

# Guidelines on Government Advertising





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**Acknowledgments**

Adapted from Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Finance and Deregulation,  
Financial Management Group, Guidelines on Information and Advertising Campaigns by  
Australian Government Departments and Agencies (March 2010).

## Introduction

This document in its entirety forms the Guidelines on Government Advertising and sets out the principles applying to advertising activities undertaken in Nova Scotia by Communications Nova Scotia (CNS), on behalf of the provincial government.

The guidelines have been developed to coincide with the Public Service Act, as it pertains to the Office of Communications Nova Scotia, and the corporate Advertising Policy (Chapter 6.4, Common Services Manual, Corporate Administrative Policy Manuals).

Under the Public Service Act, the Office of Communications Nova Scotia is responsible for centralized delivery of communications services with respect to non-partisan communications, including media and advertising services. The government's Advertising Policy requires all government departments and offices to utilize CNS for all advertising activities. Government advertising must align with Communications Nova Scotia's mission, to help Nova Scotians understand what their government is doing and why.

These Guidelines apply to any advertising that is created to inform, educate, build awareness or promote behaviour change through a paid or unpaid media effort. This includes, but is not limited to, notices to the public required by law, public health and safety ads, career ads, sponsorships, and advertising campaigns. Government departments and offices must seek advice from Communications Nova Scotia if they are unsure whether a communications activity falls within the scope of these guidelines.

Advertising conducted by Members of the Legislative Assembly is guided by the House of Assembly Management Commission Regulations.

# Advertising Principles

## **PRINCIPLE 1: Advertising must be relevant to government responsibilities, policies, and priorities.**

- A.** The subject matter of advertising should be directly related to the government's responsibilities, policies, and priorities. Examples of suitable uses for government advertising may include:
- i.** Informing the public of new, existing, revised or proposed government policies, laws, programs and services; and
  - ii.** Disseminating scientific, emergency, medical, or health and safety information.

## **PRINCIPLE 2: Advertising must be presented in a factual and respectful manner and designed to meet established objectives.**

- A.** Advertising should be factual and accurate.
- B.** Pre-existing policies, products, services and activities should not be presented as new.
- C.** Imagery used in advertising should be representative of the citizens and the province of Nova Scotia.
- D.** Advertising originating from the Nova Scotia Government will not perpetuate the objectification of people, or include hypersexualized images and messages.

**PRINCIPLE 3: Advertising must be objective and not directed at promoting partisan interests.**

- A.** Advertising must be presented in objective language and be free of partisan argument.
- B.** Advertising must not try to foster a positive impression of a particular political party or promote partisan interests by mentioning the party in Government by name, or by including partisan slogans or images.
- C.** Advertising must not:
  - i.** Directly attack or scorn the views, policies or actions of others such as the policies and opinions of opposition parties or groups;
  - ii.** Be designed to influence public support for a political party, a candidate for election, a Minister or a Member of the Legislative Assembly; or
  - iii.** Refer or link to the websites of politicians or political parties.

**PRINCIPLE 4: Advertising must be undertaken in an efficient, effective and relevant manner.**

- A.** Advertising should only be initiated where objectives are defined, target audience is clearly identified and the advertising activity is informed by appropriate programmatic research or evidence.
- B.** Advertising information should clearly and directly provide information to the target audience, as determined in the objectives.
- C.** The medium and volume of the advertising should be cost effective and justifiable within the budget allocated.
- D.** Advertising will be evaluated, as appropriate, to determine effectiveness.

**PRINCIPLE 5: Advertising must comply with legal requirements and government policies and procedures.**

- A.** Communications Nova Scotia will ensure the manner of presentation and the delivery of campaigns comply with all relevant laws.
- B.** All relevant government policies and procedures must be followed and decision making must be documented.
- C.** Particular consideration must be given to procurement policies and procedures for the tendering and commissioning of services retained pre- and post-campaign; and sustainable procurement policies, focusing on fiscal responsibility and support for the local economy.
- D.** Provincial French-language Communications Guidelines will be followed.



