

Michigan State University Extension's Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions



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Introduction

Michigan State University (MSU) Extension has had more than a century of celebrated past success, but its future will depend on its ability to embrace change and to address the needs of a broad range of Michigan residents. Including those residents living in Michigan's cities and suburbs. Ranking tenth in population and eleventh in land mass among the fifty states, Michigan is a large and influential state. It is known as the center of the United States auto production, and recognized for its diverse agricultural economy and large tourism industry built upon the state's abundant natural resources. Although vast in size, more than 80% of Michigan residents live within one of five metropolitan areas, and about a third of them live in one of 24 cities with populations of more than 50,000 people (US Census, 2017).

Over the last five decades, many of Michigan's cities have struggled. According to a Brookings Institute report (Vey, 2007), globalization and rapid technological changes have created challenges for traditional industrialized cities, like many of Michigan's largest cities. The report indicates that these cities have become trapped in a cycle of decline that includes:

- The shift from a manufacturing economy to a knowledge-based one that has left many older industrial cities grappling to find their economic niche.
- Extreme economic and residential decentralization that has left the poor and minority populations isolated in the urban cores, spatially cut off from education and employment opportunities.
- Moreover, sixty-plus years of federal, state, and local policies that have largely stacked the deck against cities, undermining their ability to attract and retain business and residents.

The report concludes that the result is the urban decay that is seen in many of Michigan's largest cities and a loss of population that has occurred in all but five of Michigan's 24 largest cities since hitting their peak population at some point in the middle of the last century.

Additionally, poverty has become more concentrated in some urban and suburban areas including Michigan's two largest metropolitan areas, Detroit and Grand Rapids. Another Brookings Institute report (Kneebone, 2014), highlights research on the startling rise of concentrated suburban and urban poverty in America. The report notes that the number of neighborhoods in the United States, including a number in Detroit and Grand Rapids, where at least 40% of residents are considered poor has risen by more than 70% since 2000. People living in areas of concentrated poverty face a "double burden" – their own poverty, and the poverty of those around them.

"The challenges of poor neighborhoods – including worse health outcomes, higher crime rates, failing schools, and fewer job opportunities – make it that much harder for individuals and families to escape poverty and often perpetuate and entrench poverty across generations. These factors affect not only the residents and communities touched by concentrated disadvantage, but also the regions they inhabit and the ability of those metro areas to grow in inclusive and sustainable ways," according to a Michigan Public Radio State of Opportunity report (Dwyer, 2014).

MSU Extension's Role

In the early twentieth century when MSU Extension was established the basis of its focus was to deliver programs to primarily agricultural and rural communities. However, since the 1960's, driven by continued urban migration of Michigan's population into cities, the resulting urban sprawl, the growing racial tensions, and the mounting economic, social and environmental problems present in Michigan cities, MSU Extension began moving its work into urban and metropolitan setting (Borich, 2001; Ford

Foundation, 1966). With its demonstrated technical expertise, located at Michigan State University, and its success in adapting and delivering educational programs to meet the needs of agricultural and rural communities MSU Extension believed it could address and successfully affect these growing urban challenges (Beaulieu & Cordes, 2014; Borich, 2001; Fehlis, 1992).

In the last half century, MSU Extension has diversified and expanded its educational programming portfolio in many ways to respond to the needs of Michigan's urban and metropolitan residents. This has led to a mostly geographic and programmatically disparate set of MSU Extension programs being scattered across Michigan's urban and suburban landscape. Additionally, much of the curricula, delivery methods, and programming is adapted from rural experiences and has not been developed specifically for urban and suburban residents. Although some of the materials and delivery methods adapt well, others do not (Borich, 2001). Studies show that urban and suburban audiences may have difficulty relating in meaningful ways to examples in teaching materials that were not designed from an urban/suburban perspective (Webster & Ingram, 2007). Program delivery methods and techniques also need to vary widely to take into account the rich urban tapestry of diversity and commonalities found in Michigan's metropolitan and urban centers (Fehlis, 1992; NUEL Steering Committee (NUEL): et al., 2015; Urban Task Force, 1996). The ability to effectively make adjustments to ensure programmatic relevancy and effective delivery of Extension's programs will determine the future of MSU Extension, as well as the Cooperative Extension Service nationally (Rasmussen, 1989).

Even with the disparate set of programming offered and the lack of widespread programming developed for urban/suburban populations and environments, there is evidence that some MSU Extension programming efforts have been successful and achieved their defined impacts. However, with the largely incongruent and unconnected nature of these programming efforts across Michigan's urban and metropolitan areas and across MSU Extension's programmatic institutes, MSU Extension has a limited ability to evaluate or achieve broad scale impacts. MSU Extension will also need to identify its urban programming strengths and expertise along with shifting its thinking from not just what is being done with current programming, staffing and other resources, but to imagining the multitude of possibilities.

MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force

To challenge the MSU Extension system to be innovative and transformative, along with beginning to build programmatic and geographic congruency and identify adjustments necessary to ensure effective urban programmatic deliverables in the fall of 2016 MSU Extension Director Dr. Jeff Dwyer requested that Dr. Dave Ivan, MSU Extension Greening of Michigan Institute Director, organize an Urban Agenda Task Force. Dr. Dwyer charged the task force with:

- Examining MSU Extension's current urban programming efforts;
- Identifying current best practices concerning space configurations and staffing in MSU Extension's current urban programming efforts;
- Identifying emerging urban issues and the intersection with our programming efforts;
- Determining future urban programming priorities, and staffing and space needs; and
- Considering pilot locations for demonstration projects.

Each MSU Extension institute director was asked to identify two to three people to represent their institute on the task force. Furthermore, the MSU Extension director's office identified two district coordinators, a member of the MSU Extension organizational development team, a MSU faculty member and a representative from MSU Outreach and Engagement to serve on the task force. Dr. Ivan

also identified a soon to be retired MSU Extension Educator with strong facilitation skills to work with the task force and asked one of the identified task force members with urban Extension experience, Marie A. Ruemenapp, to co-chair the task force with him.

The 19-member task force met for the first time in December 2016, and two additional times in 2017. The task force's work was guided by:

- The charge from the MSU Extension Director outlined above.
- *A National Framework for Urban Extension* (2015), developed by the National Urban Extension Leaders (NUEL) for the national Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). The report identifies four emerging common themes, drawn from the literature and Extension professionals nationally, that need to be addressed by Extension in urban and metropolitan settings to effectively meet the needs of people and achieve programmatic success. They are:
 - Positioning: Defining Extension urban niche, and/or Extension's image in urban settings, how Extension is positioned at the local city level, as well as state level;
 - Programs: The methods Extension practices to address the multitude of issues and priorities of urban residents and communities, are programs adjusted to be appropriate and relevant for urban audiences;
 - Personnel: The means Extension uses to attract, develop, retain and train competent human talent, along with staffing positions, patterns and structures used to staff cities; and
 - Partnerships: The manner in which Extension collaborates and builds effective partnerships to leverage resources for collective impact.
- And lastly, the following transformative question:
"How can MSU Extension provide the greatest value in helping to meet the needs of people in Michigan's urban communities?"

The remainder of this report encapsulates the work of the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force by:

- Putting forth a definition of "urban" that can be used to provide understanding and consistency across MSU Extension.
- Outlining a set of Michigan cities the task force believes MSU Extension should focus on and work to provide additional resources to, and provides a justification for selecting the defined set of cities.
- Identifying a key set of foundational elements that need to be addressed by MSU Extension in urban and metropolitan settings to effectively meet the needs of people and achieve programmatic success.
- Providing suggested "Best Practices" gleaned from an examination of current MSU Extension urban and metropolitan programming efforts and the urban Extension literature.
- Examining future programmatic opportunities identified from information gathered from urban and suburban residents that were engaged in MSU Extension's 2015-16 statewide issue identification and needs assessment process.
- And concluding with a set of recommendations and suggested possible pilot sites.

The ultimate aim of the information and recommendations presented in this framework is to promote innovative and creative MSU Extension programming and operations that are connected within and across Michigan's urban and metropolitan environments. Through the implementation of the recommendations presented in this report, it is the belief of the task force that over time MSU Extension's work will contribute to healthier people, living more productive and higher quality lives in revitalized and vibrant urban and metropolitan environments across Michigan.

What do we mean by “Urban”

It became clear after the first meeting that members of task force did not share a common definition of “urban” when discussing MSU Extension’s urban programming efforts. Believing a shared understanding of “urban” was necessary to complete the charge given to the task force by the MSU Extension director, after significant discussion the group decided to use a definition based on the U.S. Census “Urbanized Area” definition. Since this definition is long-standing and widely understood definition for “urban,” it is believed that it will provide a consistent reference point for MSU Extension.

The U.S. Census Bureau (2017) defines an “Urbanized Area” as any city with a population of 50,000 or more.

For the MSU Extension definition of “urban” the task forces recommends using the following definition: **“Cities that currently have a population of at least 50,000 people or cities that had a population of at least 50,000 at their peak population in the twentieth century, but have at least a 20% loss in population from their peak.”**

As of the 2010 Decennial Census Michigan had 26 cities that met this definition. Approximately a third of Michigan’s population lives in one of 26 cities. The cities are listed in **Table 1**. Additionally, more than 80% of Michigan residents live within one of five metropolitan statistical areas (MSA), listed in **Table 2** (US Census, 2017).

The Metro Detroit MSA, which encompasses Pontiac, Ann Arbor, Flint and the surrounding area, is the state's largest metropolitan area. As of 2010, roughly 54% of Michigan’s population lived there. It is the eleventh largest MSA in the United States. The Grand Rapids MSA, including Grand Rapids’ surrounding metro communities, is the state's second largest MSA and it is fastest

Table 1 – Michigan cities with a population of more than 50,000 people

City	County Location	Population in 2010
Detroit	Wayne	713,777
Grand Rapids	Kent	188,040
Warren	Macomb	134,056
Sterling Heights	Macomb	129,699
Lansing	Clinton, Eaton & Ingham	114,297
Ann Arbor	Washtenaw	113,934
Flint	Genesee	102,434
Dearborn	Wayne	98,153
Livonia	Wayne	96,942
Westland	Wayne	84,094
Troy	Oakland	80,980
Farmington Hills	Oakland	79,740
Kalamazoo	Kalamazoo	74,262
Wyoming	Kent	72,125
Southfield	Oakland	71,739
Rochester Hills	Oakland	70,995
Taylor	Wayne	63,131
St. Clair Shores	Macomb	59,715
Pontiac	Oakland	59,515
Dearborn Heights	Wayne	57,774
Royal Oak	Oakland	57,236
Novi	Oakland	55,224
Battle Creek	Calhoun	52,347
Saginaw	Saginaw	51,508
Bay City	Bay	34,402
Jackson	Jackson	33,255

US Census, 2010

Table 2 – Largest metropolitan statistical areas in Michigan

Rank	Combined Metropolitan Statistical Area	Population
1	Detroit	5,318,744
2	Grand Rapids	1,379,237
3	Lansing	534,684
4	Kalamazoo	524,030
5	Saginaw	391,569

US Census, 2010

growing, with over 1.3 million residents as of 2010. The Lansing and Kalamazoo MSAs follow, with about a half a million residents living in each of them, and the last is the Saginaw MSA, which includes Bay City and Midland, with just under 400,000 residents (US Census, 2017).

Although the task force recommends that the Foundational Elements and Best Practices for urban Extension efforts outlined in this framework document be applied and implemented to MSU Extension's programming and operations in all urbanized areas in Michigan, the task force was particularly interested in the application of these principles in those cities in Michigan experiencing the greatest challenges.

Cities in Michigan that have been experiencing urban decay, population loss, economic challenges around de-industrialization and job losses, community disinvestment, concentrated poverty, deteriorating housing stocks and values, historical segregation, and residents suffering from social isolation, often referred to as "Legacy Cities" (Mallach & Brachman, 2013; Vey, 2007).

Michigan's Legacy Cities

"Legacy Cities" are cities that were once great crucibles of industry and prosperity that are now mere shadows of their former selves, and as such are left with nothing but a legacy. The term "Legacy Cities" is a planning term, similar to smart cities or place making. Since the term "Legacy Cities" is not a U.S. Census or officially defined term, the list of cities it is used to describe can often contain a bit of variation. However, multiple sources use a fairly consistent list of criteria or set of conditions for defining which cities might be called "Legacy Cities" (Legacy cities (LC) partnership, 2017; Legacy city (LC) design initiative, 2017; Mallach et al., 2013) .

Criteria or conditions commonly used to define "Legacy Cities" are:

- Cities that have experienced profound social and economic disruption because of fundamental shifts of the global economy in recent decades, and policy decisions made at the local, state and federal level.
 - Older, industrial cities that had a large industrial or manufacturing economy at the middle of the last century, but have seen a dramatic decline in that economic sector which has resulted in large job losses. Mostly concentrated in Midwest and Northeast, with the majority in the states of Michigan, Ohio, New York and Pennsylvania.
 - Median household income in legacy cities is \$35,705
 - Median household income in other U.S. cities is \$49,229
 - Cities that have lost between 20-70% of residents since their mid-twentieth century population peak, but cities that are still home to around 50,000 and up to 1.5 million people.
 - Average population loss of legacy cities nationally is -37%
 - Average population growth of other U.S. cities is 145%
 - Cities experiencing high levels of concentrated poverty, housing degradation and high vacancy rates, and social isolationism of residents, as well as historic segregation.
 - Average poverty rate in legacy cities is 28%
 - Average poverty rate in other U.S. cities 17%
- (LC partnership, 2017; LC design initiative, 2017; Mallach et al., 2013)

Most "Legacy Cities," although beset with challenges, have many strengths and assets to build upon as well, such as:

- A strong cultural fabric including museums, parks, national sports teams, population diversity and substantial immigrant populations, as well as abundant historic architecture.
- Anchor institutions like world class businesses and universities.
- Available land, lower cost of living and available housing compared to other U.S. cities.
- Economic productivity and power, despite the economic challenges they experience. Together, America’s “Legacy Cities” represent the fifth largest economy in the world behind the United States, China, Japan and Germany.
- “Legacy Cities” are also generally resilient places located in regions relatively safe from earthquakes, droughts and ocean-related weather events that usually have access to ample fresh water and existing infrastructure that could support an increased population (LC partnership, 2017; LC design initiative, 2017; Mallach et al., 2013).

After a review of the literature, the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force used the following criteria to define “Legacy Cities” in Michigan:

1. Cities **that had** a population of 50,000 or more at their peak population level in the middle of the last century and have experiences about a 20% or more loss in population since their peak.
2. Cities with a median household income of around \$35,705 or less than.
3. Cities with a poverty rate of around 28%, or more.
4. Lastly, cities that had a large industrial or manufacturing economy at the middle of the last century, but have seen a dramatic decline in that economic sector which has resulted in large scale job losses, housing degradation and vacancies, and social isolationism of residents.

Application of this set of criteria resulted in the identification of the following set of “Legacy Cities” by the task force. More specific demographic information for each of the cities is provided in **Table 3**.

- Detroit
- Warren
- Flint
- Pontiac
- Grand Rapids
- Lansing
- Kalamazoo
- Saginaw

It is the task force’s recommendation that MSU Extension should focus development of urban Extension programming pilot sites in some of these cities, as well ways to expand programming, staff and resources for the identified pilot sites. The task force identified three possible pilot sites. They are the Brightmoor and Riverdale neighborhoods in Detroit, zip code 49507 in Grand Rapids and a yet to be determined area of Flint. Additional information about the each of these potential pilot sites is provided at the end of this report.

Table 3 – Cities identified by MSU Extension as “Legacy Cities”

City	2015 est. Population	Peak Population	Peak Population Year	Percentage Population Loss	Median Household Income	Poverty Rate	2015 Est. Pop. Density
Detroit	690,074	1,849,568	1950	62.69%	\$25,764	64.9%	4,973.5
Grand Rapids	192,416	197,649	1970	2.65%	\$40,355	49.6%	4,334.1
Warren	134,857	179,260	1970	24.77%	\$43,523	40.2%	3,922.5
Lansing	114,485	131,403	1970	12.87%	\$35,563	53.5%	3,175.8
Flint	99,802	196,940	1960	49.32%	\$24,862	65.5%	2,986.7
Kalamazoo	75,499	85,555	1970	11.75%	\$33,009	56.6%	3,058.6
Pontiac	59,928	85,279	1970	29.73%	\$28,505	60.9%	3,000.7
Saginaw	50,288	98,265	1960	48.82%	\$27,990	64.9%	2,900.8

Foundational Elements

To respond, adapt and innovate to the environmental, economic, societal and demographic changes that have and continue to occur in Michigan cities MSU Extension will need to recognize and draw on the assets it has developed during its first century. At the same time, the task force believes that MSU Extension will need to recognize the deficits or liabilities the system has in meeting the unique aspects of urban and metropolitan residents and communities, and develop strategies to overcome them. To assist MSU Extension in this process, the task force has identified a set of five **Foundational Elements** that are essential for MSU Extension to address in urban and metropolitan settings to effectively meet the needs of people and achieve programmatic success. The task force recommends the adoption of these five foundational elements as a framework for MSU Extension to build urban Extension programming and operations, and to access and evaluate MSU Extension's progress toward effectively serving Michigan's urban residents and communities.

The task force adopted the first four foundational elements it identified from ECOP's *National Framework for Urban Extension* (NUEL et al., 2015). The task force independently developed the fifth. The five foundational elements that the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force recommends are:

- **Positioning**
- **Programs**
- **Personnel/Staffing**
- **Partnerships**
- **Internal support and resources**

Positioning Extension in Cities

To begin effectively positioning MSU Extension in urban areas there needs to be a common understanding across the organization of what the term "urban" means. To achieve this MSU Extension needs to define and embrace a concise definition of "urban" to act a consistent reference point for organization as it focuses, markets and promotes its work in urban settings (NUEL et al., 2015). This will allow MSU Extension to have a succinctly defined geographic set of places that it is refers when the term "urban" is used that is commonly understood both internally by MSU Extension staff and MSU administration, as well as externally by MSU Extension's community partners and clientele. The MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force has provided a recommended definition for "urban" in this report.

Similarly, MSU Extension will need to define and delineate its unique niche in Michigan's cities. Essentially, what MSU Extension's value and programmatic expertise is in cities and what MSU Extension is or wants to be known for in cities. MSU Extension's niche will need to differentiate it from other organizations in cities that are doing similar work to some MSU Extension efforts (Ruemennapp, 2017). Additionally it should encompass and build upon MSU Extension's current programmatic presence and the urban expertise available at MSU, by bringing the full range of MSU resources to bear. Recognizing and respecting local culture, customs and knowledge and exploring different models of community engagement that work effectively in urban settings will be essential .

MSU Extension will also need to ensure that urban residents have multiple points of access to its programming and educational resources. MSU Extension offices should be located for easy accessibility to residents living in urbanized areas (L. A. Warner et al., 2017). Programming locations should be strategically selected to enhance MSU Extension accessibility. Use of partner facilities and marketing

networks should be utilized. Technology, such as MSU Extension's web site, online webinar, use of distance learning, phone and computer hotlines, and eXtension's Ask an Expert, can and should play a major role in ensuring access.

Even with these things in place, MSU Extension will still face an uphill battle in ensuring that its points of service are accessible to residents living in Michigan's urbanized areas. Nationally several studies have shown that urban populations have traditionally scored low on their awareness of Extension, participation in Extension programs, and use of Extension educational information (Harder & Wells, 2017; P. D. Warner, Christenson, Dillman, & Salant, 1996). Additionally, urban populations including governmental and community partners are often skeptical that Extension has the expertise or commitment to apply its resources in urban environments (Jacob, Willtis, & Crider, 1991; NUEL et al., 2015). To overcome these challenges, MSU Extension should develop and utilize a comprehensive external marketing strategy.

Programming for Urban Residents

The ability to effectively make adjustments to ensure programmatic relevancy and effective delivery will determine the future of Extension (Rasmussen, 1989). To achieve relevancy and effective delivery in urban areas, MSU Extension programming needs to be concentrated on comprehensive community development strategies and be targeted to address key community needs and issues, and not on single subject matter (Krofta & Panshin, 1989; L. A. Warner et al., 2017). Contributions and insights from single disciplines, while significant, are not adequate to help transform urban environments. Progress towards sustainable, high quality urban environments will require delivery of interdisciplinary, cross-institute educational programming. The ability to work in interdisciplinary teams of experts while documenting both Extension's impact along with community change will be paramount (NUEL et al., 2015; L. A. Warner et al., 2017; Young & Vavrina, 2014).

As it does in rural communities, MSU Extension will need to learn to recognize and respect localized urban culture, customs and knowledge. MSU Extension must also recognize that "Education" can be intimidating to people. Many urban residents have not had positive experiences with the education system, especially disenfranchised, marginalized and immigrant populations. To engage effectively in urban communities it will be necessary for MSU Extension to be present at local community tables with partners and residents when initial community needs and potential resolutions are being discussed. In many situations, because of the larger university's research-based resources and inherent community credibility, MSU Extension personnel that are embedded in urban communities as trusted resources are uniquely positioned to act as neutral, trusted facilitators and conveners to bring people together to deliberate and deal with local issues (Kellogg Commission, 1998; NUEL et al., 2015).

Serving the needs of large, diverse urban populations often requires an approach to content and delivery that differs from rural communities. Often urban community issues and needs are the same as those present in rural communities – water quality, food security, housing, and other quality of life issues. However, although topically the issues appear to be the same, the underlying causes are frequently different in urban communities from those in rural. Therefore the technical expertise and strategies to address the issues must be different (Fehlis, 1992).

Presently, the majority of the MSU Extension curricula, delivery methods, and programming offered in Michigan cities is adapted from Extension's rural experiences, and has not been developed for diverse urban audiences or for delivery in urban environments. Although some of the curricula and delivery methods have adapted well, others have not. Urban audiences can have difficulty relating in meaningful ways to examples in teaching materials that do not include diverse perspectives or urban examples (Argabright, McGuire, & King, 2012; Gould, Steele, & Woodrum, 2014; Webster & Ingram, 2007).

Nevertheless, similar to rural educational programming, MSU Extension's urban programming needs to continue to be grounded in research-based resources and based upon best practices, as well as the resident's needs and issues (Urban Task Force, 1996; Western Region Program Leader Committee, 2008). MSU Extension should continue to focus its urban programming efforts in areas where it has access to long-standing university expertise and can build upon its current programming expertise. Additionally, MSU Extension should determine knowledge gaps in assessed urban needs that require new or additional faculty expertise or research. This will most likely require MSU Extension to collaborate with different MSU colleges and departments than it traditionally has to access relevant faculty expertise and urban focused research (NUEL et al., 2015; L. A. Warner et al., 2017).

MSU Extension's program delivery methods and techniques must also be adapted and varied to take into account the diversity found in urban areas. The usage of web-based and other emerging technologies offers opportunities for MSU Extension to provide educational programs and resources to larger and broader set of urban audiences (Dromgoole & Bleman, 2006; Mastel, 2014; Robideau & Santl, 2011). Special emphasis should be placed on expanding the web-based educational program and resource system. The system needs to be developed multiple delivery platforms designed with content specifically intended to meet the needs and interests of urban residents (Fehlis, 1992; NUEL et al., 2015; L. A. Warner et al., 2017). Additionally, a robust statewide, web-based program delivery system will ensure MSU Extension's ability to provide access to a larger number of urban residents than might otherwise be reached through more traditional program delivery methods.

It is the recommendation of the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force that MSU Extension continue to look for examples of educational program content and delivery methodologies that are working for other state Extension systems and universities along with developing several pilot urban Extension programming sites in several of Michigan's "Legacy Cities." The Michigan urban Extension pilot sites will be places where MSU Extension can pilot new and adapted curricula, program delivery and evaluation techniques, staffing models, and office space configurations. They can also serve as locations to attract and develop new faculty connections in MSU colleges and departments for applied urban research. Practices developed at these sites will serve to develop best practices for MSU Extension's work across all of Michigan's urbanized areas.

Effectively Staffing Michigan's Urbanized Areas

MSU Extension needs to embrace a flexible and responsive staffing model that utilizes recruiting and hiring practices to attract the next generation of professionals who have the skillsets and passion to work in urban areas on complex issues. The next generation of MSU Extension professionals working in urban settings requires a unique combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes to address the needs of the large and diverse set of constituents found in urbanized areas (NUEL et al., 2015).

To achieve this, MSU Extension should embrace a flexible staffing model that incorporates a wide-ranging set of positions (NUEL et al., 2015). Current position classifications, descriptions, educational requirements and compensation may require some adjustments to allow MSU Extension to hire the desired urban outreach specialists needed to be successful in working in urban environments and in meeting the needs of urban residents. Additionally, MSU Extension hiring procedures may need to be adapted and improved to match staff skillsets appropriately to desired urban staffing roles (Harriman & Daugherty, 1992). Mentoring and designing retention systems will be critical to ensure that the next generation of Extension professional stays employed with MSU Extension (NUEL et al., 2015). The engagement and support of MSU Extension's new Learning and Talent Development Specialist and Human Resources unit will be imperative.

With programming that is concentrated on coordinated and comprehensive community development strategies, and not specific subject matter, at times it will be necessary to employ a project driven hiring model allowing for a greater mix of core personnel and additional professionals hired on a short-term basis with specific expertise necessary to address specific metropolitan issues (NUEL et al., 2015). Therefore, it is likely that MSU Extension programming would benefit from the ability to purchase expertise on an as-needed basis as appropriate.

It has been well documented at the national level that the skillsets of urban staff are significantly different than those of rural staff (Harriman & Daugherty, 1992; NUEL et al., 2015; Urban Task Force, 1996; Webster & Ingram, 2007). Professional development activities must be created to address the specific core and technical competency needs of personnel in urban areas. NUEL is currently working on several national professional development needs assessments to collect updated information about specific urban competencies and best management practices. Opportunities for regular and consistent communication among urban staff across the country could assist MSU Extension in developing important support networks necessary for effective urban programming (NUEL et al., 2015).

Volunteers, university students and unpaid staff can be a valuable resource in urban settings (Fehlis, 1992; NUEL et al., 2015). MSU Extension needs to go beyond the traditional engagement of volunteers, in such programs as 4-H and Master Gardeners, to explore all opportunities to utilize volunteers and unpaid staff in urban staffing models. Volunteers and unpaid staff can be an indispensable resource used to expand staffing and MSU Extension's ability to deliver an expanded menu of educational programming and resources to a large number of urban residents. However, urban volunteers and unpaid staff can be significantly different from those in rural settings that MSU Extension has historically worked with. Urban volunteers and unpaid staff are usually more diverse and often looking to engage in specific projects or for short-term commitments. MSU Extension will need to adapt and develop new models that are effective in recruiting, training, and placing them in appropriate roles, and methods to provide suitable recognition and rewards will also need to be explored (Fehlis, 1992; NUEL et al., 2015).

Building Strategic Partnerships

Building and utilizing effective local partnerships and networks with local people and community-based groups is just as essential to MSU Extension's success in urban settings as it is in rural. All cities contain intricate networks of large numbers of non-profit and for-profit organizations providing educational programs and services that can serve as partners or competitors with MSU Extension. Furthermore, Michigan's urbanized areas encompass multiple governmental jurisdiction governed by city or township

and county elected officials. The complex socio-political landscape of working in these communities, the unique character of their issues, and the competition from other educational service providers will most likely require adjustments and adaptations to MSU Extension engagement model in urbanized areas (NUEL et al., 2015). Most likely MSU engagement models will need to be adjusted to be effective at the neighborhood level or with smaller, specifically identified segments of the urban population.

Since MSU Extension has limited staffing and resources to partner with all of the potential entities present in urban centers it will need to be strategic about building and maintaining partnerships. Because of this, MSU Extension needs to identify “right” partners, which can be difficult in cities. Not all potential partners have community credibility or the willingness to collaborate. Foremost, MSU Extension should seek out those entities that share or support MSU Extension’s mission and goals, and organizations embedded in communities with community credibility. Then MSU Extension should build partnerships with these organizations around complimentary programming, shared resources, common or shared evaluations, and collective impacts.

Building strong relationships with key community decision makers and political leaders is an effective strategy to use when navigating the robust set of urban-based organizations. MSU Extension must form both program and funding alliances with government agencies, educational institutions, foundations and non-governmental organizations, large and small businesses, and other organizations that share common goals and objectives (Henning, Buchholz, Steele, & Ramaswamy, 2014; NUEL et al., 2015).

Necessary Internal Support and Resources

Along with being effectively positioned, having relevant programming, appropriate staffing and strategic partnerships, MSU Extension needs to have effective internal support systems and resources in place to sustain Extension’s programming and operations in cities. Having the necessary internal support and resources refers to the organization having adequate or appropriate policies, resources and staffing to effectively carry out MSU Extension programming and operations in urban areas.

Ultimately, MSU Extension needs to build an urban platform that is not a separate function, but a seamless addition to the rest of its’ programming and operations. However, some adjustments and adaptation will probably need to be made in more than just programming and staffing, which have already been discussed. Initially, MSU Extension needs to examine the policies, procedures and practices it has in place to ensure that as they are applied in ways that are appropriate and supportive of Extension’s urban efforts, even if this means that they are applied differently than they are in rural counties. Then MSU Extension needs to be willing to adopt policies and funding models that allow for creative programming and staffing models in urban settings.

Additionally, MSU Extension leadership should call for organizational development units, such as educational technology, communications, informational technology and development, to specifically look at the needs of Extension staff and clientele in urban setting. Particular emphasis should be placed on grants and research administration staff to work with Institute Directors, District Coordinators, Extension Educators and the new urban task force to explore special revenue enhancement efforts to fund Extension’s urban programming, staffing and operations.

Lastly, MSU Extension needs to realize that its resources are not distributed consistently across all populations, nor is the task forcing calling for them to be. However, the organization does need to realize that when it has conversations about program needs, distribution of resources, establishment

and application of policies, and other programmatic and operational issues, rural and agricultural clientele and staff voices are disproportionately present in those conversations and have historically carried the day. MSU Extension leadership should recognize its long history of commitment to substantive programming and operational support to rural and agricultural interests and implement strategies to provide equal consideration to staff and resources providing services to urban residents.

Best Practices Garnered from Michigan Examples

According to the *National Framework for Urban Extension* (NUEL et al., 2015), “A gap exists in quality research to assist urban Extension programmers to inform the development of educational programming to meet urban needs and to guide and ground our programs. While there are ‘promising practices’ attached to urban Extension work, ‘best practices’ are not yet identified and collated. More research and scholarly activity is required.”

To access potential “best practices” in Michigan the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force reviewed the urban programming and operations in three of Michigan’s largest cities/counties – Detroit in Wayne County, Grand Rapids in Kent County and Flint in Genesee County. Based on information gleaned from that review, the task force puts forth the following “best practices” to assist in guiding MSU Extension’s work in urban area. The task force realizes the list of best practices is not complete and that it needs to be a living list that is modified as MSU Extension implements the recommendations and builds on the **Foundational Elements** presented in this document.

Positioning

- Need to establish and maintain a long-term community presences
- Sustained community relationships are critical
 - Embed staff to work in specific neighborhood and/or community
- Because of limited resources focus on specific geographic area(s) with specific program
- Need offices located and embedded in community settings, takes advantage of facilities recognized as regional assets
 - Locating an office in the same location with one or more partners that have community credibility can be advantageous
- Offering similar services to those of community partners in one central location for ease of access for urban residents
- Work must result in “changing people’s lives” for the better by addressing acute or chronic problems
- Need to ensure that MSU Extension is recognized for work that it is doing in order to strengthen its urban image and be acknowledge for its presence

Programming

- Focus all programming efforts on coordinated community development
- Focus programming on identified area of need/local issues, building on community strengths
- Must be present at local community tables with partners and residents when initial program and/or community need discussions are occurring
- Need to have a “Rapid Response” to issues in urban areas, differs from sustained programming
- Successful programming efforts occur in neighborhoods within set boundaries
- Should deliver cross-institute topical programming – need to overlap content to be effective and achieve coordinated community development
- Provide programming that is adapted or developed for urban audiences, but builds on MSU Extension’s programming expertise

- Youth development, foods and nutrition, community food systems/urban ag or gardens, financial literacy/housing, and entrepreneurship were consistent examples
- Connection with broad MSU faculty expertise and resources is important and helps facilitate programs
- MSU Extension should function as convener for local groups to bring local resources to table
- Have programs and resources translated into Spanish and Arabic for outreach to local audiences, staff have language skills and cultural competencies
- Look for what is working in other areas and modify for best delivery practices

Personnel

- Educators need to have a focused geographic area of assignment, local, non- statewide
- Embed staff to work in community in specific neighborhood and provide resources for support
- Urban areas need to have strong relationships between educators for coordination and impact
- Must have people familiar with working in urban areas with urban problems and support them with specialize training specifically targeted and designed for urban
 - Need understanding of urban sociology and culture
- Successfully engage volunteers in multiple ways, and with more than just 4-H and Master Gardeners

Partnerships

- Partners should share or support MSU Extension’s mission and goals
- Engage and utilizes multiple partnerships
- Focus on building new partnerships w/organizations embedded in community/targeting of community
- Most beneficial partnerships have shared funding, programming, evaluation and impacts

Internal Support and Resources

- At beginning, look for more easily obtainable program areas “low hanging fruit” to engage effectively with larger university resources and local resources
- Secure new financial resources, but recognize that grant/contract funding impacts ability for sustained programs and personnel/staffing
 - Grants/contracts also present challenges to cramped office spaces that are present in several of the urban examples
 - Need to build in infrastructure costs to grants/contracts – office space, office equipment (phones, internet, copying), office furniture, support staff
- Research successful urban programs to replicate in Michigan

Monitoring and Evaluating Progress

Developing wide spread organizational urban competence will be an evolving, dynamic process that will take time. The MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force recommends that the organization establish a systematic monitoring process to periodically assess progress toward incorporation of the Five Foundational Elements into a seamless addition to the rest of its’ programming and operations. The pilot sites should be used to develop and test the evaluation metrics established by MSU Extension to assess the progress toward adoption and integration of the Five Foundational Elements into MSU Extension’s overall programming models and organizational operations.

Future Urban Programmatic Opportunities

To provide insight into future urban programming priorities and assess their alignment with current MSU Extension urban programming deliverables, the task force reviewed the information gathered from urban and suburban audiences through the 2015-16 MSU Extension and AgBioResearch Issue Identification Process. Urban/suburban responses from two data sets, on online survey and community focus groups, gathered through the process were reviewed.

In the online survey, respondents rated two sets of priorities. There were 36 community priorities and 9-self and/or family priorities. The task force observed a great deal of consistency in the urban/suburban and all survey respondents' rankings of the top eight community priority statements. However, in the bottom two-thirds of the community priorities there were major areas of differences in rankings between the urban/suburban and all survey respondents. These were most evident around all community priority statements concerning agriculture. The urban/suburban consistently ranked all four of the community priority statements specifically mentioning agriculture significantly lower (having more than four rankings different) than the all survey respondents group. While urban/suburban respondents ranked the following set of community priority statements significantly higher than the all survey respondents group:

- Expanded after school opportunities for youth,
- Improved access to quality childcare,
- Improved community practices that improve air quality,
- Helping urban communities grow and prosper, and
- Helping communities reduce obesity.

To examine further the priority levels the survey respondents used to rank the 36 community priorities a stepwise factor analysis was completed to identify themes. Through this analysis of the data, five broad, grouped community priorities were identified. The Urban Agenda Task Force looked at these for similarities and difference in the rankings. Again, they observed that the agricultural theme area dropped from third to fifth. All other thematic areas remained in the same ranked order for the two groups, as can be seen in **Table 4**.

Table 4 - Grouped Community Priority Themes

Themes	Urban/ Suburban Rank	All Respondents Rank
Food and water safety and security	1	1
Creating healthy families, schools, and communities	2	2
Helping Michigan maintain a healthy and sustainable environment for work, living, and play.	3	4
Helping urban and rural community development	4	5
Creating productive and profitable agriculture and natural resources	5	3

The task force also reviewed the ranking of the personal and family priorities for both the urban/suburban group and the all survey respondents group. The task force observed that the top two priority areas, Food and Health and Family, and the ninth priority, Business, were the same for both groups. However, after that the rankings for the remaining seven priority areas shifted a bit between the urban/suburban group and the all survey respondents group. Most notably, as with the community priorities, the agriculture priority dropped in the urban/suburban rankings.

For any of the nine personal and family priority areas that respondents rated at a “High priority” they were asked to prioritize a list of related MSU Extension programmatic areas. The top five prioritized programmatic areas under each personal and family priority identified by urban/suburban respondents to the online survey are presented in **Table 5**.

Table 5 - Top 5 Programmatic Priorities Identified by Urban/Suburban Audiences		
<p>1. Food (Nutrition) & Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe food & water Nutrition Physical activity Healthy relationships Food budgeting 	<p>2. Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Money management Parenting education Violence prevention Homeownership Early childhood education 	<p>3. Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainable communities Economic development Leadership Community food systems Farm & farmers' markets
<p>4. Natural Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water quality Energy Lake, streams & watersheds Fisheries and wildlife Invasive species 	<p>5. Lawn & Garden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Home gardening Composting & recycling Water usage Pest management Community gardening 	<p>6. Volunteerism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Master Gardener program Master Naturalist program 4-H Conservation Stewards prg Citizen Planner
<p>7. 4-H & Youth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life skills Youth development Academic success Healthy youth Career preparation 	<p>8. Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetables Small farms &/or urban farms Pollinators & pollination Fruits and nuts Environmental stewardship on farms 	<p>9. Business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Entrepreneurship Business development Food business & regulation Bio-economy Tourism

The second data set the task force reviewed was the qualitative input gathered from the round of community-based focus groups held with audiences that had been under-represented, in comparison to Michigan demographic statistics, during the first round of community-based focus groups. The under-represented audiences engaged in these focus groups were primarily urban residents of color.

During the focus groups, participants identified and prioritized issues of concern to them in their community. No community issues appeared in all of the prioritized lists. However, those that appeared in more than half of the lists included:

- Care and services for the elderly
- Employment and job training
- Housing, wealth development and financial literacy
- Coordination and communication between agencies
- Food/nutrition and health issues
- Languages issues such as learning English or having materials in languages other than English
- Physical and recreational activities for families
- Public safety
- Assistance in transitioning into the United States, and
- Transportation.

Several of the focus groups had sizeable numbers of immigrants participating in them, hence, a number of the prioritized community issues identified reflect the unique challenges that immigrants encounter.

After reviewing the input gathered, the task force recommends that MSU Extension capitalize on the input received through the 2015-16 statewide needs assessment/issues identification process, coupled with the additional local urban resident focus groups, as a starting point in identifying programmatic focuses and staffing gaps in urban centers.

Recommendations

The MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force puts forth the following set of recommendations:

- When MSU Extension utilizes the term “urban” or “urban Extension” it should refer to Extension’s work in “Cities that currently have a population of at least 50,000 people or cities that had a population of at least 50,000 at their peak population in the twentieth century, but have at least a 20% loss in population from their peak.”
- MSU Extension should consider the five Foundational Elements (Positioning, Programming, Personnel, Partnerships and Internal Support/Resources) presented and outlined in the *Framework for Programming in Michigan’s Cities and Metropolitan Regions* to build urban Extension programming and operations, and to access and evaluate MSU Extension’s progress toward effectively serving Michigan’s urban residents and communities in all cities in Michigan.
- MSU Extension should pilot sites in some of the “Legacy Cities” identified in the *Framework for Programming in Michigan’s Cities and Metropolitan Regions*. These were identified as Detroit, Grand Rapids, Warren, Lansing, Flint, Kalamazoo, Pontiac and Saginaw. The pilot sites should represent:
 - Places that utilize the five Foundational Elements to build effective programs and operations that effectively address the needs and issues of urban residents;
 - Places where MSU Extension can pilot new and adapted curricula, program delivery and evaluation techniques, staffing models, and office space configurations;
 - Locations that serve to attract and develop new faculty connections in MSU colleges and departments for applied urban research; and
 - Sites that develop best practices for MSU Extension’s work across all of Michigan’s urbanized areas.
 - Locations where strong community interest/partners exist that want to work with us.

- Should be used to develop and test the evaluation metrics established by MSU Extension to assess the progress toward adoption and integration of the Five Foundational Elements into MSU Extension's overall programming models and organizational operations.
- MSU Extension should encourage the utilization of the urban Extension best practices presented in the *Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions* and continue to modify and expand the list as Extension implements the recommendations and builds on the Foundational Elements presented in this report.
- MSU Extension should establish a systematic monitoring process to periodically assess progress towards achieving the set of recommendations it adopts from the *Framework for Programming in Michigan's Cities and Metropolitan Regions*.

Positioning Extension

- MSU Extension should define and delineate its unique niche in Michigan's cities:
 - Focusing on Extension's value and programmatic expertise;
 - Differentiating Extension's role in responding to community needs, through strategic partnerships that address community gaps, and that build upon Extension's current programmatic presence and the urban expertise available at MSU;
 - Recognizing and respecting localized urban culture, customs and knowledge; and
 - Utilizing models of community engagement that work effectively in urban settings.
- MSU Extension should consider the development of a comprehensive external marketing strategy specifically targeted at Michigan's urban centers to increase awareness of Extension programs and expertise.

Programming for Urban Residents

- MSU Extension should continue to concentrate its programming efforts on coordinated and comprehensive community development strategies targeted to address key urban community needs and issues, and not on single subject matter expertise.
- MSU Extension should work to embed staff in urban communities by assigning them geographically defined urban areas, and by not assigning them statewide programmatic assignments.
- MSU Extension should work to develop curricula, delivery methods, and programming developed or specifically adapted for urban audiences or for delivery in urban environments that is grounded in research-based resources and based upon best practices.
- MSU Extension should continue to focus its urban programming efforts where it has long-standing university expertise and it can build upon its current programming expertise, while determining knowledge gaps in assessed urban needs that require new or additional faculty expertise or research.
- MSU Extension should build connections and collaborations with different MSU colleges and departments to access relevant faculty expertise and urban focused research to fill knowledge gaps in assessed urban needs and issues.
- To increase the size of its urban audience, MSU Extension should consider expanding its web-based educational program and resource system with content specifically intended to meet the needs and interests of urban residents.
- MSU Extension should capitalize on the input received through the 2015-16 statewide needs assessment/issues identification process, coupled with the additional local urban resident focus groups, as a starting point in identifying programmatic focuses and staffing gaps in urban centers.

Personnel/Staffing Urban Areas

- MSU Extension should utilize recruiting and hiring practices that attract potential employees who have the desired skills, expertise and passion to work in urban areas, and who represent the diversity of Michigan’s urban centers.
- MSU Extension should embrace a flexible staffing model that incorporates a wide-ranging set of position classifications, job descriptions, and educational requirements along with a competitive compensation structure that can be utilized to employ a core set of urban Extension outreach educators/specialists as well as short-term experts to work on specific projects.
- MSU Extension should develop a robust menu of professional development offerings to meet the needs of staff working in urban environments. Connections to national urban Extension professional development efforts would be beneficial to MSU Extension.
- MSU Extension to seek to engage volunteers, university students, intern and others in new and non-traditional programmatic areas to expand Extension’s human resources and its ability to deliver an expanded menu of educational programming and resources to large numbers of urban residents.

Building Partnerships

- MSU Extension should build strategic partnerships with organizations that contain all or some of the following attributes:
 - Share or support Extension’s mission and goals;
 - That are embedded and have community credibility in urban communities and with audiences that Extension has chosen to work with;
 - Offer complimentary programming and/or other resources; and
 - Are willing to partner for collective impact.
- MSU Extension should continue to focus on building effective District Councils in urban/metropolitan areas, whose members are reflective of the urban community to help build partnerships, provide advice and serve as advocates.

Internal Support and Resources

- MSU Extension should strive to build an urban Extension platform that is not a separate function, but a seamless addition to the rest of its’ programming and operations.
- MSU Extension should examine the policies, procedures and practices it has in place to ensure that they are applied in ways that are appropriate and supportive of Extension’s urban efforts.
- MSU Extension should be willing to adopt policies and funding models that allow for creative programming and staffing models in urban settings.
- MSU Extension should specifically look at and address the needs of Extension staff and clientele in urban setting around educational technology, communications, informational technology and development.
- MSU Extension should place emphasis on building a relationship between grants and research administration, Institute Directors, District Coordinators and Extension Educators to explore special revenue enhancement efforts to fund Extension’s urban programming, staffing and operations.
- MSU Extension leadership should recognize its long history of commitment to substantive programming and operational support to rural and agricultural interests and implement strategies to provide equal consideration to staff and resources providing services to urban residents.

Pilot Sites

It is the recommendation of the MSU Extension Urban Agenda Task Force that three urban Extension pilot sites be created in Michigan. The task force suggests the following specific locations:

- The Brightmoor & Riverdale communities in the city of Detroit,
- Zip Code 49507 in the city of Grand Rapids, and
- A yet to be determined geographically bound location within the city of Flint.

These urban Extension pilot sites will be places where MSU Extension can develop and field test new and adapted curricula, program delivery and evaluation techniques, staffing models, and office space configurations. They should be used by MSU Extension to develop and test evaluation metrics to assess the progress toward adoption and integration of the Five Foundational Elements into MSU Extension's overall programming models and organizational operations. They can also serve as locations to attract and develop new faculty connections in MSU colleges and departments for applied urban research. Lastly, the practices developed at these sites will contribute to the development of best practices for MSU Extension's work across all of Michigan's urbanized areas.

The task force suggests these three sites because MSU Extension is presently providing some level of programming and resources to residents of each of these communities, but all of them are communities with inordinate economic and social issues. They have lost population, have high unemployment and poverty rates, low median income levels and are experiencing challenges with housing, business development and retention, and having adequate employment opportunities. The communities also contain one or more established, highly creditable partner organizations that MSU Extension is currently working with that is interested in having MSU Extension expand its presence in them. Furthermore, MSU Extension has already been able to garner additional resource to expand its work in two of these communities – Brightmoor/Riverdale and Flint.

Building upon current programming and community partnership, MSU Extension staff will need to engage a broad spectrum of community residents to assess local needs. Input gathered from the 2015-2016 MSU Extension statewide needs assessment and issue identification process can be used in combination with this information to determine program focuses and staffing expertise for each location. They may also be places to focus on the priorities outlined in the Cooperative Extension's *National Framework for Health and Wellness* (Braun et al., 2014). These are:

- Integrated Nutrition, Health, Environment, and Agriculture Systems
- Health literacy
- Chronic disease prevention & management
- Positive youth development for health
- Health insurance literacy, and
- Health policy issues education.

More detail about each of the suggested pilot sites and potential programming, partner and funding opportunities is provide in the following site descriptions.

Detroit: Brightmoor & Riverdale Communities

The Brightmoor and Riverdale neighborhoods are two adjacent communities located in northwest Detroit. They cover approximately five square miles with a population of roughly 20,000 people. Detroit

as a whole is not a very dense city, with only 4,973.5 people per square mile, but both of these neighborhoods have below average density. Both of them have higher median income levels, at about \$29,850, than the city at large, at \$25,764. However, the median income level of the area is well below the national Legacy City median income, which is \$35,705. About 44% of the population has less than a high school education; about another 12% has only a high school education and about 23% have a Bachelor's degree or higher level of education.

Wayne County has 45 staff members across five MSU Extension offices with three Detroit-based offices. The offices in the Metro Detroit area are Western Wayne, Eastern Market, Southgate-DCC, Focus Hope, and MSU Outreach Office – Franklin Wright. Staff at all of these offices have done programming within or near the Brightmoor and Riverdale communities. A strong set of community partners that MSU Extension staff have been working to build connections and partnerships with is the Brightmoor Alliance. The Brightmoor Alliance is a coalition of nearly 50 organizations dedicated to serving the Brightmoor community. Together, they work to mobilize community resources and focus their combined efforts to revitalize the area. In addition to members of the Alliance, staff have developed partnerships with the school systems, local government agencies, libraries, local units of government, Wayne County courts, non-profits agencies and organizations, and state agencies.

As a potential urban programming pilot site, MSU Extension could be positioned to continue to and expand programming to meet the needs of residents living in the Brightmoor and Riverdale communities in the following areas:

- Coordinated community development by bundling of MSU Extension programming in micro-enterprise development, community leadership development, community planning and land use, and business and individual financial education such as basic budgeting, homebuyers' education, foreclosure prevention and credit management.
- Youth development focused on academic success, workforce preparation, STEM activities, leadership development and civic engagement.
- Food and nutrition education along with health and wellness programs focused on health literacy, chronic disease prevention and management, social-emotional health, and health insurance literacy.

Grand Rapids: Zip Code 49507

The 49507 Census tract in Grand Rapids is an urban area on the southeast side of the city with 39,734 residents, 31% of whom live below the poverty line. One local effort is Seeds of Promise, a place-based, urban community improvement initiative located in 49507. Their core principle is that those who live in the community must direct their own improvement strategy. They need help with grant writing, research, evaluation and education. MSU Extension needs help in reaching residents as a trusted source. Seeds of Promise is also interested in replicating their project in Muskegon. We have explored building a partnership with Seeds of Promise and are working to build stronger partnerships with the City of Grand Rapids, given their interest in building stronger, healthier neighborhoods.

With that in mind, current MSU Extension Kent partnerships include:

- Social emotional health—Kent County Juvenile Detention, numerous community agencies (English and Spanish). More than 1,000 participants in 2016. Violence prevention; conflict mgt.

- Ensuring strong communities—Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative; Michigan Works!, numerous other partners. Programs in money management, homeownership, youth financial literacy.
- Nutrition education—Grand Rapids Public Schools; Spectrum Health; Kent County Head Start; Job Corps (English and Spanish); numerous community partners
- Disease prevention and management—West Michigan Diabetes Prevention Program network partners, Spectrum Health, ACCESS of West Michigan, local food pantries, child care providers
- 4-H Youth Development—Baxter Community Center/Jubilee Jobs; Michigan Youth Opportunities Initiative, Dickinson Elementary. School enrichment, SPIN clubs, science discovery, foster care transition.
- Urban Agriculture—Kent County Health Department; West Michigan Growers Group; Local First. Includes ServSafe; working to connect local growers to local consumers utilizing Bridge Cards.

Flint

Flint, Michigan is well known for many reasons. It is the place where General Motors was founded and the birthplace of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. The community was the focus of the work of filmmaker Michael Moore as a place of disinvestment and despair, and more recently, the water crisis where the municipal water supply has been impacted by the leeching of lead into the drinking water of thousands of homes. It is also a place where a committed group of residents and champions have organized to meet the challenges of an emerging crisis that has impacted a city that was already experiencing many of the ills – joblessness, crime, vacant housing – that many former industrial, legacy cities in the Midwest have experienced.

The following are demographics for the City of Flint, according to the 2016 Census Bureau (2017):

- Population 97,386
- Median income \$24,862
- 41% of the population in poverty
- Employed 50% of males 16 and over and 49% of women age 16 and over
- Education level - 82.9% with a high school diploma and 11% with a Bachelor's degree or higher
- 56.6% African American, 37.4% White, 3.9% Hispanic or Latino, 3.9% Other races, .5% Asian, .5% American Indian or Native Alaskan
- Median value of owner-occupied homes during 2011-2015 was \$32, 600

What MSU Extension is known for and could build upon as an urban Extension pilot site in Flint are:

- MSU Extension responded to the lead crisis quickly and has been recognized for their work in creating materials and programs to educate the public about the need for better nutrition to mitigate the physical and developmental impacts of lead poisoning.
- MSU Extension has a profound impact on the food system in Flint and Genesee County including a long-standing partnership with **Edible Flint**, a non-profit organization that supports people to grow their own gardens and build community around healthy food access. The organization has assisted with more than 1,000 garden projects across the city while helping engage new farmers

in growing for expanding markets for fresh food in the community. There has been a recent increase in small-scale growers who have season-extending hoop houses.

- MSU Extension is working to increase access to healthy foods through providing education and resources for food pantries and convenience stores to carry healthy, economical options for local residents.
- MSU Extension has nimble youth programs that address a wide array of interests in partnership with many different organizations including the YMCA, Genesee Intermediate School District, local faith communities, and environmental organizations. Such programs focus on leadership, self-esteem, and workforce skill development.

Opportunities for growth of MSU Extension programs in Flint, with the addition of dedicated staff to deliver them, could be:

- Mindfulness Education
- Education On Opioid Use And Addiction Prevention
- Youth Programs That Engage 1st Generation 4-Hers
- Land Use Education
- Civic Democracy
- Management Of Hoop Houses And Vegetable Production
- Water Management And Water School

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