



## **The Co-op Guide to the MLA BBQ, or How to grill your elected representative on the Key issues**

Don't let this be a summer of discontent for your co-op! Got the end-of-agreement, expiry-of-rent-subsidy blues? What better reason for throwing a party? Inviting your MLA to a summer barbeque at your co-op is a great way to show your elected representative your community and grill them on where they stand on the You Hold the Key campaign.

With that in mind, we've come up with a simple guide for a co-op barbeque party to ensure your MLA is fed both in body and mind.

**The Invite:** A nice, light, upbeat invite to a summer BBQ should be irresistible to MLAs bent on taking the pulse of their constituents. A word of advice: don't mention the Key campaign. There'll be plenty of time for that later...

**The Welcoming Committee:** You will need a designated tour guide (co-op president or long-time member) to greet and tour your MLA around once they arrive. Partner them with at least one member currently on subsidy willing to share their story (briefly) with the MLA.

**Allergy Alert:** Partisan politics are strictly off the menu. Please put aside party politics—keep your eyes on the prize of getting a rent supplement program for low-income co-op members to replace expiring federal agreements. To do this, the campaign needs support from MLAs from all the parties in the Legislature.

**The Appetizers:** Nothing like a little walk around the co-op to work up an appetite. This is your chance to show your MLA the virtues of co-op living, any repairs or renovations you've recently undertaken and, of course, to share a few stories about members on subsidy and what losing them would mean to your community.

**The Main Dish:** Make a meal of the issues. Make sure you give your MLA food for thought along with the BBQ burgers. Let your MLA know:

- Members who receive rent subsidies are seniors, people with disabilities, single-parents—the most vulnerable members of your community
- When your co-op's federal housing agreement ends, the rent support that makes housing affordable for your low-income neighbours ends too
- There's no provincial rent supplement program to replace this support
- S/he holds the key to fixing the co-op housing crunch

**Drinks Menu:** No mixed-message cocktails, please! You don't want your MLA over-indulging in too many housing issue beverages. Stick to a steady diet of You Hold the Key Campaign cola

and your elected representative will make it home with a clear head and a perfect picture of how to fix the co-op housing crunch.

**A little dessert:** By now, your MLA's head is just as full as their stomach. They need to digest. But if they want a little dessert, send them our way—the [You Hold the Key Campaign](#) would love to serve up more details on how a co-op rent supplement program could work and what MLAs from all parties can do to make sure it happens.

**Party favours for your MLA:** Before you say goodbye, make sure your MLA takes a little reading material home. The You Hold the Key Campaign mini-magazine is an ideal memento of your time together.

**The thank-you note:** Nothing says “thanks for visiting” than a short note to your MLA a few days after your event. MLAs attend hundreds of events and anything you can do to make yours stand out will help. A short letter will do; a handwritten thank you card is even better. If you took photos during the event, send a few to your MLA by email and they might show up in the next riding newsletter.

That's our advice for staging a successful co-op BBQ that gently grills your MLA on the key issues facing our most vulnerable members. This format also works really well if you have an MP on the menu...

If you have any questions, suggestions or comments, don't hesitate to contact us. Have fun and remember: You Hold the Key!

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