

The top portion of the page features a white background with a pattern of light green arrows pointing in various directions (up, down, left, right, and diagonally). Below this pattern is a solid green horizontal bar that spans the width of the page.

Policy Readiness Tool

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Understanding Readiness for Policy Change and Strategies for Taking Action

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Acknowledgements: We would like to thank members of the Alberta Policy Coalition for Cancer Prevention (APCCP) for their feedback in the development of the Policy Readiness Tool. Funding for this project was provided through the APCCP (2009-2011), which was funded by Alberta Cancer Prevention Legacy Fund (Alberta Health Services). In October 2011, the APCCP underwent a name change to the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention.

Suggested Citation: Nykiforuk, C.I.J., Atkey, K.M., Nieuwendyk, L.M., Raine, K.D., Reed, S., & Kyle, K. (2014). *Policy Readiness Tool: Understanding Readiness for Policy Change and Strategies for Taking Action*. Edmonton, AB: School of Public Health, University of Alberta.

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Overview of the Policy Readiness Tool

What is the Policy Readiness Tool?

The Policy Readiness Tool is a self-administered questionnaire that can be used to assess a community or organization's readiness for policy change. Included with the questionnaire is a series of strategies for working with groups at different stages of readiness for policy change and links to resources for additional information. The purpose of the Tool is to help advocates and policy developers encourage the adoption of healthy public policy within communities or organizations.

Who should use the Policy Readiness Tool?

The Tool can be used by policy developers, advocates, community organizations, community members, municipalities or anyone interested in encouraging healthy public policy development.

What is healthy public policy?

A healthy public policy is any policy, such as legislation, taxation, mandated education or fiscal incentive, which seeks to improve the health and wellness of the individuals, community, or population that it impacts.¹

What is policy advocacy?

The World Health Organization defines advocacy as a process of influencing outcomes, such as the adoption of healthy public policy. Policy advocacy, in particular, concentrates on influencing public policy and resource allocation decisions at the system-level.²

Who developed the Policy Readiness Tool?

The Policy Readiness Tool was developed with support from the Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention (APCCP).³ The APCCP represents a range of practitioners, policy-makers, researchers and community organizations that have come together to coordinate efforts, generate evidence, and advocate for policy change to reduce the rates of cancer and other chronic diseases in the province of Alberta, Canada.

For more information on the APCCP visit www.apccp.ca.

How was the Policy Readiness Tool developed?

The Policy Readiness Tool was developed using Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory.⁴ First, we conducted a literature review to better understand the characteristics of different types of policy "adopters." We then compiled these characteristics into a pilot Tool to assess a community or organization's readiness for policy change. The Tool was then tested with municipal representatives throughout Alberta. The Tool will continue to be evaluated by our team to assess its use in different policy environments.

Coupled with the Policy Readiness Tool are strategies that can be used to encourage the development of healthy public policy. These strategies were collected through interviews with members of the APCCP's Provincial Advisory Group, a diverse and intersectoral group with significant expertise in the use of policy to build healthier communities. Provincial Advisory Group members were asked about strategies that they use in their work with municipalities at different stages of readiness for policy change. Following the interviews, these strategies were summarized and grouped into themes to accompany the Policy Readiness Tool. Please visit our website at <http://policyreadinesstool.com> for a list of recommended resources and more information about policy development strategies.

How should the Policy Readiness Tool be applied?

The Policy Readiness Tool was designed to help encourage policy change in support of cancer and chronic disease prevention, but it also applies to the development of healthy public policy more generally (e.g., injury prevention). While the Tool was created with municipalities in mind, it may also be used with other types of governing bodies (e.g., community groups, organizations, school boards) to encourage policy change.

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1. Kemm, J. (2009). Health Impact Assessment: A Tool for Healthy Public Policy. *Health Promotion International*, 16 (1), 79-85; Canadian Partnership Against Cancer. (2009). *Environmental Scan of Primary Prevention Activities in Canada: Part 1 – Policies and Legislation*.
 2. World Health Organization. (n.d.). What is advocacy for Policy Change. Retrieved from <http://who.int/tobacco/policy/advocacy/en/print.html>
 3. Previously known as the Alberta Policy Coalition for Cancer Prevention, the name changed to Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention on October 1, 2011.
 4. Everett M. Rogers. (2003). *Diffusions of Innovations Theory* (5th ed). New York: Free Press.

Getting Started with the Policy Readiness Tool

The Policy Readiness Tool is divided into four key sections. It is important to review each section in the order presented to receive the full benefit of the Policy Readiness Tool.

1. Introduction to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory

This section will introduce you to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory and explain key concepts underlying the Policy Readiness Tool.

2. A Note on Policy Change

Review this section for recommendations on how best to apply the Policy Readiness Tool.

3. Assessing Readiness for Policy Change

This section includes a questionnaire that you can use to identify a community or organization's level of readiness for policy change (i.e., Innovator, Majority or Late Adopter).

4. Key Strategies for Policy Change

This section includes key strategies for encouraging policy change. The strategies have been divided by level of policy readiness and tailored to the needs of each level.

Introduction to Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory

What is the Diffusion of Innovations Theory?

Diffusion of Innovations Theory is used by individuals and organizations to better understand the process of change for innovations. The concepts of innovativeness and adopter categories are central to Diffusion of Innovations Theory.⁵

What is an innovation?

An innovation can refer to a wide variety of things, such as a new idea, practice or product, as long as the item in question is considered new by the unit (e.g., individual, organization or municipality) considering its adoption. For the Policy Readiness Tool, the innovation is represented by the policy that the community or organization is being encouraged to adopt.

A unit's level of innovation is influenced by "the degree to which an individual or other unit of adoption is relatively earlier in adopting new ideas than the other members of a system" (p. 22).⁵ For example, a community's level of innovation is determined by whether it adopts a new policy before or after other communities in the same province or country.

What are the adopter categories?

Rogers' adopter categories classify potential adopters (of the innovation) based on their level of innovativeness.⁵ To enhance use of the Policy Readiness Tool, we have collapsed Rogers' five original adopter types into three categories: (1) Innovators, (2) Majority and (3) Late Adopters. To read more about Rogers' five adopter categories, refer to the Appendix.

Policy Readiness Tool Adopter Categories Defined

Innovators are described as "adventurous" and often serve as role models within their social networks. They are attracted by high-reward initiatives (e.g., policy or bylaws) and have a greater tendency to take risks. Innovators have the ability to cope with elevated levels of uncertainty associated with the innovation. They are typically willing to cope with initial problems that may accompany innovations and they are able to identify solutions to these problems.

The Majority are described as "deliberate" because they require time to determine whether to adopt a new initiative. This group seldom leads the pack when it comes to adopting a new initiative and is of the philosophy that it is better to change as a group than to be one of the first to change. Considering this, the Majority tend to adopt innovations at about the same time as the average adopter.

Late Adopters are described as "traditional", and are often skeptical of new ideas and eager to maintain the status quo. They usually wait until the majority of others have adopted an innovation before implementing it themselves. Late Adopters may need to be pressured into adoption. They may also never adopt the innovation unless required to.

5. Everett M. Rogers. (2003). Diffusions of Innovations Theory (5th ed). New York: Free Press.

A Note on Policy Change

“Policy work is a long road, which requires a sustained effort. It’s often about small, incremental changes and successes. But when it all comes together, the positive impact for the population as a whole is well-worth the effort.” – APCCP Policy Analyst

Prior to undertaking any type of policy advocacy, it is important to recognize the complex nature of the policy change process. Policy work often involves countless actors (community members, advocates, decision-makers, municipal administrative staff, etc.), organizations and competing interests, and can take a great deal of time and energy before policy outcomes are realized.⁶

The Policy Readiness Tool was designed to help those interested in encouraging policy change to target their involvement in the complex policy process. Yet, it is important to remember that Rogers’ Diffusion of Innovations Theory is a static model being used to describe a dynamic process. For this reason, you must remain cautious when applying the Policy Readiness Tool. Always remember to leave room to act on unexpected opportunities and to alter your strategies to respond to changes in the political, economic, and moral economy.

For a list of recommended resources related to the **Policy Change Process**, please visit
<http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

6. Sabatier, P.A. (2007). The Need for Better Theories. In P. Sabatier (Eds.), *Theories of the Policy Process* (pp. 3-17). Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Assessing Readiness for Policy Change

Before you work with a community or organization to encourage policy change, it is important to understand the level of readiness for policy change. This will give you a better grasp of the community or organization's characteristics and will enable you to tailor your advocacy strategies to the group that you are working with.

Fill out the questionnaire on the following page to determine the policy readiness of your target. Your responses to the questions will reveal whether you are working with an Innovator, Majority type or Late Adopter.

Choose the most appropriate answer (A, B or C) in each row. Select the response that best describes the community or organization that you plan to work with. Once you have completed the questionnaire, tally up the total number of As, Bs and Cs.

What if I am unsure about how to answer these questions?

If you are unsure as to how best to answer these questions, we suggest that you work with someone who is familiar with (or works closely with) the community or organization to answer the questions. If you are still unable to answer one of the questions, leave the response section for this question blank.

Important Disclaimer:

You will notice that the questions sound very similar. This was done purposively to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of your target and its innovation characteristics. **Please read each question carefully.**

In addition, the questions used are a good starting point for thinking about the characteristics of the community or organization you are working with and approaching the issue from a perspective that works for them. In other words, the Tool is not meant to provide you with a definitive adopter category for the place you are working with, rather it is a starting point for engaging in the policy process.

Try it Online

Visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/the-tool/overview/> to complete the questionnaire online (as either an individual or a group) and access your results anytime and anywhere. The online tool allows you to compile scores from your colleagues to determine the level of readiness of your community or organization as a whole.

Questionnaire for Assessing Policy Readiness

A	B	C	Response (A, B or C?)
The community or organization is comfortable being among the first to try new policies and initiatives	The community or organization usually goes along with other groups' recommendations about trying new policies and initiatives	The community or organization is uncomfortable trying new policies and initiatives	
The community or organization enjoys being the first in the province to try something new	The community or organization prefers to try new things after seeing other groups successfully use them	The community or organization prefers to use things it is currently using	
The community or organization likes to try things that are seen on TV or read about	The community or organization prefers to try things that are seen on TV or read about only after seeing other groups successfully use them	The community or organization prefers not to try things that are seen on TV or read about until they have been thoroughly tested	
The community or organization is always looking for something new to benefit its members	The community or organization sometimes looks for new things to try to benefit its members	The community or organization likes using more traditional things to benefit its members	
If the community or organization does not know what to do, it asks other groups for advice	If the community or organization does not know what to do, it sometimes asks other groups for advice	If the community or organization does not know what to do, it tries to figure it out itself	
Incentives would motivate my community or organization to consider trying something new	Incentives might motivate my community or organization to consider trying something new	Incentives would not motivate my community or organization to consider trying something new	
It is very important to the community or organization's professional reputation to be the first to try something new	It is somewhat important to the community or organization's professional reputation to be the first to try something new	It is not important to the community or organization's professional reputation to be the first to try something new	
The community or organization likes to be the first to try new programs	The community or organization prefers to wait until other groups use a program before trying it	The community or organization likes to wait until a program is thoroughly tested before trying it	
The community or organization likes to be the first in the province to try new materials	The community or organization prefers to try new materials after seeing other groups successfully use them	The community or organization is uncomfortable trying new materials	
The community or organization prefers to be one of the first in the province to try new policies or initiatives	The community or organization prefers to wait until a policy or initiative has been implemented by other groups before adopting it	The community or organization prefers to wait for the province to adopt policies or initiatives to create a level-playing field for all communities or organizations	
As one of the first groups in the province to try new policies or initiatives, the community or organization encourages other groups to follow suit	Encouragement from other groups is the only reason the community or organization would adopt a new policy or initiative	Encouragement from the province is the only reason the community or organization would adopt a new policy or initiative	

Total As: _____ **Total Bs:** _____ **Total Cs:** _____

If the community or organization you are planning to work with received mostly **As**, the group is an **Innovator**

Innovator communities or organizations are described as adventurous and often serve as role models for other groups. They are attracted by high-reward policies, bylaws or initiatives and have a greater tendency to take risks. Innovators have the ability to cope with elevated levels of uncertainty about the policy they are adopting. They are typically willing to tolerate initial problems that may accompany new policies and they are able to identify solutions for these problems.

To see key strategies for encouraging policy change with Innovators communities or organizations, [proceed to page 7](#).

If the community or organization you are planning to work with received mostly **Bs**, the group is in the **Majority**

Majority communities or organizations are described as deliberate because they require time to determine whether to adopt a new initiative. This group seldom leads the pack when it comes to adopting new initiatives or policies and is of the philosophy that it is better to change as a group than to be one of the first to change. Considering this, they tend to adopt new initiatives or policies at about the same time as the average community or organization.

To see key strategies for encouraging policy change with Majority communities or organizations, [proceed to page 12](#).

If the community or organization you are planning to work with received mostly **Cs**, the group is a **Late Adopter**

Late Adopter communities or organizations are described as traditional, skeptical of new ideas and eager to maintain the status quo. They usually wait until a policy or new initiative has been adopted by the majority of other groups before implementing it themselves. They may need to be pressured into policy change, or they may never adopt the new policy or initiative unless required to.

To see key strategies for encouraging policy change with Late Adopter communities or organizations, [proceed to page 16](#).

Key Strategies to Gain Support for Healthy Public Policy

This section provides details about strategies that can be used with communities or organizations at different levels of readiness for policy change (e.g., Innovators, Majority and Late Adopters).

Strategies to use with ‘Innovators’

Innovators tend to be passionate and forward thinking. When working with Innovators, remember that they take pride in being viewed as leaders. Be mindful of the vision that they have for their community or organization and their desire to leave a legacy for the future. Strategies should appeal to their adventurous side and generate excitement about the actions ahead.

Provide Supportive Evidence

1. Emphasize the positive outcomes that will result from policy adoption. Be as specific as possible.
 - For example, outline how policy adoption might lead to improvements in health outcomes, increases in consumer demand or economic gain.
2. Outline the pros and cons of adopting the policy.
3. Illustrate how the benefits outweigh the risks.
 - One possible way to do this is through a cost/benefit analysis.
4. Less concrete evidence is usually required to make a case for the policy as Innovators tend to be more accepting of risks and unknowns.
 - Give examples of others who have undergone similar policy changes and illustrate how and why they have been successful.
 - Provide instances of others who are considering the adoption of a similar policy.
 - Present evidence by using experts in the field.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Working with Evidence or Assessing Costs and Benefits of Policy Change**, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Frame the Issue to Appeal to the Innovative Spirit of the Community or Organization

1. Position the issue to align it with the vision and mission of the community or organization.
 - This can be accomplished by referring to the issue using language similar to that used in other community or organization's actions (e.g., see official documents), especially in cases where groups have demonstrated leadership.
 - Another option is to link proposed policy actions to strategic documents and mission statements developed by the community or organization.
2. Present information in a way that enhances the community or organization's credibility or reputation as an Innovator (or leader).
 - For example, emphasize how their actions will set the stage for other groups, or how they will be among the first in the province or country to adopt the policy.
3. Reference others who are exploring similar ideas and, if possible, link Innovators with other Innovators.
4. Frame the message in terms of what can be gained from adopting the policy.
 - Framing involves carefully defining your advocacy goals and strategically tailoring your message to your target audience.⁷
 - While there may not be a great deal of evidence available, try to piece together what is available to illustrate the positive outcomes (e.g., improved health) that may result from policy adoption.
 - To locate sources of evidence that are relevant to the policy, be sure to explore a variety of sources; talk to people working on this issue in other places, local or provincial not-for-profit groups interested in similar issues, or research experts.
5. Position the issue in a population health perspective.
 - A population health perspective involves moving beyond an individual health focus. Instead, it focuses on how a range of individual, behavioral, and environmental determinants interact with each other to affect the health of populations.⁸
 - Innovators tend to be thoughtful and interested in the big picture view. Ensure that the community or organization understands how the proposed policy relates to broader issues that impact their population (e.g., increased quality of life and poverty reduction) and to the determinants of health (e.g., income and social status, education, and the physical and social environments).

For a list of recommended resources related to [How to Frame Advocacy Messages or the Determinants of Health](http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/), please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

7. Center for Disease Control and Prevention. (n.d.). Chapter Nine: Media Advocacy. In *Designing and Implementing an Effective Tobacco Counter-Marketing Campaign*. Retrieved from http://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/stateandcommunity/counter_marketing/manual/pdfs/chapter9.pdf.

8. Frankish, J., Veenstra, G., and Moulton, G. (1995). Population Health in Canada: Issues and Challenges for Policy, Practice and Research. *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 90, S71-S75.

Build Relationships with Champions from the Community or Organization

1. Harness the support of individuals who are receptive to policy change.
2. Identify and work with champions and key stakeholders to generate support for an issue.
3. A champion is typically an individual who is respected by the community and who is willing to passionately advocate for change.
4. Build relationships and foster dialogue with champions in a community or organization. Different issues may have different champions.
 - To build relationships with potential champions, provide them with evidence, help them understand the process of policy change and offer them continued support.
5. Work with people who have an in-depth knowledge of the community.
 - This can make it easier to develop meaningful relationships and leverage support from existing organizations, coalitions, and programs within the community.
6. Develop relationships with individuals who understand barriers to policy adoption and best practices for encouraging policy change within the community or organization.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Identifying and Working with Champions**, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Generate Decision-Maker Support

1. Work with different levels of the community or organization to create group support among those interested in the issue.
 - Innovators may be held back by the Majority and Late Adopters, so it is important to demonstrate the widespread support that exists for the proposed policy.
2. Find out who may pose as a barrier to policy adoption and work with them to understand the issue from different points of view.
3. Invite key decision-makers to participate in a meaningful, high-energy discussion about the proposed policy. Use the outcomes of this dialogue to further develop your advocacy plans.
 - The goal is to create a sense of excitement for the proposed policy and to encourage decision-makers to feel personally invested in its adoption and implementation.
4. Engage decision-makers in a one-on-one fashion.
 - Request a meeting with elected officials. This will provide an opportunity for a more in-depth conversation with each decision-maker. It will also create a powerful opportunity to start building a working relationship for future initiatives or actions.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Working with Decision-Makers**, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Raise Public Awareness by Educating Community Members about the Issue

1. Prior to launching an information or education campaign about a policy issue, make an effort to understand the needs and characteristics of the community that you are working with.
 - This important step will help you determine how knowledgeable community members are about an issue.
 - It may be beneficial to conduct a situational assessment to understand the needs and characteristics of the community.
 - » A situational assessment involves the examination of factors such as the political and economic environment, key stakeholders, literature and previous evaluations, and the community's overall vision.⁹
 - » Completing a situational assessment requires a great deal of time and energy and may not be suitable or necessary in every situation.

9. Public Health Ontario. (2012). Planning health promotion programs. Retrieved from https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Planning_health_promotion_programs_workbook_En_2015.pdf

2. Educate community members on the proposed policy based on the existing level of community knowledge.
 - Education and awareness can help shift readiness for policy change. For example, some groups may be encouraged to move beyond simply recognizing a problem and considering the need to take action, to taking personal steps to reduce resistance to change within their community (e.g., contacting their municipal representative, writing letters to the editors of local newspapers, etc.).
 - In Innovator-type communities or organizations, the decision-makers, staff and community members tend to be knowledgeable about the issue in question. For this reason, it is likely that they will not need to be educated about the proposed policy to the same degree as Majority and Late Adopter communities or organizations.
3. Use innovative forms of communication to educate the community, connect with its members and raise awareness.
 - Employ media advocacy.
 - » Media advocacy is the strategic use of the mass media, coupled with other advocacy strategies, to influence public debate and encourage policy change.^{10,11}
 - Develop a social media strategy and make use of networking sites such as Twitter and Facebook.

In addition to the key strategies identified for working with Innovators, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/strategies/> to view critical policy change strategies (and resources) that apply to all three adopter categories.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Conducting a Situational Assessment, Media Advocacy, Social Media or Community Engagement and Mobilization, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.**

10. The Advocacy Institute. (1998). *Blowing Away the Smoke: A Series of Advanced Media Advocacy Advisories for Tobacco Control Advocates*. Revised series September 1998. The Advocacy Institute, Washington DC.

11. Wallack, L. and Dorfman, L. (1996). Media Advocacy: A Strategy for Advancing Policy and Promoting Health. *Health Education Quarterly*, 23 (3), 293-317.

Strategies to use with 'Majority' Communities or Organizations

Many of the same strategies that you would use with Innovators apply to the Majority, but the process of policy change will typically take longer with this adopter category.

Provide Evidence and Outline Public Opinion

1. Provide concrete evidence about the potential benefits of the proposed policy.
 - A Majority community or organization tends to be more deliberate when it comes to adopting a new policy and can be skeptical about new ideas. Typically, they require proof that a policy will work before choosing to adopt.
2. Provide evidence that outlines how a similar policy has worked for others under similar contexts. The more examples, the better.
3. Evidence presented should be condensed, summarized, and easy to read.
 - Distribute postcards, leaflets and one-page summaries written in plain language. For examples, see the [APCCP's Issue Briefs](http://www.abpolicycoalitionforprevention.ca/our-focus/apccp-priorities) (<http://www.abpolicycoalitionforprevention.ca/our-focus/apccp-priorities>).
4. Present evidence to show constituent (e.g., community member) support for an issue.
5. Elected officials in the Majority category tend to pay close attention to the needs of their constituents and will be more willing to support policy change if there is evidence of public support for the issue.
 - One way to present this evidence is through public opinion polls and surveying.
 - » For example, see the [APCCP's Surveys on Knowledge, Attitudes and Beliefs](http://www.abpolicycoalitionforprevention.ca/our-focus/surveys) (<http://www.abpolicycoalitionforprevention.ca/our-focus/surveys>).
 - Another way to demonstrate public support is to have members of the community telephone, email, or send postcards to the decision-makers.
 - Letters to the editor of local newspapers are also evidence of public support.
6. Provide information through formal avenues of communication.
 - This may involve writing letters, presenting to municipal council, attending meetings and presenting at conferences.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Working with Evidence** or **Assessing Costs and Benefits of Policy Change**, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Frame the Issue from the 'Majority' Perspective

1. Highlight the number of places that have undergone similar policy changes.
 - Focus on communities and organizations with similar characteristics.
 - Invite individuals from other places to share their experiences.
2. Emphasize that they do not want to be left behind other communities or organizations.
 - Majority types would rather change as a group than be one of the first to change. Keep this 'group' mentality in mind and work with the idea that while they may not want to be the first to change, it is also likely that they do not want to be left behind other groups.
3. Approach multiple groups to take action on an issue together.
 - When community or organizational groups work together, it limits the perceived risk that they will have to manage on their own.

For a list of recommended resources related to [How to Frame Advocacy Messages or Media Advocacy](#), please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Engage and Mobilize the Community to Take Action on the Issue

1. It is important to: (1) understand the needs and characteristics of the community that you are working with, and (2) determine how knowledgeable community members are about the proposed policy.
 - To better understand the community you are working with, it may be beneficial to conduct a situational assessment.
 - » A situational assessment helps determine the needs and strengths of a community. It involves the examination of factors such as the political and economic environment, key stakeholders, literature, previous evaluations, and the community's overall vision.¹²
 - » Conducting a situational assessment requires a great deal of time and energy and is not suitable or necessary for every situation.
2. Educate community members on the proposed policy based on the existing level of community knowledge.
 - Compared to Innovators, Majority types will likely require a more extensive information/education campaign.
 - Create and foster dialogue within the community. Buy-in from the public is important to Majority communities and organizations. Low levels of public understanding of an issue will decrease the likelihood of successful policy development.
3. Focus on raising awareness about the issue and on educating the public about the need for the policy and its possible benefits.
4. Mobilize the community to show their support for the issue.
 - This can be achieved through media advocacy or the creation of community-based coalitions.
 - » Media advocacy is the strategic use of the mass media, coupled with other advocacy strategies, to influence public debate and encourage policy change.¹³

12. Public Health Ontario. (2012). Planning health promotion programs. Retrieved from https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/eRepository/Planning_health_promotion_programs_workbook_En_2015.pdf

13. Wallack, L. and Dorfman, L. (1996). Media Advocacy: A Strategy for Advancing Policy and Promoting Health. *Health Education Quarterly*, 23 (3), 293-317.

5. Launch a letter writing campaign and encourage community champions, other stakeholders and concerned citizens to participate.
 - Elected officials respond to letters, emails and phone calls from citizens. This provides an opportunity for officials and other decision-makers to informally assess the level of public interest and support, and to better understand the issue.
 - Enlist staff members, volunteers and community members to write guest columns and letters to the editor.
6. Encourage local constituents to set up meetings with decision-makers.
 - The more people who are actively engaged in the policy process, the less energy advocates have to spend educating decision-makers about the policy and demonstrating public support.

For a list of recommended resources related to Working with Decision-Makers, Community Engagement and Mobilization, Conducting a Situational Assessment or Media Advocacy, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Build Relationships and Maintain Momentum

1. Identify and work with champions in the community.
 - A champion is typically an individual who is respected by the community and who is willing to passionately advocate for change.
 - In Majority communities or organizations, certain individuals will be more open to new ideas and more receptive to policy change than others. Engage these “receptive” individuals and work with them to move the issue forward.
2. Maintain relationships with decision-makers, staff and community members who are receptive to policy change.
 - These individuals will likely encounter resistance from others and will require your support to counter opposition to the policy.

Provide Tools and Incentives for Policy Adoption

1. Tools and incentives can be used to encourage policy adoption by making the proposed policy easier to implement and by increasing the benefit to the community or organization.
 - Examples of **tools** include:
 - » creating a policy binder to lead the decision-makers through the entire process of developing the policy, and
 - » providing a blank policy template.
 - Examples of **incentives** include:
 - » funding pledges or guarantees of funding upon completion of policy adoption,
 - » verbal recognition,
 - » formal awards, and
 - » strategic positioning of the community or organization as a leader.
2. Provide communities and organizations with support to help them define goals, set targets and make policy uptake easier.
 - Match the community or organization with an agency or local non-government organization that has a stake in the issue and can provide the community or organization with ongoing support as it moves through the process of policy change.

In addition to the key strategies identified for working with Majority types, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/strategies/> to view critical policy change strategies (and resources) that apply to all three adopter categories.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Identifying and Working with Champions, Sample Tools for Policy Adoption or Providing Resources** please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Strategies to use with 'Late Adopters'

You can use many of the same strategies for Late Adopters as you would use with Innovator and Majority communities or organizations. However, it is important to understand that achieving policy change is usually a long and slow process and will be particularly challenging with this group. Late Adopters need to be handled with care, as they are generally reluctant to change. For instance, provincial laws may be required to force policy adoption. Considering this, you may want to determine if the timing is right to work with the provincial government to facilitate province-wide change.

Educate Decision-Makers about the Issue

1. Obtain commitments from key decision-makers to learn more about the issue.
 - Late Adopters tend to be wary of new ideas and seek to maintain the status quo. Educating decision-makers about an issue is the first step towards breaking misconceptions and changing mindsets.
2. Keep decision-makers "in the loop" by providing them with up-to-date information about new evidence, the actions and experiences of other jurisdictions, and changes in the provincial landscape that could influence the issue and policy adoption.
 - Try to stay on the policy agenda, while not aggravating the decision-makers.

For a list of recommended resources related to **Working with Decision-Makers**, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Provide Evidence to Illustrate that the Benefits of Policy Change Outweigh the Costs

1. Provide evidence to illustrate the scientific and public support that exists in favour of policy adoption.
 - When providing evidence of public support, focus on illustrating the support that exists both within the community or organization (internal government and community) and among neighbouring places.
2. Illustrate how communities or organizations with similar characteristics have successfully adopted and implemented the proposed policy.
 - It is important to highlight the positive impact that the policy has had in these communities.
3. Emphasize the risks and the detrimental impact of maintaining the status quo (i.e., not adopting the policy).

Build Strategic Relationships with Key Community Members

1. Use opportunities such as elections to develop and strengthen relationships with elected officials.
 - Meet with each candidate early in the campaign and engage them in the issue. After the election, maintain relationships with elected candidates throughout their term and remind them of their pre-election intentions. Focus on those candidates who are most receptive to change.
2. Develop relationships with key stakeholders and respected members of the community.
 - Remember that this process may be more time-intensive than with Innovator and Majority communities or organizations, so plan accordingly.

For a list of recommended resources related to *Working with Evidence, Assessing Costs and Benefits of Policy Change* or *Identifying and Working with Champions* please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

Understand the Unique Needs and Address Underlying Barriers

1. Work with the community or organization to develop an approach to fit their specific needs as well as to create buy-in and understanding for the issue early on.
 - Different communities have different needs and may require different approaches to the same issue. Acknowledging this is especially important when dealing with Late Adopters because they have reservations about adopting the policy in question.
 - Late Adopters tend to require more evidence and community-based information to inform action. For this reason, it may be beneficial to conduct a situational assessment.
 - » A situational assessment helps determine the needs and strengths of a community. It involves the examination of factors such as the political and economic environment, key stakeholders, literature and previous evaluations, and the community's overall vision.^{14,15}
 - » It is important to note that conducting a situational assessment requires a great deal of time and energy and is not suitable or necessary for every situation.
 - Recognize barriers to policy change and identify how they can be addressed.
 - » When working with Late Adopters, there are often underlying barriers inhibiting policy adoption. These barriers can result from a number of factors, such as a specific ideological standpoint, lack of resources or limited capacity. To successfully influence the policy direction of a Late Adopter, you must recognize what these barriers are and how they can be addressed.
2. Debunk myths (about the impact of adopting the policy) and increase the legitimacy of evidence about the issue.
 - Myths often surround proposed policy changes. Unfortunately, evidence may not always be sufficient or adequate to debunk these myths as Late Adopters may be skeptical about the legitimacy of the evidence or its source.
 - An effective way to increase the legitimacy of evidence is by working with community members who are well-respected, receptive to change and willing to work towards the policy adoption.
3. Be prepared to counter the arguments of the opposition.
 - Work with key stakeholders to anticipate likely arguments against the proposed policy and develop possible responses.
4. Provide resources (e.g., money, in-kind time, materials) to overcome barriers (if available).
 - Identify possible resource pools available to the community. For example, community coalitions can often apply for grants to support policy advocacy. Local or provincial not-for-profit groups are often good sources of templates and materials that can be used in support of the policy development.

14. The Advocacy Institute. (1998). *Blowing Away the Smoke: A Series of Advanced Media Advocacy Advisories for Tobacco Control Advocates*. Revised series September 1998. The Advocacy Institute, Washington DC.

15. Wallack, L. and Dorfman, L. (1996). Media Advocacy: A Strategy for Advancing Policy and Promoting Health. *Health Education Quarterly*, 23 (3), 293-317.

Mobilize the Community to Take Action and Move the Issue Forward

1. Empower receptive members of the public to take action on the issue.
 - Pressure is often needed to facilitate policy change with a Late Adopter, so it is important to engage the public and encourage them to take action.
 - Employ media advocacy as a key strategy.
 - » Media advocacy is the strategic use of the mass media, coupled with other advocacy strategies, to influence public debate and encourage policy change.^{16,17}
 - Make available a range of resources, such as letter templates and sample petitions, to make it easier for the community to take action.
2. Work to gain public support, and then use this support to engage decision-makers.
3. Connect to the public using evidence and examples of success.
 - It is important to encourage public dialogue and to work with different stakeholders, such as the media, local nonprofits and receptive community members, to build community acceptance of the issue.
4. Consider strategies that publicly 'shame' the community or organization.
 - Generally speaking, communities or organizations do not like to be identified as Late Adopters, so negative tactics may work in some circumstances. This is a more aggressive strategy and requires careful consideration of the potential consequences for current and future relationship-building efforts. This is best considered only if all other efforts to engage decision-makers have been unsuccessful.

In addition to the key strategies identified for working with Late Adopters, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/strategies/> to view critical policy change strategies (and resources) that apply to all three adopter categories.

For a list of recommended resources related to Working with Decision-Makers, Community Engagement and Mobilization, Media Advocacy or Public Shaming Examples, please visit <http://policyreadinesstool.com/prt-resources/>.

16. The Advocacy Institute. (1998). *Blowing Away the Smoke: A Series of Advanced Media Advocacy Advisories for Tobacco Control Advocates*. Revised series September 1998. The Advocacy Institute, Washington DC.

17. Wallack, L. and Dorfman, L. (1996). Media Advocacy: A Strategy for Advancing Policy and Promoting Health. *Health Education Quarterly*, 23 (3), 293-317.

Appendix

Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory

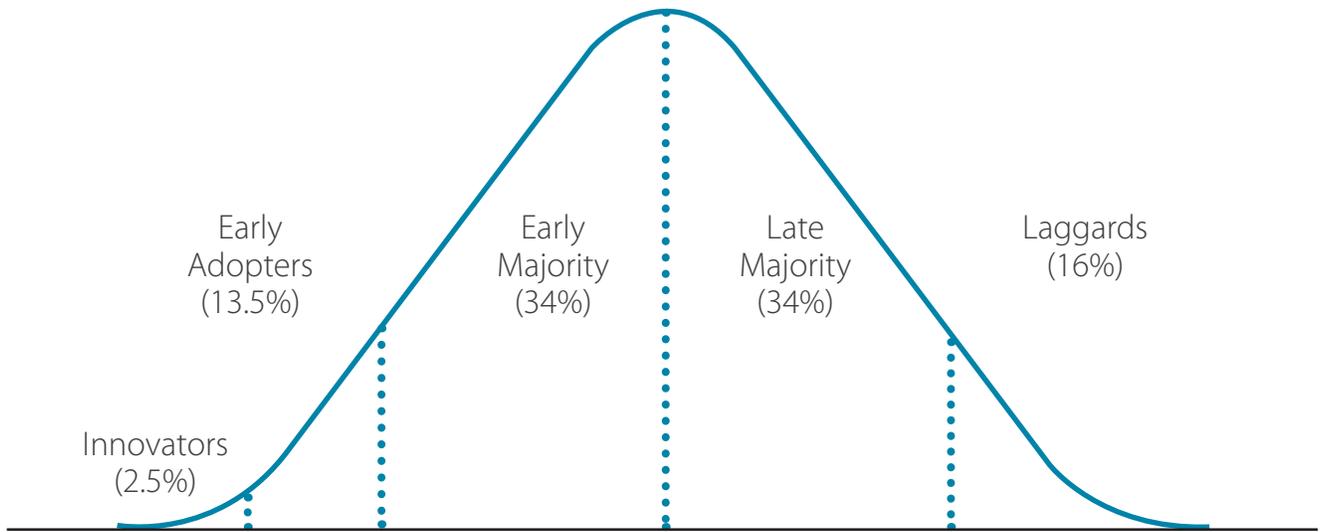
For the purposes of the Policy Readiness Tool, Rogers' five adopter categories were collapsed into three. This was done to ease applicability in the field and to help ensure that the Policy Readiness Tool is straightforward to use, easy to implement, and that users can apply it to a variety of policy situations.

Rogers' original five adopter categories include: (1) Innovators, (2) Early Adopters, (3) Early Majority, (4) Late Majority, and (5) Laggards. *Table 1* provides a detailed description of these adopter categories. Whether a community or organization is an Early Adopter versus a Late Adopter can be determined by examining the rate of adoption of policies over time, which tends to follow a bell-shaped diffusion curve. *Figure 1* illustrates the approximate percentages of each adopter type.

Table 1: Characteristics of Adopter Categories

Adopter Type	Characteristics
Innovators	Innovators are described as venturesome and show a propensity to take risks. They take pride in being one of the first to try a new initiative (e.g., bylaw or policy). Innovators are able to cope with a high degree of uncertainty about the policy they are adopting. They are typically willing to tolerate some initial problems that may accompany new policies, but are able to identify solutions for these problems.
Early Adopters	Early Adopters serve as a role model for others (e.g., other communities or organizations). They are attracted by high-risk and high-reward policies or initiatives.
Early Majority	Early Majority adopters are described as deliberate because they require time to determine whether to adopt a new idea. Therefore, they adopt new initiatives or policies just before the average community or organization. This group seldom leads the pack when it comes to adopting new initiatives or policies. They are of the philosophy that it is better to change as a group than to be one of the first to change.
Late Majority	Late Majority adopters are described as skeptical and traditional, and typically require proof of an innovation working before moving forward. They usually wait until the majority of other groups implement a policy or new initiative before implementing it themselves. Typically, pressure from others is required for them to adopt a policy.
Laggards	Laggards are skeptical of new ideas and prefer to maintain the status quo. They are the last group to adopt a new initiative or policy. Decisions are made based on what has been done previously.

Figure 1. Adoption Curve for Rogers' diffusion of innovations theory



Source: Table 1 and Figure 1 were produced based on information provided from Everett M. Rogers, *Diffusion of Innovations* (New York: Free Press, 2003).

