



# MSU Extension Volunteer Planning Guide for In-Person - Engagements

*Guidance current as of June 15, 2021*

Like so many others, Michigan State University (MSU) Extension professionals are eager to return to in-person events, meetings, competitions and experiences. However, the health and safety of program participants and volunteers, as well as their families and our staff, remains the top priority during the COVID-19 pandemic. The following guidelines have been developed to increase programming opportunities for MSU Extension program participants while striving to maintain public safety.

As we begin reintroducing face-to-face events, communication, transparency and collaboration will be essential for the safety and well-being of all parties. These protocols must be followed and MSU Extension volunteers and participants must work closely with their local program staff (i.e., 4-H program coordinator, volunteer coordinator or other program staff). Flexibility will be key and groups should continue to provide options (including virtual) for participation to ensure all participants can remain involved given their individual circumstances.

## GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

As we transition to in-person events, consider the following recommendations:

- Continue to offer a virtual option (such as Zoom or Facetime) for participants and their families who are not comfortable meeting face-to-face.
- Secure appropriate meeting locations that will accommodate your group needs, based on [Michigan Department Health Human Services \(MDHHS\) guidelines](#).
- Set-up areas for members of the same household to sit together while maintaining six-foot distances between other households or individuals.
- Consider the types of activities that occur at the event and if contact between attendees can be minimized or avoided.

## IN-PERSON EVENT GUIDELINES

MSU Extension professionals, volunteers and participants must follow the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), [MSU Community Compact](#), [MDHHS guidelines](#), MSU recommendations and local and/or tribal guidelines regarding gatherings. When there is disagreement between the sources, the most conservative approach will be followed.

- 1) A virtual option is strongly encouraged, but if choosing to meet in person, consider offering a virtual component for those unable or unwilling to attend a face-to-face event. Contact your local program staff for assistance.

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- 2) Before requesting an in-person experience, a volunteer must be in Active Gold status, have completed the "Communicating Through Conflict" module, have completed an MSU Extension In-Person Request Form for Volunteers and have received approval for the in-person event.
  - a) Requests for recurring events may be submitted for up to one month at a time, so long as logistics and functions for each engagement are the same. A separate engagement request must be made for varying experiences or logistics. This is true if you are engaging in different activities at that event or meeting at any additional locations.
  - b) Communicate with your normal location to see if they can accommodate event guidelines.
- 3) Limit attendance by restricting the event to only registered participants, one parent/guardian and/or a person required to transport the participant (if applicable). Encourage non-essential parties (i.e. younger or older siblings not participating in the event, friends or relatives) to join the virtual connection option.
- 4) In accordance with the MSU Community Compact, individuals in attendance at any indoor event must wear face coverings that cover the nose and mouth throughout the event, unless they are medically unable or fully vaccinated (fully vaccinated means at least two weeks have passed since receiving the final dose of an FDA-approved or FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine). **This means masks will be required of all youth attendees ages 2-11, as well as any older youth not fully vaccinated.** Volunteers may wish to review the MSU Extension In-Person Engagement Summary document for definitions and expectations at indoor vs. outdoor events.
  - a) The vaccination status of individuals in attendance may not be questioned; individuals cannot be required to disclose their vaccination status though they may choose to self-disclose. Individuals may also choose to continue wearing masks, regardless of vaccination status. Assumptions about vaccination status should not be made on the presence of masks.
  - b) Exceptions to masking rule:
    - i) *For shooting sports programming:* For individuals required to wear masks indoors, masks may be removed by participants while on the firing line and by range/safety officers while giving rules and commands. After the firing session, shooters must put their mask back on before moving from their place at the shooting line. See additional guidance for shooting sports programs for more shooting sports modifications.
    - ii) *For equine and livestock activities:* To ensure no vision impairments, youth participants required to wear masks indoors may remove their masks when actively leading, riding or driving a large animal (such as beef, dairy, horses, llamas, hogs, sheep and goats). Masks need to be put back on immediately after the animal has been tied up, penned or stalled.
      - (1) Given the close proximity of volunteers and 4-H'ers in the 4-H Proud Equestrians Program (PEP), additional guidance is provided for PEP.
- 5) Physical distancing of at least six feet between attendees from different households must be followed.
- 6) An attendance record is required of **all individuals at the event** (participants, volunteers, family, etc.) to assist with contact tracing.
  - a) Objects should not be shared by attendees unless sanitized between each individual use. Encourage one individual to record the attendance for each party or encourage individual participants to bring their own writing utensils.
  - b) If the event provides writing utensils, then they must be sanitized between each use.

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- c) Offer hand sanitizer and/or wipes at the sign-in table.
- 7) Allowing food or drinks at in-person events is strongly discouraged unless a necessary component of the experience (e.g., day camps that meet over lunch or summer food distribution events).
  - a) If food service is to take place, it must be commercially packaged and served in ways that eliminate multiple touch points (i.e. individually packaged and spaced apart) and follow [MDHHS guidelines for foodservice and dining](#).
  - b) The consumption of food or beverages is permitted only while seated in designated areas. While eating/drinking, no more than six people may be seated together in a group, and groups must be separated by at least six feet; groups may not intermingle.
  - c) Participants could be encouraged to bring their own food items and water should they need them during the event. This should be communicated in the registration materials; no on-site storage of food items should be provided.
  - d) If the volunteer activity is hosting an event food booth, the facility must be a commercially licensed kitchen with a ServSafe manager. Contact the local county health department for requirements.
- 8) The following items must be provided at all in-person events. MSU Extension or group funds can be used to purchase these items; contact your local program staff if you need assistance in securing these items:
  - a) Hand sanitizer
  - b) Disposable masks (if applicable)
  - c) [Attendance record](#)
- 9) The MSU Extension signage ([MSU Extension public health signs](#) or [Sparty public health](#) and [directional signage](#)) must be printed and visible at all in-person events.
  - a) Please wear face coverings ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - b) Drinking fountain closed - if applicable ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - c) Do not fill directly from fountain - if applicable ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - d) Area closed - if applicable ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - e) Maintain physical distancing ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - f) MSU Extension event guidelines ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - g) Proper handwashing ([MSU Extension](#) or [Sparty](#) option)
  - h) [One way traffic](#)
- 10) Prior to the in-person event, volunteers should send the following email:
  - a) FOR INDOOR EVENTS:

Dear Participant,

We are excited that we have been approved to offer NAME OF EVENT as a face-to-face experience. We will meet at EVENT LOCATION on DATE AND TIME OF EVENT.

*(CONTINUED ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE)*



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Per MSU Extension guidelines for in-person indoor events, everyone will be required to wear a mask that covers their nose and mouth unless they are fully vaccinated, medically unable or under the age of 2 (fully vaccinated means at least two weeks have passed since receiving the final dose of an FDA-approved or FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine). Individuals may also choose to wear a mask, regardless of their vaccination status; please respect individual choices regarding masks and vaccines.

By registering for/attending this event, you have agreed to properly wear a mask throughout the duration of the event (if applicable), practice social distancing and monitor yourself for flu-like symptoms – staying home if you either do not feel well, or test positive for COVID-19 or have had close contact with someone who is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19.

Only participants, their parent/guardian (if applicable), and volunteers will be allowed to attend the event. As much as we enjoy bringing friends and guests, at this time we are limited to volunteers, participants and the individuals transporting them. Everyone will be required to sign in and out from the event, please bring a writing utensil with you. We will also ask you to practice physical distancing from individuals not in your immediate household.

Thank you in advance for following these requirements and we look forward to seeing those who are able, at our in-person event. For those unable to attend face-to-face or follow these requirements, an alternative option may be available. Please contact me at least one week in advance to discuss this option or to request an accommodation for those medically unable to wear a face mask.

b) FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS:

Dear Participant,

We are excited that we have been approved to offer NAME OF EVENT as a face-to-face experience. We will meet at EVENT LOCATION on DATE AND TIME OF EVENT.

Per MSU Extension guidelines for in-person outdoor events, everyone in attendance is required to remain physically distanced from individuals not in your immediate household. Though masks are not required, individuals may choose to wear a mask, regardless of their vaccination status; please respect individual choices. By registering for/attending this event, you have agreed to practice social distancing and monitor yourself for flu-like symptoms – staying home if you either do not feel well, or test positive for COVID-19 or have had close contact with someone who is sick or has tested positive for COVID-19.

Only participants, their parent/guardian (if applicable), and volunteers will be allowed to attend the event. As much as we enjoy bringing friends and guests, at this time we are limited to volunteers, participants and the individuals transporting them. Everyone will be required to sign in and out from the event, please bring a writing utensil with you.

Thank you in advance for following these requirements and we look forward to seeing those who are able, at our in-person event. For those unable to attend face-to-face or follow these requirements, an alternative option may be available. Please contact me at least one week in advance to discuss this option.



11) At the event read the following statement:

a) FOR INDOOR EVENTS:

Thank you very much for attending the [NAME OF EVENT/MEETING]. I would just like to remind everyone that as part of our in-person meeting guidelines agreement, everyone in attendance is required to properly wear a face mask at all times, unless they are fully vaccinated, medically unable or under the age of 2. Individuals may also choose to wear a mask, regardless of their vaccination status; please respect individual choices regarding masks and vaccines. Attendees also agree to remain physically distanced from individuals not in your immediate household. We also ask that you sign in and out utilizing the sign in sheet and adhere to posted signage. Please use your own writing utensil and supplies. Thank you for following these guidelines so we can continue to meet face-to-face as guidelines allow. If you have any questions, please see me.

b) FOR OUTDOOR EVENTS:

Thank you very much for attending the [NAME OF EVENT/MEETING]. I would just like to remind everyone that as part of our in-person meeting guidelines agreement, everyone in attendance is required to remain physically distanced from individuals not in your immediate household. Though masks are not required, individuals may choose to wear a mask regardless of their vaccination status; please respect individual choices. We also ask that you sign in and out utilizing the sign in sheet and adhere to posted signage. Please use your own writing utensil and supplies. Thank you for following these guidelines so we can continue to meet face-to-face as guidelines allow. If you have any questions, please see me.

12) Following the event, send a copy of your attendance record to your local MSU Extension office or program staff within three days. Records can be scanned, photographed or mailed (electronic options are encouraged).

13) Contact your local program staff to discuss and share any issues, concerns or successes.



## MSU Extension In-Person Event Checklist

### PRIOR TO THE IN-PERSON EVENT:

- ☐ Make sure you are active in both Volunteer Central and 4-H Online (if applicable)
- ☐ Contact your local program staff to discuss in-person options
- ☐ Complete the “Communicating Through Conflict” training in Volunteer Central
- ☐ Secure appropriate space for the in-person event
- ☐ Complete the in-person event request form
- ☐ Allow 10 business days for approval of the request. Plans for events should not move forward or be promoted until final approval is received.
- ☐ Secure disposable masks (if applicable), hand sanitizer and wipes for the event
- ☐ Print or make arrangements with the local program staff to obtain required event signage and attendance records
- ☐ Prior to the event, send provided language to all participants, parents (if applicable) and volunteers regarding in-person experience requirements
- ☐ Collect extra pens to provide to those who forget their own

### AT THE IN-PERSON EVENT:

- ☐ Hang signs in highly visible areas
- ☐ If pre-determining seating arrangements, note where households should sit
- ☐ Place hand sanitizer in places for participants to access easily
- ☐ Post the attendance record at registration/check-in table and determine if one person will collect and write information or if individuals will write their own
- ☐ Read the “Expectations” statement at the start of the event
- ☐ Monitor physical distancing, mask wearing (if applicable) and interactions between participants

### AFTER THE IN-PERSON EVENT:

- ☐ Within three days of the event, send a copy of the attendance record to your local MSU Extension office or program staff.
- ☐ Contact your local program staff to discuss and share any issues, concerns, or successes



## In-Person Event FAQ

### HOW SHOULD I REMIND ATTENDEES ABOUT WEARING A FACE MASK?

- Remind the individual that face coverings are required to participate in indoor face-to-face MSU Extension events unless individuals are fully vaccinated, medically unable or under the age of 2. It is everyone's job to help enforce the rules.
- Point out the posted signage.
- Remind them that prior to the event, everyone was emailed expectations of the experience.
- Indicate that individual disposable face coverings are available for those who need them.
- If a required person refuses a mask, politely ask them to leave. If they refuse, do not put yourself in a position to engage in a verbal argument with the individual.
  - Adjust the event to limit exposure to everyone in attendance. It is best to keep the event to less than 15 minutes.
  - If need be, a volunteer may choose to end the event immediately due to individuals in attendance not following the expectations.
  - Immediately after the event, contact your local program staff for additional guidance. Make sure you know the individual's name that refused to wear a mask.
- The following script may be useful in this situation. While frustrating, attempt to keep your tone of voice calm, focus on the issue in a positive manner and remain in control of your own frustrations.
  - "We are very excited to meet face-to-face again, and in order to do so, Michigan State University Extension requires that everyone in attendance at an indoor event wears a face mask that covers your nose and mouth, unless they are fully vaccinated, medically unable to do so or under the age of 2. Do you have one you can put on? If not, we would be happy to provide you with a disposable one."
  - If the individual complies, thank them for cooperating.
  - If Individual does not comply:
    - "Thank you for coming to the event but without a face covering, I must ask you to leave." (If it is a parent or guardian of a participant, you can ask them to sit in their car while the event occurs so their child can participate. If it is a participant, politely ask them to leave the event.)
    - If the individual does not leave the indoor event, with a calm voice, ask the individual a second time. Inform them if they don't leave, then subsequent events will not be able to take place face-to-face for this group. If the individual still refuses, reduce the amount of time for the event as much as possible (15 minutes or less is preferable) and explain to the group that the event is being shortened as everyone is required to wear a face covering.

### WHAT SHOULD STAFF/VOLUNTEERS DO WHEN A PARTICIPANT SAYS THEY CANNOT MEDICALLY TOLERATE A MASK?

MSU Extension strives for open and accessible programs. Participants who cannot tolerate a mask may ask the group leader or MSU Extension professional in charge for an accommodation. These accommodations



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must be requested at least one week prior to an in-person engagement. Accommodations may include joining the event virtually, being seated more than six feet away from participants from other households, having a designated set of supplies that cannot be shared, etc.

Staff and volunteers may not ask for proof, but individuals or families may voluntarily show proof. If the individual is accompanying someone to the program but is not a participant in the program, ask them to please wait in their vehicle or in an area more than six feet away from the group participants.

*Sample language for use in promotional materials for in-person program:*

Masks must be worn over your mouth and nose at all times at indoor events, unless you are fully vaccinated, medically unable to do so or under the age of 2. If you are medically unable to tolerate wearing a mask, please contact the group leader or county MSU Extension professional at least one week prior to the event to request accommodations.