

LOCAL ADVOCACY TOOLKIT



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Welcome to the OC Local Advocacy Toolkit

Advocacy is essential for the long-term health and vibrancy of Canadian orchestras. Whether you are seeking funding, building community connections, or ensuring your musicians and members are part of important conversations, strategic advocacy activity ensures that decision-makers see your orchestra as relevant, resilient, and impactful.

Decisions made at the municipal level about funding, cultural priorities, zoning, infrastructure, and more, can directly shape your ability to share your music with your community. By developing strong relationships with local decision-makers, you can help ensure that your orchestra's voice is part of the conversation from the start.

Lesson 4: On Social Media

10 tips to build platforms that strengthen relationships, build visibility, and tell your story

Social media can serve as a powerful extension of your advocacy efforts. Beyond promoting your concerts and events, your online presence helps build relationships, signal your public value, and keep your organization visible to municipal leaders and community stakeholders. By approaching social platforms strategically through consistent branding, positive storytelling, and thoughtful engagement, you can strengthen credibility and expand your reach.

Explore the collapsible tips below for ten practical ways to use your social channels to amplify your impact and deepen connections with your municipality.

1. Set your socials up for advocacy

Your social media channels are part of your advocacy toolkit. They're not just for concert and event promotion; they're a way to connect with decision-makers, tell your story, and reinforce your public value.

Be an asset for your community. To build a strong following, focus on giving more than asking. Advocate for the needs and desires of audiences and artists through what you share and amplify.

Start with the basics:

- Add your mission statement to your bio or description.
- Include a link to your website and/or Linktree.
- Encourage people to comment, like, and share. Engagement helps expand your reach.
- Follow the people and organizations you want to connect with, including your Councillors and other civic leaders.

2. Hook 'em

Think of your page as a handshake. First impressions count.

- Use a compelling cover image.

- If your logo is your profile picture, test how it displays on mobile. If the text is hard to read on a mobile device, consider other options.
- The top-performing content starts with a clear, engaging first line. Hook the reader early.

3. Stick to your brand

Your tone on social media should reflect the same values and voice you use elsewhere.

- Keep your tone consistent across platforms.
- Treat social as part of your broader communications strategy, not a standalone activity.
- Involve your team. Social media works best as a shared effort.

4. Post early (or, in some cases, late) and often

Post regularly to stay visible. A good target is 2–3 posts per week.

- Share photos and short videos from events.
- Use behind-the-scenes content, process moments, or setup shots.
- Respond to comments and messages—especially from community members and civic leaders.
- Experiment with timing. Tools like Meta’s Insights can show when your audience is most active.

5. Keep it positive

Focus on good news, milestones, and community impact.

- Share stories about what your orchestra brings to your city.
- Show appreciation for funders, audiences, volunteers, and civic partners.

- Stay non-partisan: as a registered charity, you can engage in advocacy (but not in party politics).
- Be generous, clear, and kind in your tone (especially when tensions are high).

6. Share impact, data, and sector insights

Your platform can help elevate not just your work, but the broader cultural sector.

- Share updates, reports, and infographics from trusted sources like: Orchestras Canada, Hill Strategies Research, your provincial arts council, Canada Council for the Arts, Business/Arts, Mass Culture, the Metcalf Foundation, Imagine Canada, United Way, etc.
- Consider forwarding select reports or stats to Councilors, MPPs, or MPs by email.
- Post simple, insightful data points:
"This year, 30% of Calgarians heard the orchestra live - and we're thrilled."

7. Use (but don't abuse) hashtags

Hashtags can help spread your message... if used sparingly.

- Stick to 2–3 relevant hashtags per post.
- Use ones tied to your location, campaign, or community.
- Avoid clutter and stay focused.

8. Show, don't tell

Photos perform best—especially on mobile.

- If the post is about an event, show the crowd.
- If it's about a performance, show the musicians.
- If it's about a meeting, show the people—selfies work.

- Always get consent before posting images, especially of youth or public figures.

Tip: Vertical photos display larger on phone screens.

Tag people in photos to increase reach—and don't be shy about tagging elected officials. Most are happy to be seen connecting with the community.

Video can be powerful, but more complex. Make sure you have the required permissions, good-quality footage, and a clear reason for the investment.

9. Amplify your reach

Help others help you.

- Mention @orchestrascanada on Facebook, Instagram, Bluesky, or LinkedIn—we'll boost your posts when we can.
- Tag your partners, Councillors (using their official accounts), and anyone featured in your content.
- Share posts in local community groups when relevant (e.g., "Spotted in...", "Neighbourhood Noticeboards").
- Re-share your own posts after a few days to catch different audiences.

10. Start somewhere

You don't have to be perfect; just start. Social media is an extension of your storytelling. Share your voice, celebrate your work, and invite others into your story. You'll get better with practice.