

# Know Your Government Bodies and How They Relate to MSU Extension



Michigan's Cooperative Extension Program (Michigan State University Extension) is funded by a partnership between governments at three levels: federal, authorized through the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA); state, authorized through appropriations to the state's land-grant university - Michigan State University (MSU); and county, authorized through county budgets.



## Federal Government Sources

USA.gov. *How to contact your elected officials:* <https://www.usa.gov/elected-officials>

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture: <https://www.nifa.usda.gov>

U.S. Department of Treasury. Your guide to America's finances. <https://datalab.usaspending.gov/americas-finance-guide/>

## Federal Government

**Relationship definition:** The USDA oversees national Extension programs through the National Institute for Food and Agriculture. Congress authorizes federal funding for Extension work every 5 years through passage of the Farm bill found at <https://www.ers.usda.gov/agriculture-improvement-act-of-2018-highlights-and-implications/>.

**Leadership structure:** Michigan voters elect 14 congressional representatives to 2-year terms. The state also has two U.S. senators who serve 6-year terms. Congress approves the federal budgets that help fund Extension work in Michigan. You can contact and learn more about Michigan's federal lawmakers and their policy positions. Find Michigan's U.S. senators by visiting <http://www.senate.gov/states/MI/intro.htm>. Locate the U.S. congressional representative for the geographic area staff serve by visiting <https://www.house.gov/>.

**Funding:** The federal budget is primarily funded through income taxes levied on individuals and organizations, predominantly businesses and corporations. Revenue is also generated by service fees and customs duties.



## State Government

**Relationship definition:** The State of Michigan provides annual funding for MSU Extension through its appropriation to the state's 1862 land-grant university, MSU. MSU Extension's (and MSU AgBioResearch's) appropriation in the state higher education budget is separate from the general funding provided for the university. State power is granted by the 10th amendment of the U.S. Constitution and mirrors federal government with executive, legislative and judicial branches. The state Legislature's job is to enact the laws of Michigan, levy taxes, appropriate collected funds to deliver government services and provide oversight of the executive branch of state government.





### State Government Sources

State of Michigan. *Learn about the Michigan Legislature:* <https://www.michigan.gov/som/>

The White House. *State & local government:* <https://www.whitehouse.gov/1600/state-and-local-government>



### County Government Sources

Amrhein, J., Neumann, B., Schindler, K., Schulz, M., & Walcott, E. (2019). *Guide to Michigan county government*. East Lansing: Michigan State University, MSU Extension.

National League of Cities: <https://www.nlc.org/local-us-governments>

**Leadership structure:** The governor, elected to a 4-year term by Michigan voters, heads the executive branch. The governor appoints directors of 16 of Michigan's 18 state departments. Michigan's attorney general and secretary of state are elected by Michigan voters. MSU Extension staff often work in partnership with staff representing the Michigan departments of Agriculture and Rural Development; Education; Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy; Health and Human Services; and Natural Resources.

The Michigan Legislature is elected by Michigan voters and consists of the state Senate, which includes 38 members elected to 4-year terms and the state House of Representatives that includes 110 members elected to 2-year terms. You can contact and learn more about Michigan's legislative members and their policy positions. Find the state representative for the geographic area served by visiting <http://www.house.mi.gov/MHRPublic/frmFindARep.aspx>. Locate the state senator for the geographic area served by visiting <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/fysbyaddress.html>.

**Funding:** State of Michigan revenue streams include a mix of income and business taxes (the dominant source of funding), sales tax, and fees for services and ordinance and law violations.

### County Government

**Relationship definition:** County government is the primary local funding and administrative body for county MSU Extension programs. Counties are the local arm of the three-way MSU Extension core public funding partnership that includes federal, state and county government. Michigan's 83 counties are independently governed but also serve as the administrative arms of state government. County governments are charged with performing duties mandated by the state such as property records management and assessment (register of deeds) and election oversight and administration (county clerks). They are also responsible for other nonmandated provisions for resident health and safety such as law enforcement, health departments and roads.

**Leadership structure:** Most Michigan counties are led by a county board of commissioners. Four Michigan counties – Bay, Oakland, Macomb and Wayne – are led by a county executive who maintains executive powers over county government operations. Wayne and Macomb counties also operate under a “home rule charter,” which is defined as the right to local self-government including the powers to regulate for the protection of the public health, safety, morals and welfare; to license; to tax and to incur debt.

**Funding:** Most county budget revenue streams include a mix of property taxes (the dominant source of funding), state paid revenue sharing, and fees for services and ordinance and law violations.

## Municipal Governments



**Relationship definition:** The U.S. Census Bureau defines a city or municipality as any area or territory where 2,500 or more people reside. Michigan has 1,240 townships and 533 municipalities including 280 incorporated cities and 253 incorporated villages. Although there is not general funding from townships, villages or cities for MSU Extension programming, local partnerships with cities, townships and/or other municipalities can be developed to support MSU Extension programming that meets a defined need within a municipality.

Many Michigan cities operate under home rule charters. Home rule provides authority for the city or village to draft and adopt a charter for its own government under the state's constitution. Cities provide services related to local transportation; water, sanitation and environmental services; utilities; public health; safety, law enforcement and judicial; and recreation and arts.



Michigan has two types of townships – general law and charter townships. There are 138 Michigan townships with charter township status. This status provides additional administrative and taxation powers for governing and serving larger communities.

Villages differ from cities in that they have limited home rule powers and remain within a local township.

**Leadership structure:** Two forms of city government are prevalent in Michigan: council-manager and mayor. One hundred and seventy-five cities use the *city council-manager* form (also known as administrator or superintendent). In this form, the elected council appoints a manager to administer day-to-day city operations.

### Municipal Government Sources

Michigan Municipal League. (2016, January). *Organization of city and village government in Michigan*. <http://www.mml.org/pdf/mr/mr-organization-city-village-gvt.pdf>

Michigan Municipal League Member Resource Services. (1991). Structure of local government. In Michigan Municipal League. *Charter commissioners handbook*. [https://www.mml.org/pdf/charter\\_revision/charter\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.mml.org/pdf/charter_revision/charter_handbook.pdf)

Michigan Township Association. *Townships in Michigan*. [https://www.michigantownships.org/mi\\_twps.asp](https://www.michigantownships.org/mi_twps.asp)

National League of Cities: <https://www.nlc.org/local-us-governments>

Other Michigan cities use the *mayor* form, which has two types. In the *strong mayor* form, city residents elect a mayor who has authority to appoint and remove key administrative officials and may have some veto power over council decisions. Other cities and municipalities use the *weak mayor* form, in which a mayor or “president” is chosen from the elected governing council body who is responsible for chairing city council meetings and is the chief policy and ceremonial official for the municipality.

Township government generally consists of a township board with either five or seven members that include a supervisor, clerk, treasurer and two to four trustees.

Villages are typically governed using the *weak mayor-council* form of government, where the mayor is elected by the governing council body.

**Funding:** Property taxes, state revenue sharing from state sales tax collections and income taxes are the predominant sources of income for cities, townships and other municipalities.

## School District Sources

Michigan Association of Intermediate School Administrators. *Value of ISDs*. <https://www.gomaisa.org/value-of-isds/>

Michigan Senate Fiscal Agency. *The basics of school funding*. [https://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa/departments/datacharts/dck12\\_schoolfundingbasics.pdf](https://www.senate.michigan.gov/sfa/departments/datacharts/dck12_schoolfundingbasics.pdf) (2017-18, Bulletin 1011).

**Remember to use the “[Knowing Your Policymakers and Stakeholders](#)” form to document what you learn about your local policymakers and the “[Meeting with State Legislators](#)” tool to help you plan for your visits to key lawmakers and government partners.**



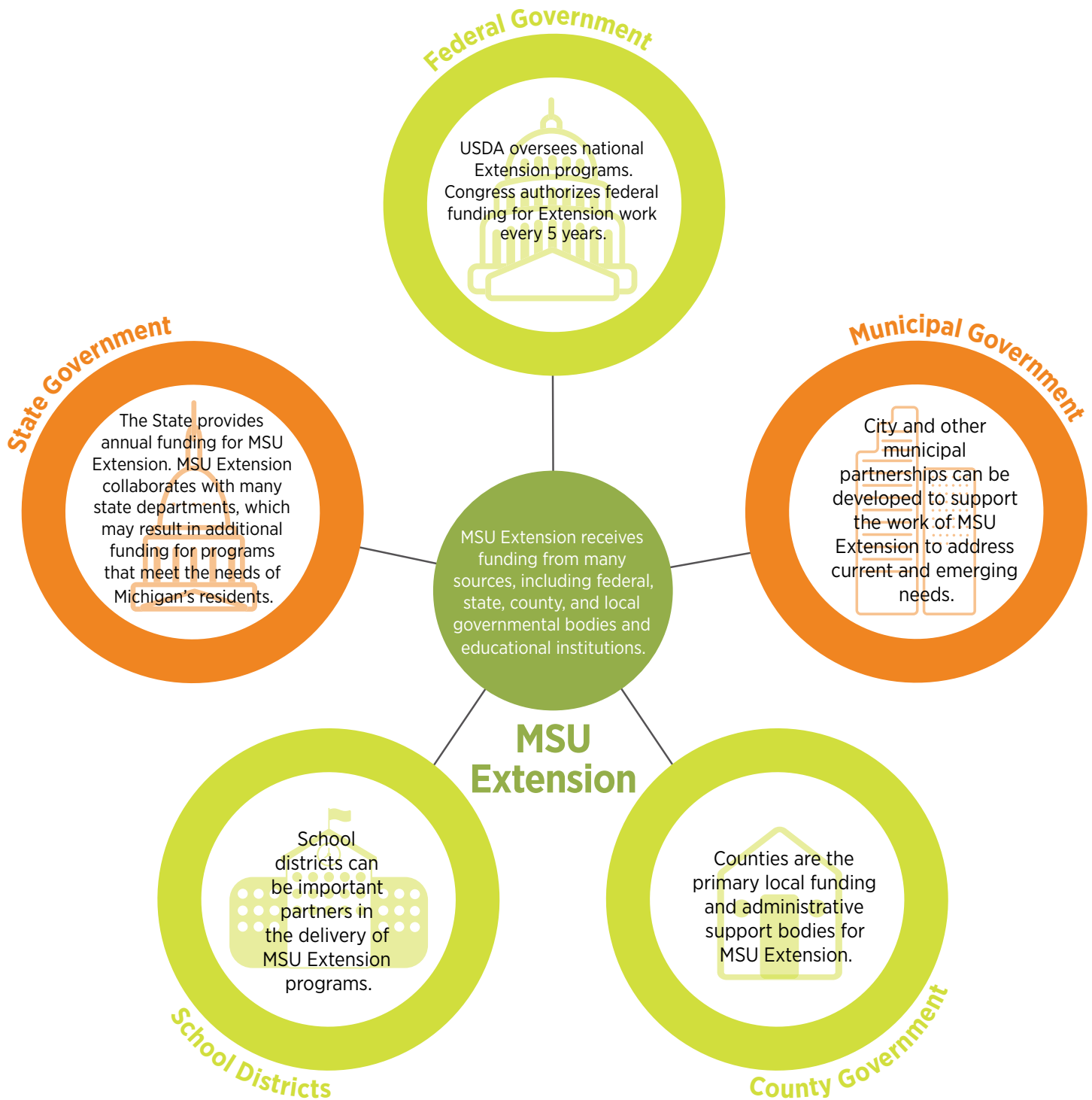
## School Districts

**Relationship definition:** School districts can be important local partners in the delivery of MSU Extension programs, particularly in the areas of early childhood education, 4-H youth development, health and nutrition education, and caregiver and parent education. School districts can provide program audiences, space for program delivery, and funding for program delivery. There are 839 school districts operating in Michigan in concert with 56 Intermediate School Districts or Regional Educational Service Agencies that educate more than 1.5 million students.

Intermediate School Districts work with local school districts, the Michigan Department of Education, and business, industry and community groups to support educational service delivery in the areas of teaching and learning, specialized student services, shared operational services, partnership development, technology services, school improvement, and assessment and mandates. MSU Extension has often developed partnerships with intermediate school districts and regional educational service agencies to deliver programming that meets the needs of local schools and communities.

**Leadership structure:** In most cases, local school districts and intermediate school districts are led by a school board that is either elected or appointed by a government official or by member school districts. These boards are responsible for setting district education policy and appointing a professional superintendent to manage the day-to-day operations of the school district.

**Funding:** Local property tax levies and the Michigan School Aid Fund allowance generally fund school district operations. The 6% State Education Tax that residents pay on property taxes is paid to the state and then redistributed to school districts. Intermediate school districts are funded by local property taxes, a per-pupil special education foundation allowance, state categorical funds and federal grants.



Published in January 2020 by the MSU Extension Strategic Connections Team