content.aspx?section=res&dir=cir/maps2&document=index&lang=e>

**Writing:**

When writing to your local MP, follow suggestions in “Writing Powerful Letters” as found either in the *CFUW Advocacy Handbook*, or in this document.

**Meetings:**

More information concerning interviews can be found in “Meeting with Elected Representatives” in the *CFUW Advocacy Handbook*, or elsewhere in this booklet.

**Visiting:**

Similar to provincial Legislatures, the Public Galleries of the House of Commons and Senate are open usually on a first-come-first-serve basis. Also check with your MP, in order to make reservations for the Members’ Galleries. With Committee meetings that you might be interested in, also check with your legislator’s office or the Parliamentary website, [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)

**Petitions:**

The Parliamentary website will have information concerning petitioning the House of Commons and Senate. Your MP may suggest doing this if he/she is supportive of your cause. Again do this in conjunction with your Regional Director and/or the Regional Vice President, who will in turn inform the National Office.

## Why and when to meet with politicians and decision-makers

**In order to influence anyone**, there are two things that are very important:

the message, the person and the organization must be **credible**;

a working **relationship** should be developed between the people involved, in this case the elected officials and the advocate.

### Why meet with local politicians?

There are a number of goals for meeting with your various legislators. You want to:

- Get CFUW issues on the legislator's map;
- Make sure they know:
  - Who CFUW is;
  - What CFUW does for the community; and
  - That you and the local membership are paying attention to them.

Identify your ongoing contact person in your legislator's office who handles your issues. For MPs and provincial representatives, this will often be a senior assistant working in the constituency office.

It is important for your elected official to hear from you. Often they will take into consideration constituents' views on controversial issues. Remember that you, and CFUW, are a valuable resource, that you represent the community, and are a good source of information about that community.

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

### When to meet with them?

Annually with federal and/or provincial elected representatives. Consider setting up an annual meeting to introduce your new executive, and present the newly adopted CFUW policies from the Annual General Meeting, plus any other pressing issues of concern

Short meeting about pressing issues with any level of government, consider asking for a short meeting (approximately 7 minute meeting) just before an important vote.

Locally attend Council and Committee meetings, especially if there is a discussion about something that

concerns you.

Make connections with them - Invite your elected officials to one of your **social events**; invite them as a **speaker**. This is especially true for local politicians and school board officials who understand and know your own area. Invite them to a coffee party or interest group; involve them in a fundraiser. Getting to know them socially may help when you need to connect with them officially.

## Meeting with elected officials

### Before a meeting

Determine the objectives for your visit, your reason for visiting. Do not go just to introduce yourselves. Use a letter for that. You do not want to waste their time, or yours.

- An annual meeting, with the newly adopted resolutions, complete with handouts from National or the Provincial Councils for the staff and the elected official.
- To express concern about an issue

Determine what you want the politician to do:

- To learn about CFUW issues of concern, in particular the latest adopted resolutions
- To support legislation or a by-law, or to not support the same
- To put forward motions – in the legislatures, the House of Commons, the Councils
- To deposit petitions from constituents - electronic petitions are allowed. If this affects an area beyond your Club's region, check with your Regional Director or the National Office for guidance.

Do your research.

- If this is more than a friendly annual meeting, decide on your “ask”, understand its feasibility and the implications of your request and how it can benefit your community.
- Have your facts, and where possible have local stories. The National Office will have provided background information nation-wide. If not, call or email the National Office to ask advice - [cfuwadvocacy@rogers.com](mailto:cfuwadvocacy@rogers.com); 1-888-220-9606.

Know about your representative.

- Take a bit of time before your meeting to familiarize yourself with their background and personal life.
- What committees do they sit on? What role do they play in their party (are they are Minister? Opposition Critic?)
- What is their party's position, especially if you are speaking to them on a particular topic? Have they sponsored any legislation recently?
- Try to learn their point-of-view on the topic.

Prepare notes and rehearse your presentation, if necessary. Always leave time for discussion.

Never go alone, but limit the delegation to no more than four where possible. The President will normally lead the delegation and, with the advice of her executive, will decide who will accompany her and who will say what and when they will say it.

Be prepared to meet with staff rather than the representative. Just as valuable.

## At the meeting

Thank them for meeting with you. Tell them a little bit about your Club, particularly if the person is not familiar with CFUW and how it serves the community.

Don't just drink tea or talk about grandchildren. Leave that for a social event.

Introduce your CFUW Club and how it serves the community. Keep this very brief.

Present the issue you're concerned about. Be brief and to the point. Many visits of a few minutes with vital information on upcoming votes are better than one long one that is not relevant to their work.

Tell them what you want them to do, but do not attack them, try to work with them.

- Do have something that they might be able to do – you might have one big “ask”, but also have a doable one.
- If the issue you are speaking on is a national one, CFUW National Office briefs will give specific actions that legislators can take such as supporting a bill, signing on to a declaration, or committing to pursue an issue within their caucus.
- If it is local, you would have determined this beforehand.

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.

Leave information with them to reference after the meeting – a one-page fact sheet is ideal.

Exchange business cards, and stay in touch.

Thank them again.

Always be nice to the staff. They are the link. Exchange business cards with them.

### Foolproof Steps to a Flawless Meeting

1. Thank them for meeting with you.
2. Introduce CFUW and how it serves the community.
3. Present the issue you're concerned about.
4. Tell them what you want them to do.
5. Give them political news from your area.
6. Leave your issue briefs.
7. Thank them again.
8. Exchange business cards.
9. Call CFUW National Office for support.
10. Follow up after the meeting

## After the meeting

Call and thank the assistant.

Send a letter to your representative thanking them for their time and reinforcing the key points made at the meeting.

Report back to your Executive and write a report of your meeting for the club newsletter. Send a note to your Regional Director.

## Writing powerful letters

A letter is still a forceful form of advocacy. It is important that elected officials hear the views of their constituents on matters of public policy, government programming and service provision. You are that voice!

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

### Tips for writing

#### Know your topic:

- Requests for letters from Clubs to elected officials that come from National CFUW or your Provincial Council have been researched, and are based on CFUW policy.
- If it is a local issue, you will need to do the research, and know what you want to ask. As part of your research, do check out **CFUW Advocacy Guidelines** and the **CFUW Policy Book**. If there is no policy to cover what you are asking for, develop and adopt a local resolution as long as it does not contravene CFUW Mission.

#### Know who to write to:

- As with meetings, do research your issue and know who is responsible, who is making the decisions? Knowing which of your local representatives (whether federal, provincial, municipal, regional or county level) to contact about an issue is important.
- When writing your letter, do **use the proper titles**.
  - You will find information about how to address your letters federal and provincially under Styles of address on the Canadian Government site for Canadian Heritage, or Google Canada Styles of Address if the page has moved.
  - Those in cabinet should be addressed using The Honourable, a title that federal cabinet ministers keep.
  - At the municipal level, a mayor should be addressed as His/Her Worship (full name), Mayor of..., and the salutation should be Dear Sir/Madam.

#### Sending the message:

- 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.
- Letters to MPs can be sent postage free to:  
[NAME, MP name of riding]  
House of Commons Ottawa,  
ON K1A 0A6
- When you want a letter to go to the entire municipal Council, address it to Mayor (name) and Council, Dear Sir/Madam and Council Members.

#### Content:

- The information in your letter should be **current, well researched and accurate**.
- Identify yourself as a constituent in your letter.



- Make the letter **one page** if possible. State your concern and what action you want your representative to take.
- Identify how the issue is **linked to, or will impact, your community**.
- Where possible, **know the policies/position of the person** to whom you are writing, and if they represent you federally and provincially, investigate the position of the party they belong to. Has your elected representative or his/hers party taken a position on this issue before? You may want to commend them for their position, or you may want to urge them to change their position.
- **Ask a question** and ask for a response, particularly if it is not clear what position your representative has taken, or will take on the issue(s) you have raised.
- **Include your contact information**, including email address, in the letter.
- Always **proofread especially emails with predicative text**. You could be writing gibberish!
- Use CFUW resources! We have lots of sample letters on our Member Resources website [www.cfuwadmin.org](http://www.cfuwadmin.org). For Log In information, check with your Club President or the National Office.

**CFUW specific:**

- Follow the [CFUW Guidelines for Advocacy](#) if the letter is coming from the Club.
- If our letter is from a CFUW Club, include a “boilerplate” explaining who the letter is from – the organization and more importantly, the local club.



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