



Strategizing for UBCM ministers' meetings

Tactics for making the ask and getting to yes

Presented by Shirley Bond and Aileen Machell



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What we'll cover: UBCM 2026

1. **Part one — The government and its priorities**
 1. The political landscape
 2. The fall session and the budget
 3. The three core priorities and mandate letters
 4. Who you'll meet and how to use your 15 minutes
2. **Part two — How to make your case**
 1. Align your ask to the government's priorities
 2. Make it easier to say yes in a tight fiscal environment
 3. Stories with impact, follow-up and building the relationship

Part one: the current government and its priorities at UBCM 2026

Political landscape

Fluctuating race,
some polls showing
closer vote intention

A steadier majority
in the legislature

Cabinet shuffle



The mood: what most voters care about

Top issues

- Cost of living and affordability — consistently in top issues
- Housing costs and supply
- Healthcare
- Jobs and the economy
- Public safety
- (Trade war)



The fall session and budget planning



The elephant in the room.



The deficit in the room.

Every ask adds pressure to a challenging picture — many needs, less money to work with, and new potential costs like tariff impacts and BCNU settlement.

This government's three core priorities

Frame every ask against these three.

- **Jobs, the economy and affordability** — central focus
- **Housing** — a top issue and a core cost-of-living item
- **Healthcare** — always high on the agenda, especially for older voters

Mandate letters



July 17, 2025

Honourable Christine Boyle
Minister of Housing and
Municipal Affairs
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Dear Minister Boyle:

Congratulations on your appointment as Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs at a critical time for our province. Serving as a member of the executive council is a privilege and responsibility which I am confident you will fulfill with integrity and a commitment to the people of our province.

British Columbians have trusted us with a mandate to deliver for them in ways that make a tangible difference in their daily lives. They expect us to listen and learn from people of different perspectives – and work together to make things better for everyone.

Specifically, we will tackle the challenges people worry about at the kitchen table:

- **Grow the economy by creating good jobs across British Columbia.** We will collaborate with businesses, workers, and communities to attract investments in both new and traditional sectors as well as emerging sectors of the economy. This approach will bring certainty for business, security for workers, and generate the wealth needed to support the essential services British Columbians rely on.
- **Reduce costs for families,** including by helping people access homes they can afford through support for first-time homebuyers, increasing the supply of rental housing stock, and stronger measures to crack down on housing speculation.

- Ministers' mandate letters signal key themes — but they aren't set in stone
- The Trump effect and the provincial deficit have shifted priorities
- Read them as general direction, not a fixed contract
- Point to how your ask fits into mandate themes

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meetings in several days. Ministers move fast — come prepared and get to the point.

Who you'll meet

Key contacts

- Premier and his office
- Ministers
- MLAs
- Public Service
- Inviting your MLA

Getting the meeting



Part two: how to make your case

Make your 15 minutes count

You get 15 minutes — treat it like speed dating.

- Advance preparation is critical
- Agree on your priorities in advance — decide who leads on which ask
- Keep introductions quick and crisp; listen as much as you talk
- Be prepared, respectful and solutions-oriented — what ministers value most
- End with clear next steps and follow-up
- Leave a one-pager, not a lengthy brief: why it matters, the ask, and the best contact

Understanding their priorities helps you advance yours

Understand the government's values and you can make a sharper pitch.

- Frame asks around the top three: jobs and affordability, housing, healthcare
- Show how the ask fits the mandate letters
- Make the benefit-versus-cost case explicit
- Answer the real question: how does this improve life for people in your community?



Small stories, big impact

Ministers remember the specific **successes – large and small – for people and communities.**

- Examples:
 - Pouce Coupe pedestrian lights
 - Valemount school
 - NW Resource Benefits Alliance
 - Treatment beds and involuntary care
 - Gibson's daycare at housing site



Make it easy to say yes

Show the benefit is worth it

- Demonstrate the benefit outweighs the cost
- Lower-cost asks and policy changes can move faster
- Show your community is taking part—municipal investment on the table

Focused, achievable

- Funnel to one concrete ask: “today, we want to talk about this”
- An achievable next step could be an introduction, advocacy to federal government, or other way to demonstrate progress
- Ministers want to find things to say yes to — be a solutions-oriented partner

Build the relationship — and know your win

- Use the meeting to strengthen the relationship: it's not just about asks
- Follow up: have staff write with appreciation, reiterate takeaways, restate the ask and outline next steps
- A win = one concrete ask delivered and one thing you'll do together
- You won't always get a yes at UBCM — but you set the stage for one



Questions

Shirley Bond and Aileen Machell