2026-27 ISU Extension and Outreach Talking Points for County Extension Councils

When talking with a legislator, here are talking points to consider:

1. **Select a few of these talking points** and adapt them to fit the needs of your audience.
2. **Add your supporting examples to show the public value of local efforts**: How do ALL Iowans and communities benefit from the work we do?
   (Learn more about public value through the *Communicating Public Value* video or take a few minutes to complete the Value Mapping Worksheet.)
3. **End with a call to action**: How can your audience engage with ISU Extension and Outreach? What would you like them to do?

General Information: Local Decisions to Serve Local Needs

1. **County Extension is a small government led by a 9-member non-partisan council elected on the general election ballot. As outlined in Iowa Code Chapter 176A, county extension council members enter into a memorandum of understanding with Iowa State University, employ staff, identify educational program needs, prepare a budget, and expend funds.**
2. **There are 100 county extension districts in Iowa (Pottawattamie County is divided into West and East).**
3. **Local extension is funded by property taxes through the county agricultural extension tax levy. County Extension is not funded by Iowa State University or legislative appropriations.**
4. **Extension builds a strong Iowa by engaging all Iowans in research, education, and extension experiences to address current and emerging real-life challenges.**
5. **Extension in *every* county is for *every* Iowan.**

Funding

- We are not funded by Iowa State University. Iowa State University receives separate funding from the Iowa Legislature through the Iowa Board of Regents appropriation. Our county never receives funds directly from the Iowa Legislature or Iowa State University.
- The funds from the county agricultural extension levy supports local programs and the staff that deliver those programs.
- Of the 100 county agricultural extension districts, 73 levy less than $300,000 per year.
- Of the 100 county agricultural extension districts, 63 employ three or fewer FTE.
- Iowa Code Chapter 176A dictates the governance of county extension. County extension councils are included under SF2472 which caps growth at 2% for their annual levy.
- Statewide, all 100 extension districts levied for just $30 million in FY27. That equates to just 0.4% of all property tax collected in Iowa.

Formulate Your Local Talking Points

Work with your regional or county director if you need help to fill in the blanks.

- Our county employs ____ full time and ____ part time employees. Those county staff lead _____ (*fill in what the roles are of your employees, such as manage educational programs, guide the 4-H program, lead the Master Gardener program, etc.)*
- For the current budget year (FY27), our county levied for $_____ and the levy rate is $.___ per $1,000 of valuation. For our population tier, we **were/were not** capped, meaning we could/could not levy any more according to Iowa Code.
- A county our size is allowed an annual funding increase of $_____, but under new legislation coming in FY28 our allowable annual growth is capped to 2%.
- We manage 4-H. We are integral to the county fair. Those things wouldn't happen without extension.
- Our most important partnership in our county is with _____ because _____.
- Our extension council prioritizes the following programs: 1) _____ 2) ____ 3)_____
- We collaborate with other counties in our area by _____ (give an example: share staff, offer youth programs with our neighboring county, meet periodically to collaborate on programming, etc.)
- We are especially proud of our _____ program. Here are some of the impacts that program has in our county (*list impacts*).

