

(SAMPLE LETTER)

This letter can be customized to speak to either 4-H volunteers or Master Gardener volunteers. Select the appropriate wording based on the volunteer group you are addressing.

Dear (4-H) (Master Gardener) volunteer,

Extension in Iowa has been through some lean times. Like many other tax-supported entities, it has had to weather the effects of a stiff budgetary crisis over the past four years. Though there are indications the economy is starting to improve, we can't assume that will lead to adequate levels of funding in the coming year.

ISU Extension is the parent organization of (4-H) (Master Gardener) in Iowa. We need your help to tell state legislators the important contributions to quality of life this program makes. They also need to know how their constituents feel about further cuts to Extension. You can provide a powerful personal message of support. It need not be long or complicated. Simply give a brief statement of how (4-H) (Master Gardener) has helped you, your family, or your community, and tell why you feel it should be maintained. Attached is a list of legislators serving (XXX) County, plus the necessary contact information.

If you have a direct relationship with a legislator or the opportunity to meet with one of them personally, your message will be even more effective. The 2005 session of the 81st Iowa General Assembly convened Jan. 10, and next year's budget considerations are already under way. It is important to make your contacts as soon as possible.

If you write or email your legislator, you may want to consider using the paragraph below as a starting point and add any personal experiences or comments you feel are appropriate.

(select one paragraph for the appropriate group)

Iowa 4-H reaches more than 124,000 youth statewide—32,000+ through local club enrollment, nearly 73,000 in school enrichment programs, and the balance through camping and special interest groups. Another 10,600 adults assist as volunteers. 4-H provides mentored, hands-on learning opportunities in leadership, citizenship, communication, and countless specialized project fields. 4-H develops the life skills, confidence and self esteem necessary for youth to grow into successful, caring adults. Through ISU Extension, Iowa 4-H has built upon a century of experience in meeting the needs of youth, their families, and communities. Here in (XXX) County, 4-H programs help nearly (XXX) kids annually who strive to make their best better.

Since 1977 **Master Gardener** has trained more than 8,250 Iowans in virtually every county of the state. The mission of the Master Gardener Program is to provide current, research-based, home horticulture information and education to the citizens of Iowa through ISU Extension programs and projects. In addition, the commitment of Iowa Master Gardeners to helping others resulted in more than 80,000 hours of volunteer service statewide in 2003.

We need your help to preserve this valuable program! Thanks in advance for your support.

Sincerely,

(XXX) County (4-H, Master Gardener) Volunteer
(street address)
(city), IA (zip)
Phone: (xxx) xxx-xxxx

(XXX) County Legislative Contacts:

The Honorable Tom Vilsack

State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319

Salutation: Dear Governor Vilsack:

To send an e-mail to the Governor, go to:

http://www.governor.state.ia.us/comments/capitol_correspond/index.html,

Phone: 515-281-5211 (Voice) 515 281-6611 (FAX)

Sen. (insert name), (XXth Senate District)

State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319

Salutation: Dear Senator (insert name):

E-mail: (first name).(last name)@legis.state.ia.us

Senate switchboard phone: 515-281-3371

A complete listing of all state senators, their home addresses, occupation, committee assignments and legislation sponsored can be found at:

<http://www3.legis.state.ia.us/ga/legislators.do?ch=s>

Representative (insert name), (XXth House District)

State Capitol
Des Moines, IA 50319

Salutation: Dear Representative (insert name):

E-Mail: (first name).(last name)@legis.state.ia.us

House switchboard phone: 515-281-3221

A complete listing of all state representatives, their home addresses, occupation, committee assignments and legislation sponsored can be found at:

<http://www3.legis.state.ia.us/ga/legislators.do?ch=h>