

How to Talk So Legislators Will Listen!

- 1) **Don't feel bad if you don't talk with THE legislator.**
Aides are top-notch, they write the legislation, they make the agency contacts, they probably have deeper knowledge of your subject (but don't assume this, especially with state legislators).
- 2) **Establish a relationship** with your legislator and the aide who is responsible for your county.
- 3) **Visit with them.**
Go to Office Hours!
Visit their offices when you're in town. Invite them to your office when they are in your town.

While you are there:
 - Make it clear you are available to help them out. Give examples of the people you serve.
 - Bring along information about what you do. Your expertise. Your programs. Be concise – you could provide your annual report for their file, but 5-6 bullet points might be more effective. (And hit them with new ones every time you visit.)
- 4) **Tout your successes.** Give them a call. (This helps them to become familiar with your programs.)
- 5) **Invite them to your events.** (Even if the legislator can't attend, he/she may send one of their representatives.)
- 6) Remember, **they can help** with issues regarding the government.
- 7) If they have questions or want additional information, provide it in a timely manner (**get back to them immediately if possible**).
- 8) **Have others talk** about how important Extension is to them.
- 9) Use these strategies with your County Board members as well.

Establish a relationship. Be available. Be realistic. Be helpful.