

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION AT WORK

2025 IMPACT REPORT



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Supporting Michigan, Every Day

Michigan communities are navigating more complexity than ever, from rising costs to climate challenges to workforce changes and more. In moments big and small, people are looking for practical support they can trust.

Every day, Michigan State University Extension provides that support.

We're proud to serve all 83 Michigan counties with a team of more than 700 people who are rooted in the communities they serve. As the community outreach arm of Michigan State University, we bring evidence-based knowledge to the people, businesses and communities who can use it most. We help them solve tough problems, seize new opportunities and thrive.

In 2025 alone, almost 300,000 Michiganders participated in MSU Extension programs, and they had plenty of programs to pick from — we delivered more than 8,000 last year! Some people took classes to plan their retirement. Some took classes to learn how to can tomatoes. Others learned how to improve their farm's recordkeeping, start a mindfulness practice or support their children's development. And that's just the start of our impact across the state.

We answered more than 6,000 questions through our Ask Extension service. We collaborated with organizations in Michigan communities, including 675 schools, nearly 250 agricultural organizations and 150 libraries. The almost 850 different clients we served through our MSU Product Center generated \$2.5 billion in annual sales for the Michigan economy. And we launched new ways to stay connected and learn, from social media campaigns to a short documentary!

This past year also brought unexpected change. Federal budget cuts ended SNAP-Ed (short for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education), a long-standing nutrition education program we had delivered for more than 30 years. While this loss was significant — for our team and for the thousands of Michigan families we served — it has only strengthened our resolve to help Michiganders live healthier lives. We remain deeply committed to health equity, community well-being and inclusive access to trusted information.

As you read this report, you'll see stories of our impact across the state. You'll meet the people behind the programs and discover how our organization's everyday actions help build a stronger Michigan. Because whether you're trying to grow a business or grow a tomato, **MSU Extension does that.**

BEYOND THIS REPORT

It's hard to explain in just a few pages everything we do. But when you look around, you could also see MSU Extension's impact in the produce at your local market, supplied by a farmer who used our farm financial tools. Or in the enchiladas at your favorite restaurant, prepared by a cook we trained in food safety through our ServSafe certification program. In fact, your new neighbor might be your new neighbor because they took a homeownership class with us.

Learn more with our collection of stories called [Extension in Action](#), featuring articles and videos that highlight the people, partners and projects of MSU Extension.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR DIRECTOR REFLECTING ON A YEAR OF IMPACT

It was a year of tremendous change and growth for us. Hear from MSU Extension Director Quentin Tyler at extension.msu.edu/2025Reflections. You can also reach his message by scanning this QR code.



AGRICULTURE & AGRIBUSINESS



Michigan agriculture is as diverse as the people who make it work. From small specialty growers to large-scale operators, farmers and agricultural professionals across the state are navigating weather volatility, pest and disease pressure, shifting markets and complex management decisions. MSU Extension goes beyond traditional approaches to provide timely, practical, research-based support for farms of every size and stage. MSU Extension is the first call for farmers, gardeners and agricultural professionals across the state.

In 2025, one of our flagship programs, the Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series, reached more than 5,500 live participants and generated more than 10,300 YouTube views. The series delivered real-time, evidence-based insights tied



CAITLIN SPLAWSKI, MSU Extension greenhouse and floriculture educator, teaches a Hands-On Weed ID Experience class for MSU Extension Master Gardener volunteers.

directly to current growing conditions for field crops across Michigan. Participants reported an average benefit of \$7.63 per acre in estimated savings as a result of management changes informed by the series.

MSU Extension also continued to support agricultural safety and emergency preparedness through the Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock, or ERAIL, program.

ERAIL helps protect the public and transported animals by equipping first responders and agricultural professionals with the tools and training they need to respond to livestock transport emergencies.



First responders practice safely haltering model livestock heads at an Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock, or ERAIL, training.



Participants practice safely moving and containing pigs at an Emergency Response to Accidents Involving Livestock, or ERAIL, training.

In 2025, MSU Extension placed a new ERAIL emergency response trailer in the Upper Peninsula, bringing the statewide total to nine strategically located trailers. Our ERAIL outreach expanded through classroom instruction, hands-on equipment trainings, livestock handling programs and ongoing engagement with participants in Michigan's equine and livestock industries.



BARBARA GREGERSON and **MELANIE FUHRMANN**, MSU Extension consumer horticulture educators, and **JENNIFER SPEYER**, MSU Extension 4-H program instructor, answer consumer questions at the 2025 Novi Home and Garden Show.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



66,154

participants in MSU Extension agriculture and agribusiness programs



1,587

programs provided by MSU Extension agriculture and agribusiness educators



748

agriculture and agribusiness news articles, as well as 126 bulletins and fact sheets, published on the MSU Extension website



179,785

subscribers to agriculture- and agribusiness-related MSU Extension News Digests

MOMENTS THAT **MATTER**

“I am learning everything from weed control to marketing the season’s crops and responding to change of weather. Also how to plan for different insect challenges and soil nutrient management. All the Virtual Breakfast sessions [cover] excellent topics.”

— A Field Crops Virtual Breakfast Series participant

“This [event] was so informative and the hands-on experience was wonderful for our local first responders. We are blessed to have this trailer in the U.P., and all livestock are in even more caring hands now that we and other members of the community have gone through this training.”

— A participant in ERAIL training

WHAT’S **NEXT**

In 2026, MSU Extension will continue supporting Michigan farmers and gardeners where they are by offering a mix of in-person education, online learning and digital resources to ensure timely, accessible support for farming and gardening success, regardless of distance or schedule.

LEARN **MORE**

For more information about MSU Extension’s agriculture and agribusiness programming, visit our Agriculture website at canr.msu.edu/agriculture or contact director Ron Bates at batesr@msu.edu.

Empowering nearly **300,000** residents in all **83 counties** with resources allowing them to prosper.

CHILDREN & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



MSU Extension's children and youth programming is built around a simple goal: Helping young people reach their full potential now and in the future. Through hands-on experiential learning activities conducted in positive environments with support from caring adults, Extension helps young people explore their interests, build skills and prepare for whatever comes next.

Our work spans early childhood and family development programs for parents and caregivers, as well as Michigan 4-H, the state's flagship youth development program for children ages 5 to 19.

In 2025, MSU Extension's children and youth programming addressed some of the most pressing issues facing families and communities:

- Helping young people become leaders in a globally connected and multicultural world.



Participants at 4-H Exploration Days learn about careers in law and politics as they tour a mock courtroom at MSU.



Michigan 4-H'ers explore ways to make a difference in their community through 4-H.

- Enhancing science literacy and life skills.
- Growing workforce preparation skills and career interests.
- Empowering young people to make proactive and healthy choices.
- Helping strengthen Michigan families while preparing children in early childhood for life and school success.

Our programs addressed important community issues such as substance use prevention, mental health support, biosecurity in Michigan's agriculture industry, financial literacy, independent living skills, postsecondary education choices, leadership development, early childhood literacy and positive discipline.

Across program areas, MSU Extension delivered a wide range of learning experiences in 2025, including more than 250 child and family development programs. During the September 2024 to August 2025 program year, Michigan 4-H delivered more than:

- 22,000 experiences related to leadership, citizenship, civic engagement, community service, communication and arts.
- 46,000 experiences related to healthy living.
- 106,000 experiences related to STEM, or science, technology, engineering and mathematics.
- 11,000 experiences related to career exploration and workforce development programs.

Together, these programs strengthen Michigan's social and economic fabric by preparing young people to be capable, engaged and contributing members of their communities.



4-H Capitol Experience participants outside the Michigan State Capitol. The event helps young people learn how to influence and have a positive impact in their communities.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

139,000

Michigan young people ages 5 to 19 participated in Michigan 4-H in the 2024-2025 program year

11,200

caring adults gave their time as Michigan 4-H volunteers in the 2024-2025 program year

10,100

people participated child and family development programs for parents, caregivers and early childhood professionals in 2025

“Attending Michigan 4-H Exploration Days gave me a first-hand college experience, building my confidence and vision for the future. The hands-on activities and life lessons set me on a path to academic and personal success.”

— A 4-H Exploration Days participant

“Because of my participation in the World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute program, I learned we can do lots, even at this age, to help solve some of the world’s most difficult problems.”

— A youth participant in the 2025 World Food Prize Michigan Youth Institute

“I thought you were going to teach me how to fix my kid, but then I realized that it starts at the top. It starts with me. I am setting an example.”

— An adult participant in a child and family development program

WHAT’S **NEXT**

In 2026, MSU Extension’s children and youth programs will continue strengthening their focus on helping young people become “Beyond Ready” for the future. (Learn more at 4-h.org/beyond-ready.) In addition, we look forward to expanding our grant-supported work in teen mental health, substance use prevention, seat belt safety and other important areas that matter to our communities.

LEARN **MORE**

For more information about MSU Extension’s children and youth programming, visit our 4-H website at extension.msu.edu/4h and our Child and Family Development website at extension.msu.edu/child-family-development.

COMMUNITY, FOOD & ENVIRONMENT



From farms and forests to city halls and kitchen tables, MSU Extension's community, food and environment programming helps people lead with purpose, plan for the future and thrive together. This work is grounded in a core belief: Strong communities depend on informed leaders, resilient natural systems, vibrant food networks and financially empowered individuals and families.

In 2025, we advanced these priorities by:

- Helping local officials learn the skills they need to make informed, forward-thinking decisions for their communities.
- Creating more ways for entrepreneurs and other local leaders to connect and learn from one another.
- Making it easier for people to get fresh, locally grown food.
- Helping communities protect water resources, manage forests, conserve wildlife and care for our Great Lakes ecosystems.

Our work also strengthened the capacity of more than 590 food and farm entrepreneurs in 2025 through business



Participants complete interactive activities as part of the in-person portion of the 2025 Zoning Administrator Certificate Program in Mount Pleasant, Michigan.

counseling from the MSU Product Center. This work resulted in 192 new jobs, 207 retained jobs and more than \$80 million in reported sales. We also launched a self-paced online food and farm business grant-writing course that attracted 232 registrants. These are just a few of the ways MSU Extension is accelerating food and farm business growth and enhancing economic resilience in communities across our state.

Just as business growth fuels economic vitality, financially secure households support long-term economic health and shared prosperity. Our money management and homeownership education programs take a people-first approach, helping more than 2,800 participants build financial stability, work toward homeownership or prevent foreclosure. These benefits ripple outward to support stronger communities.



Two of about 1,000 attendees pick out their favorite pumpkin during the annual Pumpkinfest at MSU Tollgate Farm and Education Center in Novi in October 2025.



Three participants examine a crayfish during one of a series of four-day invasive crayfish anatomy and identification workshops in 2025 that drew conservation professionals from across the Great Lakes basin.

But building resilient communities requires more than economic stability. It also depends on healthy natural resources. In 2025, our environmental stewardship work helped communities protect water resources, strengthen habitats and care for the ecosystems that sustain Michigan's quality of life. For example, we saw record participation in the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. With 332 inland lakes enrolled

across 58 counties, volunteers collected valuable data on water quality and lake conditions, continuing a more than 50-year legacy of community-guided monitoring. Along with partner efforts through the Center for Lakes and Streams, the Michigan Natural Features Inventory and Michigan Sea Grant, this work strengthens conservation partnerships and supports better decisions for Michigan's ecosystems for generations to come.

“The MSU Extension FIT program was an extremely valuable experience for [our historic downtown] . . . Seeing our community through the eyes of first-time visitors was eye-opening and energizing, and it provided us with actionable insights that will support a more vibrant, welcoming, and dynamic downtown.”

— A local leader and participant in the First Impressions Tourism, or FIT, assessment program

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

73,800+

people participated in more than 2,000 community, food and environment programs

226

partnerships and 121 coalitions supported by MSU Extension's educators

\$1.85M

in volunteer time value leveraged for programming across 56,326 volunteer hours



“As a result of this training, I feel more confident in my ability to make the financial changes and decisions to prepare me for homeownership. This training has also encouraged me to make some critical . . . and hard decisions to prepare. I feel more confident to do the hard things.”

— A participant in MSU Extension’s HUD-certified homebuyer education program

“One of the most valuable professional development workshops I have ever attended — I came away with a robust facilitation toolbox that I feel comfortable using right away.”

— A participant in the Tools for Effective Facilitation (formerly Facilitative Leadership) workshop

“Since we have been receiving these kits, it has really sparked my [5-year-old] son’s interest in growing our own food and collecting seeds from the food we eat, which we can then grow for the following years. I love that it is a teaching and bonding experience for the entire family, no matter the age.”

— A participant in the Gitigaan (Garden) Kit program from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians

WHAT’S NEXT

When it comes to our community, food and environment work, MSU Extension plans to expand flexible delivery models in 2026, strengthen partnerships and align our education efforts with community-identified needs. We look forward to further integrating programming that advances local leadership and governance, resilient food systems, Great Lakes and natural resource stewardship, and financial well-being for Michiganders.

LEARN MORE

For more information on MSU Extension’s community, food and environment programming, visit our Community website at canr.msu.edu/community, our Natural Resources website at canr.msu.edu/natural_resources, and our Finance and Homeownership website (called MI Money Health) at canr.msu.edu/mimoneyhealth.

HEALTH & NUTRITION



Across Michigan, people turn to MSU Extension for practical, trusted guidance on food, health and well-being. Our health and nutrition educators work in community centers, schools, clinics, food pantries, tribal communities, and farms, and with veterans groups. They turn research into practical support and help address the many factors that shape people's health. We support food security and safety, nutrition, chronic disease prevention, emotional well-being and overall quality of life. Our health and nutrition programs are delivered in person and virtually, ensuring that people can access support in the ways that work best for them.

In 2025, MSU Extension concluded more than 30 years of service through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Education, or SNAP-Ed. In its final year, SNAP-Ed reached 113,929 Michigan children and adults and supported more than 1,700 lasting changes across more than 380 community sites. Through hands-on education,

partnerships with veterans and families, and initiatives such as community and school gardens, SNAP-Ed helped people build healthier habits on limited budgets. The program leaves a lasting legacy of empowered individuals and stronger communities across Michigan.



Former MSU Extension Community Nutrition Instructor **JANE SHERRY** presents a nutrition education lesson to residents of Patriot Place, a transitional housing community for veterans, in Gaylord.

The ending of SNAP-Ed reinforced the importance of our programs continuing to adapt and respond to meet emerging health needs across the state. Our health and nutrition team rose to the challenge. The Moving Beyond Cottage Food Law workshop helped food entrepreneurs better understand licensing, food safety and business resources.



BIIDAABAN REINHARDT, MSU Extension Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program educator, prepares food boxes for distribution to several tribal communities in Michigan.

MSU Extension also helped launch Michigan's first Mental Health First Aid Instructor Summit, strengthening skills and collaboration among 80 instructors statewide. Additional efforts included expanding access to free health education through our virtual health referral process and producing "Weathering Together," a documentary chronicling MSU Extension's innovative farm stress management programming. To date, our managing farm stress programming has reached more than 10,000 people and helped provide nearly 550 free therapy visits, expanding access to mental health support for Michigan's agricultural communities.



Health Educator **CARLY SANDOVAL** (far left), Secretary **SYLVIA BENAVIDEZ** (second from left), and Youth Health Extension Educator **KEA NORRELL-AITCH** (far right), the planners of MSU Extension's first Mental Health First Aid Instructor Summit, pose with participants. The summit was held in Grand Rapids in April 2025.

OUR YEAR IN **NUMBERS**



3,058

programs offered by health and nutrition educators and program instructors



66,592

program participants



1 MILLION+

content views across our MI Health Matters and Think Food Safety social media channels

“The workshop opened my mind to new ideas and business opportunities.”

— A participant in the 2025 Cottage Food Law Workshop

“It was great to see other Michigan instructors. I feel more comfortable reaching out to people for collaboration.”

— A participant in the Michigan Mental Health First Aid Instructor Summit

“Thank you, very much, for the Tai Chi for Better Sleep class. I really enjoyed it and have improved my sleep by using the information I gained in class. I also gained much better balance from practicing tai chi and plan to continue practicing.”

— A participant in a tai chi class

“We really enjoyed working in the garden together. It gave us a reason to spend more time outside, watching everything grow, and then sharing the results.”

— A participant in the SNAP Outreach for Veterans program

WHAT'S NEXT

In 2026, MSU Extension will continue offering statewide education in areas like food safety, chronic disease prevention and self-management, and tai chi, while advancing community-first approaches to nutrition and physical activity on a limited budget. Through the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program, or EFNEP, and other education efforts, MSU Extension will continue to equip Michiganders with practical, trusted tools that support individual and community well-being.

LEARN MORE

For more information about MSU Extension's health and nutrition programming, visit our Food and Health page at extension.msu.edu/health or contact director Cheryl Eschbach at cheryl@msu.edu.



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