

Michigan State University Extension in Shiawassee County: Solving Problems & Increasing Opportunities for Today & Tomorrow

In 2016, Shiawassee County residents voted to maintain the research-proven education provided by Michigan State University (MSU) Extension in local communities!

On August 2, 2022, Shiawassee County residents again will be asked to continue investment that helps families, businesses and professionals with the knowledge they need to be healthy and safe, to do their jobs better, to build strong communities, protect local environments, and help young people gain the confidence and skills needed to be successful.

Shiawassee County residents receive \$3 in return value for every \$1 the county invests in MSU Extension programs.

Delivering Education Despite the Pandemic

While stay-at-home orders hindered access to many opportunities during the pandemic, Shiawassee County residents logged 712 registrations for MSU Extension online educational programs during 2020 and 2021. County residents accessed 369 online programs designed to improve parenting and child well-being, provide engaging youth-learning experiences and assist with safe home food preservation, among the many online MSU Extension educational offerings.

- Several Shiawassee County water and environment professionals participated in programs hosted by MSU Extension in 2020 focused on improving and protecting Michigan's water resources. Shiawassee County professionals attended The Great Lakes: Tracking Challenges Today and Beyond presentation held in March, the Michigan Inland Lakes Convention hosted online in September and the Water School Webinar Series for government professionals in November.
- In 2020 and 2021, 245 Shiawassee County youth registered to participate in 60 online educational programs presented by MSU Extension. Shiawassee County 4-H staff developed and taught 18 of these experiences providing youth with learning activities focused on the natural environment, animal science, physical and mental health and fitness, science, technology and the arts. These learning opportunities were designed to help supplement stay-at-home learning experiences for young people.

Fostering Youth Success

Sixty-eight percent of Shiawassee County 4-H seniors graduating from 2012 to 2017 enrolled in college within 6 months of high school graduation, exceeding by almost 18% the college enrollment rate of all other Shiawassee County seniors during this time. An investment in Shiawassee County MSU Extension and 4-H is an investment in the positive development of Shiawassee County youth.

- In 2020, Shiawassee County MSU Extension 4-H programs engaged 3,453 Shiawassee County youth aged 5 to 19 in special interest and short-term virtual learning opportunities that helped youth develop new skills and interests across a myriad of topics.
- There were 425 Shiawassee County youth registered in active 4-H Clubs during the pandemic led by 164 community-based adult volunteers.

Helping Struggling Families Make Healthy Decisions

As of December 2021, 7,332 Shiawassee County adults and children were receiving assistance from the federal Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. MSU Extension helps families needing food assistance learn how to make the most of their food dollars and safely prepare meals that are both healthy and tasty.

- In 2020, Shiawassee County MSU Extension staff delivered 50 program series providing adults and youth with six-week nutrition education classes on healthy food and lifestyle choices. Educators also provided access to educational resources to help 1,400 individuals make the most of their monthly food resources.

Mitigating High Stress & Anxiety

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention* reported significant increases in symptoms of anxiety and depressive disorders among adults aged 18 years and older from August 19, 2020, to February 1, 2021, with the largest increases among adults aged 18 to 29 years and among those with less than a high school education.

- The MSU Extension Health team offers resources to promote health and well-being designed to help people manage their physical, mental, social and emotional health. MSU Extension educators offer classes that help participants manage chronic pain, find alternatives to anger, and employ mindfulness and tai-chi tools to decrease stress. These programs are offered for Shiawassee County residents online and can be provided as in-person classes.

*CDC. (2021, April 2). Symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder and use of mental health care among adults during the COVID-19 pandemic – United States, August 2020 – February 2021. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 70(13), 490–494. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7013e2.htm>

MSU Extension is committed to continue serving Shiawassee County residents in strong partnership with the County Board of Commissioners. By working together, MSU Extension can continue to help people improve their lives by bringing the vast knowledge resources of MSU directly to individuals, families, businesses and communities.