

Government Relations and Advocacy Training Exercise

Relations/Advocacy Map

To navigate the complexities of interacting with different levels of government effectively, it's essential to understand the landscape and key stakeholders involved. The "Government Relations Mapping Exercise" is designed to help organizations gain valuable insights into their interactions with government entities and refine their advocacy strategies.

Step 1. Narrowing down your "Government Relation Essentials" list

List One:

A quick point form list of all the ways your organization interacts with or is touched by government. The following matrix is only a suggestion of one way to organize your list. Basic examples might include financial and other reports you have to submit as a non-profit, for a government grant, local planning rules or permit requirements that affect your activities. More complex ones might be laws or regulatory bodies that affect your organization.

	Name of government body	Regulation/policy	Funding	Other
Federal				
Provincial				
Municipal				
Other -Regional or professional regulatory body				

List Two:

Try to list the top three to five items for your organization from List One. Use your organization's planning documents and decide which items have the largest influence on your organization's mission, key priorities or core programs.

Priority	Government Level Involved	Interaction/Touchpoint
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		

Step 2: Building a better understanding of your “ Essentials”

List Three:

Take the most important items from List Two (or groups of similar ones) and list the elected representative responsible for it and, if you can, the unelected officials (or government organization) who are responsible. This list does not have to be comprehensive, but be sure to work out more details for the five items from List Two.

Interaction/Touchpoint	Elected Official	Unelected Official/Organization

List Four:

Using List One, list any other organizations in your region/sector that might have similar interactions with that level of government.

Interaction/Touchpoint	Other Organizations

List Five:

Write down all the government relations/advocacy your organization has been involved in during the past year.

Interaction/Touchpoint	Government Relations/Advocacy	Organizational Impact

Step 3: Making Connections

The list should give you an idea of your government relations environment. The next step is to find the important connections between all these lists. This should help you to find focus for your government relations strategy.

Government relations are about connections between ideas/beliefs, organizations, and people. It's also important to note that you can't complete everything at once. It's important to prioritize. In this step, the exercise provides one way of mapping these connections.

In this activity, you will create a visual representation, such as a picture, map, chart, or diagram, to illustrate how the key items in List Two are interconnected. By visually mapping out the connections, you can see how different levels of government affect your organization and its activities. A visual provides a common understanding and baseline for your organization to start planning its future government relations and advocacy work.

Step 4: Planning

This exercise will not set out a full plan for your government relations activities, but the picture/map should help you with three key aspects of any planning exercise.

- 4.1 Find Priorities: Looking at your picture/map, identify the parts that are more closely connected to your mission, priorities and programs.
- 4.2 Create Short-term Goals: Identify the parts that are actionable in the near future with measurable outcomes.
- 4.3 Idea Generation/Organization: Working with the matrix from the learning guide (or some other tool if it works for you), build out some ideas from the clusters that appear in your picture. They can be things you are already doing.

	Program goals (efforts to shape specific decisions)	Awareness/cause goals (efforts to shape policy or strategic direction)
Direct government relations	Meetings, telephone calls, emails with elected officials or administrators/bureaucrats	Meetings, telephone calls, emails with elected officials or administrators/bureaucrats
Indirect government relations	Encouraging people (members, clients, champions) to talk to elected and administrative officials. Petitions. Letter writing campaigns. Seeking media coverage (press releases/contact journalists. Invite politicians to program specific events.	Providing annual reports/updates to elected and administrative officials. Awareness campaigns using social and traditional media. Discussing cause with election candidates, producing voting guides