

Advocate. Educate. Connect.



Advocacy

Expanding Edmonton's Economic Opportunity:

ADVOCACY PLAN 2016-18

Executive Summary

For the full version of the 2016 - 2018 Advocacy Agenda, please visit edmontonchamber.com/policy/our-advocacy-agenda

EdmontonChamber.com



1. Our Advocacy Agenda



The Edmonton Chamber of Commerce plays a role in making our region more successful by advocating to all levels of government, across industry sectors, and to the community on behalf of our members. Advocacy can make a difference in removing barriers, simplifying processes, and allowing businesses to get back to doing what they do best. **Advocacy is the difference between one voice raising a concern, and a chorus calling for change - the difference between speaking and being heard.**

We develop policy positions, take them to municipal, provincial, and national decision tables through a policy process, and bring them forward in government consultations, meetings, and media commentary. We look for government decisions that address the issues we raise, for investments to come to the region, for Edmonton businesses to grow, and for innovative new companies to expand our range of industries. A clear strategy for advocacy helps our members succeed, our economy grow, and our city hold its own when competing on the world stage.



Figure 1: Chamber Policy Process



Our positions on priority issues are developed through our policy process, and those policy positions drive our advocacy work. The policy process helps identify priority issues and formulate policy recommendations, while the advocacy process takes those recommendations forward to the appropriate municipal, provincial, or federal bodies and other key stakeholders.

The advocacy function starts with our members. They identify issues and concerns in surveys, at meetings, events, online, and through other feedback mechanisms. Issues are taken to committees and working groups that determine whether policy work should be undertaken. If so, policy positions are developed by committees, researched by staff, reviewed by experts and senior business people, and confirmed by the board of directors.

Our policy positions reflect the insights of the broader business community, beyond partisan politics and individual commercial interests.

Once policy positions and recommendations are developed, we take them forward to other Chambers, to strategic partners, to governments, to the media, and to the public in an effort to build a greater understanding and heighten awareness.

When an issue changes, or when governments act on the policy matters we raise, we ensure that members know. We report on general advocacy activities, and on matters which directly affect business operations.

The Edmonton Chamber has developed a three-year Advocacy Plan to outline how we will help expand Edmonton's economic opportunities. **To foster a resilient and growing Edmonton that can compete in the global economy, we will focus our advocacy efforts on:**

- **Expanding Business and Investor Confidence**
- **Expanding Trade and Access to Markets**
- **Expanding Regional and Northern Partnerships**

With the broader business community working together, we can address challenges and get results. Collectively, we analyze costs, understand impacts, and identify better alternatives. Through our advocacy efforts, we knock on the doors of those whose decisions impact our success, and we bring business issues to the attention of all levels of government. We outline what is working well, and where we see areas for improvement. We work with our partners to find a better way to accomplish our shared goals.

For maximum benefit, we focus advocacy efforts in areas that pose challenges for the majority of our members, and we look for results to enhance our members' success.

2. Expanding Business and Investor Confidence



Why are we doing it?

Our advocacy efforts focus on ensuring that regulators, governments, and others understand the consequences of their decisions for business, and make changes with certainty and stability. In a stable business environment, economic opportunities are able to expand.

What are we doing?

We advocate for a predictable business environment so local companies can expand. We advocate for making Edmonton an attractive place to do business, so that new companies choose to come here after considering their near and not-so-near alternatives. We advocate for effective tax policies, so that businesses remain viable and competitive in a global market. In short, we advocate for regulations, taxes, and systems which allow for strong companies to be a vibrant part of strong communities.

3. Expanding Trade and Access To Markets

Why are we doing it?

Companies often require the same basic conditions and infrastructure to be successful. Fibre optic networks allow us to exchange information and money quickly; roads and railways allow us to ship products quickly; air service allows us to travel quickly. When ideas and products can move to where they are needed, the businesses providing them expand.

What are we doing?

The movement of goods, services, people and investment are all essential to good business operations, and we identify priority initiatives to make those operations even stronger. When Edmonton businesses face challenges that others do not, we work to level the playing field. We recognize the importance of innovation in making businesses successful, and we call for a business environment that allows innovative ideas to come forward to the marketplace.

4. Expanding Regional and Northern Partnerships



Why are we doing it?

As a Chamber, we want to strengthen business across northern Alberta, northern British Columbia and the western Arctic. Sharing expertise and business opportunities can build stronger communities within Edmonton and beyond our borders. By taking a broader perspective on our common challenges, like finding skilled workers and having adequate infrastructure, we can call for solutions which meet the greatest needs in the most effective way.

What are we doing?

As a transportation, manufacturing, retail and geographic hub, Edmonton is naturally placed to partner with northern companies, governments, and industries. As a training hub and major population centre, Edmonton is well positioned to support workforce development.

We are working to increase the business community's understanding of nearby markets and their opportunities, so members can better meet the needs of this growing, changing customer base. Similarly, Edmonton's businesses may have needs which northern firms are ready to meet. Finding these opportunities and understanding their potential will expand economic success for all.

5. How This Can Benefit Your Business

In all of our activities, we are a familiar voice to Edmontonians, a credible voice to media, and a trusted voice to government on the issues that matter to business. We are a strong partner in projects that expand our economy and our community ... with governments, think tanks, economic development agencies, industry organizations, other Chambers of Commerce, and post-secondary institutions. We organize events that provide information, insight, and networking opportunities, and we support mentorship programs to nurture entrepreneurship.

Advocacy enables individual businesses to work together to raise awareness about issues and barriers. **The benefit to member businesses is that their priorities become the group's priorities, and the resources of the group can be dedicated to understanding those problems, identifying solutions, and getting action.**

Our advocacy efforts encompass a wide range of social, environmental, and fiscal issues. Members benefit when our advocacy leads to progress on issues that affect their success: government legislation, taxation and regulations, workforce and training initiatives, environmental policies, and utility and infrastructure development.

Ultimately, members benefit from an Edmonton business climate that allows them to expand their customer base and product lines, increase their workforce, and create a community we are all proud to call home.