



ORCHESTRAS
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Making Friends and Building Allies at your Orchestra

Fostering and strengthening support with all levels of government – municipal, provincial and federal – is important for all orchestras. Having knowledgeable friends and allies is helpful at the best of times; when you really need them, it’s good to know they are there.

To ensure that advocacy and government relations are an ongoing part of your operation, consider making them a regular item at board and staff meetings.



Regina Symphony @ReginaSymphony · 14 Feb 2018

Proud of our Executive Director @tanyaderksen advocating for the arts in our community! #orchestramatter



Jim Carr @jimcarr_wpg

Today, I had a great meeting with Vicki Young and Tanya Derksen of @OrchCanada. Always a pleasure to talk about the importance of music and the arts in #WinnipegSouthCentre and all across Canada!



Agree on key messages. These could be highlights of recent achievements, opportunities you foresee and the challenges you face. Keep it upbeat and optimistic, especially in the early stages of a relationship.

It’s important to recognize that our elected representatives are busy and have many demands on their time. More often than not, they will be supportive of your orchestra and the work you do – especially if they understand your impact and contribution to your community. It’s up to you to make sure elected representatives know about your orchestra and your work. To help, here is a check list of easy actions for your orchestra to implement. We suggest you review it regularly.

An Advocacy Checklist for your Orchestra

Build relationships with representatives

- Invite elected officials to opening night or other key events in your season. Ensure board members are on hand to host them, and prepare your leaders with some key speaking points
- Find an opportunity during the season for public recognition of your representatives
- Establish an annual meeting between your board chair, staff and artistic leaders, and elected officials to update them on achievements and challenges
- Distribute your season brochure to constituency offices, and put elected officials on your email and mailing lists
- Engage with elected officials on social media. Follow them and engage positively, especially when there's good news to share
- Look for opportunities to highlight your community engagement activities to elected officials. Consider what might make a great photo opportunity!
- Regularly review officials' newsletters and websites, to see what they are focused on

Connect with your public funders

- Make sure you create a connection with potential funders before applying for a grant. Schedule regular meetings with your key contacts. Make sure they receive regular information about your orchestra and know your achievements, challenges and opportunities
- Attend relevant information sessions in your community or on-line
- Whether you liked the results or not, always seek feedback from funders, and listen carefully to their advice

Collaborate with other organizations

- Join city-wide or regional arts councils
- Consider establishing a monthly get-together with colleagues at other arts organizations to share information and insights