



The Co-op Guide to the MP BBQ, or: How to grill your federal candidates on the Key issues

Want to get the jump on the federal election campaign? Why not take advantage of the Canadian political summer salad day tradition by joining the barbeque circuit? Inviting the federal political candidates in your riding to a meet-and-greet at your co-op is a great way to show your would-be MPs 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 candidates are fed both in body and mind.

The Invite: A nice, light, upbeat invite to a summer BBQ should be irresistible to federal candidates looking for a little support in advance of the start of the campaign. 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 the candidate(s) around once they arrive. Partner them with at least one member currently on subsidy willing to share their story (briefly). If you'd like a member of the YHTK Campaign Team there too, no problem — we love BBQ. Please invite us!

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

The Appetizers: Nothing like a little walk around the co-op to work up an appetite. This is your chance to show the candidate(s) 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 — and to them.

The Main Dish: Make a meal of the issues. Make sure you give the candidate(s) food for thought along with the BBQ burgers. Let them 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
- The province needs federal funding to help pay for that program
- They hold the key to fixing the co-op housing crunch

Drinks Menu: No mixed-message cocktails, please! You don't want the candidate(s) over-indulging in too many housing issue beverages. Stick to a steady diet of You Hold the Key

Campaign cola and they'll 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, the candidate(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 MPs from all parties can do to make sure it happens.

Party favours for your MP: Before you say goodbye, make sure your MP takes a little reading material home. The **You Hold the Key Campaign mini-magazine** is an ideal memento of your time together (if you need some copies, we can get those to you). And you can always get them to sign the pledge to support the CHF BC solution to the co-op housing crunch so they can take a copy home with them.

The thank-you note: Nothing says “thanks for visiting” more than a short note to the candidate(s) a few days after your event. Candidates 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 along by email.

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