



Making Contacts for Washington State University Extension

This information provides some basic tips for anyone who wants to talk with decision makers about the importance of WSU Extension's educational programming.

Who should be contacted?

- Your state representative and senator
 - You can find information about your representative and senator at <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature>. You can also access information about legislative districts at the same web site.
- The governor
 - You can contact her by mail at: Governor Chris Gregoire, Office of the Governor, PO Box 40002, Olympia, WA 98504-0002; by phone at (360) 902-4111; or by fax at (360) 753-4110. You can also send Governor Gregoire an email to express your views. This form is available at <http://www.governor.wa.gov/contact/default.asp>.
- Other opinion leaders and decision makers
 - Talk to others who may have good contact with legislators and/or the governor.
- Organizations and agencies
 - As you meet with and work with others, it is appropriate to talk about the importance of WSU Extension and encourage anyone interested to help share that message with decision makers.

What are the basic ground rules?

- Be brief, concise and polite.
- Thank him or her for listening.
- Follow up with additional information, if appropriate.
- Use your own words to explain why WSU Extension is important to you, your family, the community, particular industries or interests, etc.
- Be reasonable and constructive. Indicate that you understand the complexity of the budget situation, and be willing to consider trade-offs.

What is the best way to make contact?

There is no one best way. The main point is to do it! Choose whatever method works for you:

- Personal contact:
 - Talking directly with your legislator is great if it can be arranged. Be prepared to share your views briefly and clearly. You may want to follow up with a note and/or more information. Remember that a conversation with a legislator's aide can also provide a valuable contact.
- Writing a letter:
 - Write about only one issue. Keep it brief and tell why this issue is important to you, outlining your own experiences. Use your own words. The letter can be hand written, but it needs to be easy to read. Give your address and sign your name clearly. Here's how to address your letter:

For Senators:

The Honorable...
Washington State Senate
PO Box 40414
Olympia, WA 98504-0414

Dear Senator...:

For Representatives:

The Honorable...
Washington State House of Representatives
PO Box 40600
Olympia, WA 98504-0600

Dear Representative...:

- Sending email
 - Increasingly, this can be an effective method for contacting your legislators. The hints for writing letters also apply here. It is extremely important to send email just to your own legislators and to include your complete address so that they know that it is coming from a constituent. You can find e-mail addresses through the Web site mentioned at the top of this article.
- Making a phone call
 - This is a useful way to share an opinion on an issue quickly, particularly a yes or no message just prior to a legislative vote. It may be less effective for trying to explain why programs are important to you.

When do I need to make contact?

NOW and anytime! It is imperative that legislators and the governor hear from citizens while decisions are being made about the 2009-2010 state budgets. It is extremely important that they continue to hear from their constituents about the ways that WSU Extension's programs affect

their lives. They also need to hear about the ways that WSU Extension can help them serve their constituents.

**Thank you for making contacts in behalf of WSU Extension.
It is crucial that policy makers hear from their constituents.**