

Working with Elected Officials: A Guide for Agents and Board Members

Public officials are interested in the issues and programming their constituents feel are important. Local agents and members of the board can provide opportunities to help officials learn about educational programming that affects the lives of people they serve.

Educational programming from K-State Research and Extension is supported by public funds. Board members and agents must ensure that elected officials, particularly county commissioners and legislators, know about local educational needs, the programming K-State Research and Extension provides to address those needs, and the outcomes of that programming.

Goals

- Communicate regularly with elected officials.
- Provide opportunities for elected officials to learn about, support, and become advocates of K-State Research and Extension's local educational efforts.

Prepare

- Know each elected official's priority issues and how they overlap with the educational mission of K-State Research and Extension.
- Engage program development committees in guiding, implementing, and evaluating local educational programming.
- Focus educational efforts to make a difference in the community.
- Show elected officials the impacts of educational programming in the community.

Act

- Get to know county commissioners and local legislators personally.
- Invite commissioners and legislators to visit the local K-State Research and Extension office.
- Keep commissioners and legislators informed of the names of extension board members in their districts and alert them to any changes.
- Outline the duties and responsibilities of the local extension board and program development committee members for county commissioners and legislators.
- Attend local briefings legislators hold — especially during the legislative session.
- Share local programming outcomes with county commissioners and legislators.
- Involve commissioners and legislators in the extension council's annual meeting.
- Invite county commissioners and legislators to participate in educational programming and to special events (Walk Kansas recognition, crop production tours, 4-H Achievement Night).
- Introduce commissioners or legislators when they are in the audience at public meetings.
- Place the names of commissioners and legislators on appropriate mailing lists.
- Prepare an information package for newly elected commissioners and legislators.
- Keep open lines of communication with all local decision makers.