



NCC Advocacy Policy	
Classification: Communications	Effective Date: June 27, 2022
Approval Authority: Board of Directors	Latest Revision: June 23, 2022
Implementation Authority: Executive Director	

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the scope and manage the risk of the Organisation's advocacy work ensuring that it is effective, related to the organisation's mission and priorities and consistent with all legal requirements and restrictions.

2.0 Scope

This policy covers the issues-based advocacy of the Organisation and is applicable to all Employees and Board Members of the Organisation.

This policy does not apply to advocacy done on behalf of clients as part of client service delivery or to awareness raising work done as part of the community development work of the organisation.

3.0 Definitions

Advocacy

Advocacy is an activity by an individual or group that aims to influence decisions within political, economic, and social institutions.

Advocacy includes activities and publications to influence public policy, laws and budgets by using facts, their relationships, the media, and messaging to educate government officials and the public. Advocacy can include many activities that a person or organization undertakes including media campaigns, public speaking, commissioning and publishing research.

Lobbying (often by lobby groups) is a form of advocacy where a direct approach is made to legislators on a specific issue or specific piece of legislation. (ref: Wikipedia)





Third Party Advocacy

Advocacy via membership in regional, provincial or national organisations that engage in advocacy issues related to the Organisation's mandate

Emerging Issues Advocacy

Advocacy on issues which have not been pre-identified by the Organisation as priorities but which are consistent with the mandate of the Organisation. Emerging issues may be identified by Employees, Board Members, Volunteers, Clients or community partners, or may arise from local, provincial, national or international issues related to the Organisation's mission that are of such significance that they require advocacy by the Organisation.

3.4 Legal Requirements and Restrictions

For the purposes of this policy, legal requirements and restrictions include but are not limited to:

- the provisions of the *Income Tax Act* which indicate that charitable organisation may participate in any amount of advocacy activities as long as those activities are consistent with an organisation's stated charitable purpose(s), and as long as the activities are not in support of or opposed to any political candidate or party
- the *Canada Elections Act* (for third party advertising during a federal election)
- the *Ontario Elections Finances Act* (for third party advertising during a provincial election)
- the *Lobbying Act* (Canada) (for verbal or written contact with an office holder that exceeds a total of 40 hours per month organisation wide)
- the *Lobbyist Registration Act* (Ontario) (for any activities aiming to influence a public office holder that exceed 50 hours per year)
- other federal, provincial, or municipal requirements that might apply to these types of activities that may be applicable from time to time

For further reference consult the CRA website "[Public policy dialogue and development activities by charities](#)"





4.0 Policy Statement

The Organisation recognises that in addition to delivering services and engaging in community development, advocacy by the Organisation may be required to further the mission of the Organisation.

The available resources of the Organisation including Employee capacity shall be considered in determining how much advocacy the Organisation will undertake.

4.1 Advocacy Parameters

All advocacy done by the Organisation shall be:

- issues based (e.g. not focussed on individuals or organisations)
- consistent with the mission of the Organisation
- implemented in a manner that is consistent with relevant Organisational policies – see section 7.0 for a list of relevant policies
- implemented in a manner that is consistent with relevant legal requirements and restrictions

4.2 Advocacy Tools

Advocacy initiatives on any particular issue by the Organisation may be conducted through one or more of the following mechanisms:

- signing petitions
- issuing media releases, conducting media campaigns, engaging with media
- social media campaigns and engagement
- lobbying decision makers
- initiating or participating in open letters, sign-on letters, and letters of support
- public speeches and other public statements
- marches, demonstrations and community events
- membership in third party organisations that engage in advocacy on issues related to the Organisation's mandate (e.g. OCASI, Canadian Council on Refugees)

5.0 Responsibilities

Board of Directors

- oversee advocacy work carried out by the Organization and make decisions on actions related to advocacy issues considered high risk;





- monitor the effectiveness of Organisational advocacy and ensure compliance with legal requirements and restrictions

Executive Director

- implement the advocacy initiatives of the Organisation as per the procedures in the Advocacy Policy
- assess the risk of advocacy on emerging issues and bring high risk issues to the attention of the Board for decision and/or approval prior to taking action
- provide regular reports to the Board on the advocacy initiatives of the Organisation

Employees

- engage in Organisational advocacy only if delegated by the Executive Director
- report to the Executive Director on any advocacy work they have been assigned

6.0 Procedures

6.1 Third Party Advocacy

A significant approach to the Organisation's advocacy work is membership in regional, provincial or national organisations that engage in advocacy issues related to the Organisation's mandate (e.g. OCASI, Canadian Council on Refugees). Most of the Organisation's role in this type of advocacy is to support the third party via membership fees. On occasion, the Organisation may be involved more directly in the advocacy campaigns of third parties.

6.2 Emerging Issues Advocacy

6.2.1 Notification of Executive Director

Employees, Board Members, Volunteers shall bring any emerging issues on which they believe the Organisation should advocate to the attention of the Executive Director.

6.2.2 Emerging Issue Advocacy Test

Upon receiving notification of an emerging issue or learning of a local, provincial, national or international issue of significance related to the mission of the Organisation, the Executive Director shall determine:

- if the issue can be implemented within the advocacy parameters (section 4.1 in the Advocacy Policy)





- If the Organisation has the knowledge and expertise to effectively advocate on the issue(s)
- if the Organisation has the capacity to effectively advocate on the issue(s)
- if the risks of advocacy on the issue (financial, reputational, legal) are acceptable
 - where the Executive Director believes that engaging advocacy on a particular issue may pose a significant risk to the Organisation, but the matter is of high importance and all other aspects of the emerging issues test have been met they shall bring the issue to the Board for a determination as to whether to implement advocacy on that issue

If the Emergency Issues Advocacy Test is met, the Executive Director can implement the appropriate advocacy initiative at their discretion.

6.3 Implementation of Advocacy

To implement advocacy initiatives, the Executive Director shall:

- identify the best strategy and advocacy tools for influencing the policy, practice, behaviour or beliefs
- determine who should be involved in the advocacy (Employees, Board Members, Volunteers) based on the knowledge and skill set required and the capacity of those individuals

6.4 Monitoring

The Executive Director shall report to the Board on a regular basis on the advocacy work of the Organisation. The Board will monitor and evaluate the progress of the Organisation's advocacy initiatives.

7.0 Related Policies

Anti-Racism and Anti-Oppression Policy

Media Policy

Confidentiality Policy

Client Confidentiality Policy

Conflict of Interest Policy

