



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) for the Partner Agreement

Why are Partner Agreements Important?

Civil Rights Partner Agreements help ensure that organizations and partners comply with federal Civil Rights laws. The agreement serves as a public notification that Michigan State University Extension prohibits discrimination and ensures everyone has an equal opportunity to participate in programs and activities.

Who should sign the Partner Agreement?

The signature authority for the agreement is determined by the partner organization.

- Note for MSU Extension staff: The “And Justice for All” poster **MUST** be displayed during educational programs. This further supports the anti-discrimination policy.

What qualifies as a Partner Organization?

A partner organization is defined as a group of people that MSU Extension works with or anticipates working with that:

- Participates in the planning, development and/or delivery of an educational program or service.
- Provides a facility or physical space at which an Extension program or activity is held.
- Provides access to a specific audience; or
- Sponsors or provides any sort of financial or in-kind support for an Extension program or activity.

Examples include but not limited to:

- Intermediate School Districts and local schools (ISD can sign for any school within its district).
- Nonprofit organizations, government agencies, educational institutions, community-based organizations, or libraries.
- Agricultural commodity groups (the signer should be designated by the commodity group board).
- Organizations with a service agreement (the service agreement does not currently contain the same language as the partner agreement, so both are needed).
- Local branches of statewide organizations may be covered by a statewide Partner Agreement.
- Board/Council Committee Leaders (e.g., fair boards).

Note: The board president and/or committee leaders should sign the agreement. Only one agreement is required per board or committee.

Exceptions include:

- Any organization that has already signed an MOA with MSU Extension, as this language is included in the MOA (such as county departments – check with your District Director).
- 4-H Councils or committees as they are composed of screened volunteers who have already committed to our civil rights standards.
- Volunteers are **NOT** expected to collect Partner Agreements, only MSU Extension staff are responsible for the events/programs they organize or lead.



Should I collect a Partner Agreement from all my Partners in 2025?

Yes, please collect a Partnership Agreement from all your partners in 2025. This will establish a baseline for the new 3-year collection process. If you form a new partnership during the 3-year cycle, a Partnership Agreement must also be collected.

How should we handle Statewide Partner Agreements? Is there a Master List?

If there is a point of contact in your Institute who is connected with a statewide partnering organization, they may be able to assist in facilitating the Partner Agreement process (please contact your support staff to verify if there is an Agreement in the system). If you need support collecting a Statewide Partner Agreement, please reach out to your Institute Director for guidance.

How can I access the Master List?

The Master List will be available to everyone in 2026. You may be able to search in PEARS for existing partners depending upon your permissions. If you are unable to find a partner in PEARS, until the master list is available, please reach out to your district support or Norma Lundeen for assistance.

What if a public entity also receives federal funds- do we still collect a letter?

Yes. While a public entity may follow a similar anti-discrimination process, MSU Extension is required to obtain copies for our Civil Rights Review Process.

What if a Partner declines to sign the Partner Agreement?

The refusal to sign the Partner Agreement should not deter ongoing conversations. It is important to explore alternative ways to address concerns and work towards an agreement. Consult with MSU Extension leadership (e.g., Institute Director, District Director, Culture, Access and Belonging Specialist).

What do I do after I get a signed Partner Agreement?

Scan and upload the Partner Agreement to PEARS, under the Partnership that you created for that specific partner. Answer the custom data question about the Partner Agreement. Instructions are available in the PEARS D2L course at: <https://d2l.msu.edu/d2l/le/lessons/952802/topics/17247946> or at <https://bit.ly/PEARSPartnerAgreements>

*On the MSU Extension Civil Rights [webpage](#) you will find the [Summary of Civil Rights Policies and Procedures](#). On page 3 of the document it specifies, "The Americans with Disabilities Act as Amended (ADAA) requires that MSU Extension programs be accessible to persons with disabilities and that reasonable accommodations be provided. The MSU Extension [Administrative Handbook](#) provides further clarification surrounding programming facilities. Program Accessibility (Title II) is outlined on page 8 of the handbook under the Americans with Disabilities Act section and indicates that all programs must be accessible, including the facilities in which the programs are delivered.

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