

Produced by:
City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
Initiative: une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF)
Ottawa, Ontario



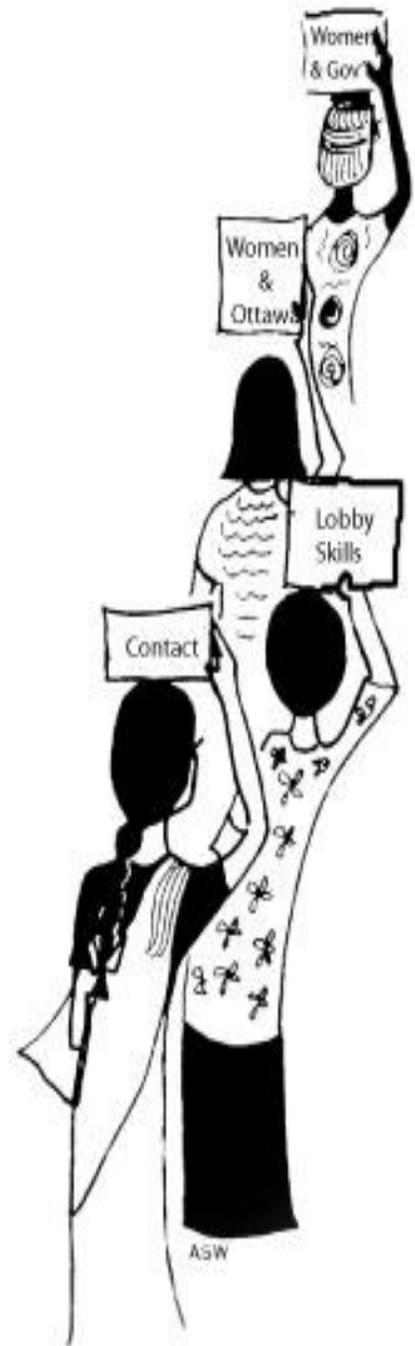
2010

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How this Kit came about

City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) is a unique collaboration of women from diverse communities, organizations, and academia working with municipal decision makers to create a more inclusive city and promote gender equality.

In winter 2004, we conducted a community survey of women's organizations in which we learned that many women do not understand how municipal government works; let alone how to influence it. Women told us that learning civic participation skills would be an important step.

So... we set out to plan training and design this kit:

Creation of a training program and this kit has been a collective effort. We thank those who contributed their ideas and experience through the Training Committee - Maryan Abdirahman, Geneviève Allard, Shellie Bird, Janet Burrows, Nubia Cermeño, Suzanne Doerge, Antoinette Chibi, Fiona Faucher, Maria Neil, Zam Zam Tani, Jacqueline Nyiramukwende, Luba Podolsky, and Sara Torres. We also thank the organizations who contributed their knowledge of civic participation - LAZO (Latin American Women's

Organization), Ottawa Council of Women, Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women and CUPE Childcare Local 2204. We especially thank the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare for many of the handouts adapted here.



For more information on City for All Women Initiative, visit: www.cawi-ivtf.org

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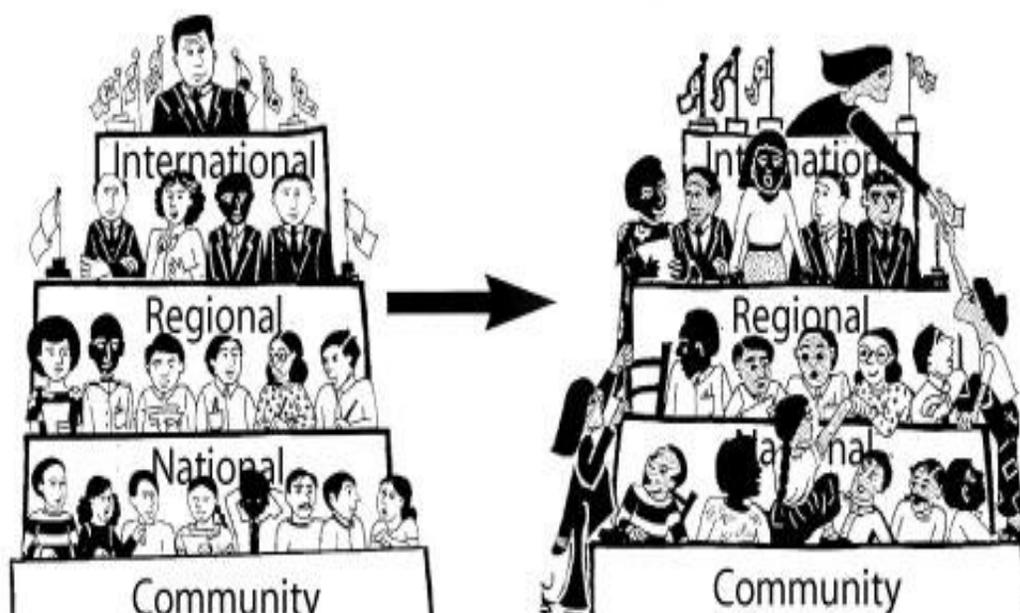
Graphics: International Women's Tribune Centre; Jenny Walker



But especially, we thank the women who participate in this training as experienced and first-time advocates for a better city. Together, we contribute to better city decision-making.

PART I: WOMEN AND GOVERNMENT

If we succeed...



There are women in government today
who are influencing decision-making.
Let's join them!!!

Gender equality is good for women, but it is also good for men and for local government. Increasing the number of diverse women in leadership, and keeping the needs of women in mind when developing policies and services, is essential to having quality cities.

What if these women were policy makers in cities around the world?

GOVERNMENT PLANNING OFFICE
QUIET PLEASE. WOMEN AT WORK



Women from every region of the world, envisioning and planning better cities, ones with priorities and values based on equality and quality of life for everyone. Women working with men who share the same vision.

This was the dream of women who gathered at the United Nations Beijing+5 Conference in 1999 to pass the IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government. Since that time, governments around the world have passed the declaration to help make equality for women a reality at the local level. In that same year, the City of Ottawa adopted the declaration.

'Local government is an integral part of the national structures of governance and the level of government closest to the citizens. Therefore it is in the best position both to involve women in the making of decisions concerning their living conditions and to make use of their knowledge and capabilities in the promotion of sustainable development.' (IULA Worldwide Declaration on Women in Local Government, 1998)

Women Advocating for a Better Ottawa

For many women, government and the work of politicians seems far-removed from our daily lives. We may not see many women that look like ourselves among the leadership of our City. We may question that those elected will really understand or represent our interests.



Illustration © E.J. Miller-Towle

We may find it hard to speak up. We may have been raised in a country where speaking up was met with repression. Or learned that important decisions were made by men. Or we found our opinion was less valued because of the colour of our skin, language, income, sexual preference or disability.

Women have a lot to contribute

Recognizing that government is alienating and difficult to influence is important. But it's also important to recognize the contribution that the full diversity of women in Ottawa can bring to building a better city.

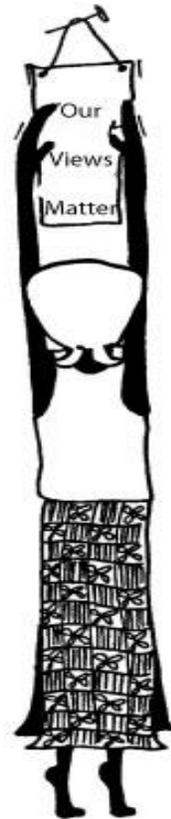
We know our City because we live and work here. We see the needs of those around us. Women have particular insights to bring in helping city leaders to envision a quality city, because we see what is needed as we:

- care for families
- volunteer in our community
- provide and receive services.

We Can Make a Difference

Diverse women influencing city government is about influencing decision-making and policy so as to better life for everyone and promote economic equality and security —things like child care, affordable and safe housing, income security and real measures to protect women from domestic violence.

There are success stories of women in Ottawa speaking up and being heard by city staff and politicians. We can build on these experiences and then pass our learning on to our communities. We have both a right and responsibility to do so.





"When I dare to be powerful - to use my strength in the service of my vision, then it becomes less and less important whether I am afraid."

Audre Lorde

**When we dare to speak out on our concerns,
We dare to be powerful.**

City Hall and You



*"We must open doors and we must see to it they remain open,
so that others can pass through"*

Rosemary Brown, first African-Canadian member of B.C. Legislative Assembly

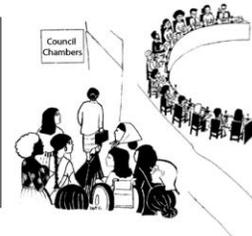
Learn How City Government Works

Mayor

City Council

24 MEMBERS (MAYOR PLUS 23 COUNCILLORS)
EACH COUNCILLOR REPRESENTS A WARD
MEMBERS ELECTED FOR 4 YEAR TERMS

- Usually meets on 2nd and 4th Wednesday
- Check the city web-site for upcoming agenda and to view videos of past Council discussions.
- Not sure who is your Councillor? Visit city web-site to find your ward.



Standing Committees

COMPRISED OF CITY COUNCILLORS
CITIZENS CAN PRESENT THEIR VIEWS
MOST DECISIONS ARE REFERRED TO
CITY COUNCIL FOR FINAL APPROVAL

- Agriculture and Rural Affairs
- Audit, Budget and Finance
- Community and Protective Services
- Corporate Services and Economic Development
- Planning and Environment
- Transit
- Transportation



City Staff

MANAGERS OF EACH DEPARTMENT
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR CARRYING OUT
THE DECISIONS MADE BY CITY COUNCIL

- Managers report to a Standing Committee
- See the Administrative Structure on the city web-site to know who are the key decision makers and how to reach them

Advisory Committee

ADVISORY COMMITTEES COMPRISED
OF CITIZENS WHO APPLY TO BE MEMBERS

- Each Advisory Committee reports to a Standing Committee
- Provide advice to City Council
- Meetings open to the public



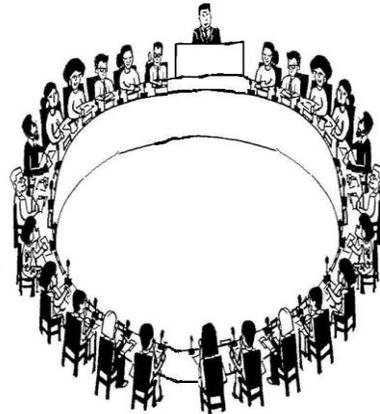
Visit the city web-site at www.ottawa.ca
for more information

City Decision Making

City Council

The City of Ottawa has a 24-member Council composed of the Mayor, representing the City as a whole, and 23 Councillors. The Councillors represent 23 wards within the City of Ottawa. Members of Council are elected for a 4-year term of office.

City Council is the decision-making body responsible for turning community needs into municipal services -- from human services, such as social services and housing, to hard services, like roads and waste management.



Standing Committees

To assist it in its deliberations, City Council appoints Standing Committees to study issues and to make recommendations to Council. These Standing Committees are comprised solely of elected representatives. It is at the Standing Committee level where residents can make presentations to express their views. Most decisions made by Standing Committees require final approval by City Council.



Ottawa Standing Committees:

- ⊙ Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee (ARAC)
- ⊙ Audit, Budget and Finance Committee (ABF)
- ⊙ Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSC)
- ⊙ Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee (CSED)
- ⊙ Planning and Environment Committee (PEC)
- ⊙ Transit Committee
- ⊙ Transportation Committee

Source: City of Ottawa, web-site

Advisory Committees

The City of Ottawa also has advisory committees, composed entirely of volunteers, who provide advice to City Council on specifically mandated areas of interest. These committees contribute to the development of policies, programs and initiatives that enhance Ottawa's quality of life.

To serve on a City advisory committee, an individual must be at least 18 years of age and a resident of the City of Ottawa. See listing of Advisory Committees on City of Ottawa web-site.



Advisory Committees	
Accessibility	Ottawa Forests and Greenspace
Arts, Heritage and Culture	Parks and Recreation
Business	Pedestrian and Transit
Environmental	Poverty Issues (PIAC)
Equity and Diversity (EDAC)	Roads and Cycling
French Language Services	Rural Issues
Health and Social Services	Seniors
Local Architectural Conservation	

Ottawa City Boards
Library Board
Ottawa Police Services Board
Hydro Ottawa Board
Cumberland Heritage Village Museum Board

City Boards are composed of City Councillors that chair or serve as members and volunteers. They provide advice to City Council, and contribute to the development of policies, programs and initiatives. Members serve terms of one, two, three and four years, with a maximum of two consecutive terms on the same committee. City Boards hold meetings once a month, mostly in the evening and members are expected to participate on one or more subcommittee or working group meetings.

You can make a difference by becoming a volunteer member of a City Board. You must be a resident of the City of Ottawa and be 18 years of age or older.

Source: City of Ottawa, ottawa.ca

When Council meets

City Council usually meets at 10 a.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month, except in March, July, August and December. Special Council meeting, Committees-of-the-while, are called as needed, especially at budget time. All meetings are held at City Hall.

Council and standing committee meetings are advertised in the City page in Friday's edition of Ottawa's daily newspapers, as well as the city web-site. For more information, contact a Committee Coordinator, listed on the city web-site.



Open to the public

Council and Standing Committee meetings are open to the public, unless an in-camera session is called. You can:

- Sit in the public gallery to observe, or
- Watch from your own home.
 - Council meetings are televised live on Rogers Television, cable 22. (Rogers television communautaire 23, en français).
 - Council meetings are aired live on city web-site.

Ways to Make Your Views Known



Inform your City Councillor

- Call, e-mail, fax or write him or her
- Set up a meeting with him or her
- Thank your Councillor when they vote in your favour
- Invite a Councillor to your events.
- Invite a Councillor to your community or organization.

Present at a Standing Committee

Speak to a citizen Advisory Committee

- Ask for their support
- Apply to be a member

Talk with City staff

Participate in Public Consultations

Organize a vigil or rally at City Hall

Circulate a petition

Put your views in the Media

- Write a letter to the editor
- Arrange an interview with the media

Participate in municipal elections

- Ask a question at a candidate's meeting
- Organize a candidate's meeting.
- Support a Councillor running for office.

Run for office, become a Councillor!!!

Contact Information

Standing Committee Coordinators

If you would like to make a five-minute presentation, you must book your attendance in advance by contacting the relevant committee coordinator at the information phone numbers listed below

Agriculture & Rural Affairs Committee (ARAC)

Christopher Zwierzchowski
(613) 580-2424, x-21359,
Christopher.Zwierzchowski@ottawa.ca

Audit, Budget and Finance Committee (ABFC)

Diane Blais 613-580-2424, x. 28091,
diane.blais@ottawa.ca

Community and Protective Services Committee (CPSP)

Marc Desjardins 613-580-2424 poste 28821, Marc.Desjardins@ottawa.ca

Corporate Services and Economic Development Committee (CSED)

Carole Langford 613-580-2424 ext. 28934, Carole.Langford@ottawa.ca

Planning and Environment Committee (PEC)

Caitlin Salter-MacDonald
613-580-2424
Caitlin.Salter-MacDonald@ottawa.ca

Transit Committee

Diane Blais 613-580-2424, x. 28091,
diane.blais@ottawa.ca

Transportation Committee

Rosemary Nelson, 613-580-2424 ext. 21624, Rosemary.Nelson@ottawa.ca



Ottawa City Council 2006-2010

You can find your ward by look on the ward map on the City of Ottawa web-site.

Send mail to:

City Hall
110 Laurier Avenue W.
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 1J1

Mayor Larry O'Brien
613-580-2496
Larry.OBrien@ottawa.ca

Ward 1 - Orléans
Councillor Bob Monette
613-580-2471
Bob.Monette@ottawa.ca

Ward 2 - Innes
Councillor Rainer Bloess
613-580-2472
Rainer.Bloess@ottawa.ca

Ward 3 - Barrhaven
Councillor Jan Harder
613-580-2473
Jan.Harder@ottawa.ca

Ward 4 - Kanata North
Councillor Marianne Wilkinson
613-580-2474
Marianne.Wilkinson@ottawa.ca

Ward 5 - West Carleton-March
Councillor Eli El-Chantiry
613-580-2475
Eli.El-Chantiry@ottawa.ca

Ward 6 – Stittsville-Kanata West
Councillor Shad Qadri
613-580-2476
Shad.Qadri@ottawa.ca

Ward 7 - Bay
Councillor Alex Cullen
613-580-2477
Alex.Cullen@ottawa.ca

Ward 8 - College
Councillor Rick Chiarelli
613-580-2478
Rick.Chiarelli@ottawa.ca

Ward 9 - Knoxdale-Merivale
Councillor Gord Hunter
613-580-2479
Gord.Hunter@ottawa.ca

Ward 10 - Gloucester-Southgate
Councillor Diane Deans
613-580-2480
Diane.Deans@ottawa.ca

Ward 11 - Beacon Hill-Cyrville
Councillor Michel Bellemare
613-580-2481
Michel.Bellemare@ottawa.ca

Ward 12 - Rideau-Vanier
Councillor Georges Bédard
613-580-2482
Georges.Bedard@ottawa.ca

Ward 13 - Rideau-Rockcliffe
Councillor Jacques Legendre
613-580-2483
Jacques.Legendre@ottawa.ca

Ward 14 - Somerset
Councillor Diane Holmes
613-580-2484
Diane.Holmes@ottawa.ca

Ward 15 - Kitchissippi
Councillor Christine Leadman
613-580-2485
Christine.Leadman@ottawa.ca

Ward 16 - River
Councillor Maria McRae
613-580-2486
Maria.Mcrae@ottawa.ca

Ward 17 - Capital
Councillor Clive Doucet
613-580-2487
Clive.Doucet@ottawa.ca

Ward 18 - Alta Vista
Councillor Peter Hume
613-580-2488
Peter.Hume@ottawa.ca

Ward 19 - Cumberland
Councillor Rob Jellett
613-580-2489
Rob.Jellett@ottawa.ca

Ward 20 - Osgoode
Councillor Doug Thompson
613-580-2490
Doug.Thompson@ottawa.ca

Ward 21 – Rideau-Goulbourn
Councillor Glenn Brooks
613-580-2491
Glenn.Brooks@ottawa.ca

Ward 22 - Gloucester-S.Nepean
Councillor Steve Desroches
613-580-2751
Steve.Desroches@ottawa.ca

Ward 23 - Kanata South
Councillor Peggy Feltmate
613-580-2752
Peggy.Feltmate@ottawa.ca



Women's Eyes on City Budget

Ontario Cities have limited ways of raising funds (property taxes, user fees). So, they rely upon senior levels of government for vital programmes and services.

Did you know that Ontario is the only province in Canada that pays for social services with property taxes?

This creates a revenue problem. We can work together to ensure that the provincial and federal governments fix the funding formula to make more money available for our cities and make services for people a priority again; women depend on it!



Where governments get their money

Revenues

Federal	Provincial	Municipal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal income tax • Corporate income tax • GST (Goods and Services Tax) • Employment Insurance Premiums • Alcohol, gas, custom tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal income tax • Corporate income tax • PST (Provincial Sales Tax) • Transfers from federal government 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Property Taxes • User Fees (developers, bus, recreation, water, sewage, garbage) • Transfers from federal and provincial governments

Regressive Taxes

(does not consider the income of the tax payer, so places a greater burden on lower income)

Progressive Taxes

(considers the income of the tax payer)

GST, PST
User Fees

Property
Taxes

Personal
Income Taxes

Corporate
Income Taxes

Women Contributing to Good City Budgets

Women in communities around the globe are taking a look at the budgets of their governments and calling for changes that will better meet the needs of women, their families and communities.

Why now?

In recent years, responsibilities are being passed down to municipal governments without adequate resources, so services are being reduced. This is having a particular impact on women.

We take on more work as family caregivers and community volunteers. We see erosion in our standard of living, as it is largely women who work in these "caring" professions. We find it more difficult to access services to meet the needs of our families. Gains women have made in addressing issues of violence against women, and accessing high quality child care childcare are all threatened.



Women living in poverty, women with disabilities, women of colour, immigrant and refugee women feel these changes most. **Our ideas and experiences need to be heard.**

Why the budget?

The budget is not just about dollars and cents. It's about our quality of life and our communities.

Ottawa's city budget is a blueprint for how our property tax dollars will be spent. It spells out the priorities for the municipal services and programs that we have come to depend on each and every day.

Think about it. The water we use each morning, the bus we take, the park where we picnic, the after-school programs our kids attend, the paramedics who respond to an emergency in our neighbourhood, the local public library we visit, the public health nurse who visits, the community centre where we attend a public meeting — these are all services provided by our city budget.

Planning a City Budget - Just like at home

A city budget is like a household budget. We have to take a look at our needs, the amount of income we have, any savings put away and then decide what is possible.

A budget is made up of four parts:

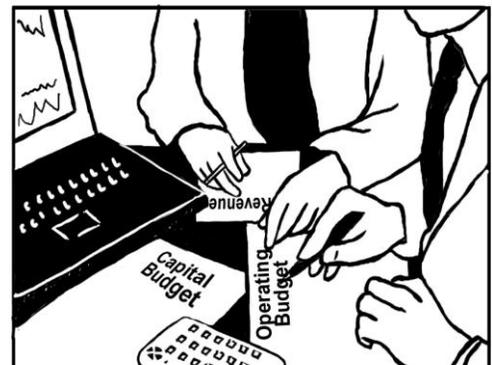
- **Operating Budget** - This is like your monthly bills: rent/mortgage, heating, water, electricity, clothing, laundry, food, child care, medicines, car repairs - you name it!

For the city, it's the day-to-day operations, including programs and services such as administration, policing, public health, recycling and recreation.



- **Capital Budget** - This is like the money you need to pay for repairs on your home, replace a car, a broken alarm clock or mend a broken fence. If you buy a home, it's the down payment on the mortgage.

For the city, it includes the City's costs for buildings, vehicles, roads, sewer, bridges, community centres and parks.



- **Revenue** - This is like the total income of your household.

For the city, it includes taxes, federal funds and fees charged to use services.

- **Reserve Funds** - This is like your savings, pension, retirement fund, RRSP's, if you are fortunate enough to have some. The money to fall back on when you need it.

For the city, it is their cushion to deal with unexpected expenses.

Each year, the City goes through a budget process to determine how much it will need to spend on a daily basis (operating budget), how much to repair or purchase buildings roads sewers (capital budget), and how much money it has to do these things.



City Government Matters!

Decisions that affect our everyday lives are made by three levels of government: Federal, Provincial and **Municipal**.

Our municipal government, the City of Ottawa, has all or partial responsibility for many services:

<input type="checkbox"/> Housing and Shelter	<input type="checkbox"/> Police
<input type="checkbox"/> Public Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Crime Prevention
<input type="checkbox"/> Employment and Training	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Funding
<input type="checkbox"/> Financial Assistance	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Transit (buses)
<input type="checkbox"/> Parks	<input type="checkbox"/> Roads
<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation	<input type="checkbox"/> Protection of Green Spaces and the Environment
<input type="checkbox"/> Child care	<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural Services
<input type="checkbox"/> Paramedics	<input type="checkbox"/> Water and Sewage
<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Department	<input type="checkbox"/> Garbage and Recycling
<input type="checkbox"/> Long Term Care for the elderly	<input type="checkbox"/> Public Library



City Budget Glossary

This list of words has been drafted for a better understanding of our City's budget

Budget

The revenue and spending plans of a government or an individual. The City of Ottawa sets its budget once a year, but their Long Range Financial Plan sets guidelines for 3 years.

Spending or Expenditures

Costs and payments made by a government. Opposite of revenue.

Revenue

Sources of income. Municipal government sources of revenue include federal government, provincial government, property taxes and user fees. Revenue is the opposite of expenditures.

Surplus

The amount of money that remains when income is greater than expenditures. The opposite of a deficit.

Deficit

The amount remaining if the amount of money spent is greater than the amount of money received. This word usually refers to the government's deficit which develops when budgets are over-spent. The opposite of surplus.



Infrastructure

The network of goods that make up the physical structure that support other forms of economic and social activity such as roads, water treatment plants, airports, and canals. There is also a social infrastructure of institutions and relationships.

Cost - sharing

One level of government (federal, provincial or municipal) partners with another level of government to fund a service or facility. For example, currently the province pays 75% of public health costs and the municipalities pay 25%.

Fiscal Imbalance:

The current imbalance in funds between the federal, provincial and municipal governments. While the federal government has surpluses, the provincial and territorial governments bear the costs of most social programming. In Ontario, the province has surpluses too, while municipalities are funding many social services without adequate funds to pay for them.

Municipal Infrastructure Imbalance:

Municipal governments today provide much more than the basic property services they were designed to provide. New municipal responsibilities include everything from immigrant settlement, affordable housing, preparing for pandemics, tough new environmental regulations, and, in some jurisdictions, childcare.

But municipal revenues haven't grown with these responsibilities. **Of every tax dollar collected in Canada, 50 cents go to the federal government, and 42 cents go to provincial and territorial governments. What's left—eight cents—go to municipal governments.**

For municipal governments and their taxpayers, the result is a chronic financial squeeze.

Downloading

One level of government passes on the cost and/or administration of a project or service to another level of government, usually, without enough funds to support it. Example: during the 1990's, the Ontario government downloaded partial cost and/or administration of affordable housing, child care, ODSP, social assistance and public health.



Uploading

When a level of government decides it cannot manage the responsibility or cost; and hands back the cost and/or administration of a service to the level of government that originally downloaded it. Example: Provincial government is currently "uploading" ODSP (Ontario Disability Support Program), but over several years.

Transparency

When discussion and work is done in the open with full disclosure and public access.

Management efficiencies

Looking for ways to reduce spending which could mean laying off staff, or not replacing those who leave their positions. Risk: this could lead to reduced quality of service, stressful working conditions for city staff and contracting out of services to private sector.

Taxes, income taxes

The money the government collects from individuals and corporations to fund the services it provides. Personal income tax is paid by individuals while corporate income tax is paid by corporations and businesses.

Progressive taxes and Regressive taxes

Progressive taxes seek to redistribute wealth within a country by ensuring that the wealthiest people pay a higher percentage of taxes. Income taxes are progressive taxes. In contrast, regressive taxes charge everyone the same percentage of tax, no matter what their income level. Therefore it places a greater burden on people with lower incomes. For example, GST is a regressive tax. Property taxes are regressive, because the current value of a person's home may not reflect her current income.

Subsidy

A sum of money given to off-set costs. An individual may receive subsidized housing if she can't afford to pay the full price. A corporation may receive a subsidy to grow food or to produce missiles.

Triple bottom line accounting: People, Planet, Profit (or 3BL)

Triple bottom line accounting means that a business or government should consider not only the "financial bottom-line" (profit) but also the environment (planet) and social (people) impact of their decisions. In July 2007, City Council voted to include the use of a Triple Bottom Line in the City of Ottawa Strategic Plan.

Acknowledgements

This glossary has borrowed heavily from a number of sources including: *If People Counted: A Popular Economics Course - Participant Manual*, Canadian Labour Congress, CCPA's *Show us the Money: The Politics and Process of Alternative Budgets*, Marilyn Waring's *Counting for Nothing*, and the Canadian Department of Finance.

City Budget Song 2010

City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)

Presented to City Council, January 26, 2010

Please take the time (Please take the time)
To hear our views (To hear our views)
'Cause when we vote, we'll think of you
We are women across this city
We represent communities

Prenez le temps (Prenez le temps)
pour notre point de vue (aux notre
point de vue)
Quand nous votons, nous pensons à
vous
Nous sommes les femmes de partout
en ville
Nous représentons les communautés

This year we're pleased (this year
we're pleased)
there are fewer budget cuts (there
are fewer budget cuts)
but the one's we see do worry us:
don't stop funding Crime Prevention
Ottawa
it would be criminal and unjust

then there's transit (then there's
transit)
the raising of fees (the raising of
fees)
the cutting of routes by wrong
priorities
we want buses accessible to all people
not just route efficiency

Ne coupez pas (ne coupez pas)
Les circuits d'autobus (les circuits
d'autobus)
Pensez aux femmes avec enfants
Qui n'ont que ce moyen de transport
Elles vous seront reconnaissantes

Please re-invest (Please re-invest)
the ODSP uploads (the ODSP uploads)
into social services, childcare, and
safer homes
Quality of life in every neighborhood!
people matter as much as sewers and
roads

And if you really want (And if you
really want)
people living better lives (people living
better lives)
recreation fees must stop their climb
So we can all be active engaged
citizens
and so Ottawa can thrive.

You took the time (you took the time)
To hear our views (to hear our views)
Champion them and we'll vote for you
We are the women across this city
Voting in our communities
Nous sommes des femmes de partout
en ville
Nous votons dans nos communautés

Influencing Your City Councillor



We can Make a Difference

Diverse women influencing city government is about influencing decision-making and policy so as to better life for everyone and promote economic equality and security - things like child care, affordable and safe housing, income security and real measures to protect women from domestic violence.

There are success stories of women in Ottawa speaking up and being heard by city staff and politicians. We can build on these experiences and then pass our learning on to our communities.

We have both a right and responsibility to do so.

Influencing City Councillors - 8 easy steps!

We all exercise influence every day - in our workplace, in our families, and with our friends! We may not use that word, but we use the same skills. With persuasion and persistence, we try to help others see our point of view.

Yet many of us have fears about influencing politicians - afraid we can't express ourselves well enough, especially with someone we think knows more than us.

With a little experience you will find that politicians are just ordinary people - and they are eager to hear from, and be educated by constituents like you. Remember, there is no one more important to them than the people who can vote for them in their ward.

Here are eight easy steps to get started on educating city council about your issue!

Step One - Find your ward and who your city Councillor is.

On the Internet go to www.ottawa.ca and press on "inside city hall" go to city wards (click on the area of the map where you live). To get a list of all city Councillors simply click on "city councillors".

Step Two - Put your team together.

Ask members of your community, supportive board and/or staff members to go with you. The ideal number of people to attend is from two to five. This will show the politician that your community is concerned while not overwhelming her/him. Ensure that at least one member from your team is a constituent from the ward of the Councillor you are meeting with. Councillors pay particular attention when a voter in their ward is present!



Step Three - Prepare your message

The content of the meeting should be planned in advance.

- Identify the key messages you wish to convey.
 - what is the issue,
 - who does it affect,
 - how does it affect your community and
 - what would it take to fix it.
- Research some key facts or figures that can support your argument.
- Have in mind, you are likely to be asked questions about cost. You need not have detail on the costs, but you will want to consider a response. One way is to stress how it will reduce costs for the city in the long run, as a particular social problem will be avoided. (i.e. providing affordable recreation for youth, reduces police costs of responding to youth crime)
- Put your ideas in your own words, back up with your own experiences, examples and a few facts.



Step Four - Call your Councillors office to book a meeting.

Be prepared to tell them the names, and affiliations of your team members and a couple of points you want to address. You may also be asked to put your request for a meeting in writing.



Step Five - Plan your meeting

The meeting with your Councillor should be organized and informative. Everyone should try to contribute to the meeting. Here are some tips:

- ★ Someone should act as the main spokesperson and introduce everyone.
 - ★ Review/rehearse what you plan to say during the meeting. Provide each team member with a role; lead speaker, person who speaks from own experience, constituent and note taker/observer. Agree who will speak when.
- ★ Prepare materials to take to the meeting. Using facts or background information is important to help make your point. Make copies for each participant (including your Councillor and their assistant).

★ *Materials to take with you include:*

- A profile of the group/groups your team represents
- An agenda or a list of topics to be covered
- Any background information on the issue that you feel the politician should have (this is your opportunity to "educate" your Councillor on your issue!)
- Letters from other members in your community affected by the issue and who support your efforts but are unable to attend

Step Six - Meet with your politician.

★ **Remember you're the expert** - Though feeling nervous is natural, you have every reason to feel confident going in. Councillors rely on members of different communities to inform them on different issues - you will know far more about the issues than they do. And remember that if you don't have the answer to a question say you will get back to them with the information right away - and expect them to do the same thing!



- ★ **Getting started** - At the meeting introduce yourself and your team and thank the Councillor for meeting with you. Make sure they know that you represent the voices of others in your community and that you will go back and talk to your community about the meeting with the Councillor. Politicians are affected by a direct show of community support.
- ★ **Explain your issue** - Explain the issue; who does it affect, how does it affect them and what is needed to fix it. After you have made your points answer questions from the Councillor and be sure to ask the Councillor how they would be prepared to help.
- ★ **Get a commitment** - Ask your Councillor what he/she is willing to do. Note what they have said they will do.
- ★ **Closing** - Be sure to thank the politician for their time and go over what each of you will do if there is follow-up from the meeting (get back with any unanswered questions, send more information, talk to colleague...)



Step Seven - Send a thank-you letter after the meeting.

It is a great idea to keep in touch with the politicians. One idea is to send him/her an invitation to visit your agency/community. Start building a valuable relationship with your elected representative!

Step Eight - Record your experience.

Once you have met with your councillor fill out the *Report Form* - this is a good way for you to let others from your group/agency know what happened and also to keep councillors accountable! (See Form on next page)



Report Form

Use this form to record the results of your lobby. If you fill it out right away, it will help you to remember the details of what was said and the follow-up you will want to do.

Name of Councillor:

Meeting Date:

Time:

People in attendance:

Goal of Meeting:

Questions asked by Councillor:

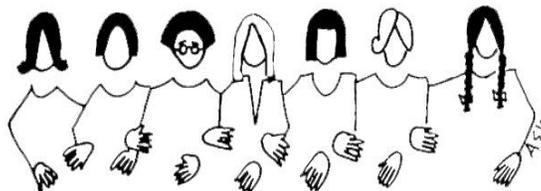
Statements/Commitments made by Councillor:

Commitments we made:

Follow-up Needed:

Other useful information:

Adapted from materials produced by the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare



Giving Force to your Message

The more people your Councillor hears from, the more they will know this is an issue of concern to the community. Consider who might join you in expressing these concerns. Who are your allies and potential allies?

Make it easy to take the action. Provide them with:

- A sample message.
- Many people don't know the name of their Councillor; help them to identify their ward and Councillor.
- Contact information: name of Councillor(s), phone, fax, e-mail, mailing address.

Phone Calls

- If Councillors get 10 messages/calls on an issue they sit up and take notice so imagine if they got 100!
- If a person prefers to not talk directly to a Councillor, they can just leave a message by calling before or after offices hours.
- In one case, Somali women, with limited English, wanted to ask their Councillors to support the Somali Women's Support Line, as a service for women with limited English, so they just left their message in Somali.



E-Mail and Letter Writing

- Provide a sample letter to help people write their own letter. State the problem, the impact on your community, what you want the Councillor to do and ask them to get back to you.
- Avoid form letters, best to be in their own words.
- It can be short and to the point. You may send by fax or e-mail for quick delivery or by regular mail.



A Fax Campaign

- Usually a written message is sent, however sometimes a visual message might be sent.

Example: The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care once did a diaper fax where they sent a graphic of a diaper with their message to the Ontario Government. Over 6000 faxes arrived at Queens Park in the course of a week. In this way, they stopped a bid by the Harris government to cut \$200 million from the child care budget.

Organize a vigil or protest

- Gathering outside of City Hall, you can let your views be known to staff and politicians.
- Holding the event at noon on a week day means you will be more visible.
- Check to see what permit is needed.
- Inform the press and politicians.
- Invite supportive politician(s) to join you and perhaps speak on the issue.



Illustration © E.J. Miller-Towle

Contact the media

Get your message out.



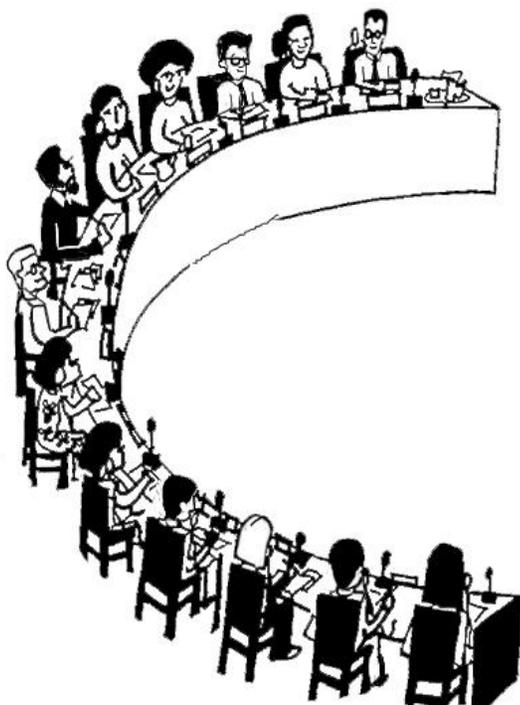
Making a Deputation

What is a deputation?

A deputation is a formal written or verbal presentation to make your views known to City Council. City Council provides opportunities for citizens, community groups and agencies to present deputations.

Why does the city do this?

It is one way for municipal politicians to listen to those who elected them. In this way, City governments demonstrate they are open and accessible to the views of its citizens.



Where are they presented?

Deputations are generally made in front of Standing Committees, so you can inform the Councillors sitting on it. You cannot present at City Council, except for special meetings, like the annual budget consultations.

Deputations are delivered orally to the committee at an appointed date and time. Written deputations may also be submitted. In the event you cannot be present, a written deputation will be submitted into the record, but will not be read aloud

Why make a deputation?

This is a great way to educate your city Councillor about your issue and to get your message out publicly. You get your point of view on public record. And, it's one way of exercising your rights as a citizen and assuming responsibility for creating a quality city. As a woman you have particular contribution to make in helping the views of diverse women to be known.

Making a deputation allows you to speak to a group of politicians at one time and to ask and answer questions. The media are also often present.

When can you make a deputation?

You can only give a deputation if a Committee or City Council has opened "the floor" to it. This means allowing community members to present their views and opinions on the issue(s) in front of the committee. This usually happens when policy and funding directions are being introduced or reviewed.

Deputations are usually heard at the beginning of each agenda item of the committee meeting, but committees may decide to hear deputations at specific times during their meetings.



How to arrange to speak

- ⊙ Monitor the committee in question so that you know when time for deputations is scheduled.
- ⊙ There are a number of ways to do this: you can check the city web site - "inside city hall" and click on City Council and Committee Agenda & Minutes, or better yet - get to know a friendly Councillor or the committee coordinator they often give warning if they think you should speak to an agenda item.

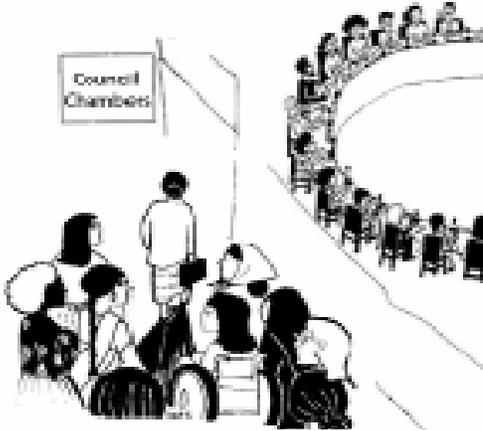
- ⊙ Call the Committee Coordinator to get put on the list to address the committee - city council has a web site www.ottawa.ca and telephone information line - **Council and Committees 580-2470** or **general information 580-2400** that can put you in touch with the coordinator of a specific Standing Committee.
- ⊙ Ask when, and for *how long* you can speak - this will usually be only 3-5 minutes. If you have more than two people speaking, they can share this time or you can request two back-to-back spots.
- ⊙ If you are a staff member at an agency it can be helpful to have a client/service user speak as well.
- ⊙ Ask who else is addressing the committee
- ⊙ Decide who is best to give the deputation from your organization - usually the politicians want to hear from a constituent (user of a service or member of an organization) but sometimes hearing from the chair or executive director of an organization is fine too
- ⊙ If you need translation services, check if the clerk can arrange them, or if you may bring your own translator with you.

Preparing your deputation

- ⊙ Write out what you want to say - there is a sample structure to guide you below.
- ⊙ Make your deputation as personal as possible. Explain how the proposed cuts or changes will affect you, your family and your community.
- ⊙ If you are a user of service that is at risk, explain what benefits you have gained from that service, what help centre or agency gave you, and how the community would suffer if the program were gone.
- ⊙ Deputations that use statistics to help make a point are good, but only use a few and be prepared to back up the statistic if asked by a Councillor.
- ⊙ Practice reading or saying it out loud before hand. Time it to be sure you are under the time limit! If you are close to the time, you will feel the pressure to rush. Better to keep it short.



- ⊙ If you are speaking in your second-language, plan to give yourself the time you need to present. You may choose to say a few words in your first language.
- ⊙ Anticipate some questions you may be asked and prepare answers.
- ⊙ Have a number of written copies of your presentation to distribute at the committee. Or you can ask the clerk if you can send these ahead.



Preparing to go to City Hall

Depending upon the agenda, you may have a lengthy wait. Be prepared. There is nothing worse than knowing you are yet to come up on the agenda, but the kids have to be met at the bus.

Avoid this problem:

- Get an estimated time for when you will be presenting your deputation. You may do this by asking the Committee Coordinator. Or, check the city web site where Standing Committee agendas are to be posted on the Friday preceding the committee meeting. You can estimate when you may speak based on your order in the agenda.
- Best to make arrangements at home or work so you can be there longer, if possible. Who will look after the kids? Ask your organization to help you.
- When thinking about what to wear, consider the message you want to convey. A neat appearance that is representative of the community you are representing is most effective.
- In the event, that you will have to leave at a specific time, arrange for someone to read your statement on your behalf.
- You may want to bring a lunch or money to buy one just in case you are still there when the Committee breaks for lunch.
- Invite others to go with you to show wider community support and to be a support to you. Sometimes, a few people will go up to the table to sit beside or stand behind the person presenting the deputation.

On the day of your deputation



- ⊙ Be yourself. Know what you have to say is important.
- ⊙ When you arrive in the room you should be able to get a copy of the "Deputation List". If this information isn't on one of the side tables you can ask the clerk. This list will tell you the order of the speakers and what issues they are there to speak on.
- ⊙ Be sure to keep to your time limit - the Councillors will cut you off when your time is up.
- ⊙ Speak slowly and into the mic so you can be understood.
- ⊙ If there isn't an assigned time, you should arrive at 9:30 a.m. at the meeting room. Be prepared that there may be a lengthy wait.
- ⊙ Smile and be friendly! Don't be afraid. Councillors want to hear what you have to say.
- ⊙ Be assertive but not aggressive.

Tips for being most effective

- ⊙ If you are willing to help City Council lobby the Provincial or Federal governments to get more money for cities and municipalities let them know that! (And then follow-up by writing a letter to your MPP and MP!)
- ⊙ Call your local Councillor and tell them you will be making a deputation. Ask them to come to the meeting room to hear you.
- ⊙ Make sure you send your local Councillor a copy of your deputation.
- ⊙ Follow up and ask your local Councillor whether they support your position.

Adapted from materials produced by the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare

The Deputation - What To Cover

Be sure to double-space your text and to use a clear and easy to read font and number your pages.

- ◆ Date and Committee Name (for tracking purposes)
- ◆ Address the Committee
For example: "Good afternoon madam chair before I start I would like to thank you for this opportunity to address the Committee"
...OR...
"I would like to thank members of the Standing Committee for this opportunity to speak before you on this very important issue"
- ◆ Thank the committee for allowing you to come before them.
- ◆ Introduce yourself and your organization - keep it brief.
- ◆ Clearly state the issue you are addressing.
- ◆ Tell them why it is important.



- ◆ Give examples of the problem and/or solution.
- ◆ Tell them what you want them to do and when.
- ◆ Tell them again, why it is important.
- ◆ Thank them and tell them you will be watching and waiting!

(And have fun!)

Adapted from materials produced by the Ontario Coalition for Better Childcare

Getting the Facts to Support your Message

In preparing to meet with a Councillor, prepare a deputation or talk to the media, you will want to collect some information. This means doing research. Research is not something only done by university researchers; it can be done by all of us. It basically means asking ourselves what we need to know and then figuring out where to get that information.

Remember City Councillors will probably know less than you do on the subject. This is your chance to educate them. Speak from your experience, but back it up with some facts or statistics.



You might want some information to show:

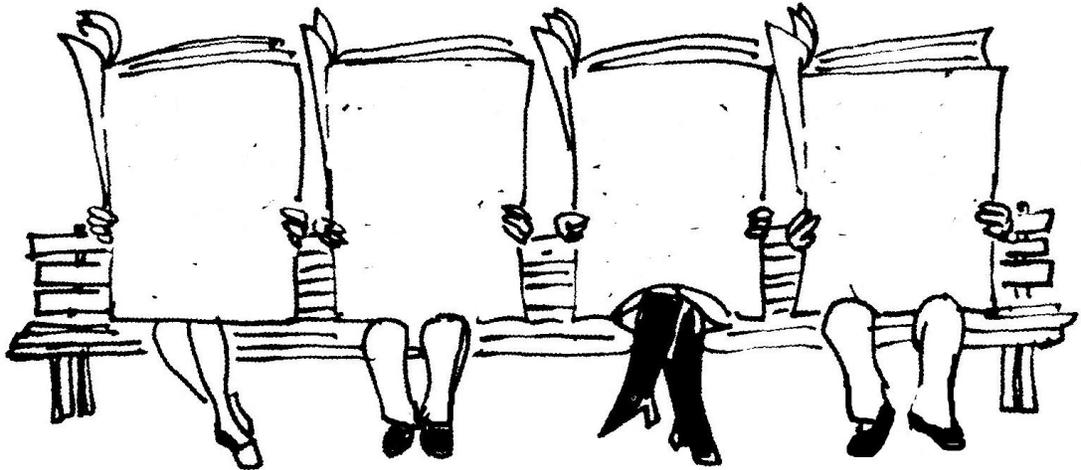
- ⊙ The history of the problem
- ⊙ The effect the problem has on the community
- ⊙ Your proposed solution will address the problem.
- ⊙ How it relates to the changing population in Ottawa.

Where you might get the information:

- ⊙ Contact community organizations working on the issue
- ⊙ Request information on population trends from the Ottawa Social Planning Council.
- ⊙ Check out reports and minutes on the City of Ottawa web-site.
- ⊙ Articles in the newspaper.
- ⊙ Do a community survey.
- ⊙ Check out web-sites on your issue (some examples below).

PART II:

HOW TO MAKE THE NEWS!¹



¹ Keys resources used to prepare this section are *Media Relations Guide*, prepared for The Regional Coordinating Committee to End Violence Against Women, by Shari Graydon, November 2004 and *Alternative/Community Media Relations Workshop*, Public Service Alliance of Canada, February 2007.

Why talk to the Media

There are many reasons why we talk to media.

- They help us speak to the public or broader communities
- They strengthen our message by informing and involving other residents
- They help us make the news

News is information people need to make good decisions about their lives in a democracy. It's a break from the normal flow of events, something new! Therefore, understanding how media works is enormously helpful when you are seeking media attention for an issue or an event.

The first thing to have in mind is that journalists, reporters, editors and people working for media are people like us. They are involved in our communities; they care about issues such as social justice, health, safety, etc. Their job is to personalize and dramatize stories or information they receive to catch readers' interest and to capture the feeling of being there.

The easiest way to build a beneficial relationship with media is to seek to establish a human connection, to view them as people who have more in common with us. Hence, journalists need us to help them tell their stories.

Preparing to talk to the media

Before you respond to a journalist's interview request, issue a media advisory, a press release, or write to an editor, it's important to take even a few minutes to review the following steps:

- ✓ Prepare a simple one-pager of facts/background information for the media about your issue and the event/action (this is your media kit).
- ✓ Know your message and communicate it with the above in mind. Be ready to say it in a few sentences. Reporters are looking for a good quote from you that sums up your side of the story.
- ✓ What action you want people to take as result of hearing your message? (e.g. change the policy, participate in a campaign)
- ✓ Prepare a list of local media contacts, including names, e-mail or fax, and phone.



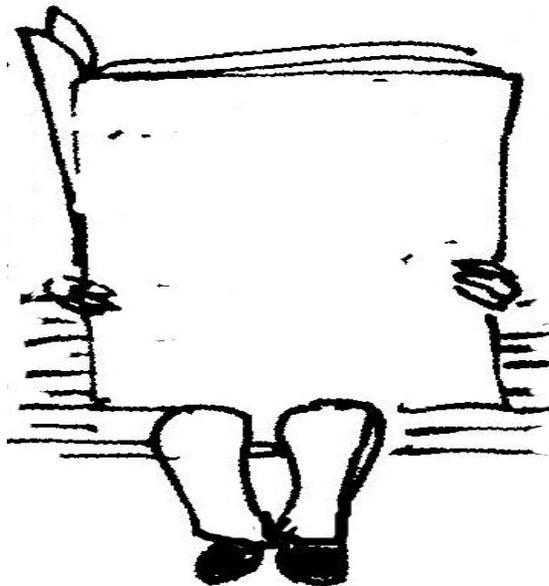
How do we ensure our story is appealing to the media?

You can build your message so both its context and vision are hard to modify; but remain appealing to the media.

- ✓ First, you have to define the **main idea** you want the public to receive, in order to be able to support your issue.
- ✓ Then you try to formulate your idea in a way that will be clear and indestructible.
- ✓ Once you have developed the **main message** you want to convey, you have to start working on the words you want to use.
- ✓ With those words, you must make sure that your message will be able to go through several hands with a minimum of changes.

You want to develop:

- something the media will recognize,
- something they will like
- and something they will want to use.



Making the Media work for you

There are 3 ways to get media attention:

- **visually** (an event that has lots of visuals for the media to capture)
- **verbally** (an interview)
- and **in print** (Media advisory, letter to an editor).



- Call or e-mail a radio talk show.
- Letter to editor
- Radio interview
- TV interview
- Issue a media advisory or a press release
- Organize a media event (press conference, public forum, town hall, street theatre, fair, etc.)
- Submit an article (community papers, magazines, etc)
- Submit a comment/article on Internet (Facebook, Youtube, Myspace, etc.)

Get your message out!!!

Getting your message out to the public

The interview

Review the following three steps for a successful interview:

Before the Interview:

Find out as much as you can about the interview to help you prepare your message.

1. Who will I be speaking to?
 - What is the name of the reporter?
 - Which media is she or he with?
 - What might be their bias or perspective on this issue?
2. Who is the Audience?
 - Local or national?
 - Primarily young, older, male, female, educated, professional, working class...
3. How much time will I have to get my point across?
 - One quote?
 - Five minutes?
 - Half an hour?



Prepare Your Message

- **Ask yourself the: what, where, why, when of your story**
WHO and **WHAT** is the story about
WHEN is it taking place
WHY is it a problem
WHAT is needed to solve the problem
- **Revise your message to make it short and clear.** Use simple language.
Be prepared to give your message in a 10 - 20 second "sound bite".
"Sound bite" is media language for a short statement.
- **Revise your message to make it short and clear.** Use simple language.
- **Consider how to cover all your message in the time available**
- **Practice saying your message** so you can say it with ease.
- **Consider your responses.** Think what questions you might be asked and how you might answer them. What is the worst question they might ask? How can you best respond so as to reinforce your main message?



During the interview:

- **Be yourself.**
- **Know you have something important to say. Your Views Matter!**
Take a deep breath before you begin and look at the reporter as someone you want to inform on this important issue.
- **Listen carefully.**
If you don't understand the question, ask the reporter to re-phrase it.
- **Not sure of your response? Take a moment.**
Ask the reporter to repeat or clarify a question while you think of how you will phrase your comment.
- **Avoid yes/no answers.**
The reporter wants you to tell your story.



- **Keep on your message.**
Regardless of what they ask, use every question as an opportunity to re-state your main message in different ways.
- **Choose the information you will share.**
Do not feel obligated to answer all the questions a reporter will ask. If it will not help to reinforce your message, find a way to come back to the main points.

- **If you don't know, don't make it up.**
Tell the reporter you will get back to them. Then make sure you do get back to them in a timely manner.
- **Expect repetitive questions.**
It is a technique reporters use to get short, jargon-free answers from you.
- **In deciding what to wear, consider the message you want to convey.**
A neat appearance that is representative of the community you are representing is most effective. Don't chew gum. Skip the sunglasses and hats that shadow eyes. If you have a symbol that conveys your message, like a scarf or button, be sure to make it visible.

After the Interview:

Following your interview, take a couple of minutes to evaluate your message delivery. Ask yourself, and ask others, who were present, if you were able to:

- Communicate your key messages
- Avoid responding with strong emotions
- Stay on message.
- Speak concisely, using short and clear phrases.
- Use simple language, avoid jargon
- Maintain eye contact
- Allow your enthusiasm and commitment to shine!

The Media advisory

A media advisory is a one-pager usually sent three days ahead of time to inform the media about an upcoming issue or event. The purpose of a media advisory is to invite members of the media to attend an event, that may or may not be public, with the aim of having the event, or the information released during the event, covered by the news media. A media advisory's job is to tell journalists the Who?, What?, When?, Where?, and Why? ("Ws questions) and any additional details relevant to them.

Media advisories aren't meant for public eyes.

Key elements of a media advisory

- It should be brief and to the point.
- It should contain a headline detailing the most important information.
- It should include the five "Ws questions" mentioned above.
- It should include contact information for reporters to get more information for their pieces and the contact information you would like to be published.
- It should include a brief description of your event or issue.



SAMPLE MEDIA ADVISORY

Use group/agency letterhead (if you don't have one put the name of your group boldly displayed at the top of your release)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

(Today's Date)

Women to press mayoral candidates on critical issues facing Ottawa

WHEN: Thursday, September 8, 2008
8:15 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

WHERE: 140 Main Street, Immaculate High School

WHO: City for All Women Initiative

WHAT: Members of the City for All Women Initiative will be attending a All-Candidates Meeting for Mayor Hopefuls in force to question those aspiring to become mayor on issues relating to employment, affordable housing, safety and crime prevention, and services in French.

WHY: We will be available before and after the meeting to speak to reporters about our initiative and the issues concerning us. Our distinctive peach scarves will make it easy for reporters to identify us.

- 30-

For more information, contact:

Marina Nawal

City for All Women Initiative

phone

email

The press release

A press release is a document sent to the media in the hopes that journalists will at least mention the forthcoming event or issue to the public, to raise awareness about the event or the issue, and to hopefully lead to increased public turnout.

Sometimes called news release or media release, the purpose of a press release is to inspire a journalist to research the story further or conduct an interview to write a unique news story.

Remember, reporters, editors and producers are hungry for news, and depend on press releases to tip them off to new events and happenings.



Writing Your Release

- ✓ **Use an active headline to grab the reporter's attention**

The headline makes your release stand out. Keep it short, active and descriptive; in other words use something like, "child care cuts mean huge job loss" instead of "city changes child care subsidy criteria"

- ✓ **Speak from facts and experience**

Make a list of fact. Be accurate. Check your facts. But also speak from your own experience. Remember you know more than the reporter.
Other things to consider

- ✓ **Put the most important information at the beginning**

This is a tried and true rule of journalism. The reporter should be able to tell what the release is about from the first couple of paragraphs. In fact chances are that's all they may read. So don't hide the good information. And remember the "5 W's and the H" - make sure your release provides answers to the Who, What, Where, When, Why and How.

✓ **Be active and to the point**

Use language that will get the reader as excited about your news as you are. Use quotes from community members, high profile people or someone involved in the event/action. Quotes help tell your story. If your release is boring or unclear and full of descriptive words the reporter may assume you will not be good to interview.

✓ **Talk to the reader, not yourself**

Give details of the news so the editor understands why it's important to her readers. Tell the story from the perspective of the community affected (people), not a specific agency.

✓ **Keep jargon to the minimum**

Reporters are not as knowledgeable about your issue/community as you. Make sure you are using clear and simple language, not jargon. Everyday words work best. Avoid acronyms. For example: say "early childhood educator" as opposed to "ECE".

✓ **Include complete contact information**

Include contact name, name of group/organization, full address, phone number and email address. Ensure your contact person is knowledgeable about your issue and the event/action. Include a short summary about your group/organization; who you are, what you do, how long you have been operating. Keep it short don't include your annual report!

✓ **Keep the media release short.**

Maximum length should be one page and no more than 300 words.

✓ **Proofread**

When you've finished your news release, remember to proofread it for errors. Ask someone else to look it over to catch errors you may not see.

When including names, be sure to use the full names of the person when first mentioned, then, after that, the initial of their first name with their last name. Be sure to spell names correctly

✓ **Distribute your Release**

Give reporters a "heads-up/warning" by sending out, first a **Media Advisory** - with time date, location and contact information 2-days before your event/action and then a **Press Release** the evening before your event (Journalists pick-up their assignments in the morning). Follow up your media release with a phone call to each of the media outlets early the morning of the event to make sure they got your media release. Ask them if they will cover your event or issue.

✓ **Respond to any media calls or emails requesting further information**

SAMPLE PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

June 20, 2007

"Peach paper" outlines women's concerns on City governance

Concerned with lack of public input, group takes pro-active approach

OTTAWA - City Council's visioning process received a gender-lens analysis today with the release of a "peach paper" on municipal governance by the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI).

"We have come together, women from diverse communities, community organizations and academia, to write this paper because we are concerned that there has been minimal opportunity for citizen input in City Council prioritizing sessions," said Lisa D'Addese, CAWI Women's Action Team. "This is in contrast to the Ottawa 2020 process, where hundreds of citizens helped to define the priorities for our city."

Recent polls have found that a full 85% of Canadians would feel better about government decision-making if government regularly sought informed input from average citizens. However, only 20% felt that the number of engagement exercises on public policy is sufficient.

"We are concerned that decisions about the direction of our city are being made in this corporate visioning process that will influence how decisions are made, social services are provided and how they are financed. This will affect every resident, so the process should reflect that," Sandy Onyalo, Executive Director, Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre said. Ms Onyalo, urged Council to study the CAWI paper closely.

"We ask that Council consider our peach paper's criteria when making decisions on city's governance structures," Caroline Andrew, Centre of Governance, University of Ottawa. "Not all processes are created equal - an online survey can be convenient but not everyone has access. Citizen advisory committees, properly facilitated, can be effective. Focus groups can be exclusionary if the full diversity of women is not represented."

CAWI produced its peach paper at the initial suggestion of Mayor Larry O'Brien. The paper:

- Outlines the importance of including the full diversity of women in City decision-making;
- Develops criteria necessary for more inclusive decision-making; and,
- Applies minimum standards to citizen engagement mechanisms.

The paper stresses that to be accountable and transparent in its governance, the City needs to commit to equitable access to decision-making, sufficient resources, and effective, on-going and consistent processes - regardless of what consultation methods it chooses to use.

City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) is a partnership between women from diverse communities, community organizations, academics and the City of Ottawa. CAWI's aim is to strengthen the capacity of the full diversity of women and the City of Ottawa to work in partnership so as to create a more inclusive city and promote gender equality.

Contact: Name, phone, e-mail

City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) / Initiative: une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF)

Letters 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. A letter to the Editor is a short letter you write to the newspaper to criticize some aspects or bring additional information in response to a particular news story that appeared in the paper. Letters to the editor page is the second most read page of the newspaper! Politicians use it to gage public opinion.



Follow these tips and you'll be able to make it work for your group/agency.

1. Keep it short (300 words is good, 150 is better and 50 is best).
2. Focus on your strongest argument. Get across one strong point.
3. Expect to be edited for length, grammar and to fit the papers' style.
4. Keep it timely and topical and refer to a previously published article from the paper to which you are submitting your article.
5. Write while people are still talking about the issue.
6. Keep it simple and clear.
7. Localize the issue, be specific and brief. Length and format requirements vary from paper to paper.
8. Be accurate. One mistake damages your credibility.
9. Sign you letter; give your address and phone number and expect a call from the newspaper to confirm your identity. Instructions for submitting a letter to the editor are usually at the bottom of the page where they appear or on the paper's Web site.
10. Follow up. If you have sent your letter to the editor and have not heard anything within a week, make a follow-up call to check on its status. Be aware that editors receive hundreds of letters and may not immediately respond to you.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Sent to the Ottawa Citizen
Re: Big City, Big Issues, June 2, 2005

I was beginning to believe that I understood how city budget decisions are made. Public consultations are key, I thought. However, according to Clive Doucet's article, *Big City; Big Issues*, City Council has decided to return to the previous budget process in which citizens provide input only at the end of the process.

In last year's budget consultations, the full-diversity of women from across the city participating in the City for All Women Initiative (CAWI) shared the concerns of their organizations and communities. We were happy to provide input into both the budget directions and the draft budget.. This is not because we achieved all we had hoped but because we felt part of the decision making process.

If I may use the same phrase as Councillor Clive Doucet - "For better, or for worse", the city belongs to all of us, our views matter!

We realize that Councillors are faced with a difficult task in this next year's budget; there will be limited funds for the important work of managing the city. The residents of the city can be part of the solution.

If indeed the budget consultation process is to be shortened, we would hope that the City will identify some mechanisms to ensure that the full-diversity of women and men have input into the budget directions that will guide the draft budget.

Jacqueline Nyiramukwende
City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
Initiative : une ville pour toutes les femmes (IVTF)
Ottawa

Participating Organizations

**Organizations who have participated in the
CAWI Women's Civic Participation Training since 2004.**

Canadian Hispanic Council
CALACS : Centre francophone d'aide et de lutte contre
les agressions à caractère sexuel d'Ottawa
Catholic Immigrant Centre (CIC)
Centre Espoir Sophie
Centretown Community Health Centre
Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa
Cornerstone Women's Shelter
CUPE Child Care Local 2204
Debra Dynes Family House
Ethiopian Community Association
Immigrant Women Service of Ottawa (IWSO)
Harmony House Women's Shelter
Karibu Canada
Latin American Women's Organization (LAZO)
Lebanese and Arab Social Services Agency of Ottawa (LASSA)
Lowertown Community Resource Centre
Minwaashin Lodge, Aboriginal Women's Support Centre
Nepean, Rideau, Osgoode Community Resource Centre
Canada Nepalese Solidarity for Peace
Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women
Ottawa Community Immigrant Service Organization (OCISO)
Ottawa Independent Living Resource Centre
Ottawa Rape Crisis Centre
Ottawa Somali Women's Organization
Pinecrest-Queensway Community Health Centre
Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
Southeast Ottawa Community Health Centre
Somali Community Advancement and Integration Centre
Somali Women's Organization
Somerset West Community Health Centre
Rwandese Community Association
TAPP (The Antipoverty Project)
The Well / La Source
Vanier Community Resource Centre
Western Ottawa Community Resource Centre
Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health
Women's Initiatives for Safer Environments (WISE)