



## **Definitions**

### **Advocacy**

To speak or disseminate information in an attempt to influence behaviours, opinions, public policy and/or law. Groups affected by advocacy work include government officials, community organizations, policy-makers, funders, and people in communities.

### **Board Member**

A volunteer member of the elected Board of Directors.

### **Grassroots Lobbying**

To encourage members of the public to contact decision-makers in order to influence public policy.

### **Lobbying**

To communicate with a public office holder in an attempt to influence legislation or public policy decisions. While advocacy may include attempts to influence the public, lobbying distinctly includes efforts to influence a public office holder.

### **Partisan**

Communication that indicates support or call for support of a particular politician, candidate or political party

### **Placement Student**

A student studying at an accredited College or University and fulfilling program requirements of field placement at West Neighbourhood House.

### **Staff**

A paid employee of West Neighbourhood House.

### **Volunteer**

A person who volunteers his or her time without pay to assist West Neighbourhood House to accomplish its mission.

## **Applicable Legislation and Guidelines**

West Neighbourhood House shall comply with all applicable legislation and guidelines.

West Neighbourhood House shall keep an up to date resource on advocacy regulations reflecting any changes as they occur.

### **Canada Revenue Agency Guidelines**

Canada Revenue Agency has a policy statement, *Canada Revenue Agency Policy Statement CPS-022, Political Activities*, to clarify distinctions between charitable activities, political activities and non-permissible activities by charity organizations. As a not-for profit

organization as well as a charitable organization, West Neighbourhood House must abide by these regulations.

Please see the West Neighbourhood House resource on advocacy and the *Canada Revenue Agency's Policy Statement CPS-022, Political Activities*, for more information on allowable resources allotted for political activities.

Please also see the West Neighbourhood House resource on advocacy for examples of what are considered charitable and political activities permitted by the Canada Revenue Agency.

Permissible political activities by Canada Revenue Agency standards may also be considered “lobbying” activities under municipal, provincial or federal lobby legislation and thus charities must also abide by relevant legislation governing lobbying activities.

### **Existing Legislation on Lobbying**

Rules and regulations governing lobbying of the Federal Government are set out in the Lobbying Act and the Lobbyist Code of Conduct. The Government of Canada requires not-for-profit organizations, whose paid employees lobby on their behalf, to register with the Office of the Commissioner of Lobbying of Canada. Please refer to applicable legislation and the West Neighbourhood House resource on advocacy.

Rules and regulations governing lobbying of the Provincial Government are set out in the Lobbyists Registration Act. The Province of Ontario requires not-for-profit organizations, whose paid employees lobby on their behalf, to register with the Ontario Lobbyist Registrar. However, unpaid individuals, such as Board members or volunteers, are exempt from having to register.

Rules and regulations governing lobbying of the City of Toronto are set out in Chapter 140 of the Toronto Municipal Code. Please refer to applicable legislation and the West Neighbourhood House resource on advocacy.

### **General Principles**

West Neighbourhood House will:

#### **Be accountable to our community regarding advocacy activities.**

West Neighbourhood House will account for advocacy initiatives in its planning cycle. Advocacy efforts will be publicized in the West Neighbourhood House newsletter. West Neighbourhood House will explicitly consider advocacy activities in our decision-making, priority-setting, partnership development, training, service planning and resource allocation. Advocacy ideas will be carefully researched, and include different viewpoints from within the organization and in the community. West Neighbourhood House has a responsibility to ensure less-advantaged viewpoints are included in the discussion.

#### **Provide an environment where advocacy for West Neighbourhood House participants, members, clients is a priority.**

West Neighbourhood House will ensure that policies, procedures, program, practices and performances reflect this environment. This environment will be promoted through communication and education.

### **Recognize and support the achievement of advocacy as an important outcome for West Neighbourhood House.**

In accordance with West Neighbourhood House's guiding principles, the organization will ensure that advocacy is an integral component of our activities and helps us to achieve our vision.

## **Procedures**

West Neighbourhood House Board members, staff and volunteers, program participants, clients, and members participating in advocacy efforts can follow this simplified process.

### **Identification & Research:**

- Identify the main issue; undertake relevant research; and present these findings and ideas to senior staff or Board of Directors, as applicable.

### **Planning and Strategizing**

- Determine the most effective advocacy activity for this issue.
- Understand the legal processes and ramifications (i.e. registering with the relevant lobby registrar).
- Decide if a coalition of organizations or stakeholders will be effective.
- Set a goal, and determine the message, messengers, tactics, tools, etc.
- Refer to the West Neighbourhood House resource on advocacy for examples of advocacy activities and relevant considerations.

### **Mobilize and Organize**

- Gather resources, personnel, supplies, etc.
- Communicate with relevant stakeholders, coalition partners and discuss operational activities.

### **Post Advocacy Evaluation**

- Analyze activities and their results: Was it effective?

## **Responsibilities**

The **Board of Directors** is accountable to the larger community for ensuring that advocacy efforts undertaken by West Neighbourhood House are in line with the organization's mission and vision. The Board is responsible for the overall development of this advocacy policy. The Board is also responsible for recruiting and retaining a diverse Board of Directors with a commitment to advocacy. Board members who undertake advocacy efforts are responsible to document all of their activities. Board members must comply with the policy on Political

Activity\* [to be inserted into this policy following Board approval of the Policy on Political Activity which is being developed] when engaging in advocacy outside the scope of this policy.

The **Executive Director** or designate is responsible for allocating adequate resources to ensure that advocacy activities are embodied in the work of West Neighbourhood House. The Executive Director or designate is also responsible overall for ensuring ongoing review and continued development of policies affecting advocacy in all aspects of West Neighbourhood House operations. The Executive Director or designate must record and document all of their advocacy activities. If applicable, the Executive Director or designate must register the organization with the appropriate lobby registrars, or in the case of a paid lobbyist or in-house lobbyist, ensure that he or she is registered with the appropriate lobby registrar.

**Supervisors** are responsible for adhering to advocacy policies and procedures and working with their teams and volunteers, as appropriate, to ensure that advocacy goals are reflected in all aspects of program delivery. Supervisors who undertake advocacy efforts must record and document all of their activities.

**All staff** are responsible for adhering to advocacy policies and procedures. Staff who undertake advocacy efforts are responsible to record and document all of their activities.

**Students, volunteers, program participants, clients, members** will be supported and encouraged to promote advocacy activities, as advised by senior staff and in accordance with advocacy policies and procedures.

## **Reporting**

For issues that West Neighbourhood House has worked on for over five years, advocacy activities must be presented to and approved by the Executive Director as part of the annual planning cycle.

New advocacy activities relating to new areas must be presented to and approved by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

All advocacy activities must be presented to the Board of Directors at least semi-annually. In addition, all advocacy activities, resources used and personnel involved must be recorded and documented. All registered charities must annually file T3010, *Registered Charity Information Return*, detailing its political activities.

## **Acknowledgement of Policy**

I acknowledge that I have received and read the Board Advocacy Policy and/or have had it explained to me.

I understand that it is my responsibility to abide by this policy and related policies of West Neighbourhood House as a condition of my employment/volunteer status.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Employee/Volunteer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_