

MLA Engagement Toolkit

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Contents

Using your MLA Engagement Toolkit	3
Contacting your local MLA	3
Identifying your MLA.....	3
Requesting a meeting with your MLA	4
If your meeting request isn't answered	5
Preparing for your MLA meeting	7
After the meeting	7
Feedback Form	8

Using your MLA Engagement Toolkit

This toolkit was created for you as a guide to help you communicate with your respective provincial government representative in your home constituency. Some sections you may find more useful than others, so please reference the **Contents** page to find what you are looking for quickly.

You may already know your MLA, attend his or her events, or even run into your MLA at the grocery store. If this is the case and you see your MLA, let him or her know that you plan to drop the constituency office and will be sending an email requesting a meeting where you can discuss some business matters more formally. Typically, informal encounters with your MLA are not the place to discuss your business in any detail, but be ready nonetheless by thinking about how you would briefly summarize your concerns and requests in case your MLA wants the short version in an impromptu meeting.

Questions regarding the contents of this toolkit should be directed to:

Kerri Romanetz

AREA Government Relations Analyst

403.209.3625

kromanetz@areahub.ca

REMEMBER: MLAs are people just like you, who work hard to represent their constituents well. They do not directly control the Government of Alberta's actions, so explain concerns but do not blame them for how things are currently done. You want to make your MLA your ally in effecting change, not your enemy.

Contacting your local MLA

If you already know your constituency name, please reference **Appendix A** for your MLA's contact information and proceed to **Request a meeting** with your MLA. Remember that you may have access to more than one MLA if your residence and your business happen to be in two different constituencies.

Identifying your MLA

To find out who represents your registry office (and/or your home constituency) within the provincial government, go to the [Elections Alberta website](http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca/skSearchPostal.cfm) (<http://streetkey.elections.ab.ca/skSearchPostal.cfm>) and enter your office's postal code where prompted. This search will yield your local MLA's name. Click on the name to be redirected to the Legislative Assembly of Alberta's website, which will provide all the contact information you will need to get in touch with your representative.

Requesting a meeting with your MLA

Your initial contact with the MLA's office should take the form of an email to his or her constituency office. Do not send your mail to the Legislature. On the next page are two examples of appropriate meeting requests that you can tailor to fit your situation.

REMEMBER: Your MLA's constituency assistant often holds great influence over his or her member's calendar. Treating that assistant with kindness and respect goes a long way towards ensuring you secure the meeting you want.

Good [MORNING/AFTERNOON],

I am writing today to request a meeting with [NAME], MLA for [CONSTITUENCY NAME]. As a REALTOR® in [COMMUNITY or NEIGHBOURHOOD], I would welcome an opportunity to introduce myself, and provide MLA [LAST NAME] with an overview of my business and the impact of REALTORS® in our community on behalf of the Alberta Real Estate Association (AREA), which represents REALTORS® in Alberta.

Alberta REALTORS® are proud to be part of solutions that put consumers first. REALTORS® are trusted advisors who help consumers make some of the largest purchases of their lives. AREA members are in the business of supporting communities – not just selling homes. Today, the real estate industry faces a number of challenges and opportunities, and I would welcome an opportunity to discuss issues that impact real estate and the community with MLA [LAST NAME].

Please advise when MLA [LAST NAME]'s schedule can accommodate such a meeting. I look forward to hearing from your office.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

You should wait 5-7 business days for a response from your MLA's office. If after that time you have still not received a response, it is appropriate to follow up with a phone call. When you make this phone call, identify yourself and indicate that you're calling to follow up on an email meeting request, and indicate the date that request was sent. During this call, you may be asked to reiterate the purpose for your meeting request. Below are two examples you can use to answer:

- + As a REALTOR® working in in [CONSTITUENCY NAME], I would welcome an opportunity to meet MLA [NAME] and provide [HIM/HER] with some information about my business and the impact of real estate impact on the community.

If your meeting request isn't answered

If the call you made to follow up your email meeting request is not answered or returned within two business days, you can then send your MLA a letter by mail. There is an example on the next page that can be used as a guideline for communicating with the constituency office. Use these ideas, but adjust the wording to suit your style and add in any details about your business you think is pertinent. Remember to put your letter on your company letterhead.

REMEMBER: Do not take it personally if you haven't heard from your MLA's office at this point. An MLA and his or her assistant receive many requests and the offices often do not have backup staff to assist during vacations or illness. The volume of correspondence also means that sometimes a request can fall through the cracks unintentionally.

[DATE]

[NAME], MLA

[CONSTITUENCY]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY/TOWN], AB [POSTAL CODE]

Dear [MLA],

I am writing today to request a meeting with [NAME], MLA for [CONSTITUENCY NAME]. As a REALTOR® in [COMMUNITY or NEIGHBOURHOOD], I would welcome an opportunity to introduce myself, and provide MLA [LAST NAME] with an overview of my business and the impact of REALTORS® in our community on behalf of the Alberta Real Estate Association (AREA), which represents REALTORS® in Alberta.

Alberta REALTORS® are proud to be part of solutions that put consumers first. REALTORS® are trusted advisors, working across the province, who help consumers make some of the largest purchases of their lives. AREA members are in the business of supporting communities – not just selling homes.

REALTORS® are committed to working with the Government of Alberta as a collaborative and engaging partner. Today, the real estate industry faces a number of challenges and opportunities, and I would welcome an opportunity to discuss issues that impact real estate and the community with MLA [LAST NAME] during an in person meeting. Please contact me at your earliest convenience to schedule a meeting.

Sincerely,

[NAME]

[ADDRESS]

[PHONE]

[MOBILE]

Preparing for your MLA meeting

Now that you have secured a meeting time with your MLA, it is important to review what you want to say, so that you can communicate clearly and effectively. The following are some sample talking points to help guide your discussion. Do not be concerned about using these exact words, but about understanding the points and being able to say them in a way that is natural for you.

The goal of this meeting is to educate your MLA about the services you offer your community and to raise awareness of the challenges REALTORS® face. The MLA may ask for additional information and may or may not share how he or she is planning to act on the information you have shared. Review the AREA advocacy documents and key messages, included in separate documents, prior to your meeting.

- *Note: H+K will update this section of the Member Engagement Toolkit with AREA's key advocacy messages once this information is developed.*

REMEMBER: You are building (or have built) a relationship with your MLA. Keep the conversation positive, while raising your concerns. Your MLA is not responsible for all Government of Alberta decisions, but can influence those decisions. No matter what your opinion of the conversation, end it by thanking the MLA for his or her time.

After the meeting

Take the time to review the feedback form provided on the next page and submit it to Kerri Romanetz, Government Relations Analyst at 403.209.3625 or kromanetz@areahub.ca.

Feedback is an important tool for AREA to identify its allies, adjust its messaging and plan its next steps effectively.

REMEMBER: If your MLA has requested that you provide additional information, it is important to do so in a timely fashion. AREA can provide these materials for you. Please contact the AREA office for assistance at 403.209.3625.



AREA MLA Feedback Form

When completed, please submit this form to an AREA employee (hard copy or via email to governmentrelations@areahub.ca)

Your Name

Board Name

Phone (Work)

Phone (Mobile)

E-mail

Name of MLA Visited

Constituency

Political Party

Have you met with him/her before today? Yes No

Does he/she support our positions on land transfer tax? Yes No Not Discussed

If no, what was his/her reason?

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Does he/she support our positions on condominium property act regulations? Yes No Not Discussed

If no, what was his/her reason?

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What did the MLA say he/she would do to support our positions? (For example, did he/she agree to speak or write to the responsible minister on AREA's behalf? Raise the issue with colleagues? Raise the issue at a relevant committee meeting?)

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Did he/she ask you to provide further information? Yes No

If yes, what information did your MLA request?

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What other issues did you raise with your MLA (if any)?

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What additional issues did your MLA raise with you (if any)?

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Is there any specific follow-up required by AREA for this MLA?

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