



ACDS Advocacy Approach and Decision Process

June 2025



CONTEXT AND SUMMARY

ACDS has a long history, embedded in our mission, to be the collective voice of our members in advocating for effective public policy to support high standards of delivery of professional community disability services.

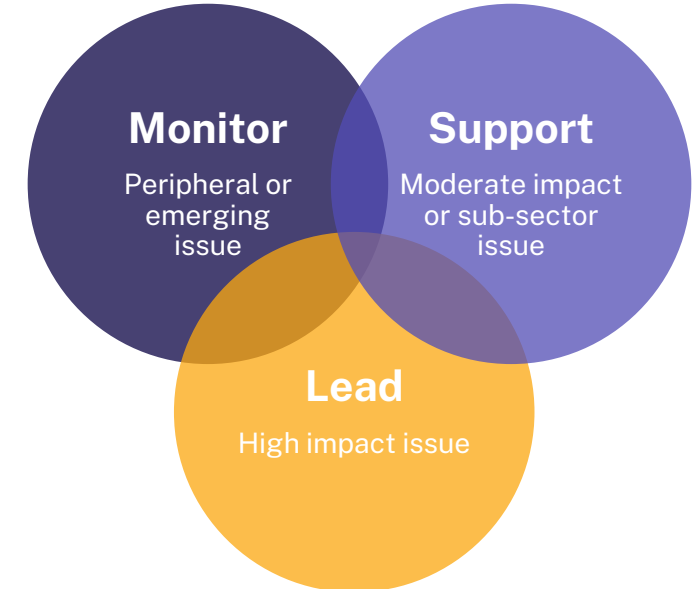
Advocacy Approach

Collaborative
Proactive
Evidence-Based
Relational

This document shows the decision process we use to determine our role and level of involvement when faced with any emerging or ongoing policy issues impacting our sector. It provides clarity on:

- **Our overall approach to advocacy**, which is to work collaboratively with the government to proactively inform and influence policy development
- **How the issue's scope of impact guides the role and actions we could take**, whether it is to take the lead and get deeply involved, play a supportive role when others are better suited to take the lead, take a “wait and see” approach for emerging issues, or a blend
- **The questions we take into consideration** to understand the issue, broader context, and implications of our role and potential actions (or lack of actions)

Decision-Making Framework



ADVOCACY APPROACH: COLLABORATIVE ADVOCACY

Collaborative

ACDS' approach to public policy advocacy is to work collaboratively with the government to proactively inform and influence policy development by:

- Building and maintaining positive relationships with ministry staff and government
- Being a credible and trusted voice by providing evidence-based knowledge of issues and offering constructive solutions
- Participating in policy discussion tables with a solutions-focused approach
- Being non-partisan in our political interactions

Proactive

Evidence-Based

Relational

The Service Provider Partnership Committee is a key mechanism through which we collaborate in a trusted and respectful forum to inform and influence the development of community disability service policies and processes.

DECISION-MAKING FRAMEWORK

This framework helps us determine ACDS' level of involvement in advocacy on any emerging or ongoing policy issues impacting the Community Disability Services (CDS) sector. Our role and actions may be a blend across these general areas depending on the scope, broader context, and development of the issue.

Lead

Scope: Issue has high impact across all or most of the CDS sector

- **Examples:** Workforce, funding, contracts, or implications of macro developments (e.g., inflation, economy, etc.)
- **ACDS role:** Lead or collaborate with partners to advocate. If necessary, take a public position to support, oppose, or change government action.
- **Possible actions:** Conduct research, provide engagement opportunities for sector input and solution-generation, prepare evidence-based position papers and briefs, offer collaboration support to government, develop resources to help agencies with collective action

Support

Scope: Issue has high impact for some CDS sub-sectors, or moderate impact across the CDS sector

- **Examples:** Cuts in funding for specific support types; changes in local or municipal regulations or processes; local emergencies
- **ACDS role:** Build capacity of sub-sector agencies or regional councils to lead their own work. Elevate ACDS involvement to actively lead if scope spreads or intensifies.
- **Possible actions:** Provide education, share resources, and monitor for spread of impact to other sub-sectors/regions

Monitor

Scope: Issue is peripheral to CDS sector, but may emerge to have greater impact for the sector

- **Examples:** Provincial post-secondary funding reductions may have zero to large impact depending on whether a college decides to cut its disability program; federal immigration restrictions may impact availability of workforce for the CDS sector
- **ACDS role:** Monitor the issue. Elevate ACDS involvement to leading or supporting if scope spreads or intensifies.
- **Possible actions:** Stay abreast of developments; share intelligence with other umbrella organizations



GUIDING QUESTIONS

These questions help us understand the scope and impact of an issue, the broader context of the issue, including potential stakeholders and collaborators, and the implications to consider for undertaking a response.

Issue

- What is the problem?
- Does it relate to our mission or strategic priorities?
- Does it impact the whole sector or some parts of it?
- How significant is the impact on those affected?
- Is it new, ongoing, or has occurred and been resolved in the past?
- What is our history with it or the sector's past response, if any?

Context

- What level of government needs to address this issue?
- What organizations have the most direct interest or capacity to work on this issue?
- Who else is working on it?
- Whose perspectives or endorsements are important to include?
- What opposing perspectives are important to understand?
- Are there other developments that could affect this issue?

Implications

- What level of involvement from ACDS is suggested? (see decision framework)
- What are the optimal actions and responses to take?
- What are the implications of these actions (consider: strategically, resource capacity, work plan/demands, organizational reputation, obligations to membership, relationship with government or community, etc.)
- What are the implications of ACDS not taking this on?