

What is Advocacy?

“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 (August, 1999)**

A very popular definition found throughout the web - Advocacy is defined as any action that speaks in favor of, recommends, argues for a cause, supports or defends, or pleads on behalf of others

**Bolder Advocacy Glossary/Alliance for Justice.
<http://bolderadvocacy.org/afj-onadvocacy/>**

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is the act of speaking in support of human concerns and needs. Where people have their own voice it means making sure they are heard. Where they have difficulty speaking it means providing help. Where they have no voice it mean speaking for them.

Women's Contact Society
Williams Lake, BC

“Advocacy is the art of effective persuasion.”

“The inside-outside theory – Nothing happens on the inside if there has not been pressure from the outside.”

A CIDA manager

**Public Interest Advocacy Centre
Ottawa, Canada**

ADVOCACY and CFUW

Why do we do it?

Advocacy has been a part of CFUW since its inception in 1919, when six clubs came together to join others from the United States, Great Britain and five other nations to create an international federation, now known as Graduate Women International. The reason: to have a say in the peace negotiations after World War I.

The first club in Toronto in 1903 worked with settlement houses and a campaign to supervise playgrounds. Since then, clubs have been involved in the community, locally, nationally and internationally.

How do we start?

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 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.

A History of CFUW Major Projects:

CFUW has over the years prepared many, many, many briefs on topics from family law to the Fowler Commission on Broadcasting to taxation to the Gordon Commission on Economic Prospects to the Royal Commission on the Status of Women to violence against women to the cancellation of the mandatory long-form census.

1919 – a comprehensive study of all the library facilities in Canada; campaign asking clubs to ask for action to improve facilities and the condition of the library profession.

1920 - a survey of occupations of university women in Canada, leading to the establishment of the Vocations Bureau in 1930, plus a survey of professional studies in Canada

1932 – with other women's groups in Toronto, was successful in the protest against the dismissal of married women from the University of Toronto

1936 – a study of women in administrative positions in Canada

1943 – the Committee on the Rehabilitation of Women War Workers which led to a government sub-committee to plan for the post war future of women, headed by a past CFUW President, Dr. Margaret McWilliams

1959 – the first visit of CFUW to a Prime Minister (Hon. John Diefenbaker) to discuss many items: the appointment of a woman to the National Parole Board) achieved some months later); Hungarian refugees

1960 – CFUW establishes an observer relationship with the new Canadian Commission for UNESCO.

1958-1961 – assisted with the establishment of Upper Canada Village, saving houses that were to be flooded for the St. Lawrence Seaway

1964-1967 – the Survey of Continuing Education was undertaken.

1967 – the report, “Women University Graduates in Continuing Education and Employment” was published – asking for, among other things, further research to examine ways in which female university graduates “can best make a useful contribution”.

1967 – As CFUW President and Chair of the Committee for the Equality of Women, Laura Sabia threatened to bring millions of women to Ottawa to demonstrate. Three days later, Lester Pearson established the Royal Commission on the Status of Women.

1992 – the study, “Women in Universities, Survey of the Status of Female Faculty and Students at Canadian Universities” outlining a profile of the women-friendly university. It was a study that was used by a number of universities.

1998 – CFUW gains Special Consultative Status with ECOSOC

2013-2016 – National Initiative on violence against women and girls