

PURPOSE

The Advocacy Policy sets out how the NWT Seniors' Society advocacy efforts will contribute to the delivery of services and advance the rights, interests and well-being of NWT seniors. It clarifies where the Society will take a leading or supporting role in advocacy, and areas which are out of scope.

DEFINITION

Advocacy is defined as promoting awareness and understanding of a cause or the ability to change public opinion, government policy or legislation (political advocacy) and cause a shift in people's perceptions or understanding of an issue.¹

Advocacy is a planned, deliberate, sustained and evaluated effort to raise awareness of an issues or issues. It is an ongoing process whereby support and understanding are built incrementally over an extended period and influence a desired outcome or effect a desired change.² Advocacy leads to positive change.

SCOPE

On occasion, the NWT Seniors' Society will advocate for good public policy where there is none and better public policy where improvements can be made. Advocacy activities of the NWT Seniors' Society shall address issues related to the strategic direction of this organization, and the identified priorities and objectives as found in the NWT Seniors' Society Advocacy Plan. The organization's voice will be used strategically and thoughtfully throughout any advocacy activity.

The NWT Seniors' Society will focus its advocacy efforts on issues that are critical and important to the seniors living in the NWT. The Society will advocate for issues that are consistent with its mandate, Charter of Rights and Freedoms for Older Adults, vision and strategic priorities (Refer to the NWT Seniors' Society 2024 – 2027 Strategic Plan). All advocacy activities shall be consistent with current community, territorial, and federal government legislation, Acts, and regulations.

The Society will not engage in advocacy practices that are in violation of law or regulatory requirements.

PRINCIPLES

The following outlines the principles and processes the Society will take when advocating on behalf of seniors in the north.

1. Only the board of directors can decide about an official policy stand for the organization.
2. Suggestions for taking a policy stand can come from the board, the President or from external stakeholders. Suggestions should come to the Board of Directors and the Executive Director.

¹ Board Development Program. (2009). *Board Development: Advocacy*. <https://open.alberta.ca/dataset/8bc04fce-dd40-477d-8a25-80fed73685ed/resource/156ef311-1cac-4bd2-9b69-400d387c0452/download/2009-advocacy-information-bulletin.pdf>

² Toronto Public Library. (2021, April 26). *Advocacy Policy*. <https://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/terms-of-use/library-policies/advocacy-policy.jsp>



3. A proposed advocacy position can be considered by the board or may be referred for further discussion with the members of the Society for examination and/or adoption.
4. Advocacy plans and actions will be developed in a manner that promotes accountability through implementation plans that are strategic, focused, targeted and measurable. They are based on evidence supporting the importance and need for the agreed upon plan/action.
5. Advocacy strategy, actions, and recommendations demonstrate a collaborative, cooperative and solutions-based approach.


POLICY

1. The NWT Seniors' Society will take a leadership role, strengthen strategic relationships, and advocate for policies, legislation, funding and partnerships that directly affect the well-being of seniors. Through its advocacy efforts, in collaboration and partnership with other organizations as appropriate, the Society will work to address important and relevant issues having impacts on seniors living in the NWT and other affected individuals, families or groups.
2. The NWT Seniors' Society advocates by supporting new or revised policies and procedures that benefit seniors living in the NWT. Issues addressed may be initiated by the Society or may be in response to other external situations or events.
3. The NWT Seniors' Society will consider taking an organizational stand if the following conditions are met.
 - a. The issue directly or indirectly affects seniors living in the NWT and/or this organization.
 - b. The issues and policy changes being addressed are within the mandate and scope of this organization.
 - c. The action will not jeopardize our reputation.
 - d. A realistic plan for how to communicate our stand and what actions are required to implement the stand is developed.
4. In making the decision to take a position or stand, we are assuming a leadership role or supporting others to take the leadership role.
5. The NWT Seniors' Society works with its partners to support existing relationships and develop new relationships where required. Mutually respectful relationships are the foundation of interactions with other organizations, elected officials, government departments, the media, and stakeholders.
6. Advocacy options the NWT Seniors' Society presents are evidence-based, reflect current trends and concerns and include practical recommendations.
7. The NWT Seniors' Society will engage in effective communication to provide information about the issues affecting seniors living in the NWT through a variety of methods to identified audiences specific to the advocacy action.
8. The Executive Director and Board will work collaboratively on any defined advocacy initiative and will provide information and facts on issues for presentation to the Board and its members.



NWT Seniors' Society ADVOCACY POLICY

8. The Executive Director and Board will work collaboratively on any defined advocacy initiative and will provide information and facts on issues for presentation to the Board and its members.
9. The President of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director will sign any letters being sent to officials, organization or open letters to the public.
10. If press conferences or briefings are initiated, they will be facilitated by the executive director and the board president, or if they are not available, another board officer.

Authorized Signature: 	Effective Date: Passed by Board resolution, February 11, 2025 Cancels & Supersedes: N/A Date of Last Review: N/A Date of Next Review: Winter 2029
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