

WASHINGTON STATE UNIVERSITY



EXTENSION

WSU Extension Calendar Building Strong External Relationships

This chart describes efforts being initiated by WSU Extension (state and county levels) to strengthen the relationships with policymakers at all levels of government. The listing includes activities that are already being done, at least in some places, plus a variety of ideas that could be instituted. Many of the actions listed may be conducted at different times, and also span several months. The county budget sequence in the fourth column may vary significantly among counties but this represents the basic pattern.

In addition to this calendar, the WSU Office of Legislative Affairs maintains a web calendar that is specific to the current session. Please access the website at <http://olympia.wsu.edu/> for legislative updates and the legislative calendar at <http://www.olympia.wsu.edu/Calendar.aspx> for information relative to specific dates.

MONTH	GOVERNMENT DATES	WSU Extension STATE INITIATIVE/RESPONSIBILITY	WSU Extension COUNTY INITIATIVE/RESPONSIBILITY
January	State dates are in blue, Federal dates in red County dates in green For updated Washington State Calendars , please access the http://www1.leg.wa.gov/legislature/calendar/ web site.	Ongoing communications about budget situation	New fiscal years begins for county governments County staff and WSU Extension advocates work together to determine strategies to build stronger relationships with public officials. Recognize that both counties and the state are continuing to face budget challenges.

			Use <u>Know your Policymakers</u> form as a staff project to match the interests of commissioners and legislators with your programming initiatives and to development communications strategy.
	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilitate discussions at every staff meeting concerning the relationships and connections with public officials. ✓ If you have new legislators, make a point to establish some regular means of getting together. ✓ Find out the names of your legislator’s staff members. Try to regularly send them information that can be helpful in their work with constituents. ✓ Contact federal liaison if a new legislator is elected from your county regarding appropriate connections and plans for making contact. 		
February	<p>Governor’s State of the State Address.</p> <p>Hearings begin the House Higher Education Appropriations subcommittee for the higher education budget on first year of biennium.</p> <p>District work period for federal legislators – mid February.</p>	<p>Share state and federal budget proposals with county and state staff and with state WSU Extension advocates.</p> <p>WSU administrators meet with key legislative leaders. (In February and throughout the budget process.)</p>	<p>Discuss Committee assignments of state and federal legislators and look for connections with WSUE programming.</p>
	<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Determine a strategy for distributing the county partner reports that works best for your situation. Possible approaches include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Consider having an Extension advocate deliver the report to the legislator or to commissioners. You may also want to send a copy to the legislator’s office. ✓ If you are sending the report, be sure to include a cover note. Try to highlight an issue of special interest to that policy maker. ✓ Consider including a resource list of WSU staff members. ✓ If there are several districts in your county, try to highlight some program initiative from that particular district in the cover note. ✓ Potential time to share program impacts with federal legislators – always contact the WSU federal relations office before making a contact. 		
March	<p>House likely to complete action on the higher edu budget by the end of March.</p> <p>District work period for federal legislators – mid March.</p>	<p>WSU Extension Advocates to meet in Olympia with state legislators and other policy makers.</p>	<p>County Extension advocates/supporters make contact with legislators as appropriate.</p>

	<p>Suggestions: Here are examples of different strategies for reporting to the county board of commissioners about Extension programming:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Written reports on a regular basis; try to include stories and description of impact. ✓ Monthly or quarterly reporting by different county staff members; Extension program advocates/supporters might also be involved. ✓ Have the “Friends of Extension” host an annual event (meal, tour, etc.) to report on major initiatives. ✓ Consider hosting a dinner (or lunch) in the Extension office prior to a County Commission meeting. ✓ Encourage Extension supporters/advocates/ council members or other program participants to use the “citizen time” to talk about the value of the programs. ✓ Potential time to share program impacts with federal legislators – always contact the WSU federal relations office before making a contact. 		
April			County departments develop budget requests
	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Attend public events in the district when members of the legislature and congress are appearing during the recess period. ✓ Be “at the table” for county department/agency collaborations. Long-term relationships are important. ✓ Be familiar with the current issues of concern within county government and look for ways that WSU Extension can be of assistance. 		
May	<p>Senate hearings and floor debate on higher education budget for first year of biennium budget.</p> <p>About May 15th – State revenue Estimating conference will establish target figures for final stage of budget negotiations.</p> <p>District work period for federal legislators – late May.</p>		Facilitate staff discussions on activities/programs where it would be appropriate to invite decision-makers
	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Good programming will lead to local investment. Show that your programs are allied with the county priorities. ✓ Always look for ways to connect the resources of WSU Extension with the work of commissioners and legislators. ✓ Potential time to share program impacts with federal legislators – always contact the WSU federal relations office before making a contact. 		
June	<p>District work period for federal legislators – late June.</p>	<p>State Extension advocacy group meets.</p> <p>Send thanks to legislators for budget support.</p>	County Extension Advocates send thanks to appropriate legislators for support of budget (timing depends on legislative schedule).

	<p>Suggestions: Contact policy makers in situations like these: ✓ “We’re considering applying for a government grant. Can you give us any insight into the process?” ✓ “Our... Extension educator just received an award from her national association.” ✓ “The WSU ____ County Extension Master Gardeners are assisting with educational demonstration at a park. Can you help with the dedication?”</p>		
July	<p>Governor approves state budget (tentative date on first year of biennium budget).</p> <p>Washington State Fiscal year begins.</p> <p>County Auditors notifies all officials to file budget requests and projected revenues for ensuing fiscal year.</p>		<p>County budget hearings are usually being held at this time.</p>
	<p>Suggestions: ✓ Regularly inform commissioners and legislators about special events/awards that involve their constituents. ✓ Arrange tours and visits so that legislators and their staff can better understand current issues in the county. ✓ Invite legislators and county commissioners to summer educational programs including field crop tours. ✓ Invite federal legislative staff to summer educational programs such as field crop tours – always contact the WSU federal relations office before making a contact.</p>		
August	<p>Filing of estimates with auditor or chief financial officer by all officials.</p> <p>District work period for federal legislators – Summer break – early August through Labor Day weekend.</p>		<p>The summer in a non-election year can be a good time for Extension advocates to host a picnic or other special event for county, state and federal policymakers.</p> <p>During election years, summer is a good time to develop strategies for building relationships with the newly elected officials.</p>
	<p>Suggestions: ✓ Involve commissioners and legislators in special programming events (e.g. Food \$ense programs, youth program celebrations, etc.) ✓ Use the expertise of legislators and/or their staff members concerning specific issues.</p>		
September	<p>State supplemental budget requests due by the 12th, for second year of the biennium budget.</p>		<p>It is recommended that County partner reports are made every six months. At least a month before you submit a report to your County partners, meet as staff and identify the most important educational programming during the past period and determine the best way to tell these stories.</p>

	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Get to know the special interest groups and the politically active clientele in the county relating to your programming area. 		
October	<p>Federal fiscal year begin on October 1st.</p> <p>Preliminary budget hearing by board of commissioners or county council.</p> <p>Review/Recommendations to the Governors budget on first year of biennium budget.</p>		<p>County board of commissioners or council finalizing budget for next year.</p>
	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Work with Extension advocates and other clientele to help them become knowledgeable about the political process and encourage them to become more involved. ✓ Encourage program participants to let their policy makers know about the value of WSU Extension programming. 		
November	<p>By the 15th, the state revenue forecast is due.</p>		<p>New county budget generally is distributed to departments; read your entire county budget document, there may be opportunities within other county departments for collaborative programs.</p> <p>Share county budget and county initiatives with advisory councils.</p>
	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Help new WSU Extension educators acquire knowledge about local government and develop “political Savvy” within the first few months of employment ✓ Help WSU Extension educators become familiar with the issue interest of your policy makers; link those interests with WSU Extension programming. 		
December	<p>Final budget adoption by board of commissioners</p> <p>By first week, Final budget Decision on Governor’s Budget Proposal.</p> <p>Governor’s second year of biennium supplemental budget to Legislature by Dec.25th.</p> <p>Adjournment of congress (TBA)</p>		<p>Some county board of commissioners or council, complete work on budget.</p> <p>Encourage council members to communicate thanks to commissioners for their support</p>

	<p>Suggestions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ At staff meetings, consciously think of ways to tell the Extension story in a manner that really means something to people not familiar with our work. In brief social situations, talk about what you do without relying on acronyms and job titles. Who do you serve? What are you teaching? What differences does it make?		