

Welcome to Module 3, Lesson 4: Telling Our Story. Family & Consumer Sciences has an important story to share regarding our work to strengthen families, farms, communities, and the economy. Who are we? What do we provide? Who do we serve? How do we serve? Where do we serve? Telling our story gives voice to human experiences and the educational programming and services that we create to tackle pressing human issues. Telling our story helps us to reflect on the cultural diversity of the communities of which we serve and our ability to empower individuals, support families, and enable communities through education and application. This lesson will describe the importance of telling our story to educate stakeholders about Family & Consumer Sciences.

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Lesson Objectives

After participation in this lesson, you will be able to:

- Utilize storytelling to raise awareness of the value of Family & Consumer Sciences
- Identify government representatives
- Recognize appropriate ways to communicate with government officials and stakeholders
- Determine methods to market Family & Consumer Sciences educational programming and resources



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There are three objectives for this lesson. First, you will be able to utilize storytelling to raise awareness of the value of Family & Consumer Sciences. Second, you will identify government representatives, which is an important step for identifying important people to tell the story of Family & Consumer Sciences. Third, you will recognize appropriate ways to communicate with government officials and stakeholders regarding the impact and benefits of work that strengthens families, farms, communities and the economy through educational programming and services. Last, you will be able to determine ways to market Family & Consumer Sciences educational programming and resources.

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Family & Consumer Sciences

- Seeks to improve quality of living for individuals, families and communities
- Has a great story to tell
- Has helped to shape our nation





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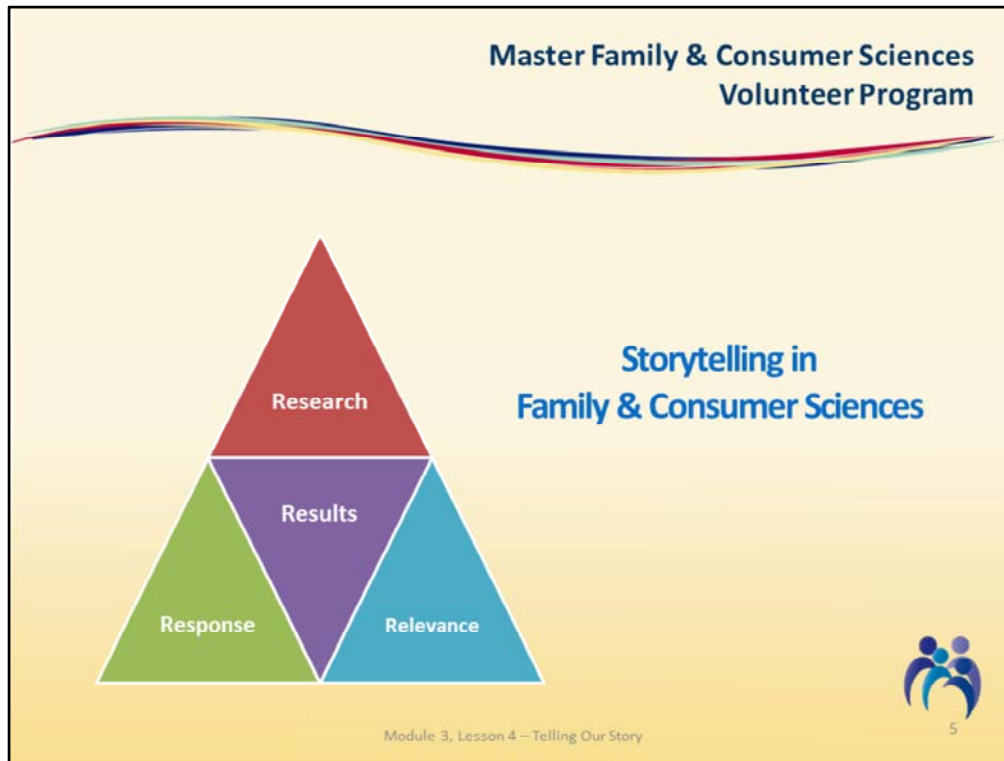
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Family & Consumer Sciences has many great stories to tell and it is important that those stories be heard. Family & Consumer Sciences has evolved from a rich history of successful and innovative programs that help to educate people by reaching individuals and families in their local communities. Our work helps people to improve their quality of living by teaching essential life skills to solve issues that they may face on a daily basis, which has helped to shape our nation. As problems facing our communities have changed and become more complex, so has our work changed to be able to meet the needs of communities.



A wise Indian Proverb reads: “Tell me a fact and I’ll learn. Tell me the truth and I’ll believe. But tell me a story and it will live in my heart forever.” Storytelling is the art and science of appealing to audiences by describing characters in context with their interactions with people, settings, and problems. As we listen to the problems that people face, and the steps they take to try and solve them, we share experiences, break down barriers of isolation and discriminations as we understand each other better, and we create more inclusive environments through community. Through storytelling, we are able to best communicate our historical perspective and the contemporary mission and objectives of Family & Consumer Sciences.

Many people may not fully be aware of the benefits and values of the outreach and impact created by work in Family & Consumer Sciences. Using storytelling, we can share information about our tailored educational programs and activities in local communities. We will discuss potential target audiences and strategies you may use to ensure the Family & Consumer Sciences story is heard.



Effective storytelling to raise awareness about the value of Family & Consumer Sciences involves four components: Research, Response, Results, and Relevance. Choose examples that share the story about Family & Consumer Sciences and educate diverse audiences about the value of our work to strengthen families, farms, communities, and the economy. The intent of storytelling is to educate others so they can provide instrumental and affective support for our discipline.

Research: Become familiar with methods in which Family & Consumer Sciences programming have and will be able to aid community issues in your area. This includes having a comprehensive understanding of the issues, differing perspectives, people directly and indirectly affected, financial implications, and others statistics, facts, and trends.

Relevance: Personalize the issues that you are communicating about and back up your arguments with your research. Nothing is more effective than personal stories and concrete evidence of how supporting the work of Family & Consumer Sciences will be beneficial to improve quality of living in communities.

Response: What is the attitude of your community regarding Family & Consumer Sciences? Through sharing real examples of public response through program evaluation regarding the benefits and areas of improvement of Family & Consumer Sciences, we strengthen accountability and increase transparency.

Results: Identifying results and impacts are key components to educating stakeholders. Share real measures of impact and the capacity of Family & Consumer Sciences to make a difference to help others to make informed decisions. What results have been or will be achieved through Family & Consumer Sciences educational programming and resources? Examples include partnerships and collaboration, garnering resources, discussion, and branding the value of Family & Consumer Sciences.

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Communication

- Show Respect for Person and Time
- Be Polite
- Be Reasonable
- Be Prepared
- Leave Factual Materials
- Be a Good Listener
- Regularly Inform



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With all government officials, no matter which level they represent, we should show respect for the person, their time, and their office. When we communicate with them, either in writing or verbally, we should always be polite and reasonable. They are human, and they can not do the impossible. You also need to be prepared. Know your issue or what you are supporting. It also is a good idea to leave materials that cover the basics of what you tell them. If writing, include a fact sheet with your letter. Always be a good listener and remember it is important to keep our representatives informed on an ongoing basis. If we keep them informed throughout the year of our programs and impacts, government officials will know and more likely support Family & Consumer Sciences.

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Creating Awareness through Storytelling

Your role as a Family & Consumer Sciences volunteer:

- Know proper procedures before making contact with governmental officials
- Know the University policy before speaking on its behalf
- Know the chain-of-command within your organizational structure
- Know the history and current challenges of Family & Consumer Sciences



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Creating awareness through storytelling in Family & Consumer Sciences is vital to the success of our work. Through storytelling, we change attitudes to gain people's trust regarding our abilities to improve communities. We also inform people about what works at the community level by being transparent and accountable. The reality is, that support and funding for evidenced-based, successful programming and services is not always guaranteed. Telling the story of our programs, issues, and impacts is important to the success of our field and in turn conveys the importance of our work to communities.

What is your role as a Family & Consumer Sciences volunteer? We will address this question by identifying four essential pieces of information to have before engaging others: 1. Know the chain-of-command within your organizational structure; 2. Know the policy before making contact with government officials; 3. Know the University policy before speaking on its' behalf; and 4. Know the history and current challenges of Family & Consumer Sciences.


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**People Who Need to Know the
Public Value of Family & Consumer Sciences**
Federal Level



United States Capitol
[U.S. Congress](#)

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Telling our story also includes identifying people who may need to know the public value of Family & Consumer Sciences. Federal officials are a particularly important audience. They not only provide financial resources but are also in contact with many people at the national level— these relationships can better communicate about Family & Consumer Sciences Extension and our work to provide research-based knowledge and skills to help individuals, families, and communities. At the federal level, every state has representatives in the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives. The link at the bottom of this slide can help you find names and addresses of representatives of your state.


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**People Who Need to Know the
Public Value of Family & Consumer Sciences**
State Level



Iowa State Capitol

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Individuals at the state level, who should be made aware of our programs, are state senators and state representatives. Each state has a web page where you can find information regarding the representatives of your area. Each state also has a governor that needs to be aware of Family & Consumer Sciences programs.

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**People Who Need to Know the
Public Value of Family & Consumer Sciences**

Local Level




Bailey County Courthouse, Muleshoe, Texas



Faulk County Courthouse, Faulkton, South Dakota



Prince Edward County Courthouse,
Farmville, Virginia



Washington County Courthouse,
South Kingstown, Rhode Island



Coconino County Courthouse, Arizona

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Localities, including towns, counties, and cities, also have government officials. These may be a city or town council member or a county supervisor or commissioner. Each county or city also has a city or town manager, mayor, or county administrator. Counties and cities also have websites that list these government officials and the municipalities that they serve.

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Government Representatives



Indiana State Capitol



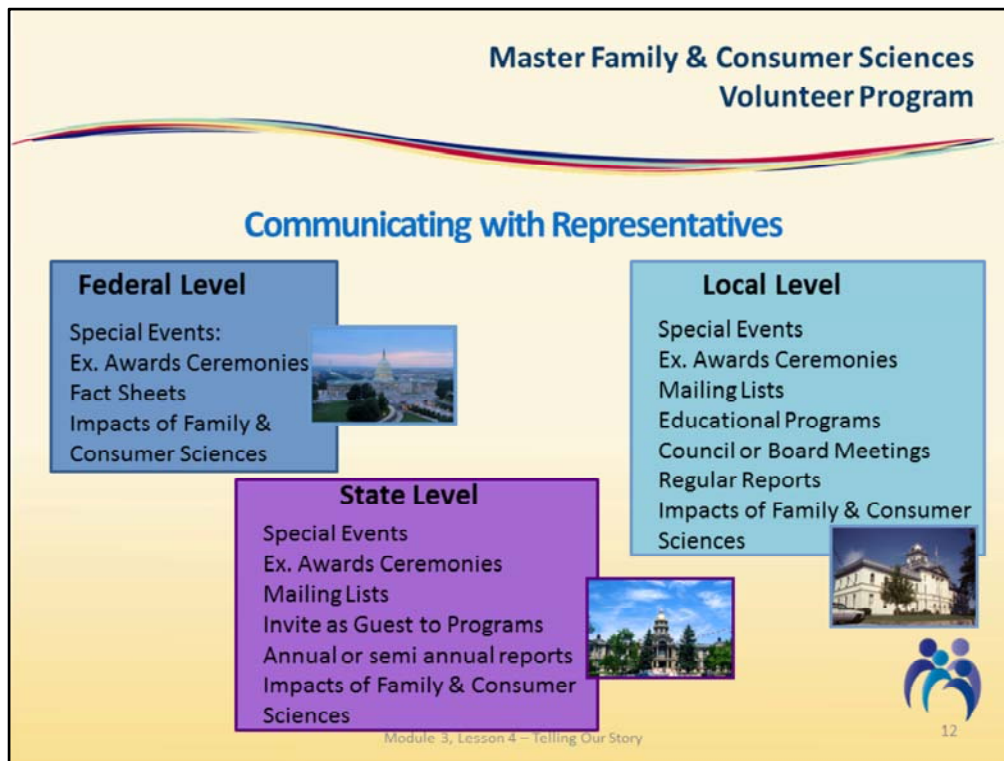
Kentucky State Capitol

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All of the government officials mentioned in the previous slides need to know about the role and impacts of programs delivered through Family & Consumer Sciences. Federal, state, and local government representatives are there to represent your region and do their best to meet the needs of citizens. It is important, however, for you to know when it is appropriate to communicate with your government officials and how to be effective in your communication with them.




How we communicate with government representatives may differ depending on the level at which they represent us. Remember also that some of the officials represent large geographic areas, so you should not overwhelm them with information. Rather, focus on specific details regarding what you want them to know about Family & Consumer Sciences programs that you volunteer for and program impacts. Annual program impacts fact sheets and invitations to federal, state, and local representatives to attend special events such as program ceremonies, or other events where program impacts are discussed are appropriate, especially if the program is funded by the invitee's agency. While your contact with federal officials will most often be infrequent and fairly formal, communication with your state and local officials can be more frequent. Consider including state and local officials on your mailing lists and occasionally attending local council meetings to both reinforce the story about Family & Consumer Sciences programs and to inform yourself of future opportunities for Family & Consumer Sciences.

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Federal Level

Be courteous and respectful
Avoid use of threats
Know your issue
Keep comments brief, pertinent, and factual
Identify the subject immediately
Be reasonable; Do not ask the impossible
Be constructive, not negative
If you support a particular bill, say so
If writing, avoid stereotyped phrases and jargon
Limit comments to one page

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We typically do not see our federal representatives as often as we see our state and local officials since they cover a larger area. Here are a few other ideas to keep in mind when you are communicating with them. Be courteous and respectful. Know your issue. Federal representatives have a lot of constituents, so it is important to be able to cover your subject with facts. It also is helpful to be brief and to the point. Make sure you are reasonable. Be constructive and use positive language and tone to support your message even in the midst of challenging human issues and experiences. If you have a bill you are supporting or not supporting, know the bill number and mention it, either in writing or verbally. If you are writing an email, avoid form letters and jargon. Consider writing a personal letter that speaks to real community issues through clearly identified, succinct points. Avoid generic letters that are more vague in nature and limit impact, further discussion, and action. Finally, with written communication, it is best to limit your comments to one page.

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Writing Letters

First Paragraph


- ✓ Identify yourself to the legislator as a volunteer of your state's Family & Consumer Sciences Extension Program
- ✓ Tell him or her how long you have been a constituent
- ✓ Tell the legislator you appreciate her or his support of the Family & Consumer Sciences program

Middle Paragraph

- ✓ Focus on the key message
- ✓ Support your key messages with facts
- ✓ Include a brief story or personal anecdote to put a human face on the facts
- ✓ Focus on positives and successes of the program

Concluding Paragraph

- ✓ Ask Legislator for support
- ✓ Ask for a response from the legislator regarding your comments
- ✓ Close your letter by thanking the legislator for her or his hard work



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For many situations, writing letters is an effective way to communicate with our legislators. This is particularly true if you want to communicate with federal or state government officials. On this page are some general ideas for letter writing. Typically, letters should be limited to three paragraphs. In the first paragraph, you should identify yourself and how you are connected with Family & Consumer Sciences Extension. You might also tell the representative how long you have lived in their district, and thank them for previous support of the Family & Consumer Sciences program. The second paragraph is the “meat” or the key message. Tell your key message and the facts that support this message. Including a brief anecdote or story can help make your letter more personal. The concluding paragraph should ask for their support and also a response to your comments. Close your letter by thanking the representative for his or her hard work.

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Local Level

- More informal
- More frequent in nature
- More specific community examples

Polk County Courthouse, Benton, Tennessee

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Communicating with your local government representatives is also important. Communication at this level is often more informal than higher level politicians and can happen on a more frequent basis. However, it is still important to use the same approaches that we discussed on previous slides – always be respectful, polite, and reasonable. Also, communication with local representatives gives you the opportunity to discuss local challenges and issues relative to your specific community – use specific community people and examples that may help to drive your message for impact.

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Who Are Your Stakeholders?

Who are the individuals and groups that should serve as stakeholders for Family & Consumer Sciences programs?



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It is important to have an understanding of what awareness and support really means. This will help define who your stakeholders are. These are the individuals and groups that can represent Family & Consumer Sciences as a whole, especially the specific Family & Consumer Sciences core areas. These stakeholders can also communicate the public value of Family & Consumer Sciences.

Who are the individuals and groups that should serve as stakeholders for Family & Consumer Sciences programs?

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Others that Need to Know

- Stakeholders
- Volunteers
- County/City Citizens
- Co-workers
- Participants



**FAMILY &
CONSUMER
SCIENCES**

Strengthening Families, Farms, Communities, and the Economy



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Along with government officials, it is important that our stakeholders, volunteers, coworkers, participants, and citizens in our counties or cities know the Family & Consumer Sciences story. This can be done by displaying the Family & Consumer Sciences icon or brand symbol at all Family & Consumer Sciences educational programs and activities and also by telling audiences about our programs. The use of mass media, newsletters, booths at activity fairs, fact sheets, or simply introducing people to Family & Consumer Sciences when they participate in an educational program are a few ideas to share the Family & Consumer Sciences story.

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Getting the Family & Consumer Sciences Story Heard



- Letter
- Newsletters
- News articles
- Fact sheets
- Presentations
- Radio\Television
- One on One
- Social Media



Booths at Fairs, Meetings, Community Events



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Not only is it important to properly define our story, it is also important that we use a range of communication to share our story so it is widely heard. While letters are an effective method of communication and outreach to audiences, other modes of communicating the Family & Consumer Sciences story might include newsletters, news articles, fact sheets, booths at fairs and meetings, presentations at programs, radio or television spots, one on one conversations, social media sharing sites, booths, meetings, and community events. Use these methods to communicate the impact and reach of Family & Consumer Sciences to introduce and engage people about our mission, goals, objectives, and services.

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Two Minute Elevator Speech

- 1 Be Enthusiastic
- 2 Be Genuine and Personable
- 3 Believe in our Mission
- 4 Talk about Why We Deliver Programs
- 5 Ask Open Ended Questions



Module 2, Lesson 4 – Resource Development

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One of the most important things that you can do to encourage others to give resources to support Family & Consumer Sciences Extension is through confident demeanor and conversation through networking. Networking requires interpersonal skills and quick thinking to be able to briefly explain and communicate the value of Family & Consumer Sciences. Developing a two-minute “elevator” speech is an excellent opportunity for you to practice your networking and to showcase your enthusiasm regarding Family & Consumer Sciences.

Be genuine and personable. Let the listener know you truly believe in the mission of Family & Consumer Sciences. Talk about why educational programs are delivered: to strengthen families, farms, communities, and the economy. Talk about what makes Extension Family & Consumer Sciences unique, maybe a short story of a success. Asking your listener open-ended questions will often get him/her involved.

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Elevator Speech Characteristics

- Is Short
- Uses Plain Language
- Discusses Value, Benefits, & Problems Solved by Family & Consumer Sciences
- Limits Details





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An elevator speech also contains the following important characteristics. First, the speech is short, but not so short that you are unable to get your message across. Elevator speech uses plain language to provide clear comments and examples that diverse audiences can understand. Discuss the value and benefits of Family & Consumer Sciences, and provide example problems and challenges that our field seeks to resolve and how our structure helps to solve these problems. Use your time wisely and limit complex details to allow for a general discussion.

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Elevator Speech Characteristics



- Creates interest by using impact statements and examples
- Uses consistent language



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Generate interest with your elevator speech by communicating impact– Using quantitative and qualitative examples of how participating in Family & Consumer Sciences programming benefits the community will encourage others to contribute resources for our causes.

For example:

“One participant wrote that she was able to save her family \$150 monthly by following steps she used from a money management seminar.”

Finally, use consistent language when delivering your elevator speech to communicate the same basic message. Examples may vary for the audience, but the main ideas regarding Family & Consumer Sciences value, benefit, and impact should remain the same.

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In Review

- Storytelling
- Communicating with Government Representatives
- Various methods to get our story heard
- Elevator Speech






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In review, telling the Family & Consumer Sciences story is very important. When we share our story, we educate diverse audiences about the rich history and the impacts of our discipline. These impacts demonstrate how Family & Consumer Sciences have helped to enhance quality of living for individuals, families and communities. Using storytelling, we are able to raise awareness about the value of Family & Consumer Sciences by sharing real examples of success in local communities. Telling our story is recognizing who may need to hear the message, especially government officials who can influence funding decisions and champion our work. Using different methods to communicate the impact and reach of Family & Consumer Sciences to engage others about our mission and services is vital. For example, writing letters, using social media, and networking using elevator speeches can help to communicate our public value and engage others to gain interest and support for our discipline.

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Activities and Post Test



Please proceed to the next slides to complete the activities and the post test.



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You have completed the lesson on Telling Our Story. Please proceed to the next slide to complete the activities, followed by the post test.


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Activities

Develop a 30 second elevator speech about
Family & Consumer Sciences Extension

Make a list of your representatives, locally, at the state level and at the
federal level.

Write a brief sample letter to a government official about an important
issue and to tell our story.



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Activities: 1) Develop a 30 second elevator speech about Family & Consumer Sciences Extension; 2) Make a list of your representatives, locally, at the state level and at the federal level; 3) Write a brief sample letter to a government official about an important issue and to tell our story.

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Post Test

Which of the following is an appropriate way to contact a government official?

- ☐ A) Going to their office without an appointment.
- ☐ B) Calling them at home in the evening.
- ☐ C) Visiting them at home.
- ☐ D) Sending them a well written, polite letter.



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Which of the following is an appropriate way to contact a government official?

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- ☐ C) Visiting them at home.
- ☒ D) Sending them a well written, polite letter.

Correct - Click anywhere to continue

Incorrect - Click anywhere to continue

Your answer:

You did not answer this question completely

Submit

Clear

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The following are ways to market Family & Consumer Sciences programs:

- ☐ A) Newspaper article
- ☐ B) Radio and television spots
- ☐ C) Flyers in prominent places
- ☐ D) All of the above.



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The following are ways to market Family & Consumer Sciences programs:

- ☐ A) Newspaper article
- ☐ B) Radio and television spots
- ☐ C) Flyers in prominent places
- ☒ D) All of the above.

Correct - Click anywhere to
continue

Incorrect - Click anywhere to
continue

Your answer:

You did not answer this question
completely

Submit

Clear

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