

# preparing your group to meet with MPs

## value of MP meetings to our work

- We want to strengthen relationships with MPs in order to make them champions of our issues.
- While letters to MPs and getting our letters in the media have influence, on the continuum of relationship building activities, getting regular meetings to speak powerfully on our issues is more effective.
- Having these meetings does the obvious: build political will. It also helps us empower citizens to realize their political power.
- Meeting with an MP, or any policy maker, on a Results issue is an invigorating and galvanizing experience. Having this experience strengthens the commitment of volunteers, builds their advocacy skills, and makes them hungry to take on more.

## using education & action meetings to motivate volunteers to meet their MPs

*"You're not really dangerous as an advocate until you can speak powerfully."  
Sam Daly-Harris, Results Founder*

- Remind volunteers that MPs need to be in touch with the concerns of constituents in order to represent them and to be re-elected. You are a resource to MPs.
- Discuss the continuum of actions that build relationships – from "click" campaigns and petitions, to emails, to hand-written letters to face-to-face meetings. Compare it to ways one would build and sustain a relationship with a friend.
- Work with volunteers to confirm who their MPs are. Get them in groups by MP.
- Great "trick": Even if it is after business hours, ask volunteers to put in a call NOW to their respective MP's office and leave a message requesting a meeting. Leave the contact information of someone in the group who is prepared to follow up with the MP office within 2 days to schedule the appointment. When confirming the appointment during the follow up, make sure the MP's office knows how many people to expect and confirm the amount of time the MP has available for the meeting. Now volunteers are

really motivated because they want to be prepared for this meeting they've just asked for!

- Review the related Action Sheet and/or “MP leave behind” provided by staff when you tell them of your upcoming meeting in the manner you normally would, pulling out some of the key points of our position.
- Use the Laser Talk model. Review elements of a good **laser talk**, ending with a question of “can we count on you to (do such and such) ...” to the MP.
- Work in small groups or larger groups to compose and practice laser talks on the issue(s) through roleplay.
- Organize roles. When there are several people going to an MP meeting, ask them to choose a leader who will organize the group and lead the meeting. Choose who else in the group will speak on which points from the group laser talk.
- Be a support. As meetings are confirmed, volunteers may become nervous. Please be available to them to practice if they want or let them worry aloud. If you or another leader in your group are available to join a group of volunteers at their MP meeting, that can also be helpful.
- Review this tip sheet with volunteers and emphasize the following things to remember at their meeting:
  - **Be Prepared.** Learn a little about the MP in advance of the meeting. The leader should make a personal connection to the issue at the beginning of the conversation using the research done on the MP. An example: “We know you have been a real leader on women’s issues and that you would want to more about this opportunity for Canada to make a difference in the lives of poor women.”
  - **Be Yourself.** You are building a relationship with your MP, make some small talk when you meet. Let each member of the group introduce themselves (very briefly).
  - **Be Conscious of Time.** The chosen group leader should confirm the time the MP has available at the beginning of the meeting and ensure the group wraps up within that time.
  - **Be Respectful.** Keep a diplomatic tone; you are ambassadors of Results.
  - **Be Specific.** Remind volunteers to conclude their position by asking, “can we count on you to (do such and such)?”. At the end of the meeting the leader should restate what the MP has agreed to do, thank the MP, and say they will follow up with the MP in 3-4 weeks.
  - **Follow-Up.** Make sure someone in the group follows up with a handwritten note of thanks to the MP within a day of the meeting.

## using education & action meetings to debrief volunteers

- This is a time for celebration – they did it! Give space at your next meeting for volunteers to discuss their experiences, and cheerlead all of the way, even if a meeting hasn't happened yet and volunteers are still plugging at getting one. Take a list of the things they learned and would or wouldn't do next time they have an MP meeting for the group to refer to before other future MP meetings.
- Ask for intelligence – did you get a commitment? Is there follow up information you promised your MP? Did they give you a lead? Etc. Then please communicate this information to the Public Engagement Coordinator at [action@resultscanada.ca](mailto:action@resultscanada.ca) or track your actions [here](#).
- Encourage volunteers to follow up with their MP as discussed in preparation.
- As MP David McGuinty has told some of our Ottawa-based volunteers, the first meeting is only the beginning of the relationship. Talk with your volunteers about planning ahead to a future appointment to reconnect and update their MP.

*Updated: January 2020*