

January 1, 2019

To: All MSU Extension Staff

From: Jeff Dwyer, Director, MSU Extension

Re: MSU Extension Equal Opportunity in Programs and Employment

MSU Extension is committed to equal opportunity in both its programs and its employment. The anti-discrimination statement on MSU Extension's letterhead and publications, and the "And Justice For All" poster displayed in MSU Extension public service areas and at all programs, notifies the public that MSU Extension is an inclusive organization. I want to reinforce the importance of this commitment to civil rights and equal opportunity as a fundamental principle that is integral to our shared values.

We have an obligation, both as an organization and as individual employees, to abide by federal and state laws, as well as the anti-discrimination policies of Michigan State University. This includes making our programs and employment open as affirmed in our public notification statements. In other words, MSU Extension cannot exclude current employees, job applicants, or anyone interested in participating in Extension programs on the basis of protected characteristics, including race, color, national origin, gender, gender identity, religion, age, height, weight, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, marital status, family status or veteran status.



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Most of you have participated in the required two-day Multicultural Self Awareness Workshop. One of the items of focus in the workshop is the development of an affirmative perspective relative to persons who are differently abled—understanding, appreciating, accepting, valuing and celebrating differences as assets for our communities and our organization. While MSU Extension does not have a legal obligation to carry out our multicultural diversity program, the concepts involved appropriately complement, support and help to realize many of our civil rights responsibilities. We see this as a blended responsibility.

"Open to all" means that none of the protected characteristics can be used to exclude people from program participation and/or employment. Further, MSU Extension and its employees are expected to make good faith efforts to encourage participation of diverse populations in Extension programs and employment. Indeed, an important guideline is for participants in MSU Extension programs to reflect the populations we serve and, as much as possible, in our staff that facilitate our programs.

For example, in programs held locally, the demographic data and participation data should be regularly reviewed to determine how effective Extension programs are in serving the diverse needs and interests of the community and offer programs that enhance inclusivity of the communities' diverse populations. In addition, good faith efforts are made for the Extension workforce to reflect the diverse populations within the relevant labor market from which we recruit applicants for employment.

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Assuring equal opportunity is important throughout the year, but two times during the year deserve special attention: 1) when institute directors, district directors and/or other MSU Extension administrators review Extension civil rights responsibilities and obligations with their respective staffs, and 2) and when institute work groups and individuals are developing and executing their plans of work. I encourage you to take these processes seriously.

I encourage staff to review all of the MSU Extension Civil Rights materials, especially when the work group or individual plans of work are being developed. You can access these materials on the MSU Extension Civil Rights site at:

http://od.msue.msu.edu/civil_rights_diversity_multiculturalism/.

It's important that we all understand our responsibilities to assure equal opportunity and implement programs and employment practices that are consistent with federal and state laws. Equally important is recognition and application of the diversity principles that reflect closely held values of Michigan State University and MSU Extension. These cooperative efforts of all MSU Extension employees will help us move forward in building and sustaining a diverse and inclusive Extension community.

Thank you for all you do to help us foster inclusivity. Please contact me if you have any questions or comments.

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