

# HOW TO: ENGAGE IN POLITICS WHILE BEING NON-PARTISAN

## in between elections

Nonpartisan engagement in politics is about amplifying information about the topics and issues that matter to your community and organization's work without favouring or criticizing a particular party or politician. It's about fostering discussion about issues important to communities.

Community organizations know the issues, because we see their effects first hand every day in our communities. We have a vital role to play to encourage dialogue from diverse groups of people, and join our voices to those of marginalized communities. Raising the issues in a nonpartisan way helps politicians of all parties better serve their constituents. It's important to be aware of the rules around partisanship for charities and public benefit nonprofits.

Here are some guidelines that can help you as you plan your organization's engagement:

- **Focus on the impact** key issues have on people in the local community. Show how these issues impact people across party lines, and that by paying attention to them, MPPs are not necessarily supporting a particular a political agenda, but serving the community they have been elected to represent.
- **Focus on the facts**, rather than on normative statements about the position you think MPPs should take. When meeting with your MPP, think of your organization like a consultant with expertise that can make their work more informed and effective.
- **Prepare in advance** and have facts about the issues that are important to your community. Not sure where to start? Check out [ontarioforall.ca](https://ontarioforall.ca) for helpful guides and fact docs on priority issues.
- **Be aware** of different parties' policies and what is within the jurisdiction of the provincial government.
- **Don't compare** the policies or priorities of your MPP and their party with other parties. Keep things focused on how MPPs can better serve their constituents through the discussions you're raising.
- **Create safe spaces** to deal with concerns – make sure that participants from your community have a safe place at or around events to deal with difficulties that might arise. Politics impacts people in powerful ways, and you can take care to provide a safe environment for those who encounter discrimination.