



HOUSE OF COMMONS  
CHAMBRE DES COMMUNES  
CANADA

## FACT SHEET

# Toward the 44th Parliament: Members' Orientation Program

Under the direction of the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Administration provides all new Members with an orientation program outlining the support and services available to them. The program focuses on providing new Members with the administrative and procedural information they will need to carry out their responsibilities as parliamentarians.

## Overview of the program

- For the first time, Members will be able to participate in the program either **in person or virtually**. As it is for each Parliament, the content is reviewed and adapted to new policies and processes. The program's delivery has been adapted in response to the pandemic, in keeping with public health directives.
- Members are assigned a **House Administration liaison officer** to guide them through their orientation.
- Members are directed to *Source*, an **intranet site** designed to provide them with accessible, relevant and timely information. An integrated learning portal gives Members and their staff access to online and in-person training.
- A **Members' Orientation Centre** is put in place for Members' first days on Parliament Hill. Members are invited to attend personalized in person or virtual **meetings and small group orientation sessions with House Administration subject-matter experts** to help them get started in their new role and set up their constituency and Hill offices. Key topics include an overview of the Parliamentary Precinct as well as information on human resources and staffing, financial resources, and the digital infrastructure.
- Shortly before the opening of the new Parliament, Members are invited to **an orientation session on their work in the Chamber**. This session covers the physical setting of the Chamber, the House schedule, procedures for debate and voting, etc.

- Before they can take their seat in the Chamber, Members must take an oath or make a solemn affirmation of allegiance at a [swearing-in ceremony](#).

## Liaison officers

New Members are assigned a liaison officer to provide them with personalized service throughout their orientation.

Liaison officers are experienced employees of the House Administration who undergo specialized training before the start of the program. Their primary responsibility is to guide Members through their orientation to the administrative and procedural aspects of their parliamentary functions.

## Members' Orientation Centre

New Members may visit the Orientation Centre in the Parliamentary Precinct when they have in-person appointments. These appointments are also available virtually. Members are provided with assistance on a variety of matters, from obtaining parking passes to setting up their IT equipment and Internet connections.

Members also participate in a series of orientation meetings and sessions to familiarize them with their new work environment, as well as provide key information on setting up their offices. They are introduced to their role as an employer within the parliamentary context and provided with training on [harassment and violence prevention](#) in the workplace. House Administration experts also provide personalized assistance and information on staffing, budgets, technology, security, and legal matters. These meetings take place in person or virtually.

The Members' Orientation Centre is open for four to eight weeks following the election, depending on the needs of new Members. After this time, the House Administration continues to assist Members with the remaining orientation and transition activities.

## Source – Members' intranet

The information Members need to carry out their parliamentary functions is available on *Source*, an intranet geared towards their specific roles. *Source* is mobile-enabled and accessible from a variety of devices. A task-based approach focuses on the essential steps that new Members must follow.

*Source* hosts a learning portal where Members and their staff, both in Ottawa and in constituencies, can easily access online courses related to the different aspects of their work.

## Chamber Orientation Session

A Chamber Orientation Session will be held shortly before the return of Parliament, providing Members with an overview of events that occur during the first days of the House sitting, describing a typical sitting day, and explaining the rules of decorum in the Chamber.

A panel of experienced Members will provide advice on how new Members can maximize their effectiveness. It is expected that this session will be offered in hybrid format.

## Swearing-in ceremony

Members are required to take an oath or make a solemn affirmation of allegiance before taking their seats and voting in the House.

As explained in [\*House of Commons Procedure and Practice\*](#), the current wording of the oath is “I, (Member’s name), do swear that I will be faithful and bear true Allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second”. The wording of the solemn affirmation is “I, (Member’s name), do solemnly, sincerely, and truly declare and affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Second”.

Members may have their swearing-in ceremony virtually or in person. For in-person ceremonies, room capacity will be limited.

## Toward the 44th Parliament: Sitting of the House

The date for the [first sitting of a new Parliament](#) is set through a series of proclamations issued by the governor general on the advice of the prime minister. On the day that Parliament is dissolved or prorogued, a proclamation is issued summoning Parliament to meet on a given day. A second proclamation confirms or changes the date and may set the time for Parliament to meet for the “Dispatch of Business” (the date can later be advanced or deferred). A third proclamation is issued if the time for Parliament to meet was not announced in the second proclamation.

The provisions for hybrid sittings and electronic voting expired with the dissolution of the 43rd Parliament. It will be for the Members of the 44th Parliament to determine future House of Commons proceedings.

## Other orientation information

The House Administration’s Members’ Orientation Program is complemented by the training and support that a new Member receives from their political party (for those affiliated with a party).

Once the Orientation Program is completed, Members and their staff will continue to have access to learning material through online and in-person sessions. The House Administration provides Members with a variety of resources to support them throughout their mandate.

## Support for departing Members

The House Administration also has a transition program in place to support Members who did not seek re-election and those who were not re-elected.

A transition team oversees and coordinates the delivery of services related to pay and benefits, vacating parliamentary and constituency offices, relocation, career transition support, and wrapping up financial aspects related to the Member's Office Budget.

In addition, transition officers are appointed as primary points of contact to support departing Members and their employees during this period.

## Health and safety measures

The House of Commons' Occupational Health, Safety and Environment team was consulted as part of the planning for the Members' Orientation Program. This included advice on determining floor layout and room capacity for in-person sessions.

Members will have the choice to participate in the program either in-person or virtually. Preventative measures, which include the wearing of masks, continue to be in place in House of Commons buildings, as outlined in this [statement from the Board of Internal Economy](#).

As there are capacity limits for in-person participation, only Members will be able to attend in person. Training will be offered virtually to partners and spouses, and Members' staff may participate in the Members' Employees Onboarding Program.

## Additional resources

- *House of Commons Procedure and Practice*, [Opening of a Parliament and a Session](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Harassment and violence prevention framework](#)
- [Frequently asked questions: Pension plan, pay and benefits of departing Members of Parliament](#)
- *Members' Allowances and Services Manual*, [Elections](#) chapter
- [By-Laws](#) of the Board of Internal Economy
- Statement by the Board of Internal Economy: [Use of masks and extension of preventative measures at the House of Commons](#)

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