



ontario  
chamber of  
commerce

**GUIDE TO PREPARING A  
POLICY RESOLUTION**

**2019 RESOLUTION DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 8 AT 5PM**

# Table of Contents

- Ontario Chamber of Commerce Policy Department..... 2
- Five Steps to Preparing a Resolution ..... 3
- The Policy Resolution Process..... 5
- Pre-Submission Resolution Checklist ..... 6
- The Policy & Advocacy Committee ..... 9
- The AGM Resolution Debate ..... 10

## Ontario Chamber of Commerce Policy Department

The OCC team is happy to help you with any aspect of the resolution development process.

Name	Title	Policy files	Contact information
Ashley Challinor	Vice President, Policy	Health; labour; general inquiries.	<a href="mailto:ashleychallinor@occ.ca">ashleychallinor@occ.ca</a> 647-243-3538
Daniel Safayeni	Director of Policy	Skills & workforce development, trade.	<a href="mailto:danielsafayeni@occ.ca">danielsafayeni@occ.ca</a> 647-243-3543
Catrina Kronfli	Senior Policy Analyst	Transportation; infrastructure.	<a href="mailto:catrinakronfli@occ.ca">catrinakronfli@occ.ca</a> 647-243-3560
Claudia Dessanti	Policy Analyst	Environment; regional economic development; housing.	<a href="mailto:claudiadessanti@occ.ca">claudiadessanti@occ.ca</a> 647-243-0882
Reid McKay	Economic Analyst	Fiscal and economic issues; general data/statistics inquiries.	<a href="mailto:reidmckay@occ.ca">reidmckay@occ.ca</a> 647-243-3563

This year, please submit your resolutions in [this template](#) to [Claudia Dessanti](#).

## Five Steps to Preparing a Resolution

### Step 1. Define the issue

What is the business problem or opportunity that needs to be addressed and what provincial government action is required or desired? Your issue should be clearly important to business and be able to be addressed at the provincial level.

*Tip:* Review the existing [Policy Resolution Compendium](#) to ensure you aren't duplicating or contradicting a resolution already on the books. Consider reaching out to your peers to check if other chambers or boards are working on similar resolutions. The monthly Network teleconferences hosted by the OCC are also an excellent opportunity to share resolution topics and solicit co-authors and co-sponsors.

### Step 2. Meet the five criteria

*All resolutions must meet the following criteria:*

1. The issue is deemed important enough to be on the legislative agenda of the government or be of considerable concern to most members.
2. The issue is provincial in scope or impact.
3. The issue is an important matter of principle that requires the OCC to be on the public record.
4. The resolution does not duplicate any existing resolutions. Duplicative resolutions will be considered invalid. Please refer to the [OCC's Policy Compendium](#) for a list of 2018-2021 policy resolutions.

*This year, based on feedback from Network leaders, the OCC has added a fifth criterion:*

5. The resolution does not pit one industry or region of Ontario against another.

*Note:* We encourage submitting members to avoid making large fiscal asks in their policy resolutions.

### Step 3. Use the resolution [template](#)

Your resolutions must be submitted in the official [template](#).

#### Resolution title

- Your title should be an active sentence starting with a verb, i.e. "Reduce the tax burden on Ontario businesses".
- It should clearly convey the theme or argument of your resolution.

#### Submitted by

- List the primary authoring chamber(s)/board(s) followed by all co-sponsoring chamber(s)/board(s).

#### Issue

- Describe the main concern or opportunity of your resolution in a few sentences.
- This section should be one concise, clear paragraph.

#### Background

- This section should explain why this issue is relevant to Ontario business and why your recommendations are the correct course of action.

- Ensure that your information is based on current facts and data, and that your issue is well researched. Facts and figures should include citations or credit to the source.

#### **Recommendations**

- Your recommendations should be in a numbered list.
- Recommendations should be directed at the Government of Ontario and indicate a clear course of action for legislative, policy, and/or regulatory change.

**All resolutions must be submitted in [this template](#).**

#### **Step 4. Review content**

Review the resolution checklist, contained on the following pages, to ensure that your resolution will inspire an informed debate at the AGM.

#### **Step 5. Submit on time**

Submit your resolution(s) in the [template](#) to Claudia Dessanti at [claudiadessanti@occ.ca](mailto:claudiadessanti@occ.ca) by **5:00pm on Friday, February 8, 2019**.

Please note that there is no late resolution process and no resolutions will be accepted after this date.

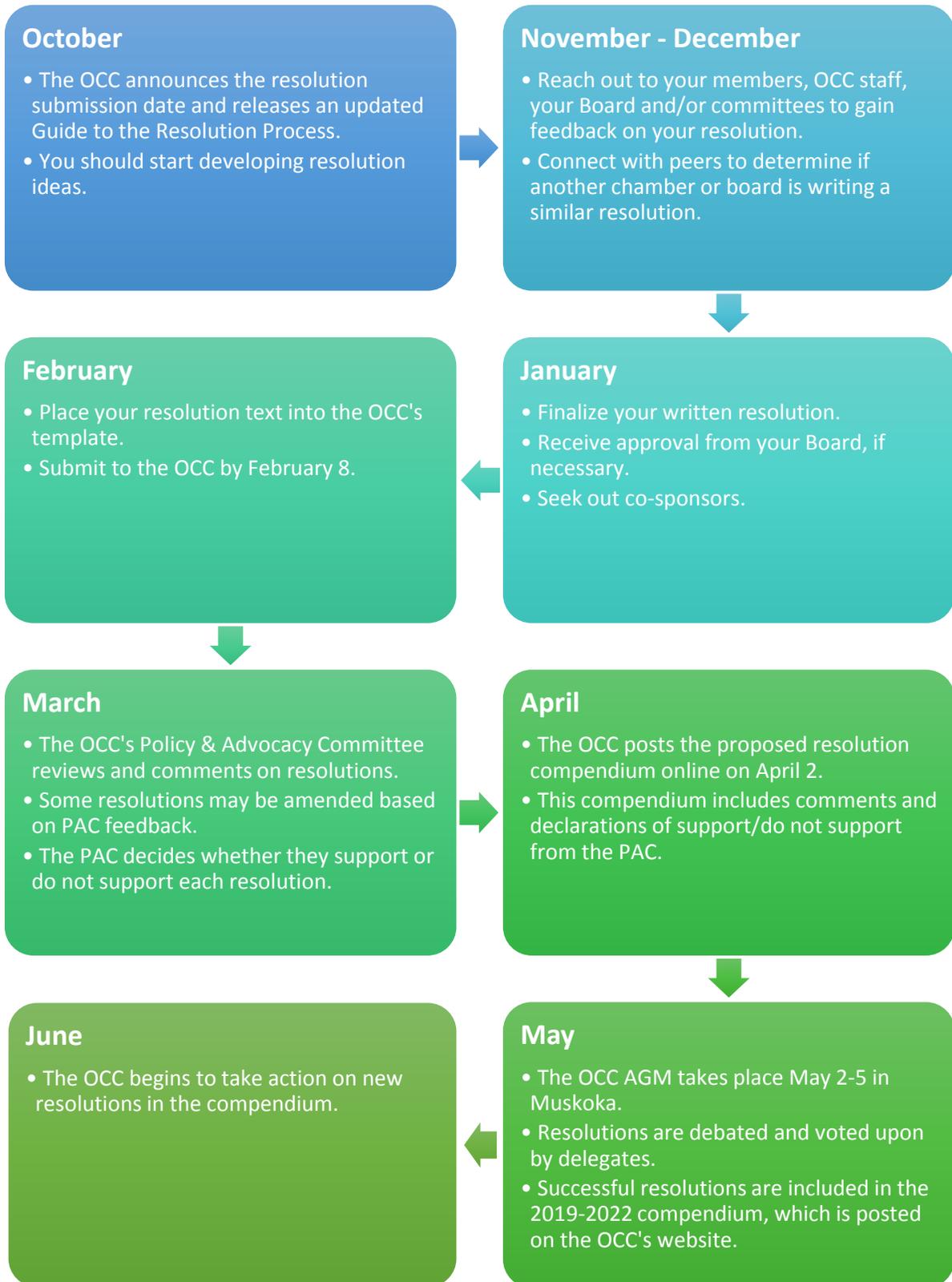
#### **What then?**

After the submission deadline passes, the OCC's Policy and Advocacy Committee (PAC) reviews the resolutions to ensure they meet the five criteria and will provide effective direction for OCC advocacy. Some resolutions may be amended based on feedback from the PAC.

Thirty days prior to the AGM, OCC staff posts the proposed resolutions online (this year, on April 2, 2019). At the AGM, resolutions are debated and voted upon by delegates. Successful resolutions are published in the 2019-2022 Policy Resolutions Compendium, which informs the OCC's policy and advocacy work.

The following page provides a visualization of the entire resolution process.

## The Policy Resolution Process



## Pre-Submission Resolution Checklist

*Once you have drafted a resolution, consult this checklist to ensure it is compelling, relevant, and ready for submission to the OCC.*

### ✓ **This resolution passes the “So what?” test.**

You must be able to convince your peers at the AGM that your issue is important and your recommendations are the right ones. Your resolution should clearly define the problem and/or opportunity and what the provincial government can do about it.

*Ask yourself:* Why should the Ontario business community care about my resolution? What specific actions can the provincial government take to bring about positive change?

*Tip:* The more specific that you can be, the more likely it is that your resolution will be supported at the AGM and that the OCC will have success advocating it to government. A specific recommendation is more likely to get a specific answer.

- Instead of, “Taxes are too high and should be lowered”, try: “The corporate income tax rate is too high and should be lowered by two percentage points in order to boost competitiveness with the US”.

### ✓ **This resolution has an appropriate scope.**

Your resolution should reflect a policy issue that is relevant to Ontario businesses and is within provincial jurisdiction (not federal or municipal). For areas of shared jurisdiction between the provincial and federal or municipal governments, focus on what the provincial government should do, or how the provincial government could work with the federal or municipal governments to accomplish the objective.

Effort should be made to ensure that the resolution is not relevant only to one region of Ontario, or to a specific industry that does not have a province-wide economic impact.

*Ask yourself:* Does the issue affect all or most businesses, or is it specific to one industry or sector? Does it concern the welfare of one region of Ontario, or the entire province? Would it be more appropriate if this issue were brought to the Canadian Chamber of Commerce AGM?

*Tip:* Including information from more than one Ontario region in your background section can help to demonstrate the issue’s province-wide scope. Approaching chambers or boards from regions not your own to get their perspective on your issue, or to solicit their support, can also make your resolution stronger and more likely to succeed on the floor.

*Tip:* If necessary, your resolution may ask the Government of Ontario to work with, or urge, the federal government to take some specific action. In these cases, it must be clear in your recommendation that there is a role for the provincial government.

- The recommendation would therefore be phrased as, “*The Ontario Chamber of Commerce urges the Government of Ontario to... 1. Work with the Government of Canada to break down inter-provincial trade barriers*”.

✓ **This resolution is timely.**

Your resolution should reflect an issue that is of current importance to the business community. The provincial government should be able to act on your recommendations now or within a specified timeframe.

Your background section should include the most recently available data and information on government action. This is especially relevant for renewals of sunseting resolutions (those resolutions passed at previous AGMs, which are expiring but have been re-submitted for debate). **Sunsetting resolutions must be reviewed and updated before they are re-submitted to the OCC.** Re-using language from a sunseting resolution without ensuring relevant facts and references to legislation are updated will adversely impact the prospects of the resolution being passed. It is important to situate the updated resolution within the current political and economic context and underscore why it is still a pressing issue.

*Ask yourself:* Has the government already dealt with or dismissed this issue? Are they taking action that is currently underway? Have I reflected this context in my resolution background?

*Tip:* Ensure that any references to legislation include the name of the bill and the bill number. This will help clarify the resolution once a bill is passed or defeated. Note also that bill numbers change with each session.

✓ **This resolution makes its case in a concise and factual way.**

Consider whether someone who is not an expert on the issue could deliberate on your recommendations based on the information included in the resolution. The background section should be concise but still provide enough information to build the case for your recommendations and explain what benefits will be achieved by their implementation. It should contain facts and principled arguments, rather than politicized language or appeals to emotion.

*Ask yourself:* Is my argument based on sound evidence and defensible policy? Am I using technical language or jargon? Have I proofread my resolution to ensure my language is clear and there are no typos and/or spelling and grammatical errors?

*Tip:* While there is no firm word limit on resolutions, if your document is longer than two pages you may be including too much information.

*Tip:* Ask an OCC staff member to review your resolution and provide feedback.

✓ **This resolution is not in conflict with or duplicating existing OCC resolutions or policy.**

Ensure you have reviewed the [current compendium](#) to determine if your issue is the same, or substantially the same, as an existing resolution. You may also want to reach out to your peers or to the OCC to check if other chambers/boards are planning to submit a resolution on a similar issue.

If you see that your resolution is contrary to existing OCC policy and you believe there is a strong case for changing that policy, indicate which policy (and specific recommendations, if applicable) and include an explanation as to why this change in direction should be made.

*Ask yourself:* Can my resolution improve upon an existing resolution, or is it simply duplicating it? Have I sought feedback from OCC staff on my proposed change in policy direction?

*Tip:* Consider the mission of the OCC. Resolutions are to benefit the widest scope of the business community and should not pit one sector, industry, or region of the province against another.

✓ **This resolution made use of OCC staff expertise.**

A phone call or email to the appropriate staffer at the OCC can ensure that you are in a better position to present your resolution.

Our policy department can provide useful information, including:

- Suggestions for timely topics that might make good resolutions
- How to position a resolution for success at the AGM
- Where you might be able to locate supporting facts/statistics
- Suggestions as to which of your peers may want to co-sponsor your resolution
- A sense as to how your recommendations will be received by government

Following the submission of a resolution, you may be required to participate in conference calls with the OCC's Policy & Advocacy Committee to discuss your recommendations. Staff can help you prepare for these calls.

*Tip:* It is important that your contact information is included in the email with your resolution, so staff can reach you with questions or arrange time for you to speak with the PAC.

✓ **This resolution is in the OCC template.**

Resolutions must be submitted in the Microsoft Word [template](#) provided by the OCC.

## The Policy & Advocacy Committee

The Policy & Advocacy Committee (PAC) is a Board committee of the OCC, which includes Board, Network and corporate members who have policy and government relations acumen, as well as a demonstrated interest in the mission of the OCC.

The PAC reviews all submitted resolutions and evaluates them based on the five criteria outlined in this guidebook on page 3. They may propose amendments to strength or clarify a resolution. Submitting chambers may be asked to call into a PAC meeting to explain their resolution, answer questions, and respond to proposed amendments. OCC staff are tasked with providing assistance with amendments where necessary.

After any amendments are accepted, the PAC then indicates whether they support or do not support each submitted resolution. The proposed compendium of resolutions distributed 30 days prior to the AGM includes the PAC's positions and explanations if they have chosen not to support a resolution. This is intended only to inform delegates' understanding – the PAC's positions are non-binding and do not represent a veto.

This year, the co-Chairs of the PAC are Kim Warburton (OCC Board) and Sandra Dueck (Peterborough Chamber of Commerce). The members are:

Beth Potter, **Travel Industry Association of Ontario/OCC Board**  
Carmen Chimenti, **HP**  
Charla Robinson, **Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce/OCC Board**  
Chris Benedetti, **Sussex Strategy Group**  
David Lindsay, **Council of Ontario Universities/OCC Board**  
Frank Notte, **Trillium Automobile Dealers Association**  
Ian Bacque, **Telus**  
James Carman, **Investment Funds Institute of Canada**  
Jennifer Grass, **Ryerson University**  
Joe Blomeley, **Morneau Shepell**  
Lauren Fischer, **Eli Lilly/OCC Board**  
Lee Weissling, **Ontario Society of Professional Engineers**  
Liam McGuinty, **Insurance Bureau of Canada**  
Lindsay Walden, **Manulife**  
Mark MacDonald, **EY Canada**  
Nathan Lawrence, **Dominion Lending/Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce/OCC Board**  
Omar Raza, **KPMG**  
Rose Gage, **Ag Energy**  
Teresa Piruzza, **Fiat Chrysler Group/OCC Board**  
Vasudha Seth, **Arcelor Mittal/OCC Board**  
Bill Stewart, **Greater Kingston Chamber of Commerce**  
Christine Ashton, **Ajax-Pickering Board of Trade**  
One additional Network member (*invited*)

## The AGM Resolution Debate

The policy resolution debate at the AGM is an exciting and energizing spectacle. For first-time delegates, however, it can be intimidating, confusing, and potentially frustrating. A basic overview of the process is below, but OCC staff and experienced Network leaders are happy to provide more information.

### Who are the debate participants?

*On the floor:* Registered AGM delegates from chambers of commerce and boards of trade that are members of the Ontario Chamber of Commerce. However, only accredited voting delegates have the right to move motions, second amendments, and vote.

*On the stage:* The moderator, a scribe, OCC staff representatives, and a Policy & Advocacy Committee representative (usually the Board co-Chair).

### What happens during the debate?

1. Resolutions are debated one at a time, based on the order they appear in the proposed compendium.
2. A representative from the submitting or sponsoring chamber/board introduces the resolution and makes their case for it to pass. This representative does not need to be an accredited voting delegate.
3. The PAC representative indicates their position. If they do not support the resolution, they offer an explanation. An OCC staffer may also comment on a resolution to provide context or an update based on recent government action.
4. Delegates on the floor are offered the opportunity to speak for or against the resolution.
5. Delegates may propose amendments, which must be voted upon individually.
6. The scribe captures all amendments passed by voting delegates.
7. The moderator calls for a vote on the resolution.
8. Resolutions can either pass, fail, or be referred to the OCC Board for further study.

### Helpful hints for a smooth debate:

- Stick to Robert's Rules of Order.
- Off topic = out of order.
- Address the moderator, not other delegates.
- Don't forget to say your name and chamber/board each time you speak.

If you wish to understand the resolution process and/or debate better, the individuals below have offered to serve as peer mentors for new leaders as they navigate the AGM.

Name	Title	Chamber/Board	Contact information
Gerry McCartney	Chief Executive Officer	Greater London Chamber of Commerce	<a href="mailto:gerry@londonchamber.com">gerry@londonchamber.com</a> 519-432-7551 x 30
Charla Robinson	President	Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce	<a href="mailto:charla@tbchamber.ca">charla@tbchamber.ca</a> (807) 624-2620