

Telling Your MSU Extension Story through Public Value Statements



You are your own best storyteller.

- If you don't tell your story, who will?
- Telling your story helps build relationships with stakeholders. Most won't understand the value that Michigan State University (MSU) Extension brings to their community unless you tell them.
- No one else can tell *your* story with the same conviction. No one knows your programs and your successes like you do.

It is everyone's responsibility to share the MSU Extension message.



Use public value statements to tell your story.

- Often, you have a short window of time to tell your story. Always start using a public value statement that shows how MSU Extension addresses crucial community concerns by working through individual participants. This gives stakeholders and others insight into the overall benefit of programming.
 - Review the [public value statements for MSU Extension](#).
 - Find the statement that is most relevant to your role.
 - Add your personal public value statement. The “[Creating a Personal Public Value Statement](#)” worksheet can help you in creating your personal public value statement. Make it a statement that:
 - Is short – less than 30 seconds.
 - Is crisp and compelling.
 - Excites you.
 - Makes you smile.
 - Makes your pulse race a bit!
 - You can't wait to talk about!
 - Memorize it. Be ready to talk about it any time.
- When time allows, add personal stories about participants whose lives were made better through your work. Don't forget to tell how changes in their behavior have benefitted their communities. A good story makes the listener want to hear more.
 - Tell your personal story quickly and with enthusiasm.
 - Explain that something has happened – a positive change was made.

Tell your story often and to everyone.

- Give your testimony at county board meetings, school board meetings and other public events.
- Look for opportunities to have private conversations during public events with county commissioners, state and federal legislators, staff members for commissioners and legislators, teachers, principals, board members, administrators, community leaders, other organization and agency leaders.



- Tell your story in written form as well, through county annual reports, news releases and other written pieces.
- Although you should tell your story anytime, it may be especially crucial during budget deliberations.
- You may encounter one of your legislators at an MSU Extension or community function. Introduce yourself and tell what you do for MSU Extension. This could be your “elevator” speech. Remember that this public servant has an interest in your service to their constituents. If you see your elected official at a public event, it may be appropriate to briefly mention your concerns about a particular issue. However, it is important to be very brief. Follow up with an email or phone call.



Every conversation is an opportunity.

- Just as important as making your points is listening to the other person and finding the connections that unite you. Find the things that matter to them and connect it to how it relates to your work. That will make your conversation relevant, impactful and memorable.
- The next time someone asks, “How is it going?” use the opportunity!



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