

# Extension Health Research

## Are you Research Ready?

### Preparing Extension Educators for Research

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#### The “WHY”

Extension Health Research at Michigan State University is developing strategies to involve Extension professionals in research to improve health outcomes of Michigan residents.

- ▶ Scientists engaged in community-based and clinical translational research look to Extension for community linkages, recruitment, support for program implementation and dissemination expertise.
- ▶ Extension benefits by involvement in research that matches programming goals, meets needs of residents, and serves as professional development or scholarship.

#### Goal

A workshop to prepare Extension educators to participate in community-based human health research with MSU faculty members. Through the workshop participants will gain a better understanding of the research process from beginning to end.

#### Objectives

- ▶ To explore the future of human health research opportunities.
- ▶ To obtain a self-assessment of research readiness from educators.
- ▶ To position educators for inclusion in research grants.
- ▶ To determine educators' next steps to become research-ready.

#### How Did We Do It?

##### DEVELOPMENT

- ▶ The workshop is based on the MSU College of Human Medicine's online course “Research Basics” for medical students.
- ▶ Pilot sessions have been conducted with MSU Extension staff members.
- ▶ The program has been reviewed by staff members at Kansas State University and the MSU College of Human Medicine.

##### MARKETING

- ▶ Workshops are marketed to all MSU Extension educators.
- ▶ Extension Health Research worked with ANR Events Management and the Michigan Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences on promotion and recruitment of participants.
- ▶ The workshop is offered throughout Michigan as a stand-alone session and as a follow-up to the MSU Extension statewide conference.

##### PRESENTATION

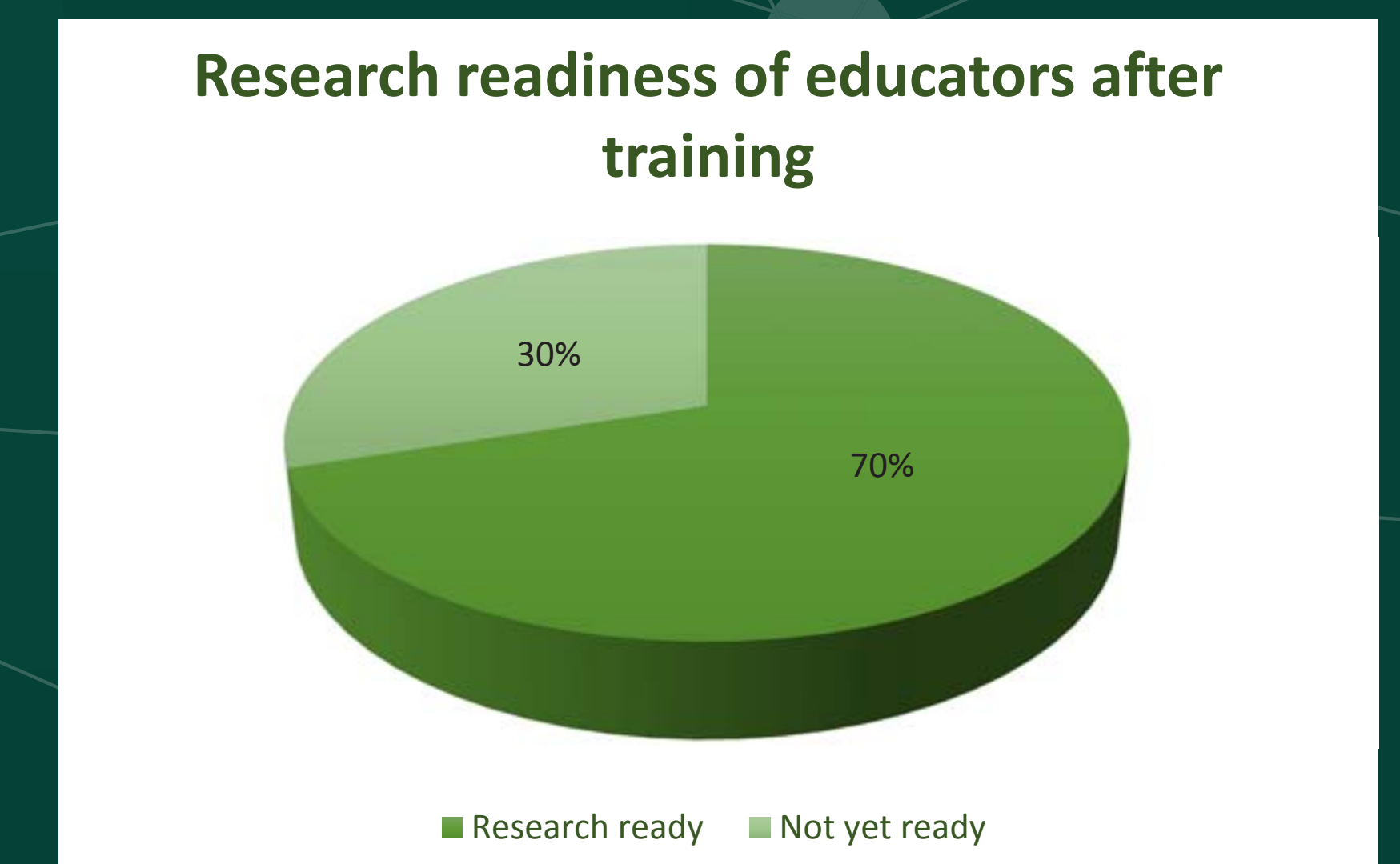
- ▶ Multiple presenters, including the state evaluation specialist.
- ▶ Focus on audience involvement.
- ▶ Participant feedback gathered for use in refining the program.

##### EVALUATION

- ▶ Self-assessment completed during the workshop.
  - ▶ Rates participant readiness from low (1) to high (5) on their current ability to connect with university researchers, conduct research tasks and methods as project staff members, and feel ready to engage in research.
- ▶ Emailed survey completed online after the workshop.
  - ▶ Aligns with the training objectives and focuses on short-term learning impacts and attitudes.

#### Results

- ▶ Participants (n=29) reported the training helped them understand basics of the research process, provided examples of how to be involved and let them assess their own readiness. Seventy percent reported overall improvement in research readiness.
- ▶ Participants are somewhat prepared to take on active roles in funded, community-based research projects if they feel supported by administration, are properly trained and have the right connections to university faculty.
- ▶ The evaluation tools and collection process will be further described for other Extension services interested in assessing their staff members' research readiness.



#### What's Next

- ▶ Continually adapting the workshop to meet staff needs.
- ▶ Exploring the possibility of creating an online version.
- ▶ Offering the workshop to Extension educators in other states.

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