

How respond to local issues in alignment with RTOERO's advocacy approach

At times, local or provincial issues arise that are related to RTOERO's advocacy focus areas of seniors strategy, geriatric healthcare and environmental stewardship. Districts may wish to respond to these issues through official district channels.

Responding to timely topics at both the district and national level can help to expand our advocacy influence and awareness of your district and RTOERO in general, while bringing attention to and offering perspectives on critical issues. The following guidance can help you determine how you might approach these topics.

1. Check Vibrant Voices toolkit

A great first step is to check the Vibrant Voices toolkit for districts – which has key messages and a variety of templates. There may already be messaging or a template on the topic, which you can adapt for your local issue.

2. Check for an official RTOERO response

RTOERO will sometimes prepare a response to a particular topic, such as the release of a report on an issue related to our three advocacy focus areas. In these cases, we often post our responses on our social media channels. You can check the channels.

If you need to know if an official response is planned or want to bring a local issue to our attention, you can contact:

- Sogand Tehrani, advocacy coordinator, stehrani@rtoero.ca
- Danielle Norris, director of marketing & communications and member services, at dnorris@rtoero.ca

These RTOERO staff members are a valuable resource and can guide you through the process.

3. Determine the channels you will use to respond

A simple way to add your district's voice to a particular issue is to reshare a social media post and add a comment. The social post should be from an authoritative and reputable source – for example, from an ombudsman or advocate. Alternatively, an even easier approach is to reshare an existing post without commenting on it.

Other options include:

- Sending a letter to your local elected officials to share a perspective.
- Request a meeting with a local official to discuss the issue.
- Include information or links to consultations in your district newsletter.
- Host a workshop/webinar on the topic for your district membership.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about the issue.

4. Draft your response

Deciding what to say is often the most challenging part of responding. When responding from RTOERO channels, it's important to ensure the response aligns with RTOERO's relationship-building approach to advocacy. This means it's respectful and reflects RTOERO's values and brand personality—caring, inclusive and optimistic. Responses take a systemic view of issues—they don't focus on a perceived failure of any one person or party.

Scenario

Example of an aligned response

Greenbelt land sale in Ontario

Our district shares the concerns of environmental groups regarding the recent sale of Greenbelt land for housing. While we agree that action must be taken to address the housing crisis, it can't be at the expense of the environment. We have a responsibility to protect land for future generations—environmental stewardship is one of RTOERO's advocacy priorities.

Read RTOERO's advocacy positions here:
<https://rtoero.ca/giving-back/advocacy/>

Manitoba plans for a seniors advocate and stalls in the legislature

Our district supports the creation of a seniors advocate in Manitoba. Independent advocate offices to oversee a range of issues affecting older adults have been central to RTOERO's advocacy for years. While there are still procedural processes to work through, the bill before the legislature is an important step forward for Manitobans.

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Release of New Brunswick
LTC report What We
All Want

Our district welcomes the report from New Brunswick's seniors advocate on long-term care in this province and the move toward a more person-centred approach to care.

Care should be based on what people need, not on what is easiest for the system or what it has to offer. We're hopeful this report will lead to system changes and a better future for all New Brunswickers.

RTOERO advocates for reforms to long-term care—holding at the centre the rights of older adults—to age with dignity, with respect for their wishes and goals, and in a place and space that aligns with what they want.

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5. Share your approach

If you send a letter to elected officials, you can let your district membership know by posting a copy of the letter on your social media, by sharing it with members via an eblast and by including an article in an upcoming newsletter.

Please also make sure to include your action when completing [RTOERO's advocacy reporting form](#). Every action, even those you may perceive as small, contribute to our overall movement as a national organization toward a better future, together.

[Access the reporting form](#) →