

Reporting Impacts to Your County Leaders



When Michigan State University (MSU) Extension signs a memorandum of understanding with a county board of commissioners or county executive, we become contractually obligated to provide them with an annual report. In addition, keeping boards informed of the good work we do is essential to the overall success of the organization.

Much of the annual report information shared with county commissioners and county executives is pulled from our Michigan Extension Planning and Reporting System (MiPRS). District coordinators need everyone's help to ensure they give an accurate, complete report of important work done in that county. Program staff *must* provide details of their work in their regular MiPRS reports, including the participants' counties of residence. This is the only way that county leaders can understand the local need for programming, our response to that need and the number of county residents who participated in the education.

In addition, talk to your district coordinator (DC) about providing an update of your programming accomplishments during a local county board of commissioners meeting or to your county executive's staff members at least once a year. If you provide programming in other counties, consider providing updates to those boards as well.

Each DC will have the schedule for all regularly posted county board of commissioner meetings throughout the year. County staff members can put themselves on the agenda, writing in their tentative date and topic. This process will ensure that MSU Extension will present at important meetings throughout the year in a strategic and coordinated fashion, not all at the same time. Speaking with the appropriate DC about your desire to present a report to your county will contribute to the success of the process. Some guidelines to help you through the process follow.

DO:

- **For counties governed solely by a board of commissioners:**
 - If your update is brief, speak during public comment period.
 - If you would like several minutes of the board's time, ask to be added to the agenda. Each county has its own calendar and process for getting on an agenda. Your DC will be familiar with the process. Be sure to ask your DC for help at least four to six weeks before the meeting.
- **If you have a county executive:**
 - Provide programmatic impact reports for a specific department head within the executive office structure and not directly to the commissioners. Speak with your DC to determine to whom you should speak, and find out the procedures for meeting with and providing information to them.



- MSU Extension cannot make a presentation to the board of commissioners without being invited by the county executive's office. However, other communication channels besides commission meetings provide information to county commissioners. These channels vary by county. Talk to your DC to determine the option that best fits your situation.

- **In all counties:**

- Determine how the board of commissioners or county executive's office likes to receive information. (Again, your DC can help you with this.) Some counties want only electronic versions of handouts, while others will insist on paper. In either case, you may be asked to provide handouts a few days in advance to be included in the board members' meeting packets.
- Introduce yourself and your role with MSU Extension.
- Address the commissioners or county executive's office staff formally. Use appropriate titles such as "Commissioner Smith" or "Ms. Smith." Avoid using colloquial or informal language such as "You guys." Also avoid using first names unless instructed by the individual you are speaking with to do so.
- Keep it short. The board members and county staff want brief reports, not an educational session. Save the details for the question and answer period.
- Make your report relevant to the residents and businesses in the county. Tell them how many people you have affected, what changes you have made (or have the potential to make) based on your programming and what types of activities you engaged in. Tie your comments to statewide or regional initiatives when appropriate.
- Speak slowly, clearly and succinctly.
- Thank them for their continued support for MSU Extension.
- Smile!
- If your DC can't attend the meeting, be sure to report back to him or her with highlights within a week.
- Seek input and feedback. Share that feedback with your office colleagues, DCs and institute director.

DO NOT:

- Don't talk about what you are doing in other counties unless it is relevant or related to the work you are doing in their county.
- Don't use acronyms or abbreviations.
- Never make up or embellish participation or evaluation data. If you only have estimates, say so, and offer to get more exact numbers if commissioners ask for specifics.
- Don't try to answer questions that are out of your area. Let them know you'll try to find the answer if they want to know.
- Don't be afraid or nervous! County commissioners and county executive office staff members are regular people, just like you!

