



Giving Hope Today

ELECTION YEAR GUIDANCE

DOs and DON'Ts During an Election



How The Salvation Army can engage responsibly during an election season

In December 2018, the Canadian government amended the Income Tax Act to give registered charities more latitude to engage in public policy dialogue due to a growing recognition that charities have a legitimate and valuable contribution to make in the development of public policy. That being said, charities must be careful to avoid partisan political activities, especially during an election period.

These tips will help you engage responsibly with political parties, candidates and the general public during an election.

Acceptable Activities: “DO”

1. **Advocate on policy issues to further The Salvation Army’s (TSA) stated charitable purpose:** A charity is free to advocate for any change to a law, policy or decision of government that would further its stated charitable purpose. This includes:
 - a. **Lobbying** activities (attempting to influence policy and laws by making representations in writing or verbally to elected officials and public officials, and appearing at parliamentary committees). Contact the public affairs office at territorial headquarters for information about lobbyist registration legislation.
 - b. **Mobilizing** members, supporters or the public to contact politicians of all parties to express their support for or opposition to a government policy or law (e.g., poverty reduction homeless strategy).
2. **Provide non-partisan information to the public** (e.g., the policy positions of all political parties and candidates) presented in a neutral fashion, so that no political party or candidate’s policy position or response is singled out, favourably or unfavourably. Information must be truthful, accurate and not misleading.
3. **Keep it non-partisan and invite all competing candidates to speak at the same event or meeting.** Provide equal opportunity by inviting all candidates to participate, including independent candidates.

Prohibited Activities: “DON’T”

1. **Directly or indirectly support or oppose a candidate or political party.** This could happen in several ways:
 - a. **Making public statements or communicating through external materials** (social media, website, print publications, etc.).
 - i. Posting partisan political content (i.e., statements that promote/oppose a political party or candidate, or encouraging people to vote for or against them). This includes linking to third-party statements from other sources.
 - ii. TSA’s online platforms (blog, website, Facebook page, etc.) must be monitored for partisan political statements. Any such statements must be removed in a timely manner.

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- iii. Where officers and employees have personal social media accounts, consideration of a disclaimer such as “views are my own, not of The Salvation Army” is strongly advised.
 - iv. Public statements include written or verbal (e.g., endorsing or opposing a political party or candidate from a church pulpit).
 - b. **Distributing literature or voter guides** that promote/oppose any candidates or political parties. For example:
 - i. Creating political party or candidate “report cards” and marking red “X”s beside the policy positions of a candidate which differ from those of TSA, and green checkmarks beside the policy positions of a candidate which align with TSA.
 - c. Allowing a political party or candidate to **use the TSA’s resources without compensation**. For example:
 - i. Allowing or assigning paid staff or volunteers to work for a candidate’s election campaign by accompanying the candidate door-to-door in their campaign while representing the charity.
 - ii. Allowing a political party to use TSA’s premises/facilities for campaign purposes without compensation.
 - d. **Carrying out other partisan political activity to support or oppose a party or candidate**. For example:
 - i. Providing financial contributions to a political party or candidate including church offerings from members.
 - ii. Allowing political party memberships or tickets to a political party fundraiser to be sold on TSA’s premises.
 - iii. Posting signs on TSA’s premises in support or opposition of a party or candidate.
 - iv. Giving a particular candidate more priority over other candidates (e.g., inviting a candidate to speak at a different event from other candidates in a way that favours said candidate, thus creating unequal opportunities).
2. **Allow officers, employees and volunteers of TSA to voice partisan political opinions while representing TSA.**
- a. Individual members must not use events organized by TSA, publications of TSA or other resources of TSA (e.g., computers, photocopiers, Lotus Notes email notice board, etc.) in any manner as a platform to voice or engage in partisan political activities.
 - b. Salvation Army officers must be particularly mindful, whether in or out of uniform, as they are always perceived to be representing and speaking on behalf of TSA, given their leadership role.

The information presented here was taken from the **Canada Revenue Agency***. While these tips are general in nature, they serve as an important reminder to ministry unit leaders to remain non-partisan during formal election periods. Charities that engage in prohibited partisan activities can face deregistration and lose their charitable status. For more information on appropriate public policy engagement, contact your Divisional Secretary for Public Relations or the Public Affairs Office at Territorial Headquarters.

* <https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/charities-giving/charities/policies-guidance/public-policy-dialogue-development-activities.html#toc5>