

# Participating in Federal Public Policy

*A Guide for the  
Voluntary Sector*



*October 2003*

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# Introduction

Canada's voluntary sector plays a crucial and complex role in our society, which includes making Canada a more humane, caring and prosperous nation. The sector is enormously broad and diverse, encompassing more than 180 000 organizations (of which 80 000 are registered charities) focusing on education, health, arts, faith, sports, social justice, the environment and more.

Alongside the private and public sectors, the voluntary sector forms the third pillar of Canadian society. With their knowledge and frontline experience, voluntary sector organizations have an in-depth understanding of society's needs and, subsequently, a significant amount to offer in the public policy process.

What is  
Public Policy?

Navigating the  
Systems

Developing  
Your Strategy

Implementing  
Your Strategy

At the same time, government is gaining a greater understanding of the unique role the voluntary sector can play in bringing forward issues raised by Canadians. Government departments are responding to public expectations by gathering information from many sources, including the voluntary sector. Increasingly, government departments must "build their case" through evidence-based decision making. They want to improve their ability to consult, engage, listen and conduct good public dialogue with key stakeholders. In order to effectively participate in public policy dialogue, voluntary organizations must also make their case using facts and solid research and then propose solutions.

## How to Use this Guide

This guide is made up of tips, summaries of articles and other resources addressing how to become more involved in public policy. It is meant as a starting point for your organization's exploration into policy dialogue with government.

Send us your suggestions and ideas:

<http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/feedback.cfm>

Government departments have made commitments to do a better job of engaging citizens and are committed to implementing the *Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* and the two *Codes of Good Practice*, developed as part of the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). Some departments have already developed their own policies and good practices on citizen engagement such as Environment Canada's *Commitment to Effective Consultations* ([www.ec.gc.ca/consult/policy\\_e.html](http://www.ec.gc.ca/consult/policy_e.html)) and Health Canada's *Policy for Public Involvement in Decision Making* ([http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/voluntarysector/building\\_partners.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/voluntarysector/building_partners.html)).

## The Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI)

Building on a long history of working together, the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI) is a joint undertaking between the voluntary sector and the Government of Canada. The long-term objectives of the VSI are to strengthen the voluntary sector's capacity to meet the challenges of the future and to enhance the relationship between the sector and the federal government and their ability to serve Canadians. The VSI focuses on several key areas including the development of an Accord, information management/ information technology (IM/IT), public awareness, volunteerism, financing, capacity and regulatory issues affecting the voluntary sector.

Signed in December 2001, *An Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* ([http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/relationship/the\\_accord\\_doc/index.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/relationship/the_accord_doc/index.cfm)) describes the key elements of a strengthened relationship between the two sectors. Two *Codes of Good Practice* were then developed in the areas of Policy Dialogue and Funding. *The Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue* ([http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/policy\\_code.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/policy_code.cfm)) is a tool for deepening the dialogue between the government and the voluntary sector at the various stages of the public policy process in order to achieve better policies for Canadians.

As one of the seven voluntary sector-government tables established under the VSI, the Capacity Joint Table (CJT) is working in three areas to strengthen the capacity of voluntary organizations to operate effectively: skills development and human resources management; policy capacity; and research and information sharing. The CJT also supported a number of activities of the sector-only Working Group on Financing. You can find out more about these projects and other work of the CJT at [http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/hr/capacity\\_advisory\\_committee.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/hr/capacity_advisory_committee.cfm).

As part of the CJT's commitments in the area of building policy capacity, this guide was designed to help voluntary organizations participate in Canadian public policy dialogue as well as to give federal departments greater insight on how to involve their sector counterparts more effectively. It is primarily intended to assist organizations that do not have full-time staff devoted to policy; however, some of the tools and resources will be helpful to all organizations. Each section contains resources and links to other Web sites for additional information. The guide provides an overview of the public policy process. It is not intended to be self-contained in any way or provide full training on these topics.

For information on other policy capacity projects supported by the VSI's Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development (SIDPD) visit: <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/sidpd.cfm>

## Guide sections

The guide is divided into the following modules:

### **Module 1 – What is public policy and why is it important to become involved?**

The guide begins with an overview of why it is important for voluntary organizations to become involved in public policy dialogue. It outlines how advocacy is part of the public policy process and reviews the history of policy involvement by voluntary sector organizations in Canada.

The objective of this module is to understand what public policy is, how it affects your organization, why it is important to be involved and to understand advocacy as part of the public policy process.

### **Module 2 – Navigating the systems and the rules**

This module provides a description of the federal government structure as well as the federal policy process and the possible levels of involvement. It also provides an overview of the voluntary sector and describes the federal regulations governing voluntary organizations.

The objective of this module is to realize the complexity of the federal government and the policy development process, understand the contributions of the voluntary sector and be aware of how to access current regulations for registered charitable organizations and to differentiate between non-profit organizations, charities and voluntary organizations

### **Module 3 – Where do you want to go? Developing a strategy to influence public policy**

This module guides you through the internal policy development process including a step-by-step guide to developing a public policy input strategy.

The objective of this module is to be able to develop a strategic policy position relevant to your organization's mission and know how and where to gather facts to substantiate your policy position.

### **Module 4 – How do you want to get there? Implementing your strategy**

This module helps you understand the numerous ways in which you can work with government (among other players) to influence public policy. It outlines the various approaches you can use and where to get more information.

The objective of this module is to understand approaches that you can use to generate interest in your organization's policy position and influence public policy dialogue.

## **Acknowledgements**

We would like to thank the Capacity Joint Table and Secretariat staff for their leadership and insight in bringing this document to life as well as the members of the Policy Sub-Committee for sharing their knowledge and experience in the development of this guide. We would also like to acknowledge background writing and research for this project by Ginsler and Associates Inc., Amy Lightfoot and Glen Milne's Policy workshops. Also, we would like to thank those who agreed to review this document, providing additional comments and thoughts.

## **An important note**

Voluntary organizations vary considerably in their composition, legal status, objectives and methods of operation. The information in this document is written generally and may not fit the exact needs of your organization. It is meant as a starting point to address some of the issues facing many voluntary sector organizations. The Voluntary Sector Initiative cannot give legal or other professional advice. You may need to consult with a lawyer or other professional to ensure that the information in this document fits with your organization's concerns and issues and does not jeopardize your organization in any way.

All Web site references were checked as of October 27, 2003.

# Module 1 – What Is Public Policy and Why Is it Important to Become Involved?

## Objectives

- understand what public policy is
- understand how it affects your organization
- understand why it is important to be involved
- understand advocacy as part of the public policy process

## Preamble

Public policy influences the lives of Canadians and everything they do. Public policy that includes input from the voluntary sector contributes to the creation of a more just and caring society, as voluntary organizations often have a very realistic, up-to-date picture of the needs and issues in our communities.

## What is public policy?

There are many definitions and interpretations of public policy. The Gage Canadian Dictionary <sup>1</sup> defines policy as:

- 1: a plan of action; a course or method of action that has been deliberately chosen and that guides or influences future decisions
- 2: practical wisdom; prudence, shrewdness or sagacity

Glen Milne, author of *Making Policy: A Guide to the Federal Government's Policy Process*, defines policy as “a clear goal and/or direction. It is the considered selection of one choice among competing difficult choices. Policy directs, but does not consist of, operational programs and details. It is best expressed as a vision with goals, strategic objectives, work plan and a program of activities, resources and leadership to achieve that choice.”<sup>2</sup>

The VSI *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue* further defines public policy, dialogue and development in the following ways:

**Public Policy** – is a set of interrelated decisions, taken by public authorities, concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them.

**Public Policy Dialogue** – is the interaction between governments and non-governmental organizations (in this Code, the voluntary sector) at the various stages of the policy development process to encourage the exchange of knowledge and experience in order to have the best possible public policies.

**Public Policy Development** – is the complex and comprehensive process by which policy issues are identified, the public policy agenda is shaped, issues are researched, analyzed and assessed, policies are drafted and approved and, once implemented, their impact is assessed.<sup>3</sup>

(See Appendix 1 for a diagram and description of the stages of the public policy process.)

<sup>1</sup>Walter S. Avis et al., *Gage Canadian Dictionary* (Toronto: Gage Learning Corporation, 1993) p. 871.

<sup>2</sup>Glen Milne, *Making Policy: A Guide to the Federal Government's Policy Process* (Ottawa, 2002) p. 17.

<sup>3</sup>Voluntary Sector Initiative. (2002) *An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary, Sector*, [http://www.vsi-sbc.ca/eng/joint\\_tables/accord/codes.cfm](http://www.vsi-sbc.ca/eng/joint_tables/accord/codes.cfm)

In Canada, public policy affects many issues of concern including tobacco reduction, affordable housing, unemployment, health care, environmental sustainability, access for people with disabilities, positions on stem cell research, immigration levels into Canada, social justice issues, violence, employment equity and taxation. Virtually every policy of government has the potential to affect the voluntary sector and its clients. It is because public policy also has the potential to have different impacts on diverse population groups that it is important to research and analyse how public policy affects your own organization. Your organization likely includes members of both genders and from various ethnic groups, income levels and age groups who can help shape positions that are inclusive of their realities.

Ideally, public policy dialogue is driven by a vision of the future that builds the capacity of society to be safe, healthy, just, diverse and prosperous. It must be recognized, though, that although all political parties embrace these themes, the specific policy directions they choose to achieve them may differ widely. So, from government to government and from jurisdiction to jurisdiction, organizations must accept that people with good intentions, who may have competing interests, can differ profoundly on the policies they develop to achieve common goals.

In the voluntary sector, participation in policy dialogue is often a part of how organizations advocate. Advocacy is an essential tool to influence public policy dialogue, effect change and contribute to the welfare of society; however, it is part of a broader process. In addition to public policy input, advocacy can include efforts to change attitudes, raise awareness and provide public education. The Voluntary Sector Initiative's Advocacy Working Group uses the definition of advocacy proposed in *Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative*, which is "...the act of speaking or disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct, or public policy and law."<sup>4</sup> The Advocacy Working Group's position paper on advocacy explains why advocacy is so important to the voluntary sector:

For a copy of *Working Together* visit: [www.vsr-trsb.net/publications/pco-e.pdf](http://www.vsr-trsb.net/publications/pco-e.pdf)

"We believe that the history of advocacy parallels the development of democratic societies. In Canada, individuals have always come together through voluntary associations to help each other and to share their ideas, values and beliefs. The natural outcome of this is for people to promote (advocate for) change in many areas of public interest. The result of this is a society that evolves as it responds to the needs of its people, communities and environment.

This form of advocacy is at the core of the voluntary sector's work. It is the articulation of the vision toward which sector organizations are working, while also providing services and delivering programs. The sector would be negligent if it failed to communicate this vision and recommend the policy changes that are required to achieve it."<sup>5</sup>

For a copy of the Advocacy Working Group's position paper visit: [www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/pdf/position\\_paper.pdf](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/pdf/position_paper.pdf)

It should be noted that some of what the voluntary sector considers to be public policy input may be viewed as "political activity" by the federal government and, therefore, subject to restriction when conducted by a registered charity. For more information on this, please refer to Module 2 as well as the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).

Voluntary organizations can benefit by understanding the systems and the environments in which public policies are developed. The next section introduces the structure of the federal government, outlines the federal

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<sup>4</sup>Voluntary Sector Initiative. (1999) *Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative: Report of the Joint Tables*, <http://www.vsr-trsb.net/publications/pco-e.pdf>, p. 58.

<sup>5</sup>Voluntary Sector Initiative. (2002) *Advocacy – The Sound of Citizens' Voices: A Position Paper from the Advocacy Working Group*, ([http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/pdf/position\\_paper.pdf](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/pdf/position_paper.pdf)), p. 9.

policy development process and describes the levels of involvement along a continuum. It also provides an overview of the voluntary sector and describes the federal regulations governing voluntary organizations.

## Resources and links

**A Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue:**

[http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/policy\\_code.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/policy_code.cfm)

**Be H.I.P.P. Have Influence on Public Policy. A Manual and Tool Kit on How Voluntary Organizations can Influence Public Policy (prepared by YMCA Canada with the assistance of Human Resources Development Canada):**

[http://www.ymca.ca/downloads/Be\\_Hipp\\_manual.pdf](http://www.ymca.ca/downloads/Be_Hipp_manual.pdf)

**Working Together:**

[www.vsr-trsb.net/publications/pco-e.pdf](http://www.vsr-trsb.net/publications/pco-e.pdf)

**Advocacy – The Sound of Citizens Voices: A Position Paper from the Advocacy Working Group, Voluntary Sector Initiative:**

[http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/pdf/position\\_paper.pdf](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/pdf/position_paper.pdf)

**VOICE in Health Policy: Inventory of Policy Capacity/Partnership Building/Collaboration Definitions:**

[http://www.projectvoice.ca/Inventory\\_Definitions.html](http://www.projectvoice.ca/Inventory_Definitions.html)

## Module 2 – Navigating the System and the Rules

### Objectives

- understand the federal government structure
- examine the federal policy development process
- identify the levels of involvement on the policy development continuum
- understand the contributions of the voluntary sector
- understand federal regulations governing voluntary sector organizations
- differentiate between non-profit organizations, charities, and voluntary organizations

### Preamble

Policy-making in Canadian governments – whether it occurs at the municipal, provincial or federal level – generally follows an established process. Each has a system involving elected officials, committees, staff research and preparation and public input that varies with the level of government and the particular jurisdiction. For the most part, the bigger the government, the more complex the process becomes.

Although only the federal system is described below, it will give you an understanding of the complexity of government decision-making and the numerous opportunities to gain access to the process. While it is not important to understand every detail of government structure, having an understanding of the way government works, who makes decisions and where the access points are, will help your organization determine where to put the most energy.

The organization of provincial governments is very similar to the federal model and, as a result, policy-making for provincial governments is also similar to the federal model. You can use the information below as a general model for other levels of government and find more detailed information on structures of other levels of government via the Web sites of provincial and municipal governments.

The voluntary sector is different from government in many areas including organizational culture, composition, authority and affiliation. Within the voluntary sector, organizations fall into one of three categories: non-profit organizations, charities and voluntary organizations. Depending on the category, organizations need to abide by federal regulations enforced by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency.

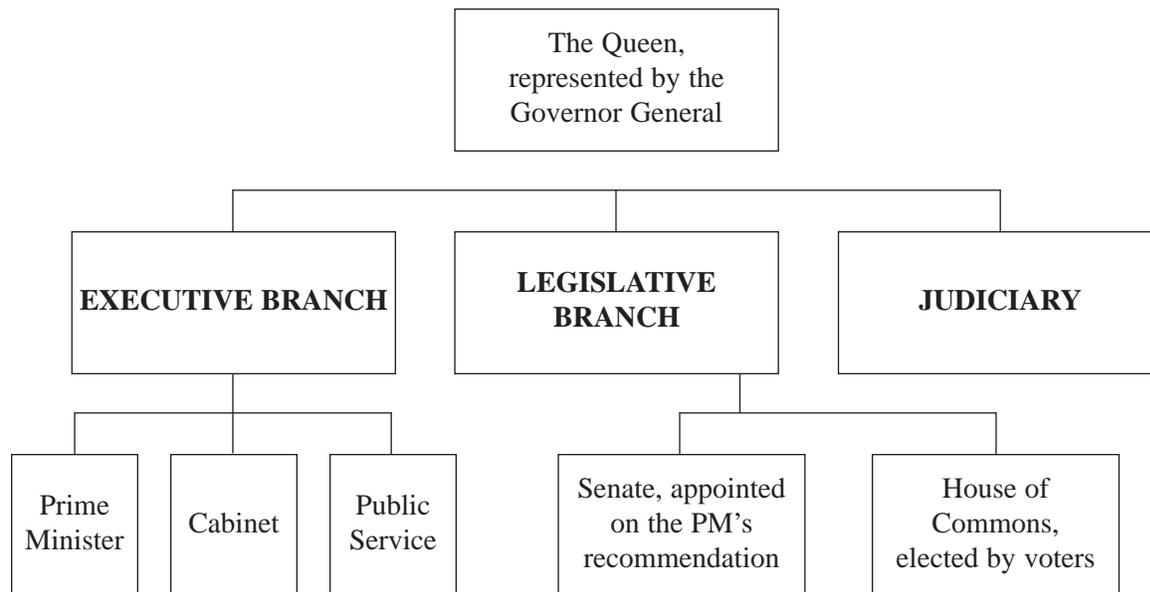
This module will help you understand the intricacies of the systems involved in public policy dialogue and the federal rules affecting your organization.

## The Federal Government<sup>6</sup>

It is important to understand how the federal government is organized in order to appreciate how its policy process works. A basic understanding will enable your organization to know about and seek out opportunities for involvement in the policy process. As complex as it may be, this knowledge will further your organization's ability to contribute meaningfully to public policy.

The Canadian system of government is a parliamentary system. The Parliament of Canada consists of the Queen, the Senate and the House of Commons. Three constituent parts handle the governing of the country: the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch and the Judiciary. The first two are involved in the development and implementation of policy (based on the recommendations of the Public Service which are acted on by the Prime Minister and Cabinet) while the third is in place to interpret and implement that policy.

### Canada's Parliamentary System



### The executive branch

The executive branch of government is comprised of those who propose policies and bills (Prime Minister and Cabinet) and those who carry them out (the Public Service).

<sup>6</sup>Institute on Governance and Public Service Commission. (2002) *How Government Works: A Primer*; [http://www.edu.psc-cfp.gc.ca/tdc/learn-append/psw/hgw/how-gov2\\_e.htm](http://www.edu.psc-cfp.gc.ca/tdc/learn-append/psw/hgw/how-gov2_e.htm)

## The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister is the head of decision-making in the federal government. He or she provides overall direction for the government and although the Prime Minister's role is not written down in detail, the responsibilities of the Prime Minister include the following:

- appoints Senators, members of Cabinet and other senior positions (such as Deputy Ministers, ambassadors, heads of Crown corporations, and heads of government agencies)
- organizes government (for example, shuffling or realigning departmental responsibilities and creating or closing agencies)
- advises the Governor General on the need and date for a general election
- determines overall government priorities, has the strongest voice in Cabinet, and is often the facilitator and manager of Cabinet debate
- provides the directing force for parliamentary debate

## Cabinet

The Prime Minister appoints the Cabinet from among elected members of his or her party. The Governor General then formally appoints them to Cabinet. For a list of current Cabinet ministers, visit [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca) and click on "Senators and Members."

Most of the ministers have "portfolios" (for example, Finance, Foreign Affairs, Environment, Health, etc.) that they represent in the House of Commons. Ministers table legislation affecting their departments as necessary and they are accountable to the legislature for their particular departments.

Each department has a deputy minister (the highest ranking public servant in the department) who works with the minister of that department. Changes to ministers (for example, through cabinet shuffles) and deputy ministers can have a profound impact on policy. Paying attention to cabinet shuffles, new appointments and changes in the political party in power will allow your organization to quickly identify whom to talk to, both politically and within the bureaucracy. In addition, keeping in touch with ministers and senior government officials in their new roles, even if the new role does not seem related to your issue, is important. Maintaining these relationships may influence decisions or gain support for issues later.

### *Cabinet committees*

The Prime Minister and ministers in Cabinet make all major policy decisions. For convenience, the Prime Minister usually establishes Cabinet committees to handle streams of policy issues. Only one committee, Treasury Board (the financial control committee for government expenditures), is established in legislation. The others are established at the Prime Minister's discretion. If a committee is established to address an area of particular concern to your organization, you should know who sits on it in order to provide or receive information and also to gain more support for sector issues. For more information on Cabinet committees visit <http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/about/people/key/CabCom.asp?lang=E>.

## Memorandum to Cabinet and Aides-Memoires

In working with government, you may hear public servants (or others) refer to an “MC.” An MC is a “Memorandum to Cabinet,” which is the structured format in which information is presented to Cabinet for decision-making. An MC is the key instrument of written policy advice to Cabinet. As the tool an individual minister uses to obtain the support of Cabinet colleagues for a proposed course of action, it plays a pivotal role in the Cabinet’s decision-making process.

Among other items, an MC contains:

- a statement of the issue
- recommendations (these may contain resources that are either policy-only resources, or policy and financial resources)
- what consultations were carried out and what perspectives were considered
- federal-provincial considerations (if any)
- environmental considerations (if any)
- foreseen problems and strategies to deal with them
- communications approach

While the MC itself is subject to Cabinet secrecy, you may be able to provide input on the issue by building relationships with officials working on the document. Therefore, your organization may be able to provide background information, options and ideas that may be incorporated into an MC. It is unlikely your organization would be involved in actually drafting the document.

There is also the lesser-used “Aide-Memoire,” which is prepared to inform Cabinet on an issue rather than to request a decision by Cabinet.

For more information visit: [http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/docs/Publications/mc/MCGuide\\_e.PDF](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/docs/Publications/mc/MCGuide_e.PDF)

## The Public Service

The Public Service is the third and largest component of the executive branch of government. The Public Service puts public policy into action. In Canada, this means supporting the activities of the government of the day. Public servants devise options for action, ministers decide on a course of action from among these options and public servants then implement the decision. Because of their ability to influence operational decisions concerning policy, it is beneficial for voluntary sector organizations to build relationships with public servants.

While access to politicians can generate support for ideas, the bureaucracy is “where it happens.” Expanding working relationships with public servants beyond your areas of interest can also be beneficial, as is maintaining relationships with people you know working in government.

The changing nature of the Canadian workforce has meant that many public servants change jobs frequently. The 1990s left a hole in the middle management of the bureaucracy and, in attempts to modernize, the public service moves its best performers from one executive position to another through programs such as the Accelerated Executive Development Program ([http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/aexdp/axhom\\_e.htm](http://www.psc-cfp.gc.ca/aexdp/axhom_e.htm)). Keeping in touch with bureaucrats who understand your issues could give you additional support in other departments not considered by your organization. In some cases, voluntary sector representatives may even serve to link one department to another and one official to another.

A final note on government departments – don't assume that departments or bureaucrats know what's happening in other federal departments or other levels of government. While there are an increasing number of "horizontal issues" on which departments work together, the size of the bureaucracy makes it difficult for coordination.

For more information on working effectively with public servants, see Module 4.

## **The legislative branch**

The legislative branch, composed of the House of Commons and the Senate, is responsible for introducing, considering and passing legislation.

### **The House of Commons**

The House of Commons is the major law-making body. Each of the country's constituencies or ridings elects one Member of Parliament (MP). When MPs are elected, in addition to serving as their constituency's representative in Parliament, they typically have one or more of the following roles as well: Minister, Member of Cabinet, Member of Cabinet Committee or Member of Parliamentary Committee.

### **The Senate**

No bill can become a law unless the Senate has passed it. The Senate usually has 105 members who are appointed by the Governor General on the recommendation of the Prime Minister.

For current government bills visit:  
[www.parl.gc.ca/common/Bills\\_House\\_Government.asp?Language=E](http://www.parl.gc.ca/common/Bills_House_Government.asp?Language=E)

Your organization will want to be aware of the laws and legislations that potentially impact on your issues, as well as any recent court decisions, especially in the Supreme Court. Your organization should be watchful of pending issues affecting policy concerns of the government as well as where specific items are on the policy agenda. This information would help to form the basis for building your case and provide options to decision-makers.

## *Parliamentary committees*

In addition to sitting in the House of Commons, MPs have many other responsibilities including parliamentary committees. An important part of the work accomplished by the House of Commons and Senate goes on outside the chambers themselves in parliamentary committees. Parliamentary committees investigate policy issues and evaluate proposed legislation. There are many types of parliamentary committees (such as standing committees, special committees and legislative committees) and each has a different composition and function. These committees have members from all parties and it is important to create relationships with members from all parties. Getting the support of members of the opposition and the majority party will help your organization better influence public policy. For more information on existing committees, visit [www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca) and click on “committee business.”

For more information on working effectively with Members of Parliament, see Module 4.

## **The judiciary<sup>7</sup>**

The Canadian system of government depends on a dynamic relationship among its three branches – the Executive, the Legislative and the Judiciary or Courts. The Legislature has the power of making, altering and repealing laws. The Executive is responsible for administering and enforcing the laws. The Judiciary has the task of settling disputes according to law – including disputes about how the executive and legislative powers are handled. Independent courts are the hallmark of a strong democratic society.

For information on the Canadian justice system visit:  
<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/dept/pub/trib/index.html>

The basic role of courts in Canada is to help people resolve disputes fairly, whether the matter is between individuals or between individuals and the state. In the process, courts interpret and establish law, set standards and raise questions that affect all aspects of Canadian society.

## **The federal policy development process**

The federal policy development process is complex and confusing as there are many steps and stakeholders involved. However, the three major steps in policy analysis – defining the problem, developing options to solve it and recommending an option – are common in every system.

The politically charged environment in which many policy decisions are made is crucial. It is important to understand that both internal and external politics are influential in this process. That is, not only various stakeholders but also the bureaucrats themselves making decisions will promote different interests.

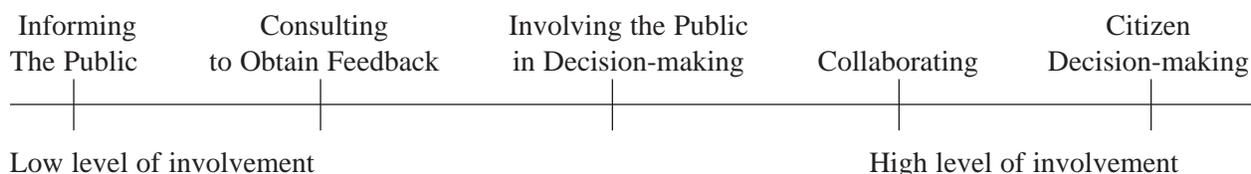
However, the complexity of the process means that there are many doors through which the public policy process can be accessed – through ministers, parliamentary and senate committees, MPs, the bureaucracy, public consultations, hearings and the media. As there are many opportunities for involvement, be sure to explore and employ the appropriate strategies to suit your organization’s resources and focus.

<sup>7</sup> Department of Justice Canada. (2003) *Canada’s Court System*, <http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/dept/pub/trib/index.html>

## Levels of involvement in policy development

The level to which organizations can be involved in policy dialogue with government varies along a continuum, from a low to high level of involvement. Government may approach stakeholders in many ways but involvement can be initiated from the sector as well. Well-made policy is often initiated both ways with levels of involvement fluctuating at various stages of policy development.

### Continuum of Involvement in Policy Development



The lowest level of involvement, **informing the public**, is more an information giving process than an information collection process. At this level, the government is trying to educate the public about an initiative they are committed to taking or have already taken. Even if input hasn't been requested, organizations can always make their views known and find out how they can get involved earlier in the next process.

The next level of involvement, **consulting to obtain feedback**, is one in which the government has already chosen one course of action from among the options available to it and intends to proceed with this course unless actively dissuaded. At this level, you have the chance to raise important questions, make important points and use the opportunity to attract members of the public to your issues.

At the third stage, **involving the public in decision-making**, the public has involvement in the policy dialogue. Government works with stakeholders to understand the issue from their point of view and feedback is sought at various stages in the process. Government ultimately makes the final decision but it is made with the help and advice of the public along the way including the development of various options that government may pursue.

At the fourth stage, **collaborating**, there is true collaboration in the development of public policy. The *Accord between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* serves as an excellent example of this kind of policy dialogue. In this case, the federal government and representatives of the voluntary sector jointly developed the Accord.

To view the Accord and the Codes of Good Practice visit: [www.vsi-isbc.ca/](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/)

The highest level of involvement, **citizen decision-making**, is one in which the public makes the final decision. This is more likely to occur at the local government level because of its limited carry over to other settings. A local government, for example, may hand over program and operational policy decision-making for a municipal neighbourhood centre to a local community committee.

In an effort to increase the level of involvement in policy, the Voluntary Sector Initiative funded a number of projects designed to enhance policy dialogue in various federal departments in the summer of 2000. The Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development Projects (SIDPD) aimed to strengthen the opportunities for input by voluntary organizations and to strengthen the voluntary sector's

capacity to contribute to departmental policy dialogue. These projects are designed to support a wide range of policy priorities such as environmental issues, childcare and health. Over 100 voluntary sector organizations from across Canada are working on 46 projects in partnership with 17 government departments (for more information, go to the VSI Web site under Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development Projects at <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/sidpd.cfm>).

## The voluntary sector<sup>8</sup>

Voluntary sector organizations have a mandate to identify and respond to community needs by providing programs, services and support to improve people's lives. They provide collective voices and involvement in issues of common concern. As diverse as the Canadian population itself, the voluntary sector includes an estimated 180 000 incorporated non-profit organizations, of which about 80 000 are registered charities. These organizations differ enormously in their causes and constituencies, in size and resources and in the extent to which they are run by volunteers and paid professional staff. They range from small community-based groups to large national and international organizations. Working independently, voluntary sector organizations determine their own priorities and manage their own affairs.

Through their staff and volunteers, these organizations work in communities across Canada every day to identify needs and provide effective service and support to improve people's lives. Instrumental in developing and supporting social, cultural, economic and political values in Canadian communities, voluntary sector organizations make a valuable contribution by delivering services; advocating on behalf of community causes; encouraging self help; facilitating community and economic development in Canada and developing countries; promoting awareness and action on environmental issues; advancing religious faith and practice; and raising funds and providing financial support to other organizations.

The voluntary sector's breadth and diversity are among its principal strengths. Voluntary sector organizations provide channels through which Canadians can make themselves heard on important issues. Many organizations work with the most marginalized members of society, advocating for the needs of those whose voices are too seldom heard. A fundamental part of a democratic, pluralistic and inclusive society, voluntary sector activities reinforce citizenship by encouraging Canadians to participate in and express their views on a diverse range of individual and civic concerns and interests within their communities, whether defined geographically or as communities of common interest.

A strong, resilient voluntary sector draws its support from a variety of sources, including 22 million Canadians who make financial and/or in-kind donations totalling almost \$5 billion to help organizations achieve their missions; 6.5 million individuals who volunteer their expertise and labour; governments, foundations, charitable funding organizations (for example, United Ways-Centraides) and corporations that provide financial and/or in-kind resources; and funds raised by voluntary sector organizations through service fees, product sales, investment income and other charitable fundraising activities. Voluntary sector organizations, through their boards of directors, are accountable to multiple constituencies including funders, donors, clients, members, volunteers, staff, government and the general public.

Through its ability to galvanize Canadians on important issues and act as an early warning system on a broad range of issues (for example, land mines, racism, family violence, climate change, media concentration, heritage preservation and HIV/AIDS), the voluntary sector can inform and enrich policy debates, identify emerging priorities and offer innovative proposals for change. The voluntary sector's ability to build bridges between communities and cultures helps to promote understanding, awareness, diversity, inclusion and social justice – connecting people locally, regionally, nationally and around the world.

<sup>8</sup>Voluntary Sector Initiative. (2002) *A Code of Good Practice on Funding: Building on An Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector (Appendix 2)*, [http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/funding/funding\\_code.cfm#appendix2](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/funding/funding_code.cfm#appendix2), p. 19.

## Working together on policy

Despite some similarities, the voluntary sector differs from the public sector in a number of ways. For example, the two sectors have different organizational cultures, reporting systems, memberships and affiliations. The following outlines some of the differences between the voluntary sector and the public sector, which must be taken into consideration when the two work together on policy questions.

### Organizational culture

Ties such as common personnel and management practices that have no equivalent in the voluntary sector bind the organizational culture of government. In the voluntary sector, the culture of one organization may be completely unlike others – due to its size and scope, or mission and approach (for example, Sick Children’s Hospital vs. Greenpeace). Voluntary organizations are mission-based, identifying and responding to community needs by providing programs, services and support to improve people’s lives. Led by a volunteer board of directors, they provide collective voices and involvement in issues of common concern.

### Hierarchy and authority

The federal government has a straightforward hierarchy where decisions are taken along reporting lines and have a prescribed process. In each federal department, the line of accountability runs upward and line of authority downward. Ultimately ministers are accountable in law to the Canadian public.

The voluntary sector’s breadth and diversity mean that no one organization (or individual) can speak for the entire sector. Instead, voluntary sector organizations, through their boards of directors, are accountable to multiple constituencies, including funders, donors, clients, members, volunteers, staff, government and the general public.

### Composition, affiliation and location

The federal government is headquartered in Ottawa and represented in all regions of Canada. All regional offices are governed by the same policies and procedures and are operated by the constituent parts of government identified earlier (the Executive Branch, the Legislative Branch and the Judiciary).

As diverse as the Canadian population itself, voluntary organizations differ enormously in their causes and constituencies, in size and resources and in the extent to which they are run by volunteers and paid professional staff. They range from small community-based groups to large national and international organizations. While organizations work independently to determine their own priorities and manage their own affairs, they also work effectively together on issues of common interest through informal networks and coalitions.

### Summary

Even though the distinguishing characteristics may cause differences in the way issues are managed, the goal should be to create a relationship based on each sector accepting that the other has strengths that benefit the relationship. One sector does not have to become more like the other in order to work together. The differences can be used to work effectively together to achieve common goals.

A number of factors can influence the degree to which a voluntary organization can become involved in public policy dialogue. These include: the type of process being used by government and the extent to which it is open to input; whether and how the organization chooses to be involved; and the status of the organization as determined by the Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA).

The following section outlines the CCRA guidelines and regulations governing voluntary organizations with charitable status.

## Guidelines for involvement of voluntary sector organizations in policy dialogue

The Canadian Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA) implements guidelines and regulations that govern the extent to which voluntary organizations can be involved in public policy dialogue. Many organizations are concerned about what they are allowed and not allowed to do in the terms of policy dialogue. There is a perception that a voluntary organization risks its charitable status by becoming involved in policy discussions.

Though CCRA (through the Income Tax Act) does have rules, they do not prohibit charities from being actively involved in policy development. Rather, they establish limits on the “political activity” of charities. Although there is some overlap, this term is not synonymous with “advocacy.” In fact, the government may consider some charities’ activities to be political while the charity views the same activity as part of an advocacy strategy. To be involved, without risking your organization’s charitable status, you need to understand the limits, which differ according to the category into which your organization falls. Because of the complexity of this issue, you should always consult the relevant CCRA Income Tax Act (ITA) rules, as well as your organization’s board of directors and legal counsel.

The following is a brief overview of the categories of organizations and the rules that apply to the conduct of “political activity.” This will help you determine how much of your organization’s resources can be dedicated to affecting public policy.

Watch for further developments that may affect the rules for charities and other non-profits. Information can be found at [www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca](http://www.ccr-aadrc.gc.ca) or [www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/index.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/index.cfm). Be sure to stay informed of the changes – they may affect how much your organization is able to be involved in influencing public policy.

## What’s in a name: voluntary, charity or non-profit?

The first task in determining your organization’s permitted level of involvement in political activity is sorting out the terminology. Although often used interchangeably, the terms “registered charity” and “non-profit organization” are defined differently by the Income Tax Act. “Voluntary organizations” and “voluntary sector,” however, are used to describe the collective of charities and non-profit organizations.

The term “**voluntary organizations**” encompasses both charities and non-profit organizations. It includes any organization that enriches the community through its work. It includes recreational associations, service clubs, local community associations, advocacy groups and community development organizations among others. Although “voluntary” implies “volunteer,” many voluntary organizations rely on paid staff to carry out their programs and services. All voluntary organizations, however, rely on volunteers on their board of directors for their governance.

Within the category of voluntary organizations, there are two categories that can be registered at CCRA: 1) registered charities and 2) non-profit organizations. Many groups (typically smaller or loosely organized ones) are neither.

“**Registered charity**” refers specifically to organizations registered under the Income Tax Act as meeting a strict set of criteria, which exempts them from paying income taxes and permits them to provide receipts for donations that can be claimed as tax credits. CCRA provides a definition of charitable purposes as well as information on how to register as a charity at <http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/tax/charities.menu-e.htm>.

“**Non-profit organizations**” enjoy special tax exemptions that they gain by fulfilling the requirements of the Income Tax Act. Although they do not pay income tax (except on their investment income), non-profit organizations are not entitled to issue tax credits to those who contribute financially to their work. Information on how to register as a non-profit organization can be found at [www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/E/pub/tp/it496r/it496r-e.html](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/E/pub/tp/it496r/it496r-e.html).

The seemingly subtle differences between non-profit organizations and charities can make all the difference when it comes to the next topic – political activity.

## Charities and political activity: can charities lobby government?

Yes...within limits. Although many people believe that charities cannot become involved in political activity, there are allowances for involvement. Registered charities in Canada *can* become involved in lobbying, advocacy and other forms of non-partisan political activity. In most cases, a charity can devote up to 10 percent of its resources to such activity as long as it is related to their charitable objectives.

In its administrative role, CCRA interprets the Income Tax Act in determining whether to grant charitable status to an organization or to remove that status from an existing charity. The CCRA may analyse which non-partisan activities do or do not fall into the political activity realm based on current guidelines.

CCRA publishes an interpretation bulletin that outlines the restrictions on political activity by registered charitable organizations. Some of this information is currently under review. For the most up-to-date information, consult the CCRA Web site at [www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/tax/charities/menu-e.html](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca/tax/charities/menu-e.html).

It should be noted that some “political activities...within expenditure limits” are permitted by CCRA. These activities are not considered to be charitable themselves but are allowed by CCRA as long as they

### A Note on Terminology

Government and voluntary sector stakeholders often describe the policy development process from different perspectives. Government often thinks of the entire process, from beginning to end, as policy development and the non-government people who do it as practicing “government relations.” The voluntary sector engages in policy dialogue because it is advocating for changes or improvements for a part of society and one of the means to achieve such change is through new policy or law.

Advocacy is a topic of considerable discussion; its exact conduct, as well as the amount that can be done by charities, is currently being reviewed. (See the material developed by the VSI Working Group on Advocacy at <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/products/reports.cfm> and IMPACS at [www.impacs.org](http://www.impacs.org).)

occur within the expenditure limits set out by the Income Tax Act. According to the CCRA interpretation, this means that 90 percent or more of a charity's resources must be spent on charitable activities. This leaves up to 10 percent "of all the financial and physical assets of the charity as well as the services provided by its human resources" as the maximum that a charity can spend on "permitted political activity." Smaller charities may devote a slightly higher amount depending on their annual income.

After you have determined the extent to which your organization can become involved in "political activity" in the policy process, you must develop a sound internal policy position to bring forward. This process is described next.

## Resources and links

### **Voluntary Sector Initiative Accord and the Codes of Good Practice:**

<http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/relationship/accord.cfm>

### **VSI Advocacy Working Group:**

[http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/advocacy\\_group.cfm](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/advocacy_group.cfm)

### **Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society (IMPACS):**

[www.impacs.org](http://www.impacs.org)

### **How Government Works:**

<http://www.edu.psc-cfp.gc.ca/tdc/learn-apprend/psw/hgw/index.htm>

### **Sectoral Involvement in Departmental Policy Development Projects**

#### **Voluntary Sector Initiative:**

<http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/policy/sidpd.cfm>

### **Canada Customs and Revenue Agency (CCRA):**

[www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca](http://www.ccra-adrc.gc.ca)

### **Income Tax Act:**

<http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-3.3/index.html>

## Government-based policy development resources

The following are examples of public policy documents, analyses, and guides to developing policy.

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Government of Canada. *Report of the Task Force on Strengthening the Policy Capacity of the Federal Government. (Fellegi Report)*. Ottawa: Minister of Supply and Services, 1995.

Hurley, James R. *Amending Canada's Constitution: History, Processes, Problems and Prospects*. Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, 1996.

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### Internet resources

Canadian Centre for Management Development. "Re-Thinking Policy: Strengthening Policy Capacity Conference Proceedings." 1996. <[http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/research/publications/complete\\_list\\_e.html](http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/research/publications/complete_list_e.html)> (under the heading: Policy and Governance)

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Institute on Governance. "The Citizen Engagement Roundtable: Technology, Democracy, and the Development of Public Policy." 1996. <<http://www.iog.ca/publications/cert5.pdf>>

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## Web sites

**Canadian Centre for Management Development:**  
<http://www.ccmd-ccg.gc.ca/>

**Canadian Policy Research Initiative:**  
<http://www.policyresearch.gc.ca/>

**Canada's Federal Budget:**  
<http://www.fin.gc.ca/access/budinfoe.html>

**Government at a Glance:**  
[http://canada.gc.ca/howgoc/glance\\_e.html](http://canada.gc.ca/howgoc/glance_e.html)

**Hot Links to Resources of Interest to Public Administrators:**  
<http://www.ryerson.ca/~ipactor/links.htm>

**How a Canadian Government Bill Becomes Law:**

<http://dsp-psd.communication.gc.ca/Reference/queens-e.html>

**How Canadians Govern Themselves:**

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/idb/forsey/index-e.asp>

**How Government Works:**

[http://www.edu.psc-cfp.gc.ca/tdc/learn-append/psw/hgw/menu\\_e.htm](http://www.edu.psc-cfp.gc.ca/tdc/learn-append/psw/hgw/menu_e.htm)

**HRDC Strategic Policy:**

<http://www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/sp-ps/home.shtml>

**Joint Planning and Policy Development Forum – Indian and Northern Affairs Canada:**

[http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/jf/index\\_e.html](http://www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/bc/jf/index_e.html)

**The Metropolis Project:**

<http://canada.metropolis.net>

**The Lobby Monitor:**

<http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/cpwebint.html>

**Open Government Canada:**

<http://www.opengovernmentcanada.org/>

**Performance Management – Linking Results to Public Debate:**

[http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account/ppf-fpp\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/rma/account/ppf-fpp_e.asp)

**Politics Watch:**

<http://www.politicswatch.com/index2.html>

**Queen’s University School of Policy Studies Working Papers:**

<http://www.queensu.ca/sps/WorkingPapers/>

**Social Research Demonstration Corporation:**

<http://www.srdc.org/english/about/core.htm>

**The Summer Institute for Policy Analysis:**

<http://web.uvic.ca/~si99/>

**Using Third-Party Public Information-Based Initiatives To Promote Public Policy:**

<http://www.wri.org/wri/incentives/moffet.html>

## Voluntary sector-based policy development resources

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## Web sites

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### **Advocacy Tools:**

<http://www.givevoicenetwork.org/advocacy.htm>

### **CharityVillage – Research and Policy Development:**

<http://www.charityvillage.com/cv/nonpr/nonpr22.html>

### **International Nonprofit Management Teaching Resource Centre:**

<http://www.inom-trc.org/>

### **Civic Practices Network:**

<http://www.cpn.org/>

### **Social Marketing:**

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/hppb/socialmarketing/index.html>

# Module 3 – Where Do You Want To Go?

## Developing a Strategy To Influence Public Policy

### Objectives

- know how to develop a strategic policy position relevant to your organization’s mission
- know how and where to gather facts to substantiate your policy position

### Preamble

There are many problems that your organization may care about but not all of them are issues that your organization should or can undertake. An issue is a problem that meets most or all of the following criteria:

- affects your organization and its constituency in a tangible way
- fits into your organization’s plans or mission/mandate
- is specific

To be successful it is important to identify and put your energy in to the one or two key public policy issues that you believe are absolutely vital to your constituency. Remember that effective public policy influence requires sustained input over a period of time. Significant changes in public policy take a long time to initiate and even longer to implement. When deciding whether or not to tackle an issue, remember to ask yourself these questions:

- How important is this policy, or this policy process, to accomplishing our mission?
- Is this part of our planned public policy development strategy or a “one-shot deal”?
- Is this effort to influence policy going to improve our chances of success in achieving our primary mission?
- Do we have the appropriate resources (human, financial and time) to commit to this initiative?

This module will help you formulate a strategy and develop some key messages for your organization, direct you to the appropriate resources to build an effective case for your policy position and help your organization to better influence public policy.

### Key questions for formulating a public policy strategy<sup>9</sup>

Once you have determined which issues and policies your organization will tackle, you need to formulate a strategy and determine the best way to influence public policy. A common source of confusion is the difference between “tactics” and “strategy.” Tactics are specific actions – distributing brochures, drafting policy briefs and building relationships (see Module 4). A strategy is an overall map that guides the use of these tools toward clear goals. A strategy is a hard-nosed assessment of where you are, where you want to go and how you can get there. Strategy formulation can be accomplished by involving key stakeholders (for example, board, staff, clients and government) in answering the following nine questions:

<sup>9</sup>Adapted from: [Advocacy Basics: Building Global Capacity for NGO Policy Advocacy Training](#)

## Looking outward

### 1. Objectives: What do you want?

Any effort to influence public policy must begin with a sense of the goals. Among these goals, some distinctions are important. What are the long-term goals and what are the short-term goals? What are the content goals (that is, what change needs to happen?) and what are the process goals (that is, what needs to happen along the way)? These goals need to be defined at the start in a way that can launch an effort, draw people to it and sustain it over time. It is important to keep in mind that influencing public policy may be a long process requiring sustained time and effort to be successful. Any strategy must also consider the context in which it is developed. What else is going on that will affect this issue (world or community events, the environment or the government's current agenda and priorities)? How will these factors influence your organization's involvement?

### 2. Audiences: Whom do you need to involve to make it happen?

Who are the people and institutions you need to influence? This includes those who have the formal authority to deliver the goods (for example, politicians) as well as those who have the capacity to influence those with formal authority (for example, the media and key constituencies, both allied and opposed). In both cases, an effective strategy requires a clear sense of who these audiences are and what access points on the policy development continuum are available to influence them.

### 3. Message: What do they need to hear?

Effectively communicating your key messages starts with defining your goals and objectives and knowing your audience. Reaching different audiences requires crafting and framing a set of messages that will be persuasive. Although the messages must always be rooted in facts based on both qualitative and quantitative data, they also need to be tailored to different audiences depending on what they are ready to hear. In most cases effective messages will have two basic components: an appeal to what is right and an appeal to the audience's interest.

### 4. Messengers: Whom do they need to hear it from?

The same message has a very different impact depending on who communicates it. You must determine the most credible messengers for different audiences. In some cases, these messengers are "experts" whose credibility is largely technical. In other cases, it may be more effective to include the citizens most affected by the issue who can speak from personal experience. You may consider using your board of directors or clients to deliver a message.

### 5. Delivery: How can we get them to hear it?

There is a wide continuum of ways to deliver a clear message. These range from passive (for example, a petition or drafting policy options to present at a Royal Commission) to direct action. The most effective means vary from situation to situation. The key is to evaluate them and apply them appropriately, weaving them together in a winning mix. Remember, don't assume that the government doesn't want to hear from you; the government is always in the midst of carefully balancing the diverse views of all its stakeholders to develop effective policy for Canadians.

## Looking inward

### 6. Resources: What do we have?

An effective strategy takes careful stock of your organization's current resources. This includes past successes in public policy dialogue, established alliances and networks, human and financial resources, board support, information and political intelligence. In short, you don't start from scratch — you start from where you are.

### 7. Gaps: What do we need to develop?

After taking stock of your resources, the next step is to identify the resources you will need. This means looking at potential alliances and networks, as well as capacities such as outreach, media, human and financial resources and research, which are crucial to any effort. Are there other organizations or networks interested in the same policy issues? How can you work together? Has any research been done on this issue? How will you fill the human resource capacity needed for what may be a sustained campaign?

### 8. First Efforts: How do we begin?

Answering a few simple questions identifies your starting point. What is an effective way to begin to move the strategy forward and identify the access points? What are some potential short-term goals or projects that will bring the right people together, symbolize the larger work ahead and create something achievable that lays the groundwork for the next step?

### 9. Evaluation: How do we tell if it's working?

The road to influencing public policy may be a long one. As with any long journey, the course needs to be checked along the way. Your strategy needs to be assessed by regularly reviewing each of the questions above. For example, are we aiming at the right audiences? Are we reaching them? Are we following the right processes? What problems did we have? What mistakes did we make? What unexpected connections did we make? Who did we reach and why? Have we achieved our objective? Why or why not? It is important to be able to make mid-course corrections and to discard those elements of a strategy that don't work once they are put into practice.

## Tips for building your organization's policy capacity

Once your organization has determined its role in developing a strategy for influencing public policy, you need to identify ways for improving the policy capacity of your organization. Four key capacity areas should be looked at:

1. skill acquisition and development
2. gathering knowledge and information
3. identification and use of tools and resources
4. climate and process for policy development and analysis

## 1. Skill acquisition and development

Figuring out what your organization might need in terms of skills related to policy development can be difficult. There are some differences between the skills needed for internal organizational policy development and those needed to influence the public policy realm of government.

If you are looking to complement your organization's skills in the area of policy, do a quick inventory of your staff's, board's and volunteers' abilities to do policy work. It's likely you'll find that many of the necessary skills already exist within your organization, though they may not have been used for this purpose specifically in the past.

### Skills of a Policy Analyst

- analytical thinking
- interpersonal
- facilitation
- leadership
- communication
- active listening
- public speaking and presentation
- clear, concise writing

## 2. Gathering knowledge and information

Research is an essential component of policy analysis and strategy development. It is crucial that your organization is seen as credible and is able to back up what it knows from experience with sound evidence and research.

If you don't have research staff of your own, there are ways to find research assistance in most communities. Apply for project funding from government, a foundation or other funders to conduct research. Contact your nearest university or college – there are often students or faculty who are interested in conducting local research. Find out who has already done research on your issue and learn from them. Liaise with existing policy research organizations such as the Canadian Policy Research Networks ([www.cprn.org](http://www.cprn.org)) or the Caledon Institute of Social Policy ([www.caledoninst.org](http://www.caledoninst.org)) to find out what else is going on in the field.

Know more about your constituent group and about the issue than anyone else. Recognize that there is always more than one option in dealing with a problem. Understand the pros and cons of other options and be prepared to demonstrate why your chosen option is best.

Research and policy institutes exist to delve deeply into areas that affect public policy — the economy, social security, the environment, employment and more. The results of their research are often available on their Web sites or by mail. Many institutes are formed with a particular political, economic or social orientation and their research tends to reflect those philosophies. A list of Canadian research and policy institutes and lobby groups is included at the end of this module.

### Stages of Policy Analysis

- Identify and define problem or issue.
- Gather information – collect expertise and evidence-based research.
- Review existing policies and programs.
- Refine policy priorities.
- Develop policy options.
- Identify policy alternatives.
- Involve partners and players at the right time.
- Conduct feasibility studies.
- Recommend policy options.
- Monitor and report on impact of policies.
- Evaluate.

### 3. Identification and use of tools and resources

Before you start your research, you need to identify the tools and resources your organization might need to access in order to get the information you need. Module 4 explains the various approaches your organization might use to implement your strategy.

### 4. Climate and process for policy development and analysis

Another key question to ask your organization is whether the issue you're proposing to undertake fits into the mandate of government departments. While the issue may not yet be addressed in existing government programs and policies, it is easier to work on issues that fit within the mission and vision of government and departments. To find out the current mandate of the government, read the recent Red Books, Speeches from the Throne (<http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=InformationResources&Sub=sftddt>) commitments, comments from the Clerk of the Privy Council, federal Budgets and Deputy Ministers' Performance Agreement Corporate Priorities ([http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=PCOsSecretariats&Sub=mpsp&doc+pmp\\_dma\\_priorities\\_e.htm](http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/default.asp?Language=E&Page=PCOsSecretariats&Sub=mpsp&doc+pmp_dma_priorities_e.htm)). Departments will focus their activities, programs and policies on these documents.

Once you have developed a strategy and conducted the necessary research, you must determine how your organization will influence public policy. The next module describes the specific approaches your organization can use to advance your position.

## Resources and links on policy research

This list includes some Canadian research and policy institutes and broad lobby groups. The criteria for inclusion in this list are that the organization conducts Canadian research, the research is directed to public policy and the focus of the research is not commercial in nature or industry specific. Note there are many issue-specific coalition and alliance based organizations as well.

**Assembly of First Nations:**

<http://www.afn.ca/>

**C.D. Howe Institute:**

<http://www.cdhowe.org/index.html>

**Caledon Institute of Social Policy:**

<http://www.caledoninst.org/>

**Canada West Foundation:**

<http://www.cwf.ca/>

**Canadian Centre for Philanthropy:**

<http://www.ccp.ca>

**Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives:**

<http://www.policyalternatives.ca/>

**The Canadian Centre for Public Sector Marketing:**

<http://www.publicsectormarketing.com/>

**Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs:**

<http://www.ccmacanada.org/ccma/>

**Canadian Community Reinvestment Council:**

<http://www.cancrc.org/>

**Canadian Council for the Arts:**

<http://www.canadacouncil.ca/>

**Canadian Council on Social Development:**

<http://www.ccsd.ca/>

**Canadian Employment Research Forum:**

<http://cerf.mcmaster.ca/purpose.html>

**Canadian Feminist Alliance for International Action:**  
<http://www.fafia.org>

**Canadian Health Coalition:**  
<http://www.healthcoalition.ca/>

**Canadian Institute for Child Health:**  
<http://www.cich.ca/>

**Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy:**  
<http://www.cielap.org/>

**Canadian Institute for Research on Regional Development (Institut canadien de recherche sur le développement régional):**  
<http://www.umoncton.ca/icrdr/>

**Canadian Institute of International Affairs:**  
<http://www.ciiia.org/>

**Canadian Policy Research Network:**  
<http://www.cprn.com/>

**Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy:**  
<http://www.unb.ca/crisp/>

**Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women:**  
<http://www.criaw-icref.ca>

**Canadian Society of Association Executives:**  
<http://www.csae.com/client/csae/CSAEHome.nsf>

**Canadian Urban Institute:**  
<http://www.canurb.com/>

**Centre for Families, Work, and Well-Being:**  
<http://www.worklifecanada.ca/centre.shtml>

**Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis:**  
<http://www.chepa.org/>

**Centre for Cultural Renewal:**  
<http://www.culturalrenewal.ca/>

**Centre for Social Justice:**  
<http://www.socialjustice.org/>

**Centre for the Study of Living Standards:**  
<http://www.csls.ca/>

**Centre for Voluntary Sector Research and Development:**  
<http://cvsrc.org/>

**Child and Family Canada:**  
<http://www.cfc-efc.ca/>

**Childcare Research and Resource Unit:**  
<http://www.childcarecanada.org/>

**Coalition of National Voluntary Organizations:**  
<http://www.nvo-onb.ca/>

**Conference Board of Canada:**  
<http://www.conferenceboard.ca/>

**Couchiching Institute on Public Affairs:**  
<http://www.couch.ca/>

**Council of Canadians:**  
<http://www.canadians.org/>

**Frontier Centre for Public Policy:**  
<http://www.fcpp.org/>

**Greenpeace Canada:**  
<http://www.greenpeace.ca>

**Health Charities Council of Canada:**  
<http://www.healthcharities.ca/>

**Institute for Media, Policy and Civil Society:**  
<http://www.impacs.org/>

**Institute for Public Economics:**  
<http://www.ualberta.ca/IPE/About.htm>

**Institute for Research on Public Policy:**  
<http://www.irpp.org/indexe.htm>

**Institute for Work and Health:**  
<http://www.iwh.on.ca>

**Institute of Governance Studies:**

<http://www.sfu.ca/igs/>

**Institute of Health Economics:**

<http://www.ihe.ab.ca/>

**Institute of Health Services and Policy Research:**

<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/institutes/ihspr/13733.shtml#?>

**Institute on Governance:**

<http://www.iog.ca/>

**Institute of the Public Administration of Canada:**

<http://www.ryerson.ca/~ipactor/menu.htm>

**International Development Research Centre:**

<http://www.idrc.ca/>

**International Institute for Sustainable Development:**

<http://www.iisd.org/default.asp>

**Lester B. Pearson Peacekeeping Centre:**

<http://www.cdnpeacekeeping.ns.ca/>

**Mackenzie Institute:**

<http://www.mackenzieinstitute.com/>

**National Action Committee on the Status of Women:**

[http://www.nac-cca.ca/index\\_e.htm](http://www.nac-cca.ca/index_e.htm)

**National Anti-Poverty Organization:**

<http://www.napo-onap.ca/>

**National Association of Women and the Law:**

<http://www.nawl.ca>

**National Children's Alliance:**

<http://www.nationalchildrensalliance.com/>

**National Council of Welfare**

<http://www.ncwcnbes.net/index.htm>

**National Council of Women:**

<http://www.ncwc.ca/>

**National Foundation for Family Research and Education:**

<http://www.wecaretoo.com/Organizations/CAN/nffre.html>

**North-South Institute:**

<http://www.nsi-ins.ca/>

**Pearson-Shoyama Institute:**

<http://www.pearson-shoyama.ca/>

**Pembina Institute for Appropriate Development:**

<http://www.pembina.org/>

**Policy.ca:**

<http://www.policy.ca/>

**Public Interest Advocacy Centre:**

<http://www.piac.ca/>

**Public Policy Forum:**

<http://www.ppforum.com/>

**Queen's International Institute on Social Policy:**

<http://www.queensu.ca/sps/forum/qiisp/qiisp.shtml>

**Groupe de recherche en économie de l'énergie, de l'environnement et des ressources naturelles (Research Group on Energy Economics, the Environment and Resources):**

<http://www.green.ecn.ulaval.ca/main.html>

**Roeher Institute:**

<http://www.roeher.ca/>

**Sheldon M. Chumir Foundation for Ethics in Leadership:**

<http://www.chumirethicsfoundation.ca>

**Sierra Club Canada:**

<http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/>

**Sustainable Development Research Institute:**

<http://www.sdri.ubc.ca/>

**Vanier Institute of the Family:**

<http://www.vifamily.ca/>

## Module 4 – How Do You Want to Get There? Implementing Your Strategy

### Objectives

- understand approaches that you can use to generate interest in your organization’s policy position
- increase your organization’s ability to influence public policy dialogue
- recognize the importance of saying thank you

### Preamble

You have developed a policy position (that is, you know what you want to say). So now what? You need to get your messages out to those who can influence policy decisions. This is the point where you put your strategy into action.

Despite being one of many voices, the voluntary sector has the opportunity to build relationships and work with other stakeholders to influence public policy. Good public policy dialogue is usually built through a process of community-wide consensus building – whether in a geographic community such as a neighbourhood, municipality, province or nation or in a community of interest such as women, persons with disabilities or visible minorities.

There are a variety of approaches your organization can use to build support for an idea. This module provides you with some of the specific approaches that can be used to generate support for your organization’s policy position. For each, a brief description and lists of tips, advantages and limitations are provided.

Keep in mind that some of the specific approaches described below can be modified to suit a number of different audiences (for example, bureaucrats and media). Also note that some of these approaches may be useful in a variety of situations and yet may not be useful a second time even in a similar situation. Policy-making is a fluid process with many players and many possible combinations.

### Government relations

Even if your work is focused on one neighbourhood or one municipality, the work you do, the people you work with and senior levels of government often affect the issues you address. Beyond careful planning, good research and considerable patience, getting on the government agenda needs effective relationship building.

In the private sector, many companies use government relations staff to ensure their issues are heard. Business associations regularly marshal their members to encourage the government to act in a certain way. Voluntary organizations, such as the Canadian Centre for Philanthropy, Health Charities Council of Canada (HCCC) and the National Action Committee on the Status of Women also incorporate government relations into their activities to participate more effectively in policy dialogue.

When the topic of most concern to your organization is not on the government’s radar screen, it may become necessary for you to make it so. In fact, the government often relies on voluntary organizations to act as an early warning system to bring emerging issues to its attention. See the *Accord Between the Government of Canada and the Voluntary Sector* at <http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/relationship/accord.cfm> for more information on how the voluntary sector identifies and contributes to important causes in Canada.

The approaches for working with government are interspersed throughout the three primary audiences (that is, members of parliament, public servants and ministers). They may be used separately or in conjunction with one another.

## **Working with Members of Parliament (MP)**

### **Description**

An MP is an elected representative at the federal level and, as such, will meet with constituents to discuss areas of concern. Set up an appointment with your MP to discuss your issue and to find out the other issues your MP is currently addressing. Be sure to involve him/her in your organization's efforts to influence policy.

### **Tips**

- Know your local MP or MPs and which committees they sit on.
- Meet with them to provide insight into your organization's concerns.
- Provide your MP with local public processes, studies, position papers and research that substantiate your concerns.
- Know which MPs sit on committees related to your organization's issues and make sure these MPs receive information regarding your concerns and the direction you would like to see policy take.
- Monitor committee activities on an ongoing basis.
- Attend or participate in town hall meetings, advisory committees or other events sponsored by your MP.
- Have your organization's board members contact their own MPs to further raise awareness of your issues.
- Work with your MP at the same time you involve ministers and the bureaucracy.

### **Advantages**

- Your MP can become your ally in the system, which can be invaluable in helping to get your issue noticed.
- MPs work for their constituents, like to meet with people in their ridings and see that the work they are doing is making a difference.

### **Limitations**

If your MP is a backbencher or a member of the opposition, they are less likely to influence Cabinet. However, they still influence private members' bills and raise questions in the House. Sometimes getting MPs to understand an issue decreases the amount of opposition in the House or provides for good debate.

## **Working with public servants**

### **Description**

In addition to your MP, you should be in touch with the bureaucrats who work on your issues and any related issues. Government staff interested in your specific policy area can be found in a number of ways. Your elected representative should be able to help identify with whom you should talk. Letters to ministers often get sent on to people within the bureaucracy for follow up work. Developing a relationship with individuals in the public service is a key to success.

One key government resource is the Government Electronic Directory Services (<http://direct.srv.gc.ca/cgi-bin/direct500/TE?FN=welcome.htm>), maintained by Public Works Government Services Canada. This directory of most federal public servants can be searched by an individual's name, organization or department. You can also access a directory of all government departments through the main Government of Canada Web site at [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca).

## Tips

Follow the example set by private sector companies who were identified by senior bureaucrats as exemplary in their effectiveness in working with the public service (as outlined in a 1999 analysis by Mark Schacter and Tim Plumptre for the Institute on Governance).

- Be a dependable source of ongoing information on your sector, present information in a relaxed manner and serve as a “constructive critic” of government initiatives.
- Serve as a role model for your sector.
- Take a “long view” in terms of your sector’s activities and give credit to the government when it is due.
- Recognize that you are in this for the long-term and communicate with government regularly – not just when you need something.
- Position your input in a way that will align with government objectives rather than positioning yourself as a government critic.
- Build the government relations function into your whole organization rather than focusing it solely in a government relations department. Engage every staff person, board member and volunteer in the public policy strategy, including sitting on advisory committees, providing feedback and advice when asked, initiating letter writing campaigns and working with the public sector in order to move policy issues forward.<sup>10</sup>

## Advantages

Since much of the work on policy issues occurs within the bureaucracy, having a good relationship with ministers and public sector officials will effectively situate your organization’s issue.

## Limitations

- Few voluntary organizations can afford government relations staff (for example, about half of Canada’s charities have revenues of under \$50,000).
- As there are numerous ways for voluntary organizations to approach and work constructively with bureaucrats, it can be difficult to know which will work best for your organization.

## Reports

### *Description*

One specific approach your organization can use when working with bureaucrats is to provide them with technical reports such as research results, policy findings or option papers related to your organization’s issue.

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<sup>10</sup>Mark Schacter and Tim Plumptre. (1999) *Public Good, Private Gain: Senior Bureaucrats and “Exemplary” Companies in Canada* (Ottawa: Institute on Governance), <http://iog.ca/publications/exemplarycos.pdf>

*Tips*

- Ensure reports get to the right people (that is, ensure that they not only go to the Minister but also to the public service staff and other organizations interested in the issue). The Minister's staff will be asked to analyse and provide advice to the Minister
- Ensure the purpose of the report is clear.
- Keep the report short and to the point.
- Collect relevant and up-to-date information and use it to build your case.

*Advantages*

- Technical reports can provide a thorough explanation of project decisions and policy decisions.
- These reports also provide a format with "hard evidence" supporting your position on the issue.
- Reports provide options, helping to identify your organization as a credible source of information.

*Limitations*

- Technical reports can be too detailed for many readers.
- The reports may not be in clear, simple language that is accessible to the average person.
- Reports can be time consuming to write and it can also be expensive to get an outside contractor involved. What is more, hiring someone to do the work can often create biased reports or may not always present the options your organization needs to build its case.

**Working with ministers**

There are many ways to have access to Ministers. Whether it is direct contact through a personal or professional relationship or through a more indirect route such as through a mutual contact, these connections can be helpful in developing a relationship.

Your organization may be asked to prepare a briefing note for a minister or senior bureaucrat and/or to provide information to the public service staff working on the internal memos or briefings for that person. When your organization requests a meeting with a minister or senior staff, someone within the bureaucracy prepares an initial assessment of whether or not the meeting should take place and then follows up with prepared briefings with speaking points for the actual meeting. The more you work with public service staff to outline your concerns, the expected agenda and the questions you are likely to raise, the better prepared the minister will be to act on those concerns.

The following outlines what is involved in preparing a policy brief.

**Policy Briefs<sup>11</sup>***Description*

A briefing note is used to explain an issue, problem or subject and to then provide a position on the matter. If possible, the brief should include any research and analysis done on the impacts of the issue on diverse population groups. If you have an opportunity to provide briefing material

<sup>11</sup> Roderick G. Quiney. (1991) *How to Create Superior Briefings* (Ottawa: Canadian Centre for Management development)

for senior government officials, remember that the operative word is *brief*. The further your policy brief goes up the bureaucratic ladder, the shorter it needs to be. Its effectiveness will depend on the quality of information you provide and the extent to which it considers the public will, the priorities of government, the relationships you have built with people in the system and the credibility of your organization.

### *Tips*

- Consider the brief from the recipient’s point of view. Why is this important to him or her? What do they need to know in order to make a decision? What questions are they likely to have? What might their doubts be? What are the advantages of following your advice? Why should they believe you? What’s in it for you? What’s in it for them?
- Ensure the following areas are covered in the policy brief:
  - an explanation of the issue
  - a summary of the facts so that the reader can become informed and/or make a decision
  - an explanation of the benefits of the desired position and why any potential alternatives are less advantageous
  - a conclusion that includes a short summary and your proposed course of action
- Write the brief using plain language. Don’t assume that the reader knows what you are talking about. Don’t use acronyms (it is acceptable to use them if they are spelled out the first time they are used) or technical jargon.
- Share your draft with someone who is not familiar with your area of work and ask him or her to tell you what he or she doesn’t understand.
- Attach additional information, such as background information or charts, as appendices.
- Keep the full argument and analysis to three pages or less.
- Keep it short because if you don’t, someone else will shorten it for you.

### **What to Include in a Policy Brief**

- your organization’s name, address and telephone number as well as its aims, membership and structure
- which committee should receive the brief
- the purpose of the brief — be clear about why the note is being written
- your input in a logical order with the most critical information up front (keep it simple, complete and accurate)
- if you are commenting on a Bill, first state your general position and then make detailed comments on causes of concern
- list your recommendations
- provide examples, if relevant

## **Resources and links on government relations**

### **Federal Government links**

**Bank of Canada:**

[www.bank-banque-canada.ca](http://www.bank-banque-canada.ca)

**Canadian Radio – Television and Telecommunication Commission:**

[www.crtc.gc.ca](http://www.crtc.gc.ca)

**Canadian Government Business and Consumer Information:**

<http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/engdoc/main.html>

**Commissioner of Official Languages:**

[www.ocol-clo.gc.ca](http://www.ocol-clo.gc.ca)

**Communication Canada:**

<http://www.communication.gc.ca/>

**Elections Canada:**

[www.elections.ca](http://www.elections.ca)

**Leadership Network:**

[www.leadership.gc.ca](http://www.leadership.gc.ca)

**Office of the Information Commissioner:**

<http://www.infocom.gc.ca>

**Office of the Auditor General:**

[www.oag-bvg.gc.ca](http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca)

**Parliament:**

[www.parl.gc.ca](http://www.parl.gc.ca)

**Prime Minister's Office:**

<http://pm.gc.ca>

**Provincial Government links**

**Government of Alberta:**

[www.gov.ab.ca](http://www.gov.ab.ca)

**Government of British Columbia:**

[www.gov.bc.ca](http://www.gov.bc.ca)

**Government of Manitoba:**

[www.gov.mb.ca](http://www.gov.mb.ca)

**Government of New Brunswick:**

[www.gov.nb.ca](http://www.gov.nb.ca)

**Government of Newfoundland:**

[www.gov.nf.ca](http://www.gov.nf.ca)

**Government of Northwest Territories:**

[www.gov.nt.ca](http://www.gov.nt.ca)

**Government of Nova Scotia:**

[www.gov.ns.ca](http://www.gov.ns.ca)

**Privy Council Office:**

<http://www.pco-bcp.gc.ca/>

**Privacy Commissioner of Canada:**

<http://www.privcom.gc.ca/>

**Reports of the Deputy Minister Task Forces:**

[http://www.cmd-ccg.gc.ca/research/publications/deputyminister\\_e.html](http://www.cmd-ccg.gc.ca/research/publications/deputyminister_e.html)

**Supreme Court of Canada:**

[www.scc-csc.gc.ca](http://www.scc-csc.gc.ca)

**Treasury Board of Canada:**

<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/>

**Government of Ontario:**

[www.gov.on.ca](http://www.gov.on.ca)

**Government of Prince Edward Island:**

[www.gov.pe.ca](http://www.gov.pe.ca)

**Government of Quebec:**

[www.gouv.qc.ca/introa.htm](http://www.gouv.qc.ca/introa.htm)

**Government of Saskatchewan:**

[www.gov.sk.ca](http://www.gov.sk.ca)

**Government of Yukon Territory:**

<http://www.gov.yk.ca/>

**Government of Nunavut Territory:**

[www.gov.nu.ca](http://www.gov.nu.ca)

## Media relations

Politicians watch the media closely. Therefore, an indirect method to reach government officials and policy makers is through working with the media.

Depending on the specific strategy employed, the approach you take will vary. For feature stories and news releases that depend on generating the interest of a reporter or the editorial board, it is a good idea to build relationships with the local press (or the national press, if applicable to your policy issue). In all cases, adhering to media deadlines is the key to having your information used.

For links to local media visit:  
[www.journalismnet.com/canada/news.htm](http://www.journalismnet.com/canada/news.htm)

Remember, it is just as important to include positive media stories as it is to include critical stories. A positive story that highlights the involvement of a government department or politician in an event is a very effective way of promoting an issue.

### Feature stories

#### Description

Feature stories are focused reports in newspapers on human- or local-interest issues. Your organization may send its own articles into the newspaper, whether it is a story of an event or an opinion paper.

#### Tips

- Think of your story using a fresh perspective in order to get the attention of reporters.
- Schedule interesting events and/or visuals.
- Give notice to the reporter well in advance and provide them with background material and related stories.
- Send a copy of any articles that are critical of the government to the Minister's staff in advance. This allows them to provide prompt feedback.

#### Advantages

- A feature story can heighten the perceived importance of your organization's issue.
- If your issue is highlighted in a feature story, it is more likely to be read and taken seriously by the public.
- Coverage through a feature story develops recognition and awareness of your organization's issue.

#### Limitations

- Your organization may have little control over what or how information is presented. That is, despite giving a reporter all the relevant information, the newspaper may edit the content based on perceived public interest or space.
- Audience/scope may not be what you anticipated in terms of influencing public policy.

## News releases/news conferences

### Description

A news release or news conference is an announcement of an event, performance or other newsworthy item that is issued from your organization to the press. There are two kinds of news releases. The first kind is *making news*. The most challenging aspect of making news is to be concise while still giving all the information necessary. The second type of news release is *responding to news*. A news story can prompt an overwhelming response from the public. When you are responding to news, it is important to follow the tips listed below so that your release has a better chance of getting noticed.

### Tips on news releases

- Learn to write like a reporter. Make the release simple, accurate and concise with an emphasis on actions. If it is well written, the news release may be copied almost verbatim in the local press.
- Format your news release according to media industry standards. Media will often reject news releases that do not conform to guidelines. See [http://www.ran.org/action/toolbox/media\\_writing.html](http://www.ran.org/action/toolbox/media_writing.html) for information on formatting press releases.
- Invite the media to events, especially when politicians are speaking.
- Hand deliver news releases when possible as this provides the opportunity to discuss your project directly with reporters.
- Ensure that something in the release stands out and is compelling so that it draws people's attention.

### Tips on news conferences

- Learn to present the information in a simple, accurate and concise manner. Most importantly, learn how to answer reporters' questions in a manner that only puts emphasis on the issues that you are trying to present.
- Prepare for questions that you believe the press will ask and maintain control of the press conference.
- Become known as the expert on your issue and let the media know when government does or doesn't do something that affects your issue.
- Include interesting visuals that will draw the attention of television and newspapers.
- Foster relationships with editorial boards and reporters. Be consistent and send information on a regular basis to media contacts.

For more resources on working with the media visit:  
[www.impacs.org/](http://www.impacs.org/)

### Advantages

- News releases and news conferences inform media of project milestones.
- News release language will often be used directly in articles so your organization's message will not be distorted.
- A news conference may catch the attention of MPs, ministers and public service staff.

### Limitations

- The media response to news releases can be low.
- News releases frequently receive poor placement in newspapers and get lost in all the other media happenings.
- You have little control of the final edit.

## **Central information contact/information hot line**

### **Description**

Designated contacts within your organization that are identified as official liaisons for public, media and government relations. Contact information can be posted on your organization's pre-recorded voicemail message or Web site.

### **Tips**

- Indicate a person, not a position.
- Ensure contact person is local.
- Make sure contact has sufficient knowledge.
- Provide a toll-free number.
- Return phone calls promptly and keep answers clear, concise and consistent.
- Keep all recorded messages up-to-date.
- Respond quickly to requests for quotes or interviews.
- Identify an individual who will act as an alternate if the contact person is not available.
- Include an e-mail contact and a "Frequently Asked Questions" page on your Web site.

### **Advantages**

- People calling your organization are directed to a designated contact person and avoid getting passed along from employee to employee.
- Your organization's information flow is controlled and consistent.
- An information hotline conveys an image of accessibility.
- Your organization has the opportunity to develop relationships with journalists, government and other stakeholders.

### **Limitations**

- Designated contact must be committed and prepared to provide prompt responses.
- Information from the public may not get back to technical staff and decision-makers.
- It may be difficult for contact person to answer tough questions.
- An information hotline may frustrate callers if they are always listening to a recorded message.

## **Television programming**

### **Description**

Presenting information on your organization's issues through television programming, such as public service announcements (PSAs), documentaries or news shows allows you to reach a wide audience and to draw out viewer support.

### **Tips**

- Check out local cable stations as they can offer inexpensive options.
- Investigate local channels as they often search for events, interviews and human interest stories for their shows.

## **Advantages**

- Television programming can reach a wide audience from multiple geographic areas.
- Many local channels will air programs more than once allowing your organization's message to reach new audiences.

## **Limitations**

- Can be expensive to contract public service announcements (PSAs).
- Little control over final edit of story or interview.
- It is one-way communication and that makes it difficult to solicit viewer feedback and gauge reaction.

## **Advertisements**

### **Description**

Paid advertisements in papers and magazines, television or Web sites.

### **Tips**

- Determine the best days and placement for the advertisement.
- Avoid the newspaper's "notice" section as it is rarely read.
- Keep it simple and clean.
- Ensure contact information is correct.
- Make the advertisement attractive so as to grab attention but also ensure it sets the appropriate tone.

## **Advantages**

- Advertising has the potential to reach a broad public audience.
- Placing an ad may satisfy your organization's legal notice requirements.
- Your organization will develop public recognition and awareness of its issues.

## **Limitations**

- Advertising can be expensive, especially in urban areas.
- Only a limited amount of information can be conveyed within an ad's space or time constraints.

## **Resources and links on media relations**

### **Managing the Media: A Guide for Activists:**

<http://tenant.net/Organize/media.html>

## Public Relations

Your organization can implement several approaches to establish and promote a favourable relationship with the public. Public outreach and education is central to many voluntary organizations.

Although your organization may have several messages it wants to convey, you should try to summarize the messages in three or four main points. On the other hand, you may feel as though you have much more to say and that simplifying and limiting your message does not do justice to your efforts. Keep in mind that your audience is typically inundated with information. By presenting your messages in meaningful, memorable and succinct packages of three or four key points, you can grab your audience and potentially spur them to action.

The following may be used separately or in conjunction with one another.

### Printed information materials

#### Description

Printed information materials include fact sheets, newsletters and brochures. To distribute these materials effectively, have several lists of organizations, supporters and people you want to influence ready for mail outs. Ideally these should be available both in hard copy and in electronic format.

#### Tips

- Keep it short and simple.
- Make it visually interesting but not too slick.
- Include a comment form to expand your organization's mailing list.
- Explain your organization's public role and impact.
- Incorporate a Question & Answer section as this format is generally appealing to readers.

#### Advantages

- Mailings can reach a large target audience.
- Newsletters and fact sheets allow for technical and legal reviews.
- Comment forms engage your audience by encouraging written responses.
- The public can track your organization's involvement in public process through regular mailings.
- Tracking audience reach is easy.
- Your organization's audience is able to absorb more information over a period of time.

#### Limitations

- The sharing of information is only as good as the mailing list or distribution network.
- Brochures and newsletters don't allow complicated concepts to be communicated.
- It can be difficult to know if the audience has looked at the information.
- Printed materials provide primarily one-way communication making it difficult to elicit feedback.
- The cost of printing and mailing materials can be prohibitive.

## **Information repositories**

### **Description**

Delivery of printed material to libraries, city halls, distribution centres, schools and other public facilities is a good method for making your organization's project-related information available to the public.

### **Tips**

- Provide an information session for the staff at the repository site so that they know the location of your materials and how to access further information.
- Keep a list of repository items and track usage through a sign-out sheet.
- Keep information updated.
- Include information about your organization's meeting dates in the materials and invite the public to attend.
- Complement the distribution of your materials to information repositories by creating a "virtual" clearinghouse on the Internet.
- Hold a public information session about your organization's issues at the repository site.

### **Advantages**

- Relevant information is available to the public without having to make multiple copies for large mail outs.
- Information is available in a comfortable public setting.
- Materials at information repositories can reach many people from different cultures and age groups.

### **Limitations**

- Repositories are sometimes not well used by the public.
- Information can get lost among all the other materials.
- Information can quickly become out-of-date if not regularly updated.

## **Briefings/public presentations**

### **Description**

Regular presentations or briefings at social and service clubs provide an opportunity to inform and educate the general public about your organization's issues. Briefings can also be made to standing committees, legislative panels, Royal Commissions and meetings with ministers and deputies. For more information, see "Working with Ministers."

### **Tips**

- Keep it short and simple.
- Use visuals.
- Provide materials ahead of time if giving a briefing to public servants.

## Advantages

- Your organization controls the information and message being presented.
- A presentation to the public can reach a wide variety of individuals.
- Your organization can use the presentation as an opportunity to invite people to join your mailing list.
- Once an effective presentation has been created, it can be repeated for different audiences.
- Regular presentations and briefings can build goodwill.
- Briefings can give your organization exposure in standing committees and Royal Commissions.

## Limitations

- Your audience may not include those project stakeholders that you want to reach.
- The topic may be too technical to capture audience's interest.

## The Internet

The Internet is fast becoming a primary source of information sharing and organizing. Its cost effectiveness in distributing comprehensive information to large numbers of people cannot be matched nor can its speed of delivery and response.

To learn more about the potential of the Internet for non-for-profit organizations, see the following link for a position paper: [http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue7\\_8/spencer/index.html](http://www.firstmonday.org/issues/issue7_8/spencer/index.html)

The Internet and related tools are important vehicles for influencing public policy. The Internet can be used to disseminate your policy position broadly to the public, hear diverse views and to gain support and build consensus on policy issues. Additional Web tools include Web boards, list serves, e-mail newsletters, Web sites and online consultations. By observing the guidelines below, you can make the most of these communications tools.

### Web sites

#### *Description*

A World Wide Web site contains key information about your organization's programs, services, positions on issues, announcements and documents. A Web site can also be used to elicit support, create action and to link related sites of similar interest. Web sites can provide an electronic forum for organizations to "talk" to each other, share ideas, collaborate on issues and build consensus.

#### *Tips*

- Keep it simple and easy to navigate using logical site organization.
- Keep site up-to-date so that it is a source of valid and reliable information. Add a footer to your Web site to indicate the last update.
- Provide links to affiliate organizations and related issues as well as links to alternate points of view.
- Provide an e-mail contact for your organization.
- Ask similar organizations to provide your Web address as a link from their site.
- Keep advertisements to a minimum.
- Ensure information is concise and to the point.
- Keep photographs and graphics to a minimum, as downloading on an older computer can be difficult and time consuming.
- Consider the audiences you are targeting when making decisions on elements such as language, font size, colours and format.

- Create an interactive site that connects users and information, chat rooms, bulletin boards, online consultations, Web boards and list servs.

### *Advantages*

- Web sites present comprehensive information that reaches a very large audience.
- Sites are a low cost way of making large documents available to the public.
- The site can be used to make new contacts or networks.
- The site can mobilize and coordinate around an issue and can create interest in a policy issue.

### *Limitations*

- The Web is not accessible by everyone.
- A poorly designed site can frustrate users.
- Dedicated resources are needed to maintain and update the site with new material.
- Web site can elicit large numbers of e-mails that may overburden staff resources.

## **E-mail Alerts<sup>12</sup>**

### *Description*

An e-mail message sent out to your membership list, government and media contacts, or community groups about news and/or events that involve your organization or the issues with which your organization is concerned.

### *Tips*

- Get your facts straight. Your message will circulate widely so double-check the information. Even a small mistake can make it easy for your opponents to dismiss your issues.
- Establish authenticity by including information about the sponsoring organization and provide the reader with several ways of tracing back to you – e-mail address, postal address, URL, phone number. Including this information allows people to establish contact with your organization.
- Date the message and give your recommended action a clearly stated timeframe, for example, “Take this action until February 17, 2003.”
- Make the message self-contained and easy to understand. Don’t presuppose that your readers will have any context of the issue or event.
- Define your terms, avoid references to previous messages and provide instructions on where to access background materials. Consider making the e-mail relatively short so that people will read it and include the URL for a Web page that provides the full details. It is crucial to begin with a good, clear headline that summarizes the issue and the recommended action. Choose words that will be understood worldwide and not just in your own country or culture.
- Ask your readers to take a simple, clearly defined and rationally chosen action and to inform you of their actions. Include all relevant information necessary for people to take action (for example, contact information, suggested script to follow, suggested method of action such as e-mail, letters or phone calls).

For the Toronto Community Economic Development Web site lists of electronic advocacy resources visit:

[http://www.torontoced.com/links/Business-Related\\_Resources/Electronic\\_Advocacy/](http://www.torontoced.com/links/Business-Related_Resources/Electronic_Advocacy/)

<sup>12</sup>Phil Agre. (1999) *Designing Effective Action Alerts for the Internet*, <http://dlis.gseis.ucla.edu/people/pagre/alerts.html>

- Make the message easy to read. Use a simple, clear layout with lots of white space. Break up long paragraphs. Use bullets and section headings to avoid visual monotony. If your organization plans to send out e-mails regularly, use a distinctive design so that readers can recognize your “brand” instantly.
- Start a movement, not a panic. You are trying to address a targeted group of people who are inclined to care about an issue. Your message should contribute to a long-term process of influencing public policy. Do encourage those on your list to implore the support of others but do not say “forward this to everyone you know” or overstate your case.
- Do not use a chain-letter petition. A chain-letter petition is an e-mail that includes a list of names, invites people to add their own names and asks them to forward the e-mail-plus-signature-list to everyone they know. This idea sounds great in the abstract but it really doesn’t work.
- Don’t mistake e-mail for organizing. The Internet is a useful tool for organizing but it’s just one tool and one medium among many that you will need and you should evaluate it in terms of its contribution to larger organizing goals.

To see an example of an electronic letter-writing campaign visit the World Wildlife Fund Canada website at:

<http://www.wwf.ca/HowYouCanHelp/SendALetter/SendALetter.asp>

### *Advantages*

- E-mail alerts are cost effective in distributing large amounts of information to a wide audience base.
- The speed of delivery and response that e-mail alerts provide make it an attractive option.

### *Limitations*

- Some people cannot access the Internet (although most public libraries have free access).
- The message may become distorted.

## **Resources and links on using the internet to influence public policy**

### **Democracies Online:**

<http://www.e-democracy.org/do/>

### **E-Advocates:**

<http://www.e-advocates.com/case.html>

### **Environment and Society:**

<http://www.rpi.edu/dept/environ/guide/index.html>

### **Network for Good:**

[www.networkforgood.org/npo/advocacy](http://www.networkforgood.org/npo/advocacy)

### **Petition Online – Online Petition Hosting:**

<http://www.petitiononline.com/>

### **Progressive Technology Project:**

<http://www.progressivetech.org/>

### **Virtual Activist Training Course:**

<http://www.netaction.org/training/part1.html>

## Partnerships and collaboration

Collaboration can be defined “as a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to a definition of the mutual relationships and goals, a jointly developed structure and shared responsibility, mutual authority and accountability for success, and sharing of resources and rewards.”<sup>13</sup>

### Inter-organizational collaboration

#### Description

The key to this definition is “sharing.” Collaboration differs from co-operation in the level of shared policy dialogue and resource allocation.

#### Tips

- Consider teaming up with other organizations working on similar issues in order to share the work and responsibilities and to benefit from the experiences of each organization.
- Be sure to investigate opportunities for collaboration in your efforts to influence policy decisions.

#### Advantages

- The goals, policies, practices and resources of two or more organizations are blended to advocate for changes in policy.
- Collaborative efforts may have more impact than a solitary group or individual.

#### Limitations

- Collaboration can be time consuming and can have too many leaders.
- Involvement in collaborative efforts may divert your organization from its original mission.

### Ten rules for effective policy collaboration<sup>14</sup>

1. **Involve all key players** – Commitment to change must be broad based and should include the participation of not only those with the power to negotiate change but representatives from those whose lives will be affected.
2. **Choose a realistic strategy** – Partners need to choose a strategy that reflects the priorities of service providers, the public and key policymakers plus the availability of resources and local needs.
3. **Establish a shared vision** – Collaborative partnerships must create a shared vision of better outcomes for those they serve.
4. **Agree to disagree in the process** – Participants need to establish a communication process that gives them permission to disagree and uses conflict resolution as a constructive means of moving forward.
5. **Make promises you can keep** – Setting attainable objectives, especially in the beginning, is necessary to create momentum and a sense of accomplishment.

<sup>13</sup>Paul W. Mattessich. (1992) *Collaboration: What Makes it Work*. (St. Paul MN: Amherst H. Wilder Foundation)

<sup>14</sup>C. Bruner, L.G. Kunesch and R.A. Knuth. (1992) *What Does Research Say About Interagency Collaboration?* (Oak Brook: NCREL)

6. **Keep your eyes on the prize** – It is easy for collaborative initiatives to lose sight of the forest for the trees. The goal is better policy.
7. **Build ownership at all levels** – The commitment to change must extend throughout the organizational structure of each participating agency.
8. **Avoid “red herrings”** – Partners should not let “technical difficulties” impede the development of a shared vision.
9. **Institutionalize change** – Participants must incorporate partnership objectives into their own institutional mandates and budgets and earmark resources to keep joint efforts going.
10. **Publicize your collaboration** – Make it known that a number of organizations are speaking together on an issue.

## **Resources and links on Inter-organizational collaboration**

### **Health Charities Council of Canada:**

<http://www.healthcharities.ca>

## **Participation on advisory panels and committees**

### **Description**

Participation can be in the form of membership on a board or committee that has governmental staff participation as well as involvement in government-established consultations and advisory committees.

### **Tips**

- Ensure you are on committees that reflect the issues your organization is concerned.
- Become the expert for your issue.

### **Advantages**

- Through participation in panels or committees you will have direct contact with the people who help to make the decisions.
- The voice of your organization can be heard and you can hear alternate points of view on an issue.
- Participation can develop networks for future issues.
- You can become known as the expert and the person to call for information.
- Involvement builds credibility for your organization and addresses public concerns about equity.
- Advisory panels and committees often use effective conflict resolution techniques.

### **Limitations**

- Participation in panels or committees can be time consuming.
- Changes to policies can take time.
- Membership on advisory committees is often by invitation only.
- Committees’ decisions are often the result of consensus building and “trade offs” around issues.

## Membership/supporter relations

Remember to look at your membership. This group has already made your organization's issues their own priority and they may be willing to speak out on behalf of your organization. The collective voice is stronger than singular one. Develop a membership of people who support your issue(s) and goals.

### Maintaining contact and building support

#### Description

As with all relationship building, you should be in regular contact with your members, volunteers, donors and supporters through personal contact, telephone, e-mail updates and/or newsletters. Being in regular contact keeps supporters up-to-date with current programs, services and issues affecting your organization. It also allows you to be top of mind if you need their help; if they know what issues you are working on, you don't need to start from scratch.

However, don't overdo it. Be sure to contact your members when they are needed for a specific purpose. Also, ask when and how *they* want to be contacted, if there are any issues in which they are particularly interested or events in which they would be willing to participate.

#### Tips

- Ask those involved with your issue who they know through work, social groups, community and family who may also be interested in your organization's issue.
- Invite people to presentations given by your organization.
- Approach business and community leaders who support your issue.
- Find out how to reach the largest number of people at the smallest cost.
- Partner with other organizations with similar missions or issues that can let their members know about your organization.

#### Advantages

- Ongoing interaction with your members will develop meaningful support and awareness of the issue.
- Support in numbers will help you have more influence on government policies.
- The involvement of others can help the development of new strategies for influencing policy.

#### Limitations

- Too much contact can fatigue even the most dedicated member.

### Board of directors

#### Description

A group of volunteers elected to provide clear and consistent leadership for the organization. They meet several times per year and make decisions for the organization.

## Tips

- Find people who are dedicated to the issues and willing to participate on a regular basis.
- Prepare your Board of Directors to take on the advocacy role. As the organization's volunteer elected officials, board members convey a different kind of message when they speak. Board members can't be accused of advocating to keep their jobs; they speak purely out of commitment for the issue.

For information and suggestions for handling different board situations visit CompassPoint's Board Café at:

[http://www4.compasspoint.org/page?WebPage\\_ID=652](http://www4.compasspoint.org/page?WebPage_ID=652)

## Advantages

- Your organization will have a group of people deciding the vision, mission, mandate, values and objectives of the organization rather than just one individual.
- The members of the organization elect board members.
- It is important to have people who are dedicated to the issues meet on a regular basis.
- Board of Directors often have strong connections to other leaders in the community.

## Limitations

- Decision-making within your organization can become more complex and time consuming.
- It can be difficult to find committed members.

## Resources and links on membership/supporter relations

### Hard copy resources

Hegel, Annette. *Advocacy on the Agenda: Preparing voluntary boards for public policy participation*. Ottawa: Volunteer Canada, Ottawa, 2003

### Web Sites

**Board Development, United Way of Canada-Centraide:**  
<http://www.boarddevelopment.org/role.cfm>

**Volunteer BC – A-Z Directory for Board Governance:**  
<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/volbc/tools/governance.html>

**Alberta Board Development Program:**  
[http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/building\\_communities/volunteer\\_community/programs/bdp/index.asp](http://www.cd.gov.ab.ca/building_communities/volunteer_community/programs/bdp/index.asp)

**Institute on Governance:**  
[http://www.iog.ca/knowledge\\_areas.asp?strText\\_Site=false](http://www.iog.ca/knowledge_areas.asp?strText_Site=false)

**Developing Cultural Boards that Work:**  
[http://ccm.uwaterloo.ca/cdpd/ilms/dcb/dcb\\_home1.html](http://ccm.uwaterloo.ca/cdpd/ilms/dcb/dcb_home1.html)

**Compass Point Non-Profit Services, Board Café :**  
[http://www.compasspoint.org/publications/board\\_cafe/index.html](http://www.compasspoint.org/publications/board_cafe/index.html)

## Saying thank you<sup>15</sup>

### Description

Recognizing efforts made in support of your issues is one of the most important steps in policy dialogue. Recognizing efforts will add to your organization's credibility and will help build strong relationships.

### Tips

- Be prompt. Make note of when there has been an important event (for example, a vote in the legislature, the issuance of a grant, an activity supported by the grant) and say thank you right away. The more quickly you acknowledge a person for their support, the better.
- If you are pursuing press coverage, publicly acknowledge support at an event with good photo opportunities.
- Be aware of your timing – choose times where your efforts will have an increased legislative impact.
- Be sure to thank officials even when they don't agree with you or things don't go your way. Don't forget that effective public policy influence requires sustained input over a period of time. Significant changes in public policy take a long time to initiate and longer to implement. Building relationships along the way will make it a more pleasant process.
- Use thank you letters as simple and formal responses to officials. Provide a specific example of how the official's actions on a policy issue affected your organization and its clients.
- Re-address the same letter to the "Letters to the Editor" section of your local paper.
- Say "thank you" personally in a public forum. For example, get up at an appropriate time in the House, such as a question and answer period, and say that you appreciate the MP's action, vote or whatever they have done to support your organization.
- If you are part of an organization that covers many districts and you send a letter expressing gratitude to an MP, make sure you send copies of your letter to your organization's members who live in the MP's constituency and let the MP know that you have so.

### Advantages

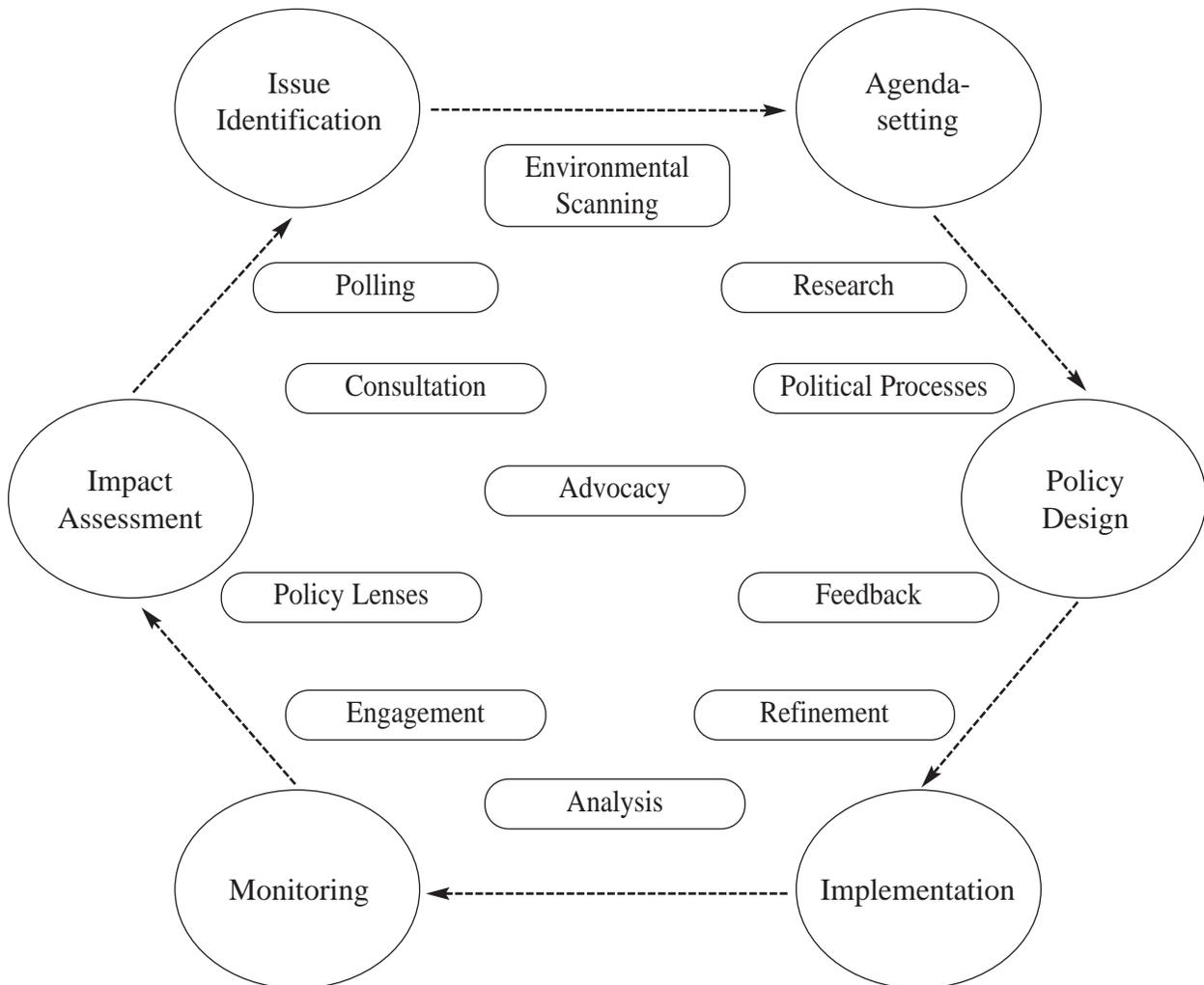
- Saying thank you is a simple way to recognize the efforts made on behalf of your organization. Because that message is heard so rarely, the results can be enormous in building support for your organization.

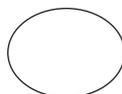
### Limitations

- Saying thank you through letter writing and other means can be time consuming.
- Your recognition will be ineffective if it is not prompt and specific to an issue.

<sup>15</sup>American for the Hearts. (2001) *How Arts Advocates Can say Thank You*, [http://www.americansforthearts.org/issues/advocacy/advocacy\\_article.asp?id=327](http://www.americansforthearts.org/issues/advocacy/advocacy_article.asp?id=327)

## Appendix 1 – Stages of the Public Policy Process<sup>16</sup>



 Elements in the public policy process

 Methods of involvement in the process (Note: While all methods of involvement may happen at any element in the public policy process, some methods are more prominent than others during certain elements in the process.)

<sup>16</sup>Voluntary Sector Initiative. (2002) *Code of Good Practice on Policy Dialogue*, [http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/joint\\_tables/accord/doc/codes\\_policy.doc](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca/eng/joint_tables/accord/doc/codes_policy.doc)

## The stages of the public policy process

Dialogue between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector will take place at the various stages of the public policy process (see diagram on previous page). These stages are described briefly below.

Some activities, such as consultation and engagement, cut across the policy development process and can be used in a variety of ways at each stage. Similarly, advocacy can be used at the various stages of the public policy process as a strategy to effect change. As previously mentioned, advocacy is defined as “the act of speaking or of disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct or public policy and law.”<sup>17</sup>

### Issue identification

Voluntary sector organizations can play a particularly valuable role in the identification of emerging policy concerns. The federal government respects the voluntary sector’s advice, which is based on direct experience and relationships and involvement with members of organizations and communities. Because of their grassroots involvement, particularly in service delivery, voluntary sector organizations may become aware of trends or emerging issues before the federal government. Strengthening the sector’s participation in governmental or departmental policy development processes and mechanisms – such as policy scanning and planning exercises, advisory mechanisms and international delegations – can help in the process of issue identification. Through advocacy initiatives, voluntary sector organizations can also play a key role in drawing public attention to emerging issues.

### Agenda-setting

Issues come onto the public policy agenda from various sources, including political platforms, research and analysis, academe, the private sector and voluntary sector organizations. Based on its in-depth knowledge and understanding of emerging and important issues, the voluntary sector can bring key information to the development of public policy priorities. Dialogue between the Government of Canada and the voluntary sector during the agenda-setting stage serves to inform the sector of how it can participate most effectively in the public policy process.

### Policy design

The voluntary sector can contribute its ideas, knowledge, expertise and experience to the various steps in public policy design – including research, analysis, drafting and testing models and developing design options.

### Implementation

The voluntary sector can play a role in proposing appropriate policy implementation approaches and mechanisms that reflect and enhance policy goals. The voluntary sector’s experience in the delivery of various programs and services, as well as its long-standing connections to communities, are vital to the success of this work.

<sup>17</sup>Voluntary Sector Initiative. (1999) *Working Together: A Government of Canada/Voluntary Sector Joint Initiative: Report of the Joint Tables*, <http://www.vsr-trsb.net/publications/pc0-e.pdf>, p. 58

## **Monitoring**

The voluntary sector can play an important role in the ongoing monitoring of policy delivery and operation initiatives and in identifying the need for changes in policy direction.

## **Impact assessment**

Based on its experience, expertise and knowledge in the delivery of programs and services, the voluntary sector can play a valuable role in assessing the impact of policy at both the national and local levels and in making recommendations for change.

## Appendix 2 – Get the Facts Here

Gathering information for any policy process can be a daunting task – especially for small organizations without a research staff. Finding news reports, experts and people in the process can be time consuming and often frustrating experience. The links below can help to cut your time by providing shortcuts to information.

**Canadian list servs with a government focus:**

<http://cgii.gc.ca/dist-e.html>

**Canadian news and magazine sources:**

<http://www.journalismnet.com/>

<http://www->

[2.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana/CA-zines.html](http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/Unofficial/Canadiana/CA-zines.html)

<http://www.opinion-pages.org/canada.htm>

**Canadian legal resources on the Web:**

<http://www.legalcanada.ca/>

<http://www.acjnet.org/>

<http://legalresearch.org/>

<http://www.gahtan.com/cdnlaw/>

**Canadian Libraries Online:**

<http://www.libdex.com/country/Canada.html?/>

**Canadian non-Profit information:**

<http://www.nonprofitscan.ca>

**Canadian Public Policy Journal Online:**

<http://OttawaBureau.com/CanadianPublicPolicy/index.htm>

**Canadian public policy links:**

<http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/cpwebp.html>

**Canadian Public Relations Society:**

<http://www.cprs.ca>

**Guide de ressources en sciences humaines et en politique canadienne:**

<http://aix1.uottawa.ca/~fgingras/carnet.html>

**The Evidence Network:**

<http://www.evidencenetwork.org/home.asp>

**National Archives of Canada:**

<http://www.archives.ca>

**National Library of Canada: Information by Subject:**

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/caninfo/ecaninfo.htm>

**National Research Council of Canada:**

<http://www.nrc.ca>

**Politics Watch – Canada’s Political Portal:**

<http://www.politicswatch.com/index2.html>

**Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council:**

<http://www.sshrc.ca>

**Social Policy Virtual Library:**

<http://users.utu.fi/thepap/world3.htm>

## Appendix 3 – Sample Policy Issues

### Internet resources

**Aboriginal issues:**

<http://polisci.nelson.com/aboriginal.html>

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca/>

**Canadian policies on older persons:**

[www.unac.org/iyop/cdnolder.html](http://www.unac.org/iyop/cdnolder.html)

**Youth Involvement in Policy-Making:  
Lessons From Ontario School Boards –  
Elder C. Marques**

[www.atthetable.org/images/Details/Handouts\\_ra\\_d93312.pdf](http://www.atthetable.org/images/Details/Handouts_ra_d93312.pdf)

**Sustainable development best practice links:**

<http://www.sustainabledevelopment.org/blp/links>

### Web sites

**Aboriginal Canada Portal:**

<http://www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca>

**The Arts and Canada's Cultural Policy:**

<http://www.parl.gc.ca/information/library/PRBpubs/933-e.htm>

**Canadian Healthcare Association Policy  
Development:**

<http://www.cha.ca/policy.htm>

**Case Studies in Tobacco Control Policy**

**Development:**

[http://apha.confex.com/apha/128am/techprogram/session\\_1443.htm](http://apha.confex.com/apha/128am/techprogram/session_1443.htm)

**The Citizen's Handbook – A Guide to  
Building Community in Vancouver:**

<http://www.vcn.bc.ca/citizens-handbook/>

**Policy Initiatives to Support Sustainable  
Development:**

<http://canada.justice.gc.ca/en/dept/pub/sds/initiatives.html>

**Tools of Change: Proven Methods for  
Promoting Health and Environmental  
Citizenship:**

<http://www.toolsofchange.com/English/firstsplit.asp>

**U.N. Habitat Best Practices:**

<http://www.sustainabledevelopment.org/blp/links>

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## Resources from the Capacity Joint Table

The Capacity Joint Table (CJT) was one of seven Government of Canada-voluntary sector tables established under the Voluntary Sector Initiative (VSI). The VSI's long-term objective is to strengthen the voluntary sector's capacity to meet the challenges of the future, and to enhance the relationship between the sector and the federal government in order to better serve Canadians.

### Skills Development and Human Resources Management

Developing Human Resources in the Voluntary Sector (HRVS) [www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca](http://www.hrvs-rhsbc.ca)

National Learning Initiative (NLI): A National Skills and Learning Framework for the Voluntary Sector and Voluntary sector leadership competencies [www.nvo-onb.ca](http://www.nvo-onb.ca)

### Research and Information Sharing

The Capacity to Serve: A Qualitative Study of the Challenges Facing Canada's Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations [www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca)

National Survey of Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations (NSNVO) [www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca) (2004)

Johns Hopkins Comparative Nonprofit Sector Project [www.nonprofitscan.ca](http://www.nonprofitscan.ca) (2004)

National Survey of Giving, Volunteering, and Participating (NSGVP) [www.givingandvolunteering.ca](http://www.givingandvolunteering.ca)

### Policy Capacity

Policy Internships and Fellowships: Bridging the Policy Dialogue Between Voluntary Organizations and the Federal Government [www.cvsrd.org](http://www.cvsrd.org) and <http://publicadmin.uvic.ca/cpss>

Participating in Federal Public Policy: A Guide for the Voluntary Sector [www.vsi-isbc.ca](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca)

### Financial Capacity

Funding Matters: The Impact of Canada's New Funding Regime on Nonprofit and Voluntary Organizations [www.ccsd.ca](http://www.ccsd.ca)

Resources for Accountability and Financial Management in the Voluntary Sector [www.vsi-isbc.ca](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca)

Inventory of Effective Practices in Financing and Resourcing of Voluntary Sector Organizations in Canada [www.vsi-isbc.ca](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca)

These projects are funded by the Government of Canada through the Voluntary Sector Initiative. For more information, visit [www.vsi-isbc.ca](http://www.vsi-isbc.ca).