

Messaging tips:

We need to send a clear and concise message about the important services we provide to Washingtonians. Talking about the budget, revenue, and our contracts is important; but we also need connect their issue to the work we do every day. Remind legislators that state services have a real impact on our communities and their constituents.

Do:

- Talk about why you became a state employee – what values drive you to do the work?
- Talk about your values and how they translate to your work.
- Tie those values into a personal story to make it memorable.
- Talk about the improvements the legislature can make – share your vision.
- Speak from the heart.

The reality:

State government is the safety net (the provider of last resort) for all Washington citizens. The cuts necessary to balance the budget would devastate higher education, human services, public safety, and any other part of the budget not protected by constitution or federal mandate.

It is not smart to make cuts that push costs elsewhere or lead to more costs down the road. We need a balanced approach to closing the current budget shortfall that includes closing unfair tax loopholes and identifying new revenue sources to stabilize funding for programs in the short and long term.

Don't:

- Complain about your agency or management.
- Talk to legislators about waste, fraud and abuse.
- Read the script/letter to your legislator.

The reality:

It is not in our interest to complain about bad management, waste, fraud or abuse to legislators. Our time with legislators is valuable and should be spent talking about things they can take action on or do something about.

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How to prepare for a meeting with your legislator:

My name is _____, I'm from _____
legislative district/city

I have been working for _____ for _____ years.
agency/department

I chose to work in public service because _____
Start with 'I believe' (name a value- responsibility, opportunity, fairness, etc)

As a _____, I _____
job title describe your work and its impact

In the past _____ years, there have been a lot of cuts to my agency. Budget reductions have led to

_____ *how have cuts have harmed community/people who depend on services and/or affected recruitment & retention*

This means/for example: _____

I took time off work to come here today and ask _____
what are you asking legislator to do?

With your help we can _____
bring it back to value statement

Can I count on you to _____
make the ask again

Sample message:

"My name is Jacki and I'm from the 22nd district here in Olympia. I've been working for the Department of Natural Resources for 15 years. I chose to work in public service because I believe in the protection of natural resources and the agency mission of resource protection. As a response coordinator, I dispatch resources to protect state lands from wildfire and other natural disasters/hazards. In the past 8 years, there have been a lot of cuts to my agency. Budget reductions have led to resource and personnel reduction. For example: we used to have 7 responders for a large incident - now we only have 4. It takes those 4 responders nearly twice as long to suppress an incident and ends up costing the state more money and damaging more of our precious resources. I took time off work today to ask you to protect our state lands. With your help we can protect our natural resources for this generation and the next. Can I count on you to look for revenue solutions to protect our state lands and not support an all-cuts budget?"