



Saskatchewan  
Parks and Recreation  
Association

# The SPRA Advocacy Handbook

*Created for Sport, Culture and Recreation Districts  
and their Community and Government Partners*



Created by Flo Frank of Common  
Ground Consulting, in consultation  
with the SPRA Advisory Team

---

## Credits and Thanks

---

This handbook is the result of many people's input and hard work. Every District participated in three sessions of advocacy training and provided many of the thoughts, ideas and experience upon which this handbook was written. Several people provided tools and examples to help demonstrate the importance of advocacy in their communities. Thanks to all of you.

As well, an Advisory Team was put in place to provide feedback and input during the writing of the handbook. These include:

- Joaleen Szeles, Coordinator – Prairie Central District for Sport, Culture and Recreation
- Colette Therrien-Heschel, Interim Executive Director – South West District for Culture, Recreation & Sport
- Donna Johnston-Genest, Executive Director – Rivers West District for Sport, Culture and Recreation
- Judy McLeod-Campbell, Program Manager – Northern Sport, Culture & Recreation District
- Tammy Miller, Community Development Coordinator - Lakeland District for Sport, Culture and Recreation
- Sheila Hryniuk, Executive Director – Parkland Valley Sport, Culture and Recreation District
- Angela Englot, Executive Director – Southeast Connection Sport, Culture, and Recreation District
- Nicole Yacishyn, Consultant – Saskatchewan *in motion*

Lee Anne Balliett, SPRA Consultant – Grants and Funding, gave the project leadership and direction, and worked with Flo Frank, a specialist in advocacy and community development. Flo authored this handbook and provided the basic training in advocacy for the Districts.

Thank you to everyone for the contributions to this handbook and for the good work that is done advocating for communities each and every day. Saskatchewan is a better province for all of our efforts.



---

# Table of Contents

---

<b>Preamble</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Purpose of the Handbook .....	1
Who is this Handbook for?.....	1
Why was this Handbook Written?.....	2
How to Use the Handbook.....	2
Definitions.....	3
<b>Section One – An Introduction to Advocacy</b> .....	<b>4</b>
What is Advocacy? .....	4
Different Types of Advocacy.....	4
Why Advocacy Needs to Happen .....	4
What do Advocates Want?.....	5
Advocacy and Community Development.....	5
Understanding Community-based Advocacy .....	6
Examples of Community-based Advocacy .....	7
<b>Section Two – Advocacy Basics – Getting Going</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Advocacy in Sport, Culture and Recreation.....	8
Effective Advocates .....	8
Principles to Live by While Advocating .....	8
The Purpose of an Advocacy Plan .....	9
Components of the Plan .....	10
Taking Action – 7 Key Questions .....	10
Linking to Strategic and Operational Plans .....	12
Other Kinds of Plans.....	13
Getting What You Want .....	13
Moving Right Along – What’s Next?.....	14
<b>Section Three – Building and Maintaining Momentum</b> .....	<b>16</b>
The Role of Research in Advocacy.....	16
Advocacy Outcomes.....	16
The Advocacy Lens .....	17
Considering Continuity and Momentum.....	18
Getting and Keeping People Involved .....	19
Board and Staff Roles .....	20
Advocacy Skills and Knowledge.....	20
Communication – Getting Your Ideas Across .....	21
Working with the Media .....	21
E-mail and Advocacy .....	22
The Role of Social Networks.....	22
The Use of Tools .....	23
Where to Get Additional Information .....	24

---

## Table of Contents

---

<b>Section Four – Tools and Tips .....</b>	<b>25</b>
1. SCR – District Advocacy Plan Framework .....	26
2. Solidifying Your Plan – Basic Steps for Advocacy.....	28
3. Writing a Letter to an Elected Official .....	28
4. How to Write to the Editor.....	29
5. Tips on how to Increase Political Advocacy Efforts .....	30
6. Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials.....	30
7. Forms of Address for Federal Elected Officials.....	32
8. Participating in Government Consultations .....	33
<b>Examples and Samples from SPRA.....</b>	<b>34</b>
I. The Media .....	34
II. The Media Advisory.....	36
Media Advisory – Sample.....	37
III. The Public Service Announcement.....	38
Public Service Announcement – Sample 1.....	39
Public Service Announcement – Sample 2.....	40
IV. The Media Release .....	41
Media Release – Sample .....	42
V. The Advocacy Letter .....	43
Advocacy Letter – Sample .....	45
Advocacy Letter – Sample Fact Sheet .....	46



---

# Preamble

---

## Purpose of the Handbook

This handbook is a direct response to needs expressed by community workers who have noticed that advocacy is rapidly becoming an important aspect of their work. There are many approaches and tools available, and SPRA thought that it might be a good idea to put a few of them in one place so that they are easy to access. This handbook is an outcome of a SPRA plan to work with Districts to build capacity related to advocacy.

There were three parts to developing capacity at the community level:

1. Advocacy Training
2. Assistance with Advocacy Plan Development
3. This Handbook and Tools

Three levels of Advocacy Training were provided to District staff and Boards. The first level was the foundation training (all the basics) followed by two training modules based on Saskatchewan *in motion's - Be Your Own Action Hero*.

Parts of this handbook are based on the training, while other parts are from the first-hand experience of the Districts. Some sections are written from the writer's experience combined with others who have spent years working in the field of advocacy and community-based action.

Both the training and this handbook are ways of gaining insight into advocacy, however, effective advocates know that each situation is different (and difficult to predict), so in each instance when we advocate, we learn a bit more about how to do it and how to teach others to be more effective.

Simply put, much of the learning in advocacy is gained by doing it. Each individual or group will develop an advocacy style and an approach that is unique to him or her or to their situation. This handbook builds on the experience of over 50 people. Their ideas and tools have been put together as a starting place to be combined with your knowledge and experience in community-based advocacy. Use it, modify it and keep it handy – advocacy is a process that is important to our success in communities, and it isn't going away any time soon.

## Who is this Handbook for?

The Sport, Culture and Recreation Districts have a solid mandate in advocacy. This handbook is primarily designed for their use, however, it should be of interest to others working in community development or in community jobs regardless of the sector. Volunteers, Board of Directors and those working in a social messaging or promotional capacity will also find this handbook useful.

---

## Preamble

---

### **Why was this Handbook Written?**

Far too many community agencies or non-profit organizations see the political arena as a foreign world – one in which they feel ill at ease and unequipped to participate in. They prefer to leave lobbying and advocacy to the “experts”. And yet, the most successful advocacy often comes from the “grassroots” – community members and community workers who are advocates for the hopes and dreams, ideas, values and interests of their communities and the people they serve.

With the right knowledge and skills, you or your organization can raise public awareness of your cause, build relationships with elected officials and help shape laws and policies critical to your mission. As a community non-profit organization, you have two primary sources of power. First, you have valuable information to contribute to the legislative debate. And second, by giving voice to those who care about the work of your organization, you are mobilizing and energizing those people who really count with elected officials.

The truth is, anyone who cares about a cause and is committed to making a difference can be an advocate or a “player” in the political arena. That is really what this handbook is all about – giving everyday people who believe in a cause, the tools, information and insight they need to make a difference.

### **How to Use the Handbook**

Each section of this handbook captures a different aspect of advocacy as its central theme. You can either read the handbook cover to cover or select a particular topic and focus in on that. There is no right or wrong way to do it; however, it is important that you make it your own. Add to it, change, adapt or do whatever it takes to make the tools and processes right for your particular circumstance.

Feel free to share this handbook with others – it is yours to scribble in, photocopy, scratch notes on, write down ideas, and use different bits and pieces as you need them. Basically, we want you to get your fingerprints all over it and share it with others. The more you work with this handbook, the more comfortable you will be with advocacy in general, and with making change through planned and focused advocacy in particular.

---

# Preamble

---

## Definitions

Let's start by getting on the same page with some basic definitions. Many of these words are part of your everyday work life and you may have slightly different ways of describing them. That's okay – most words have slightly different interpretations – the following are provided just to have them in one place. Feel free to add your own definitions if they are different.



**Advocacy** – the act of speaking or disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct or public policy and law

**Advocacy Plan** – a deliberate approach to advocacy - involving setting priorities and describing the what, why, who, when and how - as well as how much it will cost

**Advertising** – public announcements or ads to sell goods, services or publicize events that are most often paid for and aimed at the general public

**Capacity Building** – developing skills, attitudes, resources, leadership, policies, structures, knowledge and/or the wherewithal to get things done

**Community Development** – the planned and unplanned evolution of a community (either geographic or a community of interest)

**Lobbying** – focused actions aimed at influencing a politician or legislators about an issue, policy or piece of legislation

**Marketing** – a planned approach to promotion, usually based on market research, analysis and deliberate actions to influence or convince people to do, buy, pay attention to or get involved with something

**Promotion** – to encourage a change in values or behaviour – or to elevate interest to a higher level of awareness within a certain group of people or a certain interest range

**Social Messaging** – a specific and focused campaign or series of messages to change or influence thinking or behaviour or to present a position on an issue or situation

---

## Section One - An Introduction to Advocacy

---

### What is Advocacy?

The definition used at the front of the handbook is: **Advocacy** - the act of speaking or disseminating information intended to influence individual behaviour or opinion, corporate conduct or public policy and law. There are many other variations of this definition that focus on concepts such as:

- speaking up for those who cannot do it for themselves
- the pursuit of influencing outcomes that directly affect people's current lives
- identifying, embracing and promoting a cause

A very simple definition of advocacy is changing "what is" into "what should be".

An advocate may be an individual or an organization - or in some instances a whole sector might advocate to shape political perceptions or effect change that may or may not require legislation

### Different Types of Advocacy

There are many different types of advocacy. Some of the most common are:

- Community Engagement (getting community members involved)
- Community - Grassroots Organizing (taking collective action together)
- Community Development (building on local strengths to address issues)
- Communication and Promotion (getting the word out about something)
- Networking and Making Connections (linking people together)
- Representation (standing up for an ideal or for another person)
- Self Advocacy (promoting or speaking up for yourself or your organization)
- Propaganda (planned misinformation intended to sway public opinion)

Advocacy always involves influencing others, and when it works it always results in change.

Each type of advocacy is useful in certain situations and often more than one type of advocacy is required to get the job done. While we may do many of the things listed above as part of our regular community business, it only becomes advocacy when it is focused or deliberately designed to have a clear outcome associated with change and improvement.

### Why Advocacy Needs to Happen

There are five really good reasons why advocacy is so important right now, why it needs to be done and why we are hearing so much about it. They are:

1. Advocacy is a logical outcome of community-based partnerships and collaborations, which we have been doing very well for over a decade.
2. Power is being realigned (devolved) to communities through not-for-profit organizations or those not being paid directly by government systems.

---

## Section One - An Introduction to Advocacy

---

3. Big holistic issues (e.g. poverty, health, community wellness) have clear messages about community ownership and the evidence to show that grassroots changes require focus, leadership, champions and community support.
4. Community capacity and confidence have evolved enough to be a voice within the sector(s) - one that is recognized and heard by policy makers.
5. In many instances, community–base advocacy works better than professional lobbying for systemic changes, addressing policy issues and for improving programs that are designed to enhance community quality of life.

### What do Advocates Want?

Advocates come in all different sizes and types, each with a different desire or measure of what they want and what success might look like. Here are a few examples:

- Self-advocates want to improve their lives
- Community advocates want better options for their communities
- Agency or corporate advocates want policy, funding or program changes
- Concept advocates want to change people’s beliefs or behaviours
- Policy advocates want to change government direction
- Social justice advocates want the world to be more humane and fair
- Environmental advocates want everyone to be more cautious and responsible

Advocacy raises questions related to responsibility, authority, representation, credibility, proof and accountability. We want our advocacy position to be supported and come from a place of trust and confidence.

And, all advocates want to be heard, understood . . . and they want to be effective.

### Advocacy and Community Development

Community development is a critical part of advocacy. Without community involvement and support, our advocacy efforts are not viewed as being important or well supported. Community development, both a process and an outcome, is defined as the planned (and unplanned) evolution of all aspects of a community. Advocacy (in part) shapes how our communities evolve or develop and defines what they stand for, value and support.

Community development implies active involvement of community members and others to change the status quo, to meet basic needs, or to improve or enhance quality of life. Community engagement is that exact involvement. It is participation, normally based on some level of awareness, interest, motivation and the desire to do something or to support the action being taken by others.

A central theme of community development, engagement and advocacy is that of having people actively involved and working together to make a difference – a positive change. This involvement may be simply

---

## Section One - An Introduction to Advocacy

---

encouraging or influencing the opinion of others. It might involve debating ideas, setting community standards, developing or changing identity or shifting values. It could also be about setting collective goals, promoting the community to others or lobbying for resources. Either way, it is about people getting together and doing something positive for themselves or others.

The most effective advocacy is linked to community priorities for development and the active engagement of community members. In the context of community development, this type of action is often called community-based advocacy. With a focus on engagement and community development, this type of advocacy is usually about promoting and influencing ideas, behaviours, attitudes and actions - usually toward social change, safety, happiness, healthy living and good community governance or positive outcomes for the majority of the people.

Advocacy can be gentle and subtle, or strong and very visible, involving media or political involvement. Sport, culture and recreation is often the catalyst for advocates of healthy living through programs and messaging, but the sector can also be very active politically when policies or programs do not meet community needs.

### Understanding Community-based Advocacy

We advocate for many reasons, most of them based on community priorities or being dissatisfied with the current situation or the status quo. Some advocacy is on an international level or very broad based policy level, and while the tools and processes are the same, the emphasis in this handbook is community-based action taken by community organizations to improve their communities. It is advocacy linked to community development and community engagement.

What experience tells us is that advocacy is an active effort - not a passive thought or wishing. It is usually focused on wanting something to improve or change for the better. Communities (whether they be geographic locations or communities of interest) say that the reason they advocate is usually to:

- Give voice to something or to represent local interests
- Mobilize participation – often in democratic processes
- Assist in the development of public policy
- Ensure governments' accountability
- Influence the allocation of resources
- Increase citizen awareness, interest and involvement
- Shift priorities, view points, beliefs, behaviours and/or agendas

---

## Section One - An Introduction to Advocacy

---

### Examples of Community-based Advocacy

The following are a few examples of advocacy in action. Each item below has helped to change opinions, values, situations or behaviours, and each one had a plan and a campaign to get people interested, motivated and involved. They each wanted to change something and even if their actions or plans were not titled advocacy, they were nevertheless advocacy – and they worked.

***in motion*** - goal: to get people moving – active participation in physical activities

**Healthy Foods North** - goal: promotion for healthy eating habits and improved access to food in northern communities

**Aboriginal Programming** - goal: advocacy for specific, culturally relevant programming for distinct interests

**Terry Fox Run** - goal: to raise awareness of and financial support for cancer research

**Lobbying Funders for Resources** - goal: to change policy and access to programs for communities

**Take Back the Night – Street Demonstrations** - goal: to show visible ideology, protests against fear or to express frustration about a lack of safety and a need for change

**Networking for Change** - goal: partnerships and groups connecting to increase the voice or show solidarity or support for changes that benefit all

In recent years, community-based advocacy is not only happening, it is expected. There are numerous examples and more happening every day. Community leaders and social agencies are becoming experts or specialists in their fields and along with community members are often the ones who government and others turn to for advice or direction. They can, and do, represent community interests or desires because they are at the heart of the needs and have their fingers on the pulse of community.

Community-based advocacy becomes an anticipated outcome of our partnerships, community networks and our reputations for being connected and knowing what is going on. After many years of working in partnerships and with communities, there is recognition that community organizations are knowledgeable about and representative of community interests (in a particular area) and are the ones who can best recommend change. It's all about credibility, connections and accepting the challenge to be the change catalysts.

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

### Advocacy in Sport, Culture and Recreation

Advocacy has a definite purpose in sport, culture and recreation. In every District, at all levels, there are different types of advocacy taking place. It ranges from making changes in individual lives, to neighbourhoods, whole communities and within the sector. The advocacy role in sport, culture and recreation also reaches other sectors such as health, education, social services and justice. Nothing happens in isolation, including advocacy.

Just think about the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles and increasing family involvement in community activities and events, or the social messaging about being proud of who you are, suicide prevention or reducing racism – or even to seek more resources to do the things that people like to do in their leisure time. These are all important, and each one requires an advocacy effort. Here are some other visible examples of advocacy in Districts:

- Messaging and marketing (ideas, events, volunteers, recognizing efforts)
- Stating a position (taking a stand for or against something)
- Identifying and responding to needs (programming and activities)
- Representation (showing up for things, being on Boards or committees)
- Lobbying (making presentations for funding or policy changes)
- Demonstrations (visible group activities to bring attention to social needs)
- Networking for a cause (bringing partners and groups together)
- Promotion (concepts, values, activities, beliefs, programs and events)

### Effective Advocates

There is no one true way to be effective as an advocate. Each situation will require a slightly different approach, different representatives or a different presentation of the need, the position and what is being asked for.

As most Advocacy Plans have two or three key goals and components, each will require some thought about the approach or strategy to be used and who will do it. However, while the approach might be different, there are several principles that are common and need to be considered in each instance.

### Principles to Live by While Advocating

1. Focus on the situation, issue or behaviours you want to see changed, not the individual person or people.
2. Maintain the self-confidence and enhance the self-esteem of others – do not build your case by breaking down, blaming or badmouthing others.
3. Maintain constructive and respectful relationships with those to whom you will be advocating, the members of your team, partners, media and community supporters as well as those who may oppose your position.

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

4. Take the initiative to make things better and stay on high ground as to the reasons why things need to be improved.
5. Lead by example. Walk the talk in order to be a credible advocate.

### **The Purpose of an Advocacy Plan**

An Advocacy Plan is useful to set priorities and get things going. Plans help to articulate and build a common understanding about what we are aiming for, and they sort out the central messages along with what is being requested (what we are hoping to change). As well, and most importantly, they help to focus efforts in an organized way.

An Advocacy Plan makes it possible to do four things at once:

1. Clearly define an issue and its possible solutions
2. Make it easier to get more people involved
3. Bring those with the power to create solutions in contact with your group
4. Raise money or resources needed to carry out the things you plan to do

The advocacy planning process should also provide a way to ensure that there is no overlap or duplication between your plan and the plans of others doing something similar. From one group or organization to another, Advocacy Plans can be useful to complement or link into the bigger environment of community issues or root causes. Ultimately Advocacy Plans help us determine what is needed to be effective as advocates – meaning that there are enough resources and connections to make the right things happen in the right way, at the right time and by the right people.

While not providing all the answers, an Advocacy Plan is simply a guide to determine a vision for change, and to sort out who will do what, when it will happen, what tools and resources are required, and what success might look like. Advocacy Plans need to be both flexible and concrete with tangible issues and goals, not just concepts, as well as having both short-term and long-term objectives - all at the same time.

As advocacy is usually only part of the work we do, the plan needs to connect well with other priorities within the District or organization's strategic direction and may require special assistance or advice in order to link it to our partner's agendas or other groups or organizations' efforts that are focused on similar issues.

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

### Components of the Plan

Most groups need a plan that is written down (very simply) so that it can be shared with others to gain their buy-in, resources, input or support to build momentum. Basically, a plan helps to set direction by laying out key components that need to be addressed.

The District Advocacy Training that took place through the advocacy workshop series (*Be Your Own Action Hero – and the Foundation Training for Advocates*) suggested the following key components that will create the foundation for a solid community-based Advocacy Plan.

Advocacy Plans should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Realistic
- Time Bound

1. **The Issue and Vision** – identify the problem and the type of change that is needed
2. **Capacity** – outline your strengths and weaknesses related to the issue
3. **The Ask** – determine what you want and specifically what needs to change
4. **The Target** – identify who will be approached to make the change
5. **The Message** – design the message and what you will ask them to do
6. **The Action** – know how to ask and what you will do next, regardless of the answer
7. **Making the Case** – use research to support your position and prove the need
8. **Key Influencers** – know who they are and how best to approach them
9. **Your Allies** – be creative with the list and let them know what you are doing
10. **Resources** – list human and financial requirements as well as materials and tools

### Taking Action – 7 Key Questions

Ask and answer the following seven questions to implement or move the Advocacy Plan to action. The answers to these questions should link to the components of your plan and will be useful when considering the scope and approach you want to take.

These questions and answers can be used as a general format for a discussion and will get the group focused. The answers may also help to determine if you are the right people to undertake the advocacy agenda. If you are, then action will be taken based on a thorough job of thinking things through.

1. **What is our general or overall goal?**

Any successful advocacy campaign must begin with a clear issue or situation and a goal linked to the organization's core business or mandate. List your organization's strategic objectives. Ask yourself, "What is it we want to do and why us?" Do we want to change policy or legislation, and if so are we the right people to do it? Do we want to simply build awareness for an issue, or get people involved in our cause or mission? Based on the organization's key objectives or mandate, what is your advocacy role, how does it connect to the goal and what is our "ask" going to be?

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

### 2. **Who is our likely target?**

If it is us, then who can help us reach our advocacy goal? The answer to this question may involve several target audiences – community leaders or influencers, politicians, the media who could build support for what we are doing, and other constituent groups who could help in the overall advocacy campaign. This is also a good time to discuss the connection you have with the target and look for good relationships that exist or identify ones that may have been damaged and could potentially be harmful.

### 3. **What is our main message?**

What is the one main message we want to convey? Because you may be dealing with different target audiences, create a message that will be persuasive for each one. This doesn't mean you need to change it for each one – it is important to have a common theme or message but perhaps tailored differently for each audience based on what those people need to hear and what will help them listen to you.

Like healthy living - advocacy is something you learn how to do - and then you do it....so you can plan all you want, but in the end we have to get going and "Just Do It!"

### 4. **Who are our messengers?**

Who are our best representatives to help reach the goal and are they ready, willing and able to help? Each target audience may need to have messengers that are more effective than others. The same message can have a different impact depending on who communicates it. For some audiences you will need "experts" to deliver your message; other audiences will be more influenced by "real people" who speak from their personal experiences. Sometimes the role people serve dictates their involvement (e.g. chair of the Board, parent or Recreation Director) but ultimately the message should be delivered by a skilled spokesperson.

### 5. **Who are our partners?**

Advocacy is often based on numbers. How many people feel the way you do about an issue and will they stand up for it with you? Make a list. Are there some other individuals or organizations that share the same advocacy goals and vision – ones that can help build a broad and diverse coalition of support? Who are some individuals or groups with influence or recognized champions who will support your efforts? If certain partnerships are in place for other reasons, the partners may be logical allies.

### 6. **What are our general tactics?**

In general terms, how would you take action? What would you actually do to reach the advocacy goal? The way you choose to conduct the advocacy campaign can vary from less intrusive (writing letters) to more direct or personal face-to-face meetings. The most effective campaigns include a variety of tactics or approaches – selecting the most appropriate to each situation and individual.

### 7. **How would we implement the plan?**

If you were to proceed, what's the best way to begin to move the plan or campaign forward? Perhaps there are some short-term projects or activities to undertake, such as bringing people together to discuss the issues, or creating a list of the people to influence or identifying local media figures who might cover the particular issue or cause.

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

Keep in mind that once you begin an advocacy campaign, there must be follow-up, continuity and momentum building, otherwise people will not believe that there is commitment to the goal or they may think that advocacy is not a high priority for your organization.

### **General Tips and Advice**

1. Know your community
2. Know the issues as well as the positive things
3. Get the facts right (date - analysis - plan)
4. Focus your efforts - be clear
5. Know what you want (the ask) and what you will settle for
6. Know who to ask and how
7. Select the messenger well
8. Tailor the approach for each audience
9. Be prepared to change things if required
10. Know when you have won or when to end and say thank you

### **Linking to Strategic and Operational Plans**

Advocacy weaves through many layers of an organization's planning. As it is often confused with promotion, marketing, or organizational advertising, it is important to know where advocacy fits within regular planning and operations so it can be agreed upon and then monitored and maintained over time. Often it is either assumed (taken for granted) or forgotten within the organizational day-to-day activities.

Most Districts have strategic plans (developed by the Board of Directors) with big picture goals related to promotion, community development, community participation and networking. The way that these strategic goals get implemented (by the staff) is usually based on an operational plan that describes who, what, when and with what resources. Advocacy is often seen as part of these plans all the way along. However, in recent years, it has been seen as beneficial to have a separate Advocacy Plan that will:

- Set specific advocacy priorities, goals and objectives
- Create an advocacy campaign or ways to reach the goals
- Gather data and research to help support the Advocacy Plan
- Motivate people to get involved with advocacy actions and activities
- Promote and advocate for programs and community causes
- Evaluate progress and advocacy results
- Let people know what is happening, related to their advocacy efforts

Advocacy Plans need to link to other District plans and be monitored or managed in conjunction with the other plans. The results of successful advocacy usually mean an increase in other District activities because advocacy is designed to:

- Generate awareness and interest
- Link people to the host advocating organization
- Promote ideas and viewpoints linked to District mandates
- Increase participation and community empowerment

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

- Influence change or shift the status quo
- Position the District or organization within the sector and beyond

This could mean that a case needs to be made for your situation or position. The case being made is more powerful with the use of research, data, examples or proof that what you want to do is the right thing, and that it is accepted and supported by many. It may also require evidence that your ideas are credible or that they have endorsements from respected champions to help support the cause or advocacy position.

Over the years, it has been noted that when people get interested in a cause, get invited to help with it or feel empowered to make change, there is often an increased interest in the organization in general, not just the Advocacy Plan. Supporters often want to get to know the organization better and may, to show solidarity, take part in programs, join the Board, offer to volunteer for events or other things, and not just take part in the advocacy activities. A plan to include them in many ways should be considered.

### Other Kinds of Plans

To be effective in advocacy, other plans (beyond the strategic and operational) for District activities may need to be in place, or if they are in place, they may need to be aligned or beefed up to support the advocacy efforts. Specifically, the following plans are most often connected to advocacy and should be considered in light of advocacy needs and the activities taking place:

- Marketing and Promotion
- Communication
- Human Resources
- Financial
- Evaluation

Each of these plans is normally part of the overall and regular District planning, but must be considered differently, if advocacy is taking place, in a much focused way. Advocacy does not happen in isolation and when underway, it is going to take more resources. This will have an impact (whether successful or not) on the organization's budget, people and time.

If advocacy is shifting to become a key part of the work being done by your group or organization, it is important to consider the impact it has on communities and decision makers as well. Even if it is just a guess, it is useful to think about the end results.

### Getting What You Want

The first rule of getting what you want is to know what you want and how much of it you need. To simply say that we want change to take place is not enough. Take the time to discuss what success will look like and know what the desired outcomes are all the way along. Since there are many ways to measure progress and results in advocacy, consider the following points to ensure that you get what you want.

- Plan your advocacy actions and set tangible goals
- Get others involved – continue to build support
- Respect differences and work collaboratively
- Decide what is important – know what is essential and what is not

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

- Define actions that will achieve what is important
- Describe ideal outcomes in both the process and results
- List short-term and longer-term results that are desired
- Find the necessary time and resources to do it right
- Maintain the momentum (keep people involved to avoid grassroots wilt)
- Keep everyone in the advocacy group well informed
- Maintain good communication with the public and all other stakeholders
- Don't be afraid of success or failure – plan for both!

When thinking about getting what you want, consider the time, costs or investment needed and then measure the progress being made and the results being obtained. This is done in order to see if what is being done is worthwhile or not, and if what you are doing is destined to be successful. Monitoring progress requires honesty, objectivity, patience and perseverance almost in exact measures.

If you are not getting what you want or the progress is too slow, adjust the plan or rethink the priorities, the focus, the other supporters and the approach being taken. Don't bite off too much at one time – it is better to do something small very well than something large that is done poorly or fails.

### **Moving Right Along – What's Next?**

There are some very specific tasks to be done to make advocacy effective once the plan is in place and you have an idea of what you want and how to get it. Here are a few things to consider:

1. **Create a “who's who” list**

Make a list of all the government officials who are in positions of influence with regards to your cause, program or mission. This list should include elected representatives, senior bureaucrats, agency staffers and others with whom you might interact. Make sure you get complete (and correct!) contact information that you can put into your database.

2. **Compile useful data**

Nothing is more persuasive to a politician than a compelling story that demonstrates the important work of your organization. Survey your program participants for information about the impact of your programs. Often, such personal stories become the basis for government consultations, press conferences and other media events. At the very least it shows a real connection to community that in turn demonstrates credibility.

3. **Build a coalition**

Any piece of legislation or policy has a greater chance of success if it has a broad base of support. Ask around to see if there are other organizations in your region or province that could be similarly impacted or that would benefit from a change. When it comes to advocacy, there is strength in numbers.

4. **Know the players**

Research your legislators. Learn their interests. Do they have any personal or professional ties to your cause or your organization's mandate? Most elected officials provide such information on their websites.

---

## Section Two - Advocacy Basics - Getting Going

---

### 5. Understand the process

At every level of government, whether it's the House of Commons, provincial legislature or the local school board, there is a prescribed process by which policies get put into place, or bills become law or funding requests become part of the budget. While professional lobbyists and advocates are paid to know the details of this process, you should set out to learn at least the basics, including deadlines to introduce bills, committees assigned to hear certain bill, and how to amend legislation as it makes its way through the process.

### 6. Brief your Board of Directors

Chances are one or two members of your Board have personal relationships with influential people in the political arena. Discuss with your Board President the possibility of establishing a public policy committee composed of Board members who are interested in helping build your political capacity or who might help move the Advocacy Plan forward.



#### **How to Do Advocacy**

1. Gather information and identify what needs to change (Environmental Scan)
2. Prepare and get organized; what do we want to do about the current situation? (Pre-Planning)
3. Make a plan and take action (Advocacy Action Plan)
4. Build capacity to be effective (Resources, Leadership, Materials, Training)
5. Develop tools and techniques (Create and use an Advocacy Tool Box)
6. Gather and use data - research (Analysis - Proof/Evidence)
7. Create networks (Build and maintain a support group - stay connected)
8. Maintain momentum (Provide continuity over time)
9. Document examples and lessons learned (For the next time - a legacy of best practices)
10. Evaluate progress and results (Learn from experience and modify as required)

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

### The Role of Research in Advocacy

A key element of advocacy is research or data gathering. It is useful as a way of providing proof or evidence to support (or discredit) an advocacy cause or position. On its own, research is not advocacy – it is just information. When coupled with intent and an Advocacy Plan, it builds the case and in turn builds momentum.

In order for research to be useful it should be well designed and information gathered in a formal or well thought-out way. Once the research or information is gathered, someone needs to do the analysis to determine what the information means. When that's done, consideration needs to be given to how the research can best be used to help your advocacy efforts.

All advocacy efforts are more effective when there are examples, statistics, facts and expert or champion's opinions – or even informal research such as stories and antidotes that support the position or issue being addressed. Research is often critical to convincing others to lean our way and in making advocacy positions believable or effective. Don't be afraid to ask for help from professional researchers, from colleges or universities or from others who have done it before and know how to use research in an effective manner.

#### Advocacy Formula

Research + Analysis = Evidence

We do and see things - learn from experience and the information we are presented - form opinions and beliefs - and we question the status quo based on research, data, facts or what we are told.

From all that, we make a decision to take action or not - depending on how much we care about it or believe we can make a difference. Advocacy therefore, is the planned action we take to generate awareness and interest - and to influence others to agree with us and to make changes.

### Advocacy Outcomes

There are many possible outcomes of advocacy. Usually the focus is on the end result – the change we want to see happen. However, the process can be every bit as powerful as the end product. Getting people involved and excited in advocacy activities builds bonds and confidence when it works well. Even when it is not successful, trying to do something positive together such as advocacy can build solidarity, community and capacity.

When we advocate, we want to not only build momentum for the cause, we also want to build

Often advocacy efforts result in more than one outcome - for better or worse. Try to discuss these possible outcomes ahead of time so that you are prepared to accept or respond to them when they happen. It is most likely the specific outcome that people are interested in and it helps to know what success looks like. People often ask advocates what will happen if they get what they have been advocating for - and then they ask how will that outcome benefit our community?

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

credibility (so that we are believable) and establish trust (in order to gain support) and then we want others to agree with us (or take action with us or on our behalf).

Sometimes this is about going from ignorance (or being unaware) to hearing about something; then moving toward understanding and interest or empathy about it – and enough of it to get involved and to take action. When action is taken, the goal is ultimately to maintain momentum to keep things going. In the end, the desired outcome of advocacy is to get enough people involved to shift attitudes and the balance of power that will lead us to changes. These changes can be any combination of:

- Personal
- Organizational
- Societal
- Systemic

### Six SUCCESS Factors

Simple  
Unexpected  
Concrete  
Credible  
Emotional  
Stories

Each situation is different, and each will have different outcomes – some planned and some not. It is helpful to know in advance what you are aiming for in terms of specific and general results so that you know if you have achieved them. It is also a good idea to know what you want and what you will settle for – just in case a compromise is required. This is sometimes called having a backup or “Plan B”.

Advocacy is often assumed to be a conflict (either/or - win/lose). Advocacy does not have to be confrontational - often it is very collaborative, supportive and nurturing.

### The Advocacy Lens

Advocacy has the potential to be of interest to a wide range of people. They may not all see things the same way, and may need to be considered separately, in order to get a good sense of the impact or outcomes of your advocacy efforts. To be an effective advocate it is useful to look through the eyes of:

- The Community (in general or for specific groups)
- Our Organization (Board and staff)
- Partners and Funders (the Sector)
- Elected Representatives (Politicians)

Ask yourself what they are thinking and how the advocacy effort will affect them or their organizations. Remember that it is possible to have different opinions and still get things done - peaceful advocacy builds capacity and often results in agreement and buy-in.

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

### Buy In

What people want to know before they agree to something or “Buy In” is:

1. What’s in it for me? You?
2. What do I have to do? You?
3. Am I ready, willing and able to do it?
4. Yes or No - what’s next?

### Considering Continuity and Momentum

There are seven things to consider when undertaking an advocacy campaign or action that requires continuity or continued momentum.

Awareness – Interest – Action – Change – Resources – Recognition – Evaluation

Keep the following in mind when looking at the cycle or continuum:

1. **Awareness:** build awareness of the issue or cause through ongoing marketing/promotion (e.g. increase general public or specific group awareness in order to increase their understanding of the issue or the cause)
2. **Interest:** simply being aware of something does not mean that people will be interested - tell them why it matters to them in order to get their attention and gain their interest and support
3. **Action:** provide opportunities for participation and engagement, both immediately and over the long run (e.g. join us now or participate later in assessment or in implementing changes for programs and events)
4. **Change:** the change and acceptance of the change takes time as does changing attitudes/values/ beliefs or behaviour (e.g. increased physical activity or a change in policy or programs)
5. **Resources:** advocacy often results in changes that require additional funding, resources or time for policy input (e.g. more funding for certain things or policy advice over a longer duration)
6. **Recognition:** maintain relationships and foster encouragement through rewards and recognition (e.g. volunteer involvement and recognition for their advocacy work or contact with a politician that has been helpful)
7. **Evaluation:** establish benchmarks and collect data over time to prove change is happening, or to demonstrate it is needed, or to show that something is working or to prove the value of the action that has taken place (e.g. build the case and measure the impact or success)

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

### **Getting and Keeping People Involved**

Community-based advocacy is all about community engagement - getting and keeping people involved. There are times when having masses of support is important, but normally there are some very key people who are needed at specific times to do specific things. They have a role to play, hopefully with clear expectations attached to their involvement. Following are a few examples:

**Advocacy Strategist or Coordinator** – a main or point person who will coordinate efforts and provide leadership to the process

**Presenters** – those who will do the presentations, the ask or be the visible and verbal champions of the cause

**Support People** – where and when needed, administrative support is important for getting notes and minutes of meetings out and to organize any logistics required

**Community Leaders** – those who are responsible or mandated for the topic area and who will ultimately need to support the advocacy position and action being taken

**Agencies (Community Groups)** – others in the sector or community that may benefit or be damaged by the advocacy position or action being taken

**Politicians** – elected leaders who need to be kept informed about their constituencies and can either make or break your position

**Funders** – they should be aware of what you are doing in order to voice any concerns or to provide support and guidance to your advocacy efforts

**Media** – they are critical and can help by getting the word out for broad-based buy-in and support

**Influential Supporters** – individuals or organizations with a voice or credibility and that are connected to those you are approaching or to whom you are advocating

**Analysts (Data Experts)** – can provide an expert opinion about data, information or research - what it means and how to use it for effective advocacy

**Community Members** – if it will benefit a community and to show it is desired – community members need to be aware of it and their sentiments understood

**Special Interest Groups** – may be beneficial in gaining their support or being aware of their lack of it – either way, if they have a stake in it, they will be involved – best to get them onside right at the beginning

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

### Board and Staff Roles

In not-for-profit or community-based organizations, the role of the Board of Directors and the role of staff is different when it comes to advocacy. The easiest way to keep track of who does what (or who should be doing what), is to keep in mind that the Board of Directors usually handles the political or higher-level connections and the staff normally has their focus at the community level.

In reality, often the Executive Director is the “face” of the organization and may be the one who has the connections and contacts to make things happen. When taking on a role in advocacy, whether it is a social message or a political intervention, the Board and staff all need to be on the same page and saying the same things. There should be no surprises from within, as there may be plenty from elsewhere.

When advocating to senior people in government, industry or funders, it is a good idea to have a Board member (or two or three) either do the presentation or be there to answer questions. There is always a need to show that the Board supports the action being taken, and ultimately the Board is responsible for everything that happens in the organization. Keeping them in the forefront in advocacy is a good idea. Building Board capacity and keeping them in the loop as things progress, are both necessities that are often overlooked.

#### Getting Them to Hear You

- Understand advocacy and how to do it well
- Learn some presentation and speaking techniques
- Practice speaking publicly and rehearse the advocacy “ask” and the pitch
- Build a network of supporters
- Get professional presentation help if needed

### Advocacy Skills and Knowledge

The following are some of the basic skills and areas of knowledge needed to be an effective advocate, either as a Board member or staff:

- Community knowledge and information (values, statistics, unique factors)
- Ability to focus on the topic area and grasp issues and solutions
- Knowledge of the basics of advocacy and how to do it well
- Credibility and ability to garner support from a wide range of interests
- Communication skills both written and spoken
- Ability to put together a compelling advocacy message or campaign
- Analysis and the ability to gather, use and understand data
- Focus and leadership skills to provide clarity for advocacy goals
- Compassion and ability to see all sides of issues and all positions
- Skills to present a position or make the ask
- Knowledge related to media and public messaging
- Understanding of government systems and policies
- Connections and influence – knowing who to ask and how
- Delegation skills to share the load and to position others in the best way
- Ability to tailor the advocacy approach for each audience
- Being credible, believable and compelling

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

### Communication – Getting Your Ideas Across

Communication is the key to success in most things, but for sure in advocacy. The following is a brief overview about how to get your ideas across, and collectively form the platform or basis for an effective advocacy communication plan.

1. State the purpose of the advocacy effort and the main point of your message. Be clear about what you want. “The Ask” should be right up front.
2. Present the key points briefly to build understanding. Don’t assume the audience knows your situation. Keep the language simple, keep the presentation short, use logic with supporting points that makes the case for the cause and for the ask.
3. Check for understanding and reaction from your audience (adjust the approach if need be). Listen carefully and summarize your main points and allow time for it to settle in or be understood.
4. Link what you want from them with their mandate, mission or interests. Show the connection to their world and how your “ask” might benefit their needs and interests.
5. Speak clearly, plainly and honestly. Keep the conversation respectful and reasonable, even if there is some tension involved. Be courteous – always.
6. If you are using a PowerPoint presentation or other supporting materials, make sure they are well done and professional looking and test it out before the presentation.

### Working with the Media

Media can play an important role in the advocacy efforts of your organization. In addition to the public, elected officials also read their papers daily and closely follow the issues covered by the media in their legislative districts. The more you can keep the media informed about your cause or position, the louder the voice of your organization will be to those who count.

The following ideas are a few ways you can strategically (and inexpensively) work with the media:

#### 1. Write a letter to the Editor

Let your newspaper know how a certain change in policy, bill or regulation will affect your organization. This is an effective and inexpensive way to reach a wide audience. Keep the letter focused and short, and make sure to have it proofed before you send it in.

#### 2. Use a press/media release

When there is a special event linked to your cause, a position being taken or anything news worthy, prepare a media release. Not only is it a starting place for reporters, it gets your information (in your words

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

and tone) in their hands. A release makes it easier to print or use because most of the work is already done.

### 3. Set up a meeting with the editorial Board

Gather several representatives of your organization and request an editorial Board meeting with your local newspaper. Use the meeting as an opportunity to highlight your issue or cause, or how the proposed legislation will impact your group and those you serve. Ask the newspaper to write an editorial about the issue or volunteer to submit a written article.

### 4. Listen to the radio and use it often

Monitor your local talk radio programs for mention of the issues your organization cares about. Call in and let them know your position. Keep your message simple and factual. Have others call in to show that there is much interest in the topic and some action needed or being taken. Remember that public service announcements are free.

### 5. Be a resource

Let the media know they can come to you for information, or for your reaction to particular issues connected to your organization's mandate or your advocacy campaign. Be credible, helpful, available and informative. Try to stay in touch with media representatives all year round, not just when you need them. Keep in mind that all relationships take time and effort.

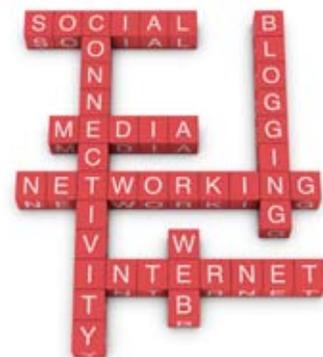
## E-mail and Advocacy

The role and use of e-mail in advocacy has increased dramatically in recent years. E-mail is now considered an acceptable means of communication especially if you have already established a relationship with the person you are contacting. It is a popular and expedient but also a more informal than a face-to-face meeting or a professional letter.

Remember that although e-mail communication has increased, so has the ability to ignore it. Consider e-mail as only one component of a successful advocacy campaign. To be effective, e-mail messages must be accompanied by phone calls, faxes, written letters and personal visits.

## The Role of Social Networks

Technology is advancing faster than most of us can comprehend and there are very few checks and balances or protocols in place to help us make good use of social networks for the purpose of advocacy. It is important for community-based advocates to understand social networks and use them to reach particular groups (such as youth) but also to be thoughtful and deliberate in the use of this technology. There are positives and negatives that need to be considered.



---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

Social networks such as Facebook, Twitter and MySpace have become a very effective vehicle to generate awareness, share opinions and to generally get a buzz going on different topics – for better or for worse. Because they can reach hundreds of thousands of people around the planet in a matter of seconds (or it can be used to send information to a select group of people), this tool can be both useful and overwhelming.

There are recent examples of “rallying people” for a cause that have changed legislation, or at least brought media and public attention to it, in a manner that necessitated political response. There have also been false or bogus stories, or accusations that have caused considerable harm or detriment to those trying to do legitimate work. The rule of thumb right now is to use social networks carefully and always remain professional. It is the same type of public forum as a newspaper used to be with the interesting twist of those involved being able to react or respond quickly (with no controls) to anything that is put forward. User beware and be aware.

### **The Use of Tools**

As we know, advocacy is becoming an important part of our work, and anyone who has been involved in advocacy efforts knows that it doesn't just happen. It requires focused thought, buy-in, a plan and of course some tools. This handbook was designed to provide advice and information about the basics of advocacy, how to get started and ways to maintain momentum, and it was designed to provide tools.

Tools are something that help us get the job done, or tips and templates that show us what to do or enhance what we are doing in advocacy. A tool could be a plan, an example, a template or tips and advice. For example, tips on effective use of media helps us to generate awareness, get the word out or garner support for a cause. Samples or examples of letters help us to write more effectively and communication tips and advice can show us how to be more credible when doing presentations.

These needs and related tools were some of the things that were taken into consideration when putting this handbook together. It is important to note that there are many more resources available than could be provided in one book. So, the list on the next page is a good starting place to get more information and the last section of the handbook is full of tools to use in your work.

The best tool is only that – a tool. Who uses it and how, is what makes the difference. Seeking someone with experience and talking with each other is also highly recommended and when in doubt, ask a friend, talk to your coworkers and community partners, call a specialist or even ask the people to whom you are advocating, for their advice about the best way to go about it.

Community-based advocacy is usually very open and supportive, and in the end it pays to remember that we are all in it together - everyone working toward the same goal – the best we can do for our communities, every day, all year round - Advocating Together 24 - 7 - 365.

---

## Section Three - Building and Maintaining Momentum

---

### Where to Get Additional Information

The following is a list of additional places to get further information on advocacy. Each site has been selected because it has good information, tools or examples. Feel free to add to this list – it is just a starting point.

#### ***Be Your Own Action Hero Workshop Series***

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

- Modules One and Two

#### **SaskCulture – Advocacy Toolbox**

[www.saskculture.sk.ca/cultural\\_resources/advocacy.htm](http://www.saskculture.sk.ca/cultural_resources/advocacy.htm)

#### ***Saskatchewan in motion***

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

#### **Advocacy Primer – Canadian Conference of the Arts**

<http://ccarts.ca/en/advocacy/publications/toolkits/index.html#howtoadvocacy>

#### **A Guide to Government Relations for Directors of Not-For-Profit Organizations (CSAE)**

<http://www.csae.com/public/public.asp?C=39&K=220630&ListingByName=1330>

#### **The Community Tool Box**

[www.ctb.edu](http://www.ctb.edu)

#### **United Way Advocacy Online Tool Kit**

<http://www2.unitedway.ca/UWCanada/content.aspx?id=105>

#### **Advocacy for Public Health – A Primer (Article)**

<http://journals.bmj.com/reprintform> or [www.jech.com](http://www.jech.com)

#### **Connecticut Health Policy Project Advocacy Toolbox**



---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

<http://cthealthpolicy.org/toolbox/>

This section is all about tools and tips. It contains the following:

1. SCR - District Advocacy Plan Framework
2. Solidifying Your Plan - Basic Steps for Advocacy
3. Writing a Letter to an Elected Official
4. How to Write to the Editor
5. Tips on How to Increase Your Political Advocacy Efforts
6. Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials
7. Forms of Address for Federal Elected Officials
8. Participating in Government Consultations

Examples and Samples from SPRA:

- I. The Media
- II. The Media Advisory  
Media Advisory – Sample
- III. The Public Service Announcement  
Public Service Announcement – Sample 1  
Public Service Announcement – Sample 2
- IV. The Media Release  
Media Release – Sample
- V. The Advocacy Letter  
Advocacy Letter – Sample  
Advocacy Letter – Sample Fact Sheet



---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

### 1. SCR – District Advocacy Plan Framework

**Name of District:**

**Contact Information: (name – email – phone)**

**Date of Submission:**

#### **Purpose of this Plan**

Advocacy is almost always about change (attitudes, values, behaviour, etc.) and is connected to the overall mandate and strategic plans of the Districts. This plan is being developed to focus on specific advocacy activities and is simply an outline of what the District is aiming for (what you want to change) and how it will be done.

**Advocacy - Moving from what is to what should be (Note: this is one of several ways to look at advocacy).**

#### **Section One: Description**

Please provide a brief description of the District's top one to three advocacy priorities:

1.

2.

3.

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

### Section Two: Details of the Plan

Please provide a brief (point form) overview of: the District’s priority advocacy items; what action will be taken to address them; who will be responsible for each item; when it will be addressed and an estimated cost.

Priority Advocacy Item	What change do we want to see happen	Actions – Key Activities	Who	When - Timeline	Estimated Costs

### Section Three: Evaluation

A. Please provide a brief paragraph about how the Advocacy Plan will be evaluated (For example, how will you know it has been successful? How will you measure progress and change? Who will do the evaluation and when will it take place?).

B. Complete the chart below to indicate what is hoped for in the Advocacy Plan:

Priority Item	Desired Outcome	Success Indicators

**Additional Comments:**

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

### 2. Solidifying Your Plan – Basic Steps for Advocacy

There are a few basic steps for advocacy action and to solidify your Advocacy Plan. Once there is agreement on what you want to advocate for or change, address the 10 points below.

- i. **Focus Your Position** – in simple language what do you really want to do or what do you want to see change?
- ii. **Determine Your Capacity** – what have you got in place and what is needed? Identify your strengths and weaknesses and how you will build on the strengths and address any limitations or weaknesses.
- iii. **Focus the Ask**– what will you ask for (be very clear and specific) – what change do you want and what do you want others to do to make the change happen?
- iv. **Know Your Target** – who will you contact and what do you know about them that could help determine the best approach to use? What are the pressure points that would cause them to respond favourably?
- v. **Develop the Message** – what is your main message – how can you keep it clear, understandable and simple so that others “get it” the way you do?
- vi. **Organize and Control the Action** – how and who will you ask - what tools or materials will you use and who will do any presentations that are needed? What is our timeline? What is the best we can hope for and what is plan B if we are not as successful as we hope to be. Who will we share the results with and how will we do this?
- vii. **Influence Key Influencers** – who are they and how can you reach them to get them on side with you?
- viii. **Know Your Allies** – who stands with you and how will you contact them? Be creative with your list and appreciative for their involvement.
- ix. **Find Resources** – how much human, financial and other resources are required – where will you get them?
- x. **Communicate** – with whom and about what do you need to communicate in order for the advocacy action to be effective?

### 3. Writing a Letter to an Elected Official

Most elected officials will tell you that a well-written letter from a constituent is one of the most influential ways of communicating with them. Here are some tips to writing a good letter:

- Be sure that the Member of Parliament or Minister’s name and title are correct. Contact information for Federal Ministers and MPs is listed at: [http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct\\_e.html](http://canada.gc.ca/directories/direct_e.html)
- Keep your letter to only one page. You don’t need to be an expert. Simply demonstrating your concern is just as effective.
- Be polite and cover only one issue in your letter. Use your own words; don’t use jargon or unfamiliar acronyms.
- Type your letter if possible, but make your letter personal. If using a form letter, add your own thoughts. Politicians receive many form letters – make yours unique and it will catch their attention. Form letters will receive form replies.
- Be sure to include the action you would like the Member of Parliament or his government to take.

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

- Ask a question, the recipient of your letter will be more inclined to send a prompt response.
- When writing on behalf of your organization, tell your elected official about your organization – what you do, how many people you serve, etc.
- Be encouraging. If your elected official has taken a stand that favours your position, let your appreciation be known and thank him/her.
- While it is important to write your elected official, always send a copy to the responsible Minister as they have the power to change laws, regulations, policies or programs and need to hear from citizens directly. Similarly, when writing directly to a Minister, copy your local MP.
- Sign your letter above your typed or printed name and address. Envelopes sometimes get detached, so it's best to include your address on the inside as well.

### 4. How to Write to the Editor

Local media is one of the most important advocacy tools at your disposal – there's no more efficient method of getting your message out to people. Writing a letter to the editor is one of the easiest ways to use the media. Follow these tips and you'll be able to make it work for you!

#### Letters to the Editor:

- The letters to the editor page is the second most read page of the newspaper. (Front page is first)
- Most newspapers are eager to receive letters from the public. They need to fill the space.
- Politicians read this page to gauge public opinion on an issue. Some newspapers even provide a running tally of the number of letters they receive on an issue.
- Letters to the Editor are the quickest and cheapest way to communicate your message to a wide audience.
- Letters must be short and simple and stick to one point. Keep your letter to a maximum of 200 words. Don't ramble. If you have more than one point to make, write more than one letter!
- Write the way you talk and speak from the heart. Don't try to impress the Editor with big words and encyclopedic knowledge. They want passion.
- Don't get personal. You can disagree with an opinion or action, but personal attacks distract from the point you are trying to make.
- Write the same day or the day after a story appears – the more current the topic, the more interest it will attract.
- Send a letter whenever you have an opinion. You can send two letters on two subjects on the same day.
- Always include your name, address and phone number. Most papers have a policy of phoning to verify authorship prior to printing.
- If you are sending your letter by email, put it in the body of the email, do not attach it. Most newspapers today do not open attachments.
- There is strength in numbers – try to get others to write also.

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

### 5. Tips on how to Increase Political Advocacy Efforts

The following are some quick tips on how to improve or increase your political advocacy efforts. They are just ideas – add to them.

- Put elected officials and other influential people on your mailing lists. Keep it updated!
- Invite elected officials to your events.
- Involve elected officials in groundbreakings, ribbon cuttings, committees and task force meetings.
- Acknowledge all elected officials and their position at every event, meeting or gathering where they are in attendance.
- Monitor their committee and legislative work, review agendas and, when possible, attend committee meetings.
- Give them credit whenever possible, but be sincere.
- Hold breakfasts or luncheons on particular issues and invite the elected official to speak.
- Occasionally invite elected officials to dinner with your Board, with no agenda other than to keep them informed.
- Attend events or meetings if you are requested.
- Support those who support you.
- Offer to write an article for your Legislator’s newsletter.
- Sponsor a “Day on the Hill” or at your local politician’s offices for your members.
- Get to know and develop a working relationship with their staff.
- Leave your personal politics at home.
- Always say “thank you”.

### 6. Tips for Meeting with Elected Officials

#### i. Call for an appointment

Don’t just walk in and expect to see an elected official. Make an appointment well in advance and specify what you will be talking about. This lets the official prepare for the meeting or delegate to the appropriate staff person. Don’t be upset if you are screened by a staff member first to find out as much as possible about the subject for the desired meeting.

Be forthright with the staff and be prepared to put in writing what the purpose of your meeting with that politician will be. Politicians hate surprises. Remember - if you can’t meet with the legislator – spend time with the staff. It can be highly rewarding.

#### ii. Be organized

Have an agenda to keep the meeting from going astray. Remember, the elected officials and their staffers will form an opinion of you, your group and perhaps your cause. Know your subject, don’t overstate your case, and maintain a businesslike manner.

#### iii. If you are going as a group, keep it small and have a pre-meeting

Always take time to plan your meeting to ensure a smooth presentation. Decide who will present each topic. Choose a leader to direct the conversation and see that your agenda is followed. This is an instance where there is no strength in numbers, so keep it to a minimum, but with adequate

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

representation. If there is no “job” for the person during the presentation then they probably shouldn’t be included.

iv. **Always be a good listener**

What the elected official will say will provide insight into strategy for follow-up or suggest who needs to be included in another meeting. Remember, the official needs to have his or her point of view understood as much as you do. Being attentive to his or her concerns and issues does not mean you have to agree or compromise your position. Leave time for questions.

v. **Be on time and don’t overstay your allotted time**

If an elected official asks you to continue, do so. But, remember they run on very tight schedules. If you are well organized, you can cover the critical aspects of your case in a limited time. Time your presentation in advance and if you are using PowerPoint do not add too much chatting during the presentation of the slides – just do it and get on with the meeting.

vi. **Don’t be afraid to ask for something**

Don’t merely ask for “support” – ask for something specific. Don’t leave without asking to whom else you should be talking. Make sure you see them as well, and if a referral can be made, so much the better.

vii. **Don’t be awed**

Sure, it’s an important job, but elected officials are people just like you. It’s highly likely they won’t understand your issue as well as you do – not because they’re dumb or don’t care, but because they must be “generalists” on a wide range of issues. Discuss the issue; don’t lecture and present it in a way that the official can see the connection to his or her role.

viii. **Leave fact sheets – short ones**

Emphasize the impact of programs or legislation on the elected official’s constituents. Make sure your facts can be verified; if you quote numbers, be able to back them up. Offer to provide more information as requested.

ix. **No politician is able to make a commitment on the spot**

The best you can do is say “I hope to hear from you soon.” Try to get a specific commitment of their interest or willingness to help, but don’t be pushy.

x. **Remember to say “thank you” with a small note**

(on your organization letterhead, of course!).

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

### 7. Forms of Address for Federal Elected Officials

#### Proper Forms of Address

##### **The Governor General of Canada**

The Right Honourable - for life and to be styled ***Her Excellency*** and her husband, ***His Excellency*** or, ***His Excellency*** and his wife, Her Excellency, as the case may be, while in office.

##### **The Lieutenant Governor of Province**

Honourable for life and to be styled ***His Honour*** and his wife ***Her Honour*** or ***Her Honour*** and her husband ***His Honour***, as the case may be, while in office.

##### **The Prime Minister of Canada**

***The Right Honourable*** for life

##### **Cabinet Ministers**

***Honourable***

##### **Minister of State**

***Honourable***

##### **Parliamentary Secretary**

***Honourable***

##### **The Chief Justice of Canada**

***The Right Honourable*** for life

##### **Senators of Canada**

***Honourable*** for life

##### **Ambassadors of Canada**

***His or Her Excellency***

For further details, visit the Office of Protocol: [www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/protocol](http://www.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/protocol).

---

## Section Four - Tools and Tips

---

### 8. Participating in Government Consultations

Knowledge is power, and your organization has important information that legislators need to hear before they make significant decisions about the budget, regulations or new laws.

Find out which Legislative Committees or Caucuses are holding consultations on subjects related to your organization's mandate or mission and ask for permission to provide testimony (information) in person.

**Here are 8 tips for effectively presenting your position to government committees:**

1. Keep your statement brief. At consultations, presenters are usually asked to keep their statements under five minutes, although a longer written statement will be accepted for the record.
2. If possible, have a high-ranking staff member or well-informed volunteer present the testimony.
3. Provide a one-page summary of your testimony, as well as a longer written statement, if necessary.
4. Practice your statement several times so that you can present it in a conversational tone; don't read it word-by-word.
5. Learn everything you can about the committee members. Politicians always appreciate being addressed by name (Chairman Smith, Minister Jones, etc.)
6. Plant questions with friendly legislators.
7. Anticipate and prepare responses for opposing arguments.
8. Conclude by asking committee members to vote in support of your position.



Legislative bodies (from Parliamentary committees to the local city council) televise many of their committee hearings. If you know you will be presenting, take some time to watch a few consultations to get a feel for the flow of the event. It will help to make you more comfortable when it's your turn at the microphone.

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---



- I. The Media
- II. The Media Advisory
- III. The Public Service Announcement
- IV. The Media Release
- V. The Advocacy Letter

### I. **The Media**

The media can be the most efficient and effective way to communicate with the largest audience possible in the least amount of time. The media can assist you in bringing problems and solutions to the attention of the community and local decision-makers or to promote an event.

Creating your media inventory

- a) Consider the following outlets:
  - Newspapers: Provincial, Local, Community, Neighbourhood
  - Radio stations: Especially Talk Shows that Discuss Community Information
  - TV stations: Local Stations that Provide Community Information and Events
- b) Consider the opportunities available through each outlet:
  - Newspaper: News Stories, Feature Stories, Special Series, Specialized Sections, Editorial Coverage, Columns, Letters to the Editor, Community Calendars and Community News
  - Radio: Daily News Reports, Public Service Announcements (PSAs), Community Calendar and Talk Shows
  - TV: PSAs, Community Calendar Announcements, Community Viewpoint Editorials, Daily News Programs and Weekly Public Affairs Interview programs

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

- c) Develop a mailing list with contact information for each outlet you identify. If you are not familiar with the types of audiences that each media outlet reaches, do some research and find out. Be familiar with the types of issues and events different publications, television and radio stations typically cover.



### Resources

- Visit <http://www.swna.com/?page=memberslist> for a list of Saskatchewan Newspapers
- The 2010 Saskatchewan Media Directory is available for purchase through Benchmark Public Relations. Contact Benchmark Public Relations at (306) 522-9326.

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### II. The Media Advisory

One of the most common and effective vehicles used by communities and organizations to communicate with the media is a media advisory. The media advisory is a one-page document, which alerts the media to an upcoming event such as a press conference or an event to release new information.

A media advisory should contain the facts with little editorial comment. The media advisory will provide information on the who, what, when, where and why of a news item as opposed to a media release which gives more complex and detailed information about an event. The media advisory is designed to be easily faxed, mailed or emailed. The goal of the advisory is to give reporters enough information so that they are compelled to attend the featured event, but not so much that they have everything they need to write a story.

A media advisory should contain the following elements:

- A headline
- A short description of the event
- The location (and directions, if appropriate)
- Date and time
- Why it is important
- Spokesperson
- A contact person (including phone number)
- If the event is visual, describe what it will look like or include a photo

The media advisory should be sent out 3 to 5 days prior to an event to alert the media. You may want to send the advisory out a second time, 2 days before or the day before the event as a reminder. Consult your media list when determining to whom the advisory should be sent. It is good practice to phone the media a day in advance as a courtesy reminder.

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### Media Advisory – Sample

***Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Inc.***

#100 – 1445 Park Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Canada, S4N 4C5  
Website: [www.spra.sk.ca](http://www.spra.sk.ca)

Telephone: (306) 780-9231  
Facsimile: (306) 780-9257  
Toll free: 1-800-563-2555

**May 20, 2007**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association to Launch *June is Recreation & Parks Month***

**What:** The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) to celebrate the return of summer programming and get residents involved in fun outdoor physical activities with the launch of *June is Recreation & Parks Month*.

**Where:** YMCA of Moose Jaw - 220 Fairford Street East, Moose Jaw

**When:** June 1, 2007 - 12:00 noon

**Who:** A representative from the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation will be on hand to proclaim June as Recreation & Parks Month on behalf of the Government of Saskatchewan.

**Why:** The designation, *June is Recreation & Parks Month* is being made to acknowledge the contributions leisure facilities and parks make to quality of life within Saskatchewan. Each year recreation services and parks throughout the country utilize June to celebrate the return of summer programming, to gather their communities together, recognize volunteers, get residents involved in physical activities and gain support for the parks and recreation sectors. There are many benefits to participating in physical activity and recreation pursuits. Recreation provides personal, economic, social, and ecological benefits to our people, our communities and our Province.

***For more information contact:***

John Firnesz,  
SPRA Recreation Consultant  
(306) 780-9262

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### III. The Public Service Announcement

A Public Service Announcement (PSA) is a short message produced on film, video, or audiocassette and submitted to radio and television stations. PSA's are sent as ready-to-air audio or DVDs, although radio stations sometimes prefer a script that their announcers can read live on the air.

#### Key points to remember when developing a Public Service Announcement

- Identify your target audience. Once you identify the types of people you would like to reach, you can determine your desired media outlets and your PSA content.
- Consult your media inventory to determine which media outlets are available in your area. Determine which outlets your target audience is most likely to prefer (i.e. Will your target audience be listening to Country 800, the Oldies Station, etc.).
- Approach your desired media outlet and determine the requirements for submitting a PSA.
- Consider:
  - The format in which they would like to receive the PSA
  - Preferred length
  - How the PSA should be submitted
  - To whom the PSA should be submitted
- You only have a limited amount of time to reach your audience with your PSA, often 30 seconds or less. As a result, make sure the language is simple and vivid and that every word counts.
- Ensure the content of your writing includes the right words or phrases to grab your reader's attention.
- The PSA should request a specific action, such as calling a specific number to get more information.
- Ensure the PSA is sent out approximately three weeks in advance of the event or launch.

#### Basic Guidelines for PSA format

Length of PSA	Number of Words
10 seconds	20-25 words
15 seconds	30-35 words
20 seconds	40-50 words
30 seconds	60-75 words

#### What to include in your PSA

- a) The top of the PSA should list:
  - The duration for which the PSA should run i.e. For Use: "November 18 – December 5" or "Immediate: TFN" (to further notice)
  - The length of the PSA
  - What agency or group the PSA is for
  - Title of the PSA

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

- b) The script itself should be split into two columns. The left column will list all directions, camera angles and effects. The right column lists all dialogue. If you are not using special effects, a single column is adequate.
- c) At the end of the script write –END– or –30–
- d) Include a contact name and phone number at the bottom of the PSA

### Public Service Announcement – Sample 1

***Saskatchewan Parks and  
Recreation Association Inc.***

#100 – 1445 Park Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Canada, S4N 4C5  
Website: [www.spra.sk.ca](http://www.spra.sk.ca)

Telephone: (306) 780-9231  
Facsimile: (306) 780-9257  
Toll free: 1-800-563-2555

### Public Service Announcement

**For USE:** Immediate: TFN

**Time:** 20 seconds

**Agency:** General Public

**Title:** “Everybody gets to play™”

**Main Point:** Every child should have the right to participate in physical activity opportunities. However, 35% of children from low-income families participate in recreation compared to 75% of children from high-income families. Help us remove the barriers. Contact SPRA at 1-800-563-2555 to find out how you can get involved.

-End-

Contact: Lori Ross,  
Communication Consultant  
(306) 780-9370  
[lross@spra.sk.ca](mailto:lross@spra.sk.ca)

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### Public Service Announcement – Sample 2

**For USE:** May 8, 2008 – July 20, 2008

**Time:** 30 seconds

**Agency:** General Public

**Title:** “Play Leadership”

**Main Point:**

Effects Dialogue

School Bell Rings! You can hear children’s voices as they rush out of the school.

*Child 1* – “Hi Johnny, what are you doing over summer holidays?”

*Johnny* – “Not much. Probably watching some TV. You?”

*Child 1* – “Probably just play some video games”.

*Announcer* – Nothing for the kids to do over summer? You need a Play Leader in your community. Contact SPRA today at 1-800-563-2555 to have a Play Leader trained for your community.

**-End-**

Contact: Lori Ross,  
Communication Consultant  
(306) 780-9370  
lross@spra.sk.ca

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### IV. The Media Release

A media release is issued at the time of the event or immediately afterwards. A media release is generally used when making an important announcement about an event happening or to support a media advisory or public service announcement about an event, project or launch.

Media releases are longer in length than a public service announcement or media advisory and more detailed information is usually included. A media release should contain all the information a reporter might need to write an article, as well as contact information in the event additional information is required. Frequently, a media release includes quotations that could be used as part of a story.

A media release should contain the following elements:

- **Top of page:** Place your release on your company or organization letterhead
- **Heading:** Journalists usually receive hundreds of media releases each day. For your release to get noticed, the headline must catch their attention.
- **First Paragraph:** This is the most important paragraph of a media release and should include the most newsworthy aspect of your announcement. It should be no more than 30 words long. It should be simple, clear and direct.
- **Second paragraph:** The second paragraph should include descriptive information about the event. If you are including quotations, ensure they are natural sounding.
- **Remaining paragraphs:** Subsequent paragraphs should include background information that suggests why the event is important.
- **Conclude** the news component of your release with -End- or -30-
- **Contact Information:** Include information on who to contact for further information. Provide as much contact detail as you can, including names, phone numbers, fax numbers, email addresses, and website addresses. Double-check phone numbers and the spelling of names.
- **Follow up** your media release the next day with phone calls to the journalists to whom you sent the releases to encourage them to attend your event.

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### Media Release – Sample

#### *Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Inc.*

#100 – 1445 Park Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Canada, S4N 4C5

Telephone: (306) 780-9231  
Facsimile: (306) 780-9257  
Toll free: 1-800-563-2555

November 1, 2007

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **Practitioners Receive Commemorative Medal for the Centennial of Saskatchewan**

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) is pleased to announce that Don MacAulay and Emile St. Amand are recipients of the *Commemorative Medal for the Centennial of Saskatchewan*. On January 26, 2006, The Speaker of the Legislative Assembly presented the Medal to the recipients in attendance at a special Ceremony held in Regina. SPRA President, Shauna Bourassa, and SPRA Recreation Consultant, John Firnesz, were also in attendance to personally acknowledge the recipients and their accomplishments.

The *Commemorative Medal for the Centennial of Saskatchewan* is a one-time commemorative medal marking the Province's 100th anniversary. The Medal is presented to individuals who have made a significant contribution to the Province and are a symbol of the pride and vision of Saskatchewan.

Recipients are selected based on the recommendation of governmental and non-governmental organizations and Members of the Legislative Assembly. The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association nominated Don and Emile for their outstanding contribution to the recreation and parks field.

#### **Don MacAulay**

Don's ongoing commitment to the field of parks and recreation directly enabled the Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association to be recognized as a stakeholder. Don contributed to the development of the province's delivery system during his service as a civil servant and as a community volunteer. Don's reputation for honesty, his commitment to excellence and his ability to address issues in a positive manner have been instrumental in moving the parks and recreation movement forward.

#### **Emile St. Amand**

Emile has served as a committed volunteer and practitioner in the field of parks and recreation for forty-three years. Emile worked in the municipal field where he truly recognized the value in parks and recreation. His enthusiasm and astute planning ensured municipal elected leaders began to recognize the enormous potential and benefits of parks and recreation programming. In addition, Emile left a legacy with the Government of Saskatchewan, working for twenty-one years in the Department of Culture, Youth and Recreation.

-30-

Contact information

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### V. The Advocacy Letter

A letter is an effective way to deliver your advocacy message when you do not have a personal relationship with your target audience. Before writing a letter, be clear whether you are writing in order to receive a response or mainly to register your opinion.

Advocacy Letters should contain the following elements:

- **Proper salutation**

Address your audience appropriately and according to their proper title. Refer to the Forms of Address listed below.

#### **Federal**

*Prime Minister:* The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada

#### **Provincial**

*Premier:* The Honourable Brad Wall, Premier of Saskatchewan

Letters to the Premier may begin with “Dear Premier”, “Dear Sir” or “Dear Mr. Wall.” (Avoid Mr. Premier)

*Cabinet Ministers:* The Honourable Christine Tell, Minister of Tourism, Parks, Culture and Sport  
Letters may begin “Dear Minister”, “Dear Madam”, or “Dear Ms. Tell.”

*Speaker:* The Honourable Don Toth, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly  
Letters may begin with “Dear Mr. Speaker”, “Dear Sir”, or “Dear Mr. Toth”

*Leader of the Opposition:* Mr. Lorne Calvert, Leader of the Opposition  
Letters begin with “Mr. Calvert.”

*Members of the Legislative Assembly:* Mr./Mrs./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_, M.L.A. for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Letters begin with “Mr./Mrs./Ms.\_\_\_\_\_.”

#### **Municipal**

*Mayor:* His Worship Pat Fiacco, Mayor of Regina

Letter may begin with “Your Worship”, “Dear Mayor Fiacco” or “Dear Mr. Fiacco.”

Inside address for letters and envelopes: His Worship Pat Fiacco, Mayor of Regina

*Alderman or Councillor* (cities, towns, villages); *Reeve or Councillor* (rural municipalities)

Letters begin with “Dear Alderman/Councillor/Reeve” \_\_\_\_\_(last name) or “Dear Mr./Ms.” \_\_\_\_\_(last name).

Summarized from the Office of the Protocol and Honours- Forms of Address.

<http://www.ops.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=d08d8bdf-dc96-445a-ba6a-b63770d8df89>

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

Refer to <http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/members/members.htm> for a complete List of MLAs by Constituency, including party affiliation, constituency, contact information and links to biographies

Visit <http://www.gov.sk.ca/cabinet> for a list of Saskatchewan cabinet ministers.

- **Leading paragraph**  
State your purpose for writing and deliver your messages immediately. Do not be afraid to put your request for action up-front.
- **Information about yourself**  
Explain who you are and whom you are representing.
- **Supporting arguments**  
Make a few supporting arguments for your request (no more than three). Use statistics strategically but sparingly. Provide evidence that others support your views.
- **Request for action**  
Be very specific about what you are asking the reader to do.
- **Acknowledgement of your audience**  
Thank your reader for taking the time to read your letter and show your appreciation for any past support. Offer to provide additional information or assistance in the future.
- **Attachments**  
Supporting information can be attached. Keep attachments short.

For a greater impact, have organizations and communities, who have a mutual interest in your cause, submit a letter of support

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

### Advocacy Letter – Sample

#### *Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association Inc.*

**#100 – 1445 Park Street  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
Canada, S4N 4C5**

**Telephone: (306) 780-9231  
Facsimile: (306) 780-9257  
Toll free: 1-800-563-2555**

January 8, 2008

Chief \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Police Service

Address

City, Province

Postal Code

Dear Chief \_\_\_\_\_:

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) would like to commend you for your interest in investigating alternatives for youth in an effort to reduce crime in the community. The purpose of this letter is to share with you how participation in recreation and park programs can detour youth from engaging in criminal activity by providing them with the knowledge, skills and opportunities necessary for successful integration in society.

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) is a non-profit volunteer organization funded by Saskatchewan Lotteries whose purpose is to promote, develop and facilitate parks and recreation opportunities throughout the Province. SPRA, as the voice of recreation, represents over 688,000 Saskatchewan residents through its municipal membership alone. SPRA is the leader for the parks and recreation network that builds healthy and active communities.

Research supports the many benefits participation in recreation provides to the individual, community and society as a whole. Participation in recreation contributes to lifelong health, learning and academic achievement, leadership and motivation, and reductions in justice, health and social service costs. I have attached a Benefits of Parks and Recreation Fact Sheet, which outlines how recreation can assist in the reduction of youth crime, racism and substance use and abuse. Feel free to draw upon this Fact Sheet to assist you in making the case for recreation and park activities and their role in reducing youth crime and delinquent activity.

I appreciate your time and consideration in reviewing this material. If you have any questions, or are interested in learning more about the Benefits of Recreation and Parks, please contact me at (306) 780-9370 or by email at [lross@spra.sk.ca](mailto:lross@spra.sk.ca).

Sincerely,

Lori Ross, SPRA Communications Consultant  
Encl.

---

# Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

## Advocacy Letter – Sample Fact Sheet

### The Benefits of Parks and Recreation Fact Sheet

#### Who We Are

The Saskatchewan Parks and Recreation Association (SPRA) is a non-profit volunteer organization whose purpose is to promote, develop and facilitate parks and recreation opportunities throughout the province. SPRA is recognized as the provincial umbrella organization representing parks and recreation in Saskatchewan and manages the Recreation Division of the Saskatchewan Lotteries Trust Fund for Sport, Culture and Recreation. The SPRA network represents a large cross section of parks and recreation service providers from across the province, committed to providing quality leisure and parks services.

#### Recreation Defined

Recreation is a socially accepted leisure time experience that gives immediate and inherent satisfaction to anyone who voluntarily participates.

#### The Benefits of Parks and Recreation

Parks and Recreation benefit all levels of society – the individual, the family, the community, the Province and the Country as a whole. Being that the benefits of parks and recreation are so comprehensive and encompass individuals from across the country, it is important that Parks and Recreation are a top priority at the community, Provincial and Federal level of society. Included below are statements and facts, which support the value and benefits of parks and recreation for youth and the criminal justice system.

- 1. Developing Leadership: Recreation is a mechanism through which Children and Youth Develop Life-long Skills**
  - Physical recreation activities contributes to the development of determination, perseverance, confidence, leadership, citizenship, goal-orientation, motivation and personal satisfaction (Donnelly et al., 2000)
  - Recreation contributes to the development of future capacity. Childhood recreation activity is associated with adult volunteering and community work (Jackson et. al, 2001)
  - Recreation opens pathways for children to make a contributions to their communities by providing opportunities to teach, coach and make pocket money (Round Table On Youth Justice Renewal, 1999)
  - Participation in recreation promotes the acquisition of motor skills, social skills, creativity and the development of cognitive function, which are important to successful integration into society (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)
  - Recreation builds self-esteem and positive self-image, improves life satisfaction levels and enhances perceived quality of life - for individuals, families and communities (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)

---

## Examples and Samples from SPRA

---

- Recreation provides connections through trusting networks and common values that enforce positive standards for youth and provide them access to mentors, role models, educational sponsors and job contacts (Torjman, 2004)
2. **Addressing Racism: Recreation encourages cultural understanding and acceptance**
    - Recreation reduces racism by nurturing ethnic and cultural harmony by encouraging understanding between diverse cultures in the community (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)
    - Participating in traditional recreational activities is a way to preserve and protect cultural lifestyles and values (Winther, 1994)
  3. **Alcohol and Drug Services: Recreation Contributes to Decreased substance use and abuse**
    - Factors such as peer pressure, negative self-esteem, depression and anxiety contribute to substance use and abuse. Recreation can prevent substance abuse by contributing to psychological health by building self-esteem, and fostering self-discipline (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)
    - Research shows that individuals with substance abuse problems who were involved in a comprehensive leisure education program showed increased knowledge and skills in self-awareness as well as social skills and social interactions (Browne, 2000)
    - Recreation reduces self-destructive behaviour and negative activity in youth - an antidote to smoking, substance abuse, suicide and depression (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)
  4. **Preventing Crime: Recreation contributes to prevention and reduction of child and youth crime**
    - Participation in recreation reduces self-destructive behaviour and negative social activity (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)
    - The National Crime Prevention Strategy lists a variety of recreation based initiatives used as community-based early intervention efforts that deal with the root causes of crime and victimization (<http://www.prevention.gc.ca/>)
    - Boredom is one of the causes behind youth becoming involved in criminal activity. Recreation, however, can reduce boredom, isolation, loneliness and alienation by giving youth something constructive to do (McKay et al., 1996)
    - Community workers have observed that Aboriginal youth typically under-utilize mainstream recreation centres and note that the consequent feelings of boredom have their outlet in criminal behaviour (Beresford et al., 1993)
    - Rest, relaxation, and revitalization through recreation opportunities is essential to stress management. The catharsis achieved through intense physical recreation is an ideal antidote to the build up of otherwise negative tension, anger and adrenalin (Benefits Catalogue, 1997)
    - Recreation provides safe, developmental opportunities for the latch-key child (Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, 2001)
    - Research conducted by the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Children's Mental Health Division of Health Canada found that recreation/child care pays for itself by reductions in the use of Probation Officers -10%, Children's Aid Society -50%, 911 Services -50%, Social Workers -10% and Psychologists -50% (G. Browne, 2002)

For more information on the Benefits of Parks and Recreation, please contact Lori Ross, SPRA Communications Consultant, by phone at (306) 780-9370 or by email at [lross@spra.sk.ca](mailto:lross@spra.sk.ca).



*Saskatchewan*  
**LOTTERIES**

