

# Telling Your Extension Story Through Public Value Statements



## You are your own best storyteller.

- If you don't tell your story, who will? It is everyone's responsibility to share the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension message.
- Telling your story helps build relationships with stakeholders. Most won't understand the value that 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.



## 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 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 ([msue.anr.msu.edu/about/public\\_value\\_statements](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/about/public_value_statements)).
  - Find the statement that is most relevant to your role.
  - Add 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 it 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 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 organizations and agency leaders.
- Tell your story in written form as well, through county partner reports, news releases and other written pieces.



- Though 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 his or her 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 a letter or phone call.



**Every conversation is an opportunity.**

- The next time someone asks, “How is it going?” use the opportunity!

