

ACTiViTY WORKBOOK

A Journey Towards Systemic Changes

A Simple Advocacy Guide

This simple advocacy guide is meant to help you navigate advocacy work in your community and understand the step-by-step process needed to achieve your community's goals.



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Introduction

What is Advocacy?

Advocacy is about people speaking up and taking action about the issues that matter most to them and their communities.

Community-led advocacy can influence policies, systems, and public attitudes through everyday people using their voices to make a difference. It's rooted in the belief that communities don't have to wait for governments or large organizations to take the lead: when people come together and speak out, change becomes possible.

Why is it important for us to advocate collectively for our community?

1 Empower People

Sharing knowledge is a powerful tool. It helps people understand the root causes of food insecurity, bringing greater clarity to the reality we are living in, and guiding us toward meaningful change.

2 Build Collaboration

When we share knowledge, we build connections with others who are facing the same challenges. Together, we create trust, strengthen our community, and inspire hope. The more people who speak up for the solutions we believe in, the more likely we are to be heard—because when we stand together, we show our strength.

3 Real Changes

Real change happens when, collectively, we recognize and act in response to what our community truly needs. By raising our voices together, we can work toward solutions that benefit us all.

*If you have any questions or would like support using this material, please don't hesitate to reach out to **Sara Farias, Advocacy Lead** with Feed Nova Scotia. Sara can help to support you use the material to plan or lead engagement sessions in your community. You can reach Sara at advocacy@feednovascotia.ca*



1

Let's reflect!

Before jumping into advocacy work, take a moment to think about your community — the people, the connections, and the shared experiences that bring you together.

ASK YOURSELF:

- How well do I know my community and the people in it?
- What challenges or struggles is my community facing right now?
- Do I have meaningful and respectful relationships with community members?
- Do we have trust between us — a sense that we listen, support, and show up for one another?

Advocacy begins with understanding and connection. The stronger our relationships, the stronger our collective voice.

Take a moment to answer these questions.

Use the space below to write your thoughts, reflections, or anything that comes to mind. There are no right or wrong answers — this is just for you to connect with your purpose and community.

If, after reflecting on these questions, you realize that your connection with your community isn't as strong as you'd like — that's okay! This is a great moment to start building it.

Talk with your neighbors, join local events, show up at protests and rallies, volunteer, or simply be present in community spaces. Building trust and connection takes time, but every small action matters. Be there, listen, and support each other — that's where true advocacy begins: when we care, support and are consistent with our community.

Keep in mind that advocacy work takes time, care, and a lot of energy. Be gentle with yourself along the way. Change doesn't happen overnight, and that's okay.

You don't have to do this alone. Bring people with you through collaboration, partnership, and mutual support. Working together makes the journey lighter and the impact stronger.



If you're ready to move forward, let's take these next steps together.

2

Know your Community

Advocacy starts by getting to know your community and paying attention to where people are struggling with food insecurity.

Food insecurity doesn't happen in isolation; it's often the result of multiple, interconnected barriers that communities face.

These barriers can include:

- **Limited access to food:** Lack of nearby grocery stores, transportation challenges, or living in food deserts.
- **Inadequate income:** Low wages, unstable employment, or limited access to financial supports.
- **High cost of living:** The rising cost of housing, utilities, and groceries leaves less money for nutritious food.
- **Barriers to employment:** Challenges such as lack of childcare, transportation, or accessible job opportunities.

All of these factors contribute to the struggle many households face in securing enough healthy, affordable food.

Learning from Your Community

This might be a longer step, but it's one of the most meaningful ones you can take. Building understanding and solidarity starts with connection:

- **Talk with your neighbors. Listen to their stories and experiences** — you'll learn what people in your community are truly going through.
- **Join protests and rallies. Show up where people are speaking out.** These moments help you understand what communities are fighting for and why.
- **Participate in webinars or community discussions.** Many incredible grassroots groups and local organizations host events that are full of insight and lived experience.

This is your time to learn and to be an active listener in your community.

Remember, you don't have to do it all on your own — invite your friends, family, or colleagues to join you. Learning and taking action together makes the work stronger and the journey more meaningful.

3

Spread the Word

Once you've gathered data, stories, and concerns from your community and identified the main priorities, it's time to raise awareness. This step helps everyone understand the root causes of food insecurity and why it matters. The more people know, the stronger your collective voice becomes.

Here are a few ways to get started:

- **Put up posters or flyers** where people will actually see them — like community boards, schools, cafés, or markets.
- **Share information** on social media in ways that feel real and personal to you.
- **Start conversations** with friends, neighbors, and coworkers. Sometimes a simple chat can spark real change.

The goal isn't to convince everyone — it's to make people aware and curious. Awareness is the first step toward action.

4

Gather Your Community

This step is powerful. It's about building trust and connection. When people feel heard, they're more likely to get involved and take action together.

Here's how you can start:

- **Gather your community.** Invite people to come together — in person or online — to share ideas, concerns, and hopes.
- **Create a safe and welcoming space.** Make sure everyone feels included, respected, and free to express themselves.
- **Listen without judgment.** Truly hearing each other builds understanding and stronger relationships.
- **Respect everyone's story.** Each experience adds value and helps shape collective action.

Community organizing begins with listening. The more we create spaces where everyone feels seen and heard, the stronger our movement becomes.

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Take Collective Action

After listening and learning from your community, it's time to decide what to do together.

Start by asking:

- What are we trying to solve?
- What actions can we take collectively to make a difference?

Here are a few ideas to get started:

- **Create a petition** to gather community support and make your message visible.
- **Organize a campaign or protest** to raise awareness and call for change.
- **Meet with local representatives or leaders** to share your community's concerns and ideas.
- **Host a community event** (e.g. a gathering, workshop, or celebration) to bring more people in and strengthen connections.

Remember: every action, no matter how small, helps build momentum. Change grows from people coming together with purpose and care.

Here are a few more ways to strengthen your approach:

- **Host workshops or info sessions** so everyone shares the same understanding.
- **Create simple, clear materials** (like flyers, one-pagers, or infographics) that explain your message.
- **Practice how to speak about the issue.** Utilize storytelling, key points, and relevant examples that resonate with your audience.



Know Who You're Reaching

Before taking action, it's important to be clear about who you're trying to reach or influence.

Once that's clear, make sure everyone involved understands both the issue and the goal. This helps your group stay united, confident, and focused.

Know your target and be prepared.

Each level of government has different responsibilities — understanding who makes the decisions related to your issue will help you direct your advocacy where it matters most.

Roles of All Levels of Government

FEDERAL



Leader: Prime Minister
Representative: Member of Parliament (MP)

Responsibilities

The federal government funds big social programs like health care, housing, and infrastructure. It also regulates industries, sets taxes, provides income support, and makes sure companies compete fairly (e.g. grocery competition)

Actions they could take

The federal government can improve food security by supporting the Canada Food Guide, funding agriculture and food-system programs, providing farm loans and research funding, and shaping trade and regulatory policies to strengthen access to food. It can also allocate resources to work with Indigenous Nations, leaders, and organizations to affirm Indigenous jurisdiction over food systems, land, and climate-resilient strategies, uphold the UN Right to Food, regulate marketing of unhealthy foods to children, and make groceries more affordable for all households.

PROVINCIAL



Leader: Premier
Representative: Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA)

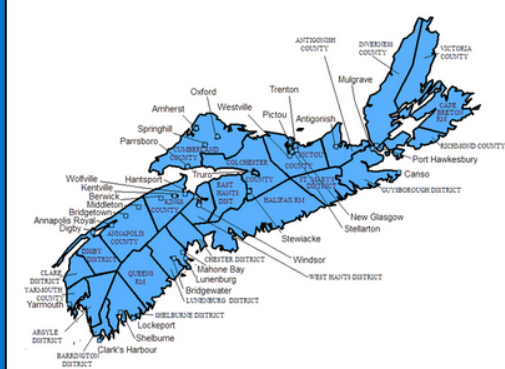
Responsibilities

The provincial government runs services people use every day, like health care and social housing. It offers income support, sets housing rules, and can fund local programs such as public transit or community food initiatives.

Actions they could take

The provincial government can support community-led local food initiatives that enhance local food systems and improve food access. It can continue funding school food programs, provide grants for food-related projects, and invest in food infrastructure. Additionally, the province can assist with farm development, set fair agricultural land tax rates, and implement social procurement policies that prioritize purchasing local food and supporting local farms through provincial contracts.

MUNICIPAL



Leader: Mayor
Representative: Councillor

Responsibilities

The municipal government takes care of local services that affect daily life, like roads and snow clearing, water and sewage, and garbage, recycling, and compost collection. It provides fire and police services, manages parks and recreation, plans land use and zoning, collects property taxes, and runs public transit.

Actions they could take

The municipal government can include food in land use plans, create a food charter to guide its vision, and provide funding or grants for food projects. It can support community gardens, orchards, kitchens, and ovens on municipal land, develop toolkits or maps to help residents access food resources, and back community-led advocacy efforts or campaigns to influence provincial food policies.

Know your community



Spread the Word



Gather Your Community



Take Collective Action



Systemic Changes

