

A few points to remember...

Show an interest in their politics by asking: “What challenges are currently important in your riding?” This gives them an opportunity to talk about some of their priorities, as well as find areas of mutual interest.

Be polite and set a positive tone from the very beginning of your conversation – this is important as it may be your MPP’s first real encounter with the co-operative sector and you are its representative!

If they look bored or disinterested with what you have to say, **don’t harass them**, just let them go.

If they are interested in pursuing the discussion later, get a staffer’s name and contact information and **tell them you will follow-up**. Don’t leave it up to them to do the following up!

Always leave a **business card** attached to a fact sheet, flyer or pamphlet about your organization.

Take a few notes during, or immediately after the meeting, to use as a reference point in your thank-you letter and in your follow-up summary to On Co-op.

Tools for Effective Lobbying

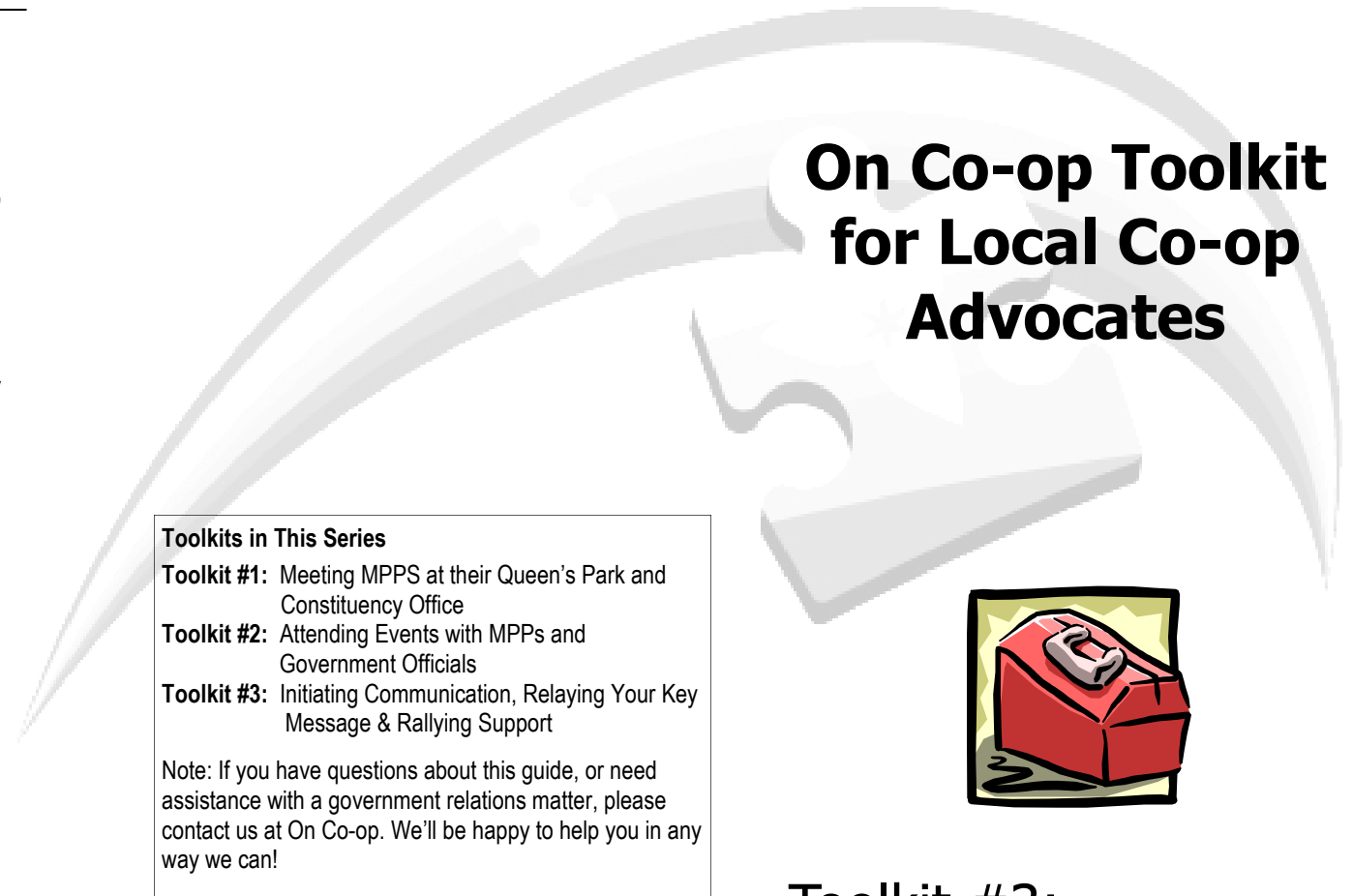
As a provincial co-operative association, On Co-op is itself a non-partisan organization. However, we recognize that we live in an environment that is highly influenced by government and politics. Consequently, we also recognize the need to **INFORM, INFLUENCE, and EDUCATE** political parties and the government about the co-operative sector.

In a non-partisan way, we lobby the government with respect to issues of concern to us, provide public policy makers with information, and participate in various events organized by the different political parties. However, we can’t do it – and shouldn’t do it - alone! We require the help of local co-op champions in each riding to support our efforts and build ONE VOICE for the co-operative community.

Making the decision to get involved and help lobby the government is the first step. Once you have done this, you need to know how to approach members of government, effectively and efficiently, in order to turn your concerns and issues into action. We created this toolkit to help you achieve this goal.

About the toolkits

These toolkits are guides to help you in lobbying on behalf of the co-op sector, for your own individual lobbying efforts, and as a means to making the process of meeting with MPPs, Ministers and their staff less intimidating and more effective. You can use all or parts of this guide, depending on whether you are attending a sit-down meeting with an MPP at their constituency or Queen’s Park office, an all-candidates meeting in your riding, or other political events. Simply adopt our suggestions on the following pages to suit your own issues and needs as necessary.



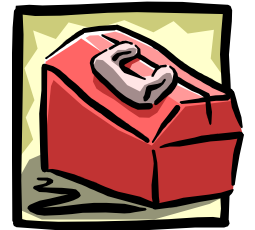
Toolkits in This Series

Toolkit #1: Meeting MPPs at their Queen’s Park and Constituency Office

Toolkit #2: Attending Events with MPPs and Government Officials

Toolkit #3: Initiating Communication, Relaying Your Key Message & Rallying Support

Note: If you have questions about this guide, or need assistance with a government relations matter, please contact us at On Co-op. We’ll be happy to help you in any way we can!



Toolkit #3: Initiating Communication, Relaying your Key Message & Rallying Support



**Build a better Ontario...
Move forward with the Co-op Secretariat.**

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Initiating Communication, Relaying Your Key Message & Rallying Support



Key Issues to Address:

- The MPP's (and their staff's) familiarity with co-operatives and the co-operative model of business enterprise (i.e. the difference between a co-op and a corporation);
- Their familiarity with the *White Paper on Co-operative Development*;
- Whether they support the *White Paper's* key recommendation for the creation of a provincial Co-operative's Secretariat;
- What steps can be taken to help turn the recommendation into a reality.

Initiating Communication:

Based on these key issues, below are some suggestions for initiating communication with your MPP:

"Hi, I'm _____ from _____ <co-op>. We are _____ <briefly describe your co-op> in the area. Are you familiar with our enterprise?"

OR

"Hi... Are you familiar with the co-operative sector?"

If they answer NO, they are not familiar with co-ops...

Relay a few facts, for example:

There are more than 1,300 co-operatives and credit unions in Ontario, with over 1.4 million members and comprising over \$30 billion in annual assets

Ontario's 250+ credit unions and caisses populaires serve 1.6 million residents in over 700 locations employ 6,000 people and contribute over \$375 million to the province's GDP...

Some of the well-known co-ops operating in Ontario are Gay Lea Foods, The Co-operators Group, GROWMARK Inc., and Mountain Equipment Co-op...

People in Ontario have been members of co-ops for over 140 years...

Co-ops span a wide range of sectors, including but not limited to, agriculture, housing, health care, elder care, child care, insurance, transportation, communication, natural resources, utilities, retails, aboriginal and rural development...

There are over 10,000 co-ops and credit unions in Canada, with combined assets of \$167 billion and employ over 160,000 people...

Forty-three percent of Canadians belong to at least one co-operative...

Relay a few facts about your particular sector...

If they answer YES, they are familiar with co-ops...

Ask: "Are you familiar with the 'White Paper on Co-operative Development'?"

If they answer NO, they are not familiar with the White Paper...

Give them a brief summary, for example:

It is a policy paper (created by the Ontario Co-operative Association, in conjunction with its francophone equivalent, le Conseil de la coopération de l'Ontario - CCO), launched at Queen's Park in November 2005.

It outlines the co-operative model of business enterprise, gives a background of the sector and highlights several recommendations and initiatives that both government and co-operatives should do to help support the sector in our global economy.

*One of its key recommendations is the creation of a **provincial Co-operatives Secretariat**, modeled after the federal Co-op Secretariat, whose mandate would be to help foster a public-co-operative partnership, as a means to further our similar socio-economic values and goals.*

A resolution, passed in the legislature on December 14, 2006, recommended the development of this Secretariat.

Electronic and hard copies of this paper are available upon request.

If they answer YES, they are familiar with the White Paper...

Ask: "What is your party's position on the creation of a provincial Co-operatives Secretariat?"

If they DON'T support it...

Find out why. Use this opportunity to highlight its importance and benefits for both government and the co-op sector. For example:

Co-ops, like Government, are involved in finding solutions in the areas of affordable housing and day care, health care, agriculture, renewable energy, financial services and community economic development, among others...

With a 140 plus year track record of success, the co-operative represents a business model of enterprise that integrates a financial bottom line with putting people first, while being environmentally and economically sustainable...

A co-operative / public partnership would see the fusion of these shared interests and goals, thereby strengthening the social economy of the province as a whole...

Take this opportunity to ask if they are willing to meet further to discuss the recommendations, and how it would serve a mutually beneficial purpose for both the co-operative sector and the government.

If they ask what the Secretariat is for...

Explain it in these simple terms:

Modeled after the federal Co-operatives Secretariat, its mandate would be to represent and further develop Ontario co-operatives; to foster and facilitate interaction between government and co-ops; to educate ministries about the co-op model of business enterprise; to work with the sector and government to develop policies that enhance the overall well-being of the community...

If they mention that FSCO (Financial Services Commission of Ontario) already serves this purpose...

Explain that:

FSCO's mandate is to provide a regulatory role with regards to the 'Co-operative Act'.

As FSCO is an agency of the Ministry of Finance, its focuses are cost-recovery, and serving its financial consumers, leaving the larger non-financial co-op sector entirely un-represented...

The Secretariat would not be a duplicate body within Government, but an entity entirely separate from the regulatory role assumed by FSCO.

If they support a provincial Co-operatives Secretariat...

Try to get a commitment to the cause from them!

Ask: "What steps can we take in order to get this resolution turned into a reality?"

Then, try to get some form of commitment from them to further the cause...

"Will your party commit to the creation of a provincial Co-operatives Secretariat, modeled on the federal version, and based on similar Secretariats in other provinces, such as Quebec and Saskatchewan?"

Once you have established this, THANK THEM for their time, ask for contact information to follow-up in the near future, and leave them with your background material.