



Fact Sheet

Role of a Member of the Legislative Assembly

Nunavut's 19 MLAs are elected to represent their constituents in the Legislative Assembly. MLAs exercise a number of responsibilities in the fulfillment of their role as Nunavut's legislators.

As representatives and legislators, MLAs articulate the broad concerns and aspirations of their constituents, advocate for their communities' needs and contribute to the process of determining the direction of the government in addressing Nunavut-wide issues.

MLAs perform an important "ombudsperson" function through their ability to assist constituents with problems or requests for information from the government.

The responsibilities of an MLA can be grouped according to the main areas where they work:

In the House

- Participating in the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly;
- Making statements in the Legislative Assembly about issues of importance to a specific constituency, community or constituent;
- Making statements in the Legislative Assembly about issues of importance to Nunavut as a whole;
- Asking oral and written questions of Ministers to ensure the accountability of the government;

- Speaking to and voting on formal motions;
- Scrutinizing and voting on the proposed Bills, budgets and business plans of the government; and
- Presenting petitions on behalf of constituents.

In Committees and Caucuses

- Serving as a member of the Standing and Special Committees of the Legislative Assembly;
- Participating in the proceedings of Committees, including public hearings on Bills and other matters; and
- Participating in the proceedings of Full Caucus and Regular Members' Caucus.

In the Constituency

- Meeting with individual constituents on issues of concern;
- Meeting with community leaders and organizations on issues of concern to the constituency;
- Attending and speaking at community functions; and
- Keeping constituents informed of their activities as an MLA and listening to constituents' concerns by holding public meetings and appearing on local radio.

In the Office

- Reviewing and preparing correspondence;
- Meeting with other MLAs, staff, constituents and others;
- Holding interviews with the media;
- Reviewing *Hansard*; and
- Keeping informed about current issues by reading reports, news releases and other documents.

The Speaker, as the presiding officer of the Legislative Assembly, must maintain the appearance of public neutrality and impartiality. For example, the Speaker may not ask questions of Ministers or make statements in the House. However, the Speaker is still the MLA for his or her constituency and may be expected to meet privately with Ministers on issues of concern.

The Premier and Ministers are MLAs, but constitute the government of the day. As part of the Cabinet, they are collectively responsible for the policies of the government. While Ministers may, on occasion, make statements as individual MLAs, they are expected to refrain from publicly criticizing the actions of the government of which they are a part.

Regular MLAs are not considered to be part of the government. As Regular MLAs, they have the responsibility and opportunity to speak out freely on public affairs and pose questions to the government of the day on its policies and actions.