

PURPOSE

FIT is a comprehensive community assessment conducted by unannounced visitors in a host community positioned to lead development based on the program results. FIT involves developing community leadership, assessing the host community, sharing the results in a community forum open to all, and providing suggestions to drive community action. Overall, FIT helps communities learn about their strengths and weaknesses through the eyes of first-time visitors.

The results of FIT can:

- Spawn **local leadership**.
- Strengthen **community vitality**.
- Form the basis for **future development**.

Apply for FIT today to help your community enhance its appeal to tourists while advancing as a place where people enjoy living, working and playing.



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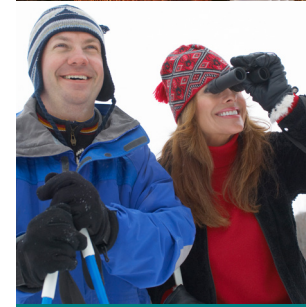


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FIRST IMPRESSIONS:

Assessing your community for tourism (FIT)



msue.anr.msu.edu

First Impressions:

Assessing your community for tourism

(FIT)



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Process:

1. Form a community leadership team (CLT) made up of local stakeholders and apply for FIT by visiting msue.anr.msu.edu and downloading and filling out our application. (Search “First Impressions” first to download application)
2. MSU Extension educators will conduct a FIT orientation and outline next steps with the CLT.
3. A team of FIT visitors will then assess the host community unannounced.
4. The CLT organizes a community report forum (CRF), where MSU Extension educator/FIT assessor will share the assessment results and suggestions with the CLT and the community.



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5. MSU Extension educator/FIT leader will provide a written report of results and suggestions to the CLT.
6. The CLT takes the lead in driving action within the host community based on FIT results.
7. MSU Extension conducts follow-up at a later date and offers further assistance.

FIT communities will:

- Learn about their assets and opportunities from first-time visitors.
- Strengthen an existing cohort of leaders and residents by providing them an opportunity to organize on the basis of valuable feedback about their community.
- Develop a list of action items for community improvement.
- Integrate action items into community plans.
- Take action on community improvements and strengthen their image.
- Improve community well-being and quality of life for residents and visitors.

INTERESTED IN FIT?

Things to know:

1. FIT is designed to meet needs and interests of each community that applies.
2. Applications are accepted and reviewed year round.
3. FIT is ideal for communities with 10,000 people or fewer. Special arrangements can be made for larger communities.
4. On average, the FIT process takes between four and six months per community.
5. Applications can be found by going to msue.anr.msu.edu and searching “First Impressions” to download the FIT application.



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