

We have developed a short script to help you extend a personal invitation to your MPP to the Co-operative Queen's Park Reception on April 28th. This goes a long way in encouraging them to attend, as they want to meet with their own constituents!

Things to know:

- Google your provincial MPP's name (not your MP, that is federal) and find the phone number for the constituency office
- When you phone, you will typically get their office manager who schedules meetings in the constituency office
- This person may give you a number for the MPP's Chief of Staff or scheduler in the Queen's Park office, because the event is at Queen's Park

Script for when you call:

Good morning/afternoon, this is _____ (name) from _____ (your co-operative) in _____ (town/city/neighborhood).

Pause for the person to say hello.

I am calling because I will be attending an upcoming Reception on April 28th at Queen's Park from 5-7 pm, to celebrate Ontario's co-operative businesses. Our co-operative has been in the community for _____ years and we attend this annual event to share our story of good work in our community. I hope MPP _____ (last name) will attend and meet us there.

Does MPP _____ (last name) have this event in his/her calendar?

This is the point where the person may re-direct your call.

If yes: Thank you – we look forward to seeing MPP _____ (last name) there!

If not yet: Is there any opportunity for him/her to drop by the Reception, or for us to meet with him/her while we're at Queen's Park that day?

LEAD, CULTIVATE AND CONNECT

Co-operatives are a *different* kind of business model that are driven by people, planet and profit. The Ontario Co-operative Association (OCA) supports, develops, educates and advocates for Ontario's 1,500+ co-operative businesses.

If no: I am sorry to hear that. Is there any opportunity for him/her to drop by the reception or for us to meet with MPP _____ (last name) while we are at Queen's Park on April 28th?

If they ask you what you want to meet about:

Option 1: You share something related to your co-operative that you would like to discuss, to get us in the door.

Option 2: The Ontario Co-operative Association and our co-operative have some exciting new opportunities for community building including affordable housing, addressing labour shortages and succession planning for businesses. Is MPP _____ (last name) aware of these issues in our riding?

If yes: We are very interested to discuss our co-operative solutions currently being piloted in other communities. When is MPP _____ (last name) available?

If no: Thank you for your time.

After the call:

- Please phone Audrey Aczel at the Ontario Co-operative Association (OCA) at 519-763-8271 x24 or email her at aaczel@ontario.coop to update her on your MPPs plans to attend, or an opportunity for a meeting.
- If you like, on your behalf, OCA will follow up with you and your MPP to schedule a meeting if that is an option.

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SOME BACKGROUND INFORMATION IF YOU ARE ASKED

What is a co-operative?

A business corporation owned by its patrons, producers or employees who work together democratically toward the common goal of a successful business that serves the needs of the community.

There are 1,500 co-operative corporations in Ontario serving all types of community needs. Some examples are:

- The Co-operators insurance company founded in 1945
- There are 66 credit unions in Ontario who are all owned by their members, including both individual citizens and 136,000 small business members
- In the agricultural sector, Gay Lea Foods Co-operative, GROWMARK and Hensall District Co-operative are owned by farmers and have all operated for over 60 years in rural Ontario
- There are over 500 housing co-operatives in Ontario, providing 44,000 units at an operational cost below non-profit housing, with one third of member residents paying a monthly charge geared to income
- Over 130 co-ops owned by workers or community members operate in health care and social assistance, providing solutions to many groups of marginalized Ontarians
- Retail co-operatives like Mountain Equipment Co-operative (MEC), Karma Co-op grocery store and Urbane Cyclist are owned by their patrons, or workers, or both!

Co-operatives by the Numbers:

- 57,000 direct and indirect jobs
- \$3.3 billion in income created for Ontarians
- \$6 billion in value add created in the economy
- \$1.3 billion generated for government services
- Twice as many co-operatives remain in business after 10 years as other business enterprises

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