

Reach 338 - Meeting your MP

ABOUT REACH 338

Thank you for signing up to be part of this project!

Reach 338 will ensure our advocacy work reaches all 338 federal ridings in a meaningful way. Whether it's through a one-on-one meeting, a community event, a letter, or simply a phone call – Reach 338 will make certain the National Association of Federal Retirees and our key priorities are seen and understood by every single sitting member of Parliament.

The key to making Reach 338 possible and effective is empowering our members and supporters to advocate where they'll have the biggest impact – in their own communities. Local voices give context, a face to the issue, and a personal story that gives a relatable, human perspective to our priorities. Service to others is the highest calling a person can have, and the members of our Association have spent their working lives in service to Canada. A show of strength and shared focus amongst federal retirees from all walks of life focused on the same mission – to significantly improve the quality and security of retirement – makes a lasting and positive impact.

ABOUT THIS KIT

This kit will give you the tools you need to have effective meetings with your local Member of Parliament (MP).

This kit includes:

- Helpful information to help you figure out which Member of Parliament represents your riding
- How to set up and conduct an effective meeting with a Member of Parliament, including how to report in your results
- Where to find additional information and materials for your meeting – including background information on our priorities, with talking points

Remember, your Advocacy Program Officer (APO) and the Association's Advocacy Team are here to help. If you have questions about this kit, this project, or anything else, please email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca.



CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

1-855-304-4700 | advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca

federalretirees.ca



National Association
of Federal Retirees

Association nationale
des retraités fédéraux

WHY MEET WITH YOUR MP?

Members of Parliament (MPs) not only represent their political party but also every person who lives in their riding – whether they voted for them or not. MPs are regular people who have chosen to run for office to serve our country. While it can be intimidating to meet with an elected official, it's important to remember that they represent you. That's why meeting with them is important. It's how we introduce the Association, raise awareness of our advocacy priorities and goals, and gain support for our positions in Parliament.

While the National Association of Federal Retirees regularly communicates with MPs in a variety of ways – your meeting is one of the most effective ways to relay our message. As a constituent living in their riding, you can provide local context and put a face to our priorities and why they are so important – things we simply cannot replicate from our national office. Your work on the ground, combined with our national campaigns, make a lasting and positive impact.

FIND YOUR MP

There are 338 Members of Parliament – one to represent each federal riding across the country. MPs have a minimum of two offices: a constituency office in the local riding, and an office on Parliament Hill. Sometimes, MPs with large, rural ridings will have more than multiple constituency offices in different parts of their riding to ensure that they are able to serve and interact with all constituents.

In most cases, you will meet your MP in their constituency office. You can find your MP and the address for their constituency office(s) using the search tool at www.ourcommons.ca and entering your postal code. Here you will find your MP's name along with their photo, an overview of their roles and actions in Parliament (whether they sit on any parliamentary committees, if they are part of any parliamentary associations, their speeches and votes in parliament, etc.), as well as the contact information for their offices.

Once you have this information, but before you begin seeking your meeting, it is a good idea to read up a bit about your MP. In addition to the information you can find on www.ourcommons.ca, most MPs have websites as well as active social media profiles – a quick Google search should bring up a lot of results. While you certainly don't need to know everything about the MP, it can be helpful to have a sense of their background to help inform your conversation with them.

GET THE MEETING

Members of Parliament are extremely busy – which can make arranging a meeting challenging. However, MPs are generally keen to meet with voters and those who represent them (you!) in hopes of winning them over.

Here are some tips and tricks for getting a meeting:

- **Find their schedule.** Check out the House of Commons schedule to see if the MP is in Ottawa or in the riding. Generally, the House of Commons sits from the end of September until the end of June, with a lengthy break in December and January. Approximately once a month, the House will also rise for a week (commonly called “break weeks”). MPs can usually be found in their ridings when the House of Commons isn’t sitting.
- **Find the right person.** Each MP office will have a variety of staff and volunteers working to ensure the MP is well-represented and well-organized – and sometimes it is difficult to know who is in charge of managing their schedule. The only way to find out is to send an email or to call – whoever you get in touch with should be able to connect you with the right member of the team.
- **Follow-up regularly.** As noted, MPs and their teams are busy. Follow-up first to ensure that your meeting request has been received, and then continue to do so every few days. Polite persistence is key to getting noticed, and to getting the meeting.

PREPARE FOR THE MEETING

The more you prepare for your meeting, the more successful it will be. While volunteers are not expected to be subject matter experts, taking some time to familiarize yourself with the material and logistics of the meeting, can help make the experience less stressful and more fruitful.

Here are some best practices:

- **Practice, practice, practice.** Run through the materials provided by the Association several times before the meeting. Also take some time with a fellow member or volunteer, a friend, your Advocacy Program Officer, or our Advocacy Team to practice your pitch and to ask any questions you may have.
- **Have your materials ready.** Make sure that you have all your printed materials assembled and ready to go! All of our materials can be downloaded by logging into our website, or requested by emailing advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca.
- **Plan your trip.** MPs have tight schedules, and being late because you couldn’t find parking will make a bad first impression. Make sure that you have the address, driving or public transit instructions and parking information available well ahead of your meeting.

MAKE YOUR CASE

When meeting with a MP, it is important to outline our priorities clearly and confidently in order to make the most impact. You are not expected to be an expert on every issue – but there are some key things you can do while making your case that can ensure success.

Here are some tips:

- **Keep your tone direct, but friendly.** Even if you expect the MP to oppose our position on an issue, be sure to use friendly, accessible language.
- **Don't be sidetracked.** Many MPs are really good at taking up a 30 minute meeting with 25 minutes of small talk – leaving nearly no time to speak about the issues. Be polite, but firmly keep the conversation on the topics you want to discuss.
- **Engage.** Don't simply talk at the MP. Be sure to engage them in conversation by asking questions – this can help ensure they are paying attention. Questions could include:
 - ▶ Are you familiar with this issue?
 - ▶ Do you believe (simplified message)? For example – “do you think its fair to change a pension deal after someone is retired?”
 - ▶ What are you hearing about this issue? What do you think will happen?
- **Don't make things up.** You are not expected to be an expert on every issue. While you should review notes provided by National Office ahead of your meeting, it is not reasonable to try and memorize them! If you are asked a question that you don't know the answer to – say so! Simply saying “I am a volunteer and I don't know that information off the top of my head, but I can ask our staff to provide you with more information.” We are happy to provide this extra expertise to help you out – and we would much rather provide accurate information a little later, than to have to address or correct incorrect information.

GET COMMITMENT

Always get a commitment from the MP during the meeting. This information is extremely important. Keep track of the commitments given during your meeting, and be sure to relay that information to your APO and the Advocacy Team.

Commitments can include:

- A campaign policy promise, possibly in the party's previous election platform or policy book.
- Voting for or against an issue, should the issue come before the House of Commons.
- Spreading the word on the importance of the issue. This could be speaking to the issue in the House of Commons, sharing content on social media or in their MP communications (such as e-newsletters and mailings).

SNAP A SELFIE

We love to showcase the work our team is doing in communities from coast-to-coast. We often publish photos of our team meeting with MPs on our website, social media, and sometimes in Sage magazine – but we need you to remember to take the photo in order to do it!

Here are a few tips for taking a great photo (and what to do with it afterwards):

- Use your cell phone! Cell phone cameras are often high-quality and nearly everyone has one in their pocket. If you have a digital camera – that can also work well.
- Take the highest resolution photo possible. If your phone or camera has settings for quality, always use the highest quality setting you can.
- Selfies are great, but ask for help if you can! MP staff are often happy to snap photos for you, so don't worry about your selfie skills. Don't be afraid to ask MP staff to take your photo – they get asked to do this sort of thing all the time.
- Send us the photo! Simply email your photo to advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca. Don't forget to include the names of everyone in the photo, as well as the date your meeting took place, as well as any other relevant information.
- Share the photo! If you use Facebook or Twitter, don't hesitate to share the photo on your own profile and show off your hard work! If you are using Twitter, be sure to tag us [@fedretirees](https://twitter.com/fedretirees) so that we can retweet you!

FOLLOW UP AND REPORT IN

In order to understand our impact across the country, and to allocate resources and support to volunteers appropriately, it is important that you report on your meetings. By emailing advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca, be sure to relay the following information:

- Meeting details, including when the meeting took place and what was discussed.
- Who was there, noting the MP, any of their staff or representatives, and the volunteers who attended along with you.
- Which materials were provided to the MP.
- Results of the meeting and any commitments made by the MP or their staff.
- Any required follow-up, whether it will be completed by you or by National Office.

If you have any additional information to share – please do! We would much rather know more about your meeting than less – so please spare no detail.

It is essential to share this information with us in a timely manner – this helps us ensure we're not duplicating our effort by pursuing a meeting in Ottawa with a MP that you have already met with, or sending them material they may have already received.

ADDITIONAL MATERIALS

We want to make sure you have everything you need to succeed! That's why we have put together a variety of materials to help you prepare for your meeting.

As a member of the National Association of Federal Retirees, you can login to our website and access additional toolkits, background information and talking points, recorded training sessions, and interactive online learning tools to help you get ready.

Simply visit www.federalretirees.ca and click on the "Log In" link in the upper right-hand corner of the web page. From here you can login with your membership ID and password, or set up a new account. Once logged in, you will see a menu on the left-hand side of your screen. Click on "My Membership", and on the next page click on "My Documents". Under the "Member Documents" drop down, you will see a special folder for Reach 338. Here, you will find everything you need to succeed!

If you are having trouble logging in or creating an account, please email advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca.

THANK YOU

Reach 338 is an important project for the National Association of Federal Retirees. Together we are making a big impact by building, strong, effective local relationships with Canada's House of Commons – and we couldn't dream of achieving this goal without you. Thank you.

Your local Advocacy Program Officer and the Advocacy Team are here to help you. If you have any questions about this guide or any of our materials, please contact us at advocacyteam@federalretirees.ca.