

## ANNEXE 1

### SUBMITTING A REQUEST TO MEET WITH A DEPUTY/MINISTER

MNAs are holders of public office and must uphold their obligation to speak with members of the public, particularly those from their district or who are affected by the duties overseen in their role (ex: as a Minister or spokesperson).

This being said, MNAs receive hundreds of requests weekly. Some will try to meet with the largest number of people possible, while others will meet only with those judged to be important, and still others hardly meet with anyone at all. Regardless, one should not hesitate to request a meeting. That's why MNAs were elected, and what they are paid to do.

**The steps required to obtain a meeting are relatively simple:**

#### **Step 1: Send a request**

- All MNAs, their electoral division and their contact information (email and phone) are available here: [Députés - Assemblée nationale du Québec \(assnat.qc.ca\)](http://assnat.qc.ca)
- Requests can be sent via email to the addresses found in the above list.
- Your request must be brief and precise – identify yourself, the reason for the meeting and when you would like the meeting to take place. By including specific dates your request will be more likely to get attention and less likely to be pushed to the bottom of the pile.
- If you live in the district of the MNA you are contacting, mention it.
- Ideally your request should be placed 3 to 4 weeks prior to the requested meeting date.
- The subject line of your email must specify that you are requesting a meeting, for example: "Meeting request for the week of February 7th".
- Below is an example of a meeting request for a fictional Minister named John Smooth. The signature in your email must include your name, address and phone number.

Example of request:

Mr. Minister or Mr. Deputy

I belong to a group representing community organizations that support needy families. Group X has been in existence for 10 years and offers support and respite for parents of autistic children. Our organizations are greatly hindered by the chronic lack of financing, and these past two years have accentuated the problem. During this difficult time, it is crucial that support be provided to those impacted by the current pandemic.

Today I write to you in the hopes of meeting with you to discuss the needs of the organizations in your district, as well as possible solutions to lessen the numerous negative effects on our population. You understand that the situation is urgent and thus we must begin working together to reduce the current distress.

To that effect, I am fully available during the week of February 7<sup>th</sup> to discuss this issue with you. If it is not convenient for you to meet then, please provide an alternate date of your choice.

Thank you for your time and attention.

Mrs. Z

**Step 2: Getting a meeting**

With a bit of luck, your request will be accepted, and you will have a meeting. Responses will usually come from a Minister's assistant, the person in charge of scheduling, or a political attaché. Should you receive such a response, try to be as flexible as possible and accept the proposed meeting time. MNAs have very busy schedules.

Due to Covid 19, some meetings are still being held via Zoom or other similar platforms. The assistant may ask if you are able to be the host for the meeting held on this type of platform. Alternately, the majority of Ministers have their own hosting capabilities. As with the above, be as flexible and conciliatory as possible.

You may also receive an automated response from the Minister's office stating that their schedule is quite full and that you will be contacted at a later time. If this happens, move on to **Step 3** below.

Further, if you haven't received any response after approximately 2 weeks, move on to **Step 3** below.

Also, you may receive an outright refusal explaining that a meeting is not possible due to scheduling constraints. Should this happen, ask to meet with the cabinet director of political attaché for the Minister. They often have more availability than their employer, and their role consists specifically in the support of daily tasks and follow up on files for the MNA. A meeting with a political attaché who will then report to the Minister is better than no meeting at all.

In all cases, a polite response is recommended. Below is a suggested response.

Suggested response to the refusal of your meeting request:

Thank you for your reply. I am disappointed to learn that Mr. Smith is not able to meet with me at this time. Know that I remain available at any time he would find convenient, as this issue is very important to me, to our group, and to the families that we assist.

We cannot afford to wait as further delays will result in untenable situations for the parents, which may have dramatic outcomes.

While waiting to meet with M. Smith, I would like to meet in a more timely manner with someone from his staff to inform them of the urgency of our situation and to evaluate the possible solutions.

Thank you again for your time.

Mrs. Z

**Step 3: Follow up by phone**

If, after approximately one week, you haven't received a response, follow up by phone is recommended. Below is a suggested scenario:

I'm calling about the meeting request that I submitted on (date). I'm available at any time during the week of February 7th. It's important that I meet with Mr. Smith to discuss a situation that may have a direct impact on several Québec families in his district.

You will probably be asked about the purpose of your meeting request. If this happens, you can answer along the lines of:

I want to discuss XYZ

Elected officials must listen to people who, like myself, are impacted by this situation.

If the person to whom you are speaking implies that the subject of your request isn't pertinent to the Minister, you can respond as follows:

There are several families concerned by the situation in Quebec in the Minister's district. This concerns him. We are desperate and we want to be heard. Elected officials must meet...

Remain polite and don't engage in a confrontation when making your statements as outlined above. Tell your own story. That is what will leave a lasting impression.

Remember that regardless of the responses you may receive, you must always maintain respectful behaviour and conduct.

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