



# **Friends in High Places:**

## **Why Government Relations matter to your organization**

Presented by:

# Learning Outcomes

1. Why you and your organization need to be involved in Government Relations
2. How to make your organization Government Relations ready
3. How to have a successful meeting at the federal, provincial and municipal levels
4. Learning from past successes
5. Current sector issues and partnerships

# Learning Outcome #1

Why you and your organization  
need to be involved in  
Government Relations



# Why Government Relations?



Who can name some fundraising and/or charity-related government relations issues that have arisen in the last 2 years?

# Why Government Relations?

Government Relations is critical to the success of the fundraiser and charity executive because:

- Good relations with government can be a way to **increase the credibility of your organization** with stakeholders, including donors.
- Issues relating to fundraising and charities are **governed by provincial and federal legislation**.
- Even **municipal governments** can impact us (e.g. development permits).
- Governments are essential to providing **environments where fundraising and charities can thrive**.

# Why Government Relations?

A charity can spend up to 10% of its resources on non-partisan political activity

- Defined as any activity whose aim is to change, retain or oppose a law, policy or decision of a government
- Charities must avoid prohibited political activities:
  - Supporting an election candidate in communications
  - Organizing and carrying out political campaign events
  - Distributing information highlighting lack of government support for charity's goals

# Learning Outcome #2

How to make your organization  
Government Relations ready



# AFP Resources

- AFP has an active Government Relations Committee and expertise on staff to support you.
- The Canada GR Orientation Manual is available to AFP members via the Canada Office
  - Content includes
    - Public Policy priorities
    - CRA information and Advocacy related acts
    - Historical listing of issues and successes
    - Overview of Political activity Rules and more



# AFP Resources

- AFP developed a tool kit to help fundraisers develop Public Awareness Relations expertise
- Available [online](#) or via the AFP Canada Office
- Content includes
  - Know your parliament
  - Framework for engagement
  - Meeting with a Parliamentarian
  - Elevator pitch



# AFP Public Awareness Tool Kit

## 1. Know your Parliament:

- Treat government relationships like major gift relationships
- Which party does your MP belong to?
- Do they hold any key positions (e.g. Ministers, Parliamentary Secretary, etc.?)
- Are they part of any government committees?
- What are the key issues of their party's platform?
- Where might they lean on the issue you wish to discuss?
- Have they had any contact with your organization?



# AFP Public Awareness Tool Kit



## 2. Build Relationship:

- What homework is required to know your MP before the meeting?
- What is the objective of your meeting?
- How can you engage in 2-way dialogue on your issue?
- How can you establish your and your organization's credibility?
- What can you leave behind regarding your issue?
- How can you keep in touch and have some next steps?



# AFP Public Awareness Tool Kit



## 3. Making an Appointment

- When is the best time to be in touch?
- Who should you speak to when setting up the appointment?
- When is the best time to meet?
- Who should you meet with?
- Should you meet with government officials or just MPs?

# AFP Public Awareness Tool Kit



## 4. Handling yourself with a Parliamentarian:

- Who should be in your delegation?
- How can you best represent your organization?
- How much casual vs. formal conversation should you have?
- Should you meet alone or bring others with you?
- How much should you listen vs. talk?
- Can you give examples?
- Should you leave on time?



# Learning Outcome #3

How to have a successful  
meeting at the municipal,  
provincial and federal levels

# Scenario

- You are a fundraiser for Nonprofit X based in City Y.
- Although you are a great fundraiser, your cost-to-raise-a-dollar is \$0.40.
- This is due to the fact that your Nonprofit X is small and just starting up.
- You learn that a new Bill has been put forward in the House of Commons that would cap fundraising expenses at 10%.
- You are very concerned about how this will impact your organization and want to meet with the MP of City Y to discuss your concerns
- **What do you do next?**





# Meeting with MPs

## Top 10 “Must-Dos” when meeting with a Parliamentarian





# Meeting with MPs

10. Convey what's in it for them
9. Show support from your constituency
8. Be helpful not defensive
7. Be prepared for the meeting
6. Be informed on your issue
5. Do your homework
4. Be proactive not reactive
3. Define success beforehand
2. Aim for smaller changes not just radical change
1. Appeal to their objectives in addition to your own

# Learning Outcome #4

## Learnings from past successes



# Past Successes

- Bill C-470
- Anti-Spam Law
- New Tax Incentives



# Case Study

## **New Societies Act for British Columbia**

- Society Act had not been updated since 2007
- Governs 27,000 NFPs registered in the province
- White Paper issued August 2014 by Ministry of Finance inviting submissions
- Section 99 would allow any member of the general public to apply to court if it society is not acting in the “public interest”
- Provision could result in lengthy, costly legal battles advancing specific political and social agendas and not in the public interest
- AFP joined a consortium of NFP associations to formally raise objections to several points, with a focus on Part 8 dealing with legal remedies
- E-mail campaign initiated by Vancouver AFP Chapter (with national GR committee support)
- Official AFP submission by AFP GR Committee Chair
- Representation at Minister’s Roundtable

# Case Study

## **New Societies Act BC: What did we learn?**

- The raising of common concerns across entire NFP spectrum got attention of the Minister
- Don't underestimate lobbying of other groups ("donor rights" advocates in this case)
- Policy needs to be based on facts
- Time is of the essence
- Size matters: coalitions and partnerships are key
- New draft amended section 99 and passed in May 2015, took force November 2016

# Learning Outcome #5

## Current sector issues and partnerships



# **“In the news”**

[Canada Without Poverty - Political activity court case](#)

[AFP Canada Public Policy Issues List](#)

[Special Senate Committee on the charitable sector](#)



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
GIVE TO  
CHARITY**

# AFP requests of elected officials



## **Continue to learn about and support the many charities in your riding.**

- This can include attendance at events or visiting their places of business, thus giving them an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise with you concerning local needs.

## **Access AFP expertise for riding and national matters related to fundraising.**

- This can be as a result of a media story, a proposed bill or as per the mandate letter to the Minister of National Revenue, involve AFP in any conversation about a new legislative framework to strengthen the sector.

## **Seek to understand why your constituents, charities and Canada as a whole would benefit from the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development having prime responsibility for the charitable and nonprofit sector.**



# AFP Public Policy Priorities



- **Designate a federal department** - the Ministry of Innovation, Science and Economic Development (formerly Industry Canada) - **to have economic policy responsibility for the nonprofit sector.** In doing so, it would provide a better framework to develop data-driven, charitable giving policies that would in turn foster a stronger nonprofit sector.
- Allocate **\$1 million annually** to Statistics Canada, for the purpose of collecting, analyzing and disseminating comprehensive data about the nonprofit sector, as proposed by Imagine Canada.
- Permanently **eliminate the capital gains tax on charitable gifts of private company shares and real estate.** It has been estimated that this proposal would enable the charitable sector to access an estimated \$170 to \$225 million of incremental funding from the private sector with a tax revenue cost to the government of only \$50 to \$65 million.

# Your Organization

## **What to do if you have Government Relations issues?**

1. Develop your organization's position on the issue and document the background.
2. Determine if it is relevant to the national, provincial or municipal level.
3. See if there are other organizations interested in the same issue.
4. Contact your local AFP chapter's government relations committee.
5. Contact other para-sector partners.

# Sector Issues



## Other Sector Collaborators for Effective Government Relations:



# In Closing...

## Dispelling the Myths:

- Advocacy is not complex.
- Change is possible through concise messaging, patience and mobilization.
- Complacency is never the answer.

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good people to do nothing.”

Edmund Burke





# Thank you!