



Meeting with elected officials and policy makers

Some of the reasons why your Club might want to contact your local representatives:

- To introduce them to new CFUW and Ontario Council policies .
- To provide information on a particular issue. MPPs and MPs are members of caucuses. Most elected representatives are also part of committees where bills are studied. Individual members are also asked for advice when leaders are establishing policy.
- To ask them to pose a question in the Legislature or House.
- To give them sufficient information or support to question the appropriate Minister. If they have several letters from a cross-section of their constituency, this strengthens their position and their resolve, especially if other representatives can say that they have had similar letters.
- To ask them to lobby their colleagues, and the responsible Minister.
- To request a response and a report on what action will be taken
- To inform them of a particular concern that might not be before the Legislature or Parliament.

Ways to meet with elected officials and policy makers

Invite your elected officials to one of your social events.

Invite them as a speaker. This is especially true for local politicians and school board officials who understand and know your own area.

Invite them to a coffee party or interest group.

Involve them in a fundraiser.

Getting to know them socially may help when you need to connect with them officially, and of course

Meeting with them officially at their office

Making the appointment

It should not be too difficult to find time to meet with your political representatives. When the Legislature or the House is not in session, politicians are often in their ridings and available for meetings. Even when the Legislature or the House is in session, most politicians spend one day a week in their home riding constituency office – usually Fridays.

The easiest way to set up a meeting is to phone the constituency office and ask to speak to the scheduler. It is important to tell them who you represent and what you would like to discuss at the meeting. If you have already sent an introductory letter, remind them of the date it was sent and refer to any reply you have received. Be flexible when scheduling a date. Confirm the date and time of the meeting in a letter or email including in it what you want to discuss and the people who will be there.

Before the Meeting

Discuss the purpose of the planned visit with your Club Executive and get their approval.

Determine the objectives for your visit. You do not want to waste their time, or your own.

Collect information about your representatives, their committees or parliamentary work, their background and their party platform. Be aware, if possible, of any statements they have made or positions they have taken on any issues similar to the one(s) you want to address. It shows them you are aware of their efforts.

Prepare notes and rehearse your presentation, if necessary. Always leave time for discussion.

Never go alone, but limit the delegation to no more than four where possible.

The President will normally lead the delegation and, with the advice of her executive, will decide who will accompany her and who will say what and when they will say it.

During the Meeting

If you are bringing information such as a brief or Resolutions with you, have copies for each member of your delegation, as well as your representative and any staff members present.

Thank them for meeting with you.

The meeting will have two primary components:

- the presentation of your position as representative of CFUW and your club; and
- the gathering of information from your elected representative.

Get to the point quickly, explain your Club, CFUW, Ontario Council (if you are meeting with MPPs or local officials), and the reason that you are there, presenting your facts and ideas in a clear concise manner. If the reason is the newly passed resolutions, explain the process.

Don't be awed or intimidated; they are your elected official, but do listen to their point of view.

Your elected representative will be primarily interested in information that is relevant to concerns currently facing the legislature, the House or the City Council, highlight these issues.

Once you have outlined your Club's and CFUW's concerns, ask for their position and that of their party.

Feel free to make notes on their replies.

If you are asked a question you can't answer, offer to forward the information to their office (and then do it). If it concerns resolutions, offer to have the Club which prepared the resolution send them more detail.

Ask what you can do to be helpful.

Respect your time limit [usually 30 minutes], and don't overstay your welcome.

Leave information behind [copy of relevant Brief(s), your Club brochure, CFUW brochures].

After the Meeting

Call and thank the assistant.

Send a letter to your representative thanking them for their time and reinforcing the key points made at the meeting.

Report back to your Executive and write a report of your meeting for the Club newsletter.

Send a report to your Regional Director.