

OSU Extension COVID-19 Information – FAQs

The Ohio State University – State of Emergency remains in place

The university state of emergency remains in place until further notice... This is pursuant to Ohio State's [Disaster Preparedness and University State of Emergency Policy \(Policy 6.17\)](#). A policy FAQ is available online. This declaration enables university leaders to utilize [Disaster Leave \(Policy 6.28\)](#) and is essential to give the university flexibility in making a variety of financial decisions over an extended period if necessary. The emergency declaration will be revisited on a weekly basis as circumstances evolve.

▼ RETURN TO OFFICE

See also the [Return to County Office Plans](#) page.

Face Masks

Q: Are masks still going to be required for employees in their individual office with doors closed or if they are the only person in the office? A related question – what recommendations are there for lunch breaks because of the mask requirement (e.g. office door closed or lunchroom one at a time with staggered lunches)?

A: Wearing masks and wearing them correctly at all times is a requirement to be in the office, even in personal offices. Failure to do so puts colleagues, clientele, and the university at risk. The expectation about employees wearing masks falls into the same category as other university activities that require PPE or other safety requirements (e.g., protective gear with pesticide application, use of chemicals, etc.).

Q: Do we need to wear masks if we are outside/outdoors?

A: You do not need to wear a mask if you are working in an outdoor space (e.g., on-farm research, scouting, etc.) IF there is no one else around, such as in an empty field. However, if you are working next to another person within closer quarters (e.g., partnered scouting, community food gardens (for projects that have been approved), then you should still wear a mask.

Q: Do we turn away clientele who refuse to wear a mask?

A: Wearing masks and wearing them correctly at all times is a requirement of being in the office, even for clientele. Failure to do so puts employees, community members, and the university at risk. If they refuse to wear a mask for the limited time they will be in the office, invite them to call by phone, make a delivery in a drop box or mail slot, or set up a virtual appointment via Zoom.

Scheduling/Administrative Engineering

Q: If there is a county where everyone wants to get back in the office and they can achieve the requirements, should it be discouraged with the recommendation of just one or two people at a time?

A: As long as there is enough square footage and traffic pattern availability to maintain the maximum capacity (e.g. 50% of fire code, 36 square feet of physical workspace per employee/office), this is a possibility; but the justification of essential and time-critical activities still applies. This is not simply about people wanting to get back to the office. Most employees should still be in telework status for the majority of their time, if possible, during Phase 2. This is, again, a limited exemption; and there should not be a full office reopening until we get to the point where we are past the 10-person mass gathering requirement from the governor and the virtual-only event requirements through July 6 for the university.

Q: Can staff work after hours or on weekends if no more than one or two staff are in the office at a time and if they follow guidelines for disinfecting, sanitizing, etc.?

A: Yes, offices can promote flexible scheduling as long as supervisors are aware of the hours, it is agreeable to the professional, all guidelines are followed, and the landlord is aware/agreeable (if applicable).

Q: Can hourly staff be scheduled be outside the regular and predictable schedule so they can be in the office by themselves if they have health considerations and are struggling with having work to do with continued telecommuting?

A: Yes, we can promote flexible scheduling as long as supervisors are aware of the hours, it is agreeable to the professional, all guidelines are followed, and the landlord is aware/agreeable (if applicable).

PPE and Protection

Q: How do we obtain PPE? Are there central supplies? What is the purchasing process?

A: While limited PPE is available centrally, there is an estimated 300% demand versus supply right now. We are still encouraging you to use college group purchase when possible (contact Seth Walker directly); purchase locally if you cannot get PPE via the college. We have been given the go ahead to purchase locally with a PCard; and we can seek reimbursement for personal purchases of PPE for the office if a sale or accessibility is immediate and no PCard is available at the time.

Q: If a minimum of 6 feet between can be maintained for staff and visitors in the office, is a barrier needed at the front counter or reception?

A: As indicated in the guide, barriers are only required IF ensuring the 6 feet of physical distancing is not possible. It is also important to consider employee comfort. If an employee feels most comfortable with a barrier in place, then it is encouraged to install one.

Q: Do we have to provide public restrooms, or can we just have restrooms for employees?

A: We do not need make our restrooms open to the public.

Volunteers

Q: Does the soft opening include permitting Master Gardener Volunteers to work on community projects?

A: No, ONLY those MGV projects that have been submitted for Phase 1 Essential Research/Extension Activities, pre-screened by Pam Bennett, and approved by the CFAES Essential Research/Extension Activities team are currently allowable.

Signage

Q: What if I need to change the sign because the date is wrong for our county?

A: You are able to change the sign to meet your local needs. It was simply provided to give you

something to work from and to be a holding place until additional signage is available/created with more specific information.

Q: How can we obtain office signage?

A: The OSU Office of Administration and Planning is finalizing a web page on the UniPrint site with links to downloadable, printable files (primarily posters for physical distancing and handwashing signs). There are a few signs available there now that are fairly simple. A few additional future items will include floor decals for demarking space and traffic flow arrows. Here are links to the currently approved downloadable documents and graphics:

<https://uniprintonline.osu.edu/uStore/login.aspx?>

[ReturnUrl=%2fuStore%2f2%2fCategory%2f1784%2fCovid-19-Social-Distance-items&StoreId=2](https://uniprintonline.osu.edu/uStore/login.aspx?ReturnUrl=%2fuStore%2f2%2fCategory%2f1784%2fCovid-19-Social-Distance-items&StoreId=2)

<https://osu.app.box.com/s/83hq0gax29ty63ulsi8egt5vehfyhoit>

You are encouraged to create and print your own signs as needed to address the unique messaging needs within your community. Please also remember to use available signage from the CDC for reducing the spread, understanding COVID-19, and proper face mask use available at:

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc)

[Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc)

Clientele/Offerings

Q: How does the Phase 2 plan (June 1- July 6) relate to what guidelines and/or plans will be needed after July 6?

A: This will depend on recommendations from the governor, the Ohio Department of Health, and The Ohio State University once we get to July 6. As indicated in the guide, this is a Phase 2 exemption for essential time-critical activities and not the return to fully open offices and in-person programming.

Q: Has there been any movement on July 6 in-person programming?

A: No changes have been announced as of this update.

Travel and Restrictions and Reimbursement

Q: Have there been any adjustments related to travel restrictions and reimbursement?

A: For those who have approved exemptions for research or to participate in the fair activities, you simply need to attach the exemption approval to your eRequest. For those going to the office under approved plans, this is considered a typical commute and not eligible for reimbursement. For those interested in domestic travel to conferences, there is still no lift on the travel ban at the university, though we anticipate information soon.

Additional Information Regarding Reopening

Summary of Phases for Expansion of Existing Essential Research and Extension Activities Process

Phase 1 (current/already in process): CFAES COVID-19 Research/Extension Exemptions

- Diagnostic services for plants in support of agriculture
- Field operations including annual planting and maintenance of crops, trees, and vines to prevent long-term damage to our operations and ability to serve Ohio agriculture
- Field research or projects...that provide direct support of essential food production planned for the coming growing season, animal breeding, natural resources including water quality, and other activities may be eligible to proceed where an entire year of information would be lost or critical food production would be affected.

Phase 2 (beginning June 1-July 6): Expanded Extension Activities Exemption

- All telework except critical employee access, essential critical and time-sensitive activities, and the

office coverage to achieve these activities

- Limited increase in county Extension operations (Extension plan, approved by college)
- County units develop plans for Phase 2 (limited additional Extension activities) and prioritize essential critical and time-sensitive activities
- Intended to allow units to coordinate safety and hygiene plans, and coordinate access issues. With required protective measures, environmental conditions, and monitoring/documentation.

Assurances

1. All service sector requirements for General Office Environments from the Ohio Department of Health will be strictly adhered to in each office.
2. All implementation of approvals is contingent upon completion of an office-wide training and safety interview performed by the CFAES Safety and Compliance unit.
3. Supervisors will monitor the offices to ensure all health and safety protocol is enforced.
4. Any or all approvals may be rescinded if relevant health and safety precautions are not utilized, or additional restrictions are put into place by the State of Ohio, The Ohio State University (OSU), or the College of Food, Agricultural, and Environmental Sciences (CFAES).

To view the OSU Extension Phased Reopening Plan, [click here](#).

▼ MEDIA INQUIRIES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Q: How should we notify our clientele and stakeholders that our office is closed?

A: As of March 18, each county office received a copy of a press release that can be personalized for the county and shared with county commissioners, clientele, stakeholders, and local media?

Q: Who should respond to media inquiries?

A: It is fine to respond about questions if an event will or will not be held, but any questions related to the university's response to COVID-19 and all other media inquiries should be directed to Ben Johnson, The Ohio State University director of media and public relations, johnson.7149@osu.edu, 614-292-9681.

Q: What about county social media accounts?

A: In terms of social media messages, counties can continue your "content" posts as planned; please be mindful of your tone and content before publishing. Do not post information on county social media accounts about the COVID-19 outbreak as a whole; those messages will be handled by the university, college, and Extension Administration as necessary.

Q: Can our county/office start a new Facebook account to reach audiences during this time?

A: For several reasons, we request that you do **not** start a new account at this point. Per previous university direction on social media accounts: all units have been instructed not to request any new accounts until after the summer 2019 social media audit results and recommendations for each college (and unit within the college) are available. This was confirmed again with Mitch Moser, the CFAES social media specialist and team leader, as of mid-March 2020.

It is also important to remember that a new social media account is not an "immediate fix" to connect with stakeholders. It takes time to build an audience for any social media account; and each unit with an account should have a plan for content, posting schedule, etc.

Whether your unit has a Facebook or other social media account now – or would like one in the future – the current teleworking situation could be a great time for digital engagement stewards and other staff to update or draft a social media content plan, review existing university and social media guidelines, look at other county Facebook accounts, and develop messages to post. Use this

link to review the [Policy for Institutional Social Media Accounts](#). **Note:** this is also a good time to review and clean up existing county website content. That is still the preferred outlet for connecting with local stakeholders on static content; and content should be ready for referral from any social media account.

▼ MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Ohio Governor Mike DeWine has issued a Stay-at-Home order effective March 23 (11:59pm) through April 6 (11:59pm). CFAES Dean Cathann Kress and Government Affairs Director Adam Ward are seeking additional clarification about how food and agriculture are defined as part of the "Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce." The college will be updated as more information becomes available. In the meantime, the approach to research remains the same – ONLY critical COVID-19-related research is approved to be going on right now at the university. This means there is currently no on-farm research, no face-to-face on-farm consults, and no Master Gardener Volunteer gardens or community garden initiatives allowed to be in process. **Learn more about the stay-at-home order and other updates [online](#).**

Please note: The amount of planning that has gone into an event or activity is NOT a determinant of whether that event is critical to our mission. The health of our volunteers, 4-H members, employees, stakeholders, and others is of utmost importance, so this directive also impacts our 4-H club meetings, camp counselor training, junior fair board meetings, advisory committees, field days, community meet and greets, recognition events, etc.

Q: Should my meeting or event be cancelled?

A: In coordination with Governor DeWine's declared state of emergency for the state of Ohio, unless a meeting is *absolutely* mission-critical, it should be delayed, held virtually, or cancelled with the health and safety of participants as our primary concern. Guidance is not based solely on the size of the event; social interaction should also be considered. It only takes one individual to compromise a group, so the university is recommending that meetings be held virtually or delayed for the next several weeks. Per the governor, it is suggested that no meetings of groups with more than 10 people may be held at this time throughout the state.

Decisions about whether to hold a specific, *previously-planned* Extension-led activity should be made on a case-by-case basis in coordination with your direct supervisor and/or area leader. At this time, new Extension-led activities should not be planned until after May 15.

Q: Are farm visits continuing?

A: No – at this time, all non-critical farm visits must be discontinued, per university and college direction, in keeping with prioritizing the health and well-being of our employees, clientele, and other stakeholders.

Q: What precautions should staff take when conducting programs with the senior population?

A: They should consult with the senior residence if it is a facility. If the program is being held somewhere else or hosted by us, for the next few weeks, it is now required to be held virtually, delayed, or cancelled.

Q: When MGVs or volunteers are invited to attend gatherings that are not sponsored by Ohio State, should they attend on Ohio State's behalf?

A: If we wouldn't send staff members, then sending volunteers seems out of line. If they choose to attend individually, that is their choice.

Q: In the immediate term, how should staff proceed with events that involve food tastings?

A: Per current state, university, and college direction, all in-person events such as food tastings planned and hosted by OSU Extension should be delayed or cancelled. If such an event is determined to be critical to hold this event in the next few weeks, then following CDC recommendations for hygiene is critical.

Q: How do we handle any fees pre-paid by attendees for events that are cancelled?

A: If an event is likely to be rescheduled at a later date, it is suggested that the originating unit maintain those funds to be used for the postponed event.

Q: How do we handle fiscal shortfalls for pre-paid site and other prep work for events that are cancelled?

A: At this time, the originating unit for an event will be responsible for covering the costs associated with cancelling an event. However, we are checking into additional alternate funding that could be used to help offset these costs (please note: there is currently no guarantee we will receive these).

Q: What about other groups (not Ohio State) who use our facilities and hold meetings at our locations?

A: Affiliate group meetings – if groups have booked a facility (such as the 4-H Center), it is their choice if they want to continue using the facility for their events. We suggest not penalizing groups for late cancellations, if a cancellation fee is normally charged.

▼ **GRANT-RELATED ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH**

Per direction from the Ohio State Office of Academic Affairs – Research Administration, as of March 19, 2020, "All research activity that cannot be performed via telework or does not fit into one of the following criteria must cease immediately. Critical research is defined as: COVID-19 research that has the potential to mitigate the spread of the pandemic; certain medical research that if discontinued would endanger the lives of the participants in the research; or procedures that require timely and regular attention from a person to maintain critical laboratory infrastructure and experimental conditions (e.g., providing animal support, maintaining equipment that requires gas, cryogenic service, monitoring irreplaceable cell lines, and other substantially similar treatments)."

Per Dean Cathann Kress..."Faculty and graduate students are not to keep coming to labs, greenhouses, or other facilities to continue research activity; nor is anyone allowed to gather in remote locations. We realize the significant negative impact this will have on the CFAES research community in many ways and will work to provide you with additional relevant details to understand and minimize those effects."

Q: What are the guidelines regarding salary, benefits, and stipends related to research projects?

A: Per Dean Kress (20March20), "the [Office of Management and Budget](#) is providing more flexibility through new guidance regarding salaries and benefits for your research team. It is Office of Research policy that these costs should continue to be charged to active federal grants. Stipends should also continue to be paid and charged to active federal grants. This guidance supersedes previous guidance from OMB and NIH.

There are numerous allowable sponsored program activities that can be done remotely, including writing, reading, data analysis, and experimental design as well as required or recommended training. This newly released guidance also allows salary, benefits and stipends to be allowable charges, even when not all of a person's time can be applied on the sponsored program. In these cases, please document this fractional effort and send to your Ohio State sponsored program officer so it can become part of the 'official' record of the award."

Q: How do I know what to do with my grant-funded projects and activities?

A: When certain deliverables are associated with a grant, please reach out to the grant funder(s) about how best to proceed during the next two to three weeks. For community nutrition work, as of March 10, please be patient. Pat Bebo is contacting our grant partners about funding and directives, next steps, etc.

Q: Is the Ohio State Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) operating as usual?

A: Yes – the Office of Sponsored Programs is operating as usual for proposal submissions and award negotiations. OSP staff are working remotely.

Q: Can I still submit proposals?

A: Yes – the CFAES Grant Development Support Unit is fully operational and working with faculty and staff on proposal submission. New referrals can be submitted at grants.cfaes.ohio-state.edu. Click the Request Services tab on the right side of the page. If we become aware of changes in proposal deadlines, information will be posted on the CFAES Researchers listserv.

Q: COVID-19 issues are negatively affecting the progress on my grant. What should I do?

A: For programmatic issues affecting your study, contact your agency program officer or sponsor contact. If any issues persist, they may need to be reported in future progress reports, or you may need a no-cost extension (NCE) to complete your study. NCEs can be requested and processed by your sponsored program officer.

Q: Do sponsors have specific guidance on COVID-19?

A: Please refer to the specific reference links and next steps spelled out in the March 17 all-Extension "additional information on grants" message from Lori Kaser, grants and contracts administrator, Grant Development Support Unit.

Q: How should I request a non-cost extension (NCE) for sponsored projects?

A: Contact your sponsored program officer to discuss sponsor requirements; start preparing information the sponsor may request; send the request to your sponsored program officer, including your PI Portal project number. Refer to the March 26 all-Extension message from Lori Kaser for more information about this process.

Q: I recently received an award and anticipated starting my research during the spring. What should I do?

A: First and foremost, the safety and well-being of faculty, staff, and students should be considered. Review your project for vital tasks and review the questions asked about this in the March 17 all-Extension message from Lori Kaser.

Visit oarc.osu.edu or grants.cfaes.ohio-state.edu for regularly updated information.

Review the March 26 all-Extension message from Lori Kaser for links to updates from the OMB and different federal sponsors.

▼ EVENTS/WORK WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Q: What about my work with other organizations?

A: For Extension activities that already have been planned in conjunction with other organizations, it is important to make a decision *with* that organization. Please note: some activities may be cancelled by the other parties involved, and you'll need to follow up accordingly. For other entities who are hosting an activity, if they continue to hold it, our employees can attend – based on the employee's comfort level with attending in midst of this health concern.

Q: If events scheduled in April ARE held by other agencies (e.g., Earth Day), can Ohio State employees attend, or should we wait to see what happens?

A: As long as we are following social distancing standards, OSU Extension employees should not participate. We will evaluate things as time progresses.

Q: What about soil samples? How can this be done?

A: Anyone requesting soil sample testing can send the sample(s) directly to the lab. Some places will have tables for the kits to be dropped off. Results can be mailed along with a bill. Please share other ideas with us.

▼ TRAVEL

University-sponsored travel – The university has suspended all university-sponsored international and non-essential domestic travel until December 31, 2020. All previously approved travel prior to that date must be cancelled. Exemption processes and elevated approvals related to travel restrictions are available under specific circumstances. For more, visit the [Business and Finance website](#).

International travel quarantine info: While only those who have traveled to Level 3 countries (China, Iran, South Korea, most countries in Europe) are required by the university to be quarantined upon their return for 14 days, it also would be wise for those who have visited other countries for personal travel to consider a voluntary self-quarantine for three to five days if you have just returned from domestic travel where COVID-19 cases have been confirmed.

Only mission-critical domestic business travel will be considered, and this travel must receive prior approval or there will be no reimbursement.

Q: Are there any travel exemptions (such as for research purposes)?

A: All requests for travel should be routed to Jackie first, and then will be sent to the dean for consideration. If you were previously granted permission to travel remotely for research purposes, be aware that we have been asked to review those activities as well.

Q: Will I be reimbursed for cancellation fees for travel already booked and paid for?

A: Some central resources may be available for this; to be determined in the future.

Q: What about national conferences for which I am scheduled to attend?

A: OSU Extension is aware that several national organizations have cancelled their conferences (e.g. National 4-H Conference has been rescheduled to this fall). If a domestic conference that you plan to attend in the upcoming weeks has not been cancelled, please confirm with your supervisor that it is absolutely necessary for you to travel to the conference.

▼ TELECOMMUTING

The university is NOT closing and the key is to maintain operations – however, we are now required to telecommute for the immediate future. We will provide additional guidance for those who are essential employees – meaning that they must be physically present whether on our farms, to keep offices open, or monitor labs, etc. **Please note:** We are also keeping in mind options for full office closures as this situation evolves across the state.

Q: Who determined that our offices will be closed and we would work remotely?

A: Usually we follow the lead of the county commissioners, but Extension must follow the direction of the university and the college. Because the university has closed all campus facilities at this time,

we need to working completely via virtual telecommunication. Example office door signage, voice mail and email content was shared with all employees as of Tuesday afternoon, March 17.

Q: Who will communicate office closures to county commissioners? Will information be shared about this from Administration?

A: Extension Administration has developed a press release for sharing this information with commissioners, other stakeholders, and clientele. That will be shared with counties as soon as possible; and this is the official communication that should be used to distribute information.

Q: If an office is officially closed, can people come in and work?

A: No – no one is allowed to work in a closed office.

Q: What about shared areas within buildings where Extension is located and the other occupants may not be closed?

A: Try to move valuable equipment out of sight; lock cabinets; maybe block off the area with tape or plastic; if possible.

Q: How often should office meetings be held (virtually)?

A: There should be a plan for each office to touch base regularly for communication and collaboration – no fewer than once a week to ensure connectivity, effective communication, and the ability to remain responsive to clientele.

Q: Are we required to forward phone calls? Or can the voice mail message direct them to our website and individual email addresses?

A: Office phones should be answered "live" always, if possible. We need to be as responsive to our clientele as possible. Office associates may have the time to do this while telecommuting; and many of them are "in practice" because they are usually the main contact for phones while in the office as usual.

Q: What are some options for forwarding phone calls if our office does not yet have Skype for Business?

A: You can forward land lines to cell phones, but only one land line to one cell phone.

A: Note: You can use *67 for outbound calls on your cell phone to prevent the recipient being able to see your cell number.

Q: Can we use Google Voice to handle phone calls if our office does not yet have Skype for Business?

A: No – Google Voice is **not** an approved application for university business.

Q: Can we do one telecommuting agreement per office?

A: Not initially – Human Resources has asked that each individual complete and turn in a telework form. However, it is not necessary to change the form if/when parameters of your telework agreement change (e.g. shift in which hours you might work daily).

Q: How does the digital signature on the telework form work?

A: Click on the signature line, and it should autopopulate if you have created a digital ID. If not, create a new digital ID if necessary; then, "save to file." Enter name and email; then create password and save.

Q: Is there an anticipated end-date on the telecommuting agreement form?

A: The initial agreement for this will be through April 30, with weekly reviews.

Q: Is it possible to go across county lines to help out an office that may need coverage?

A: Potentially, but the travel request will need to be signed off by the dean prior to doing this.

Q: We have a part-time employee who is scheduled to start now. Should we have her hold off or ask her to telecommute?

A: Discuss this with her; she may want to wait to start. If the employee wants to start as planned, we will need to work closely with her and LOD to ensure adequate onboarding and ongoing training and support.

Q: What about staff with children? Can staff take vacation time?

A: Yes, vacation time can be used, especially since schools are closed and day cares are also closing in some communities. Talk to your office and participate in the conversation about how/if you can contribute to office coverage rotation. Meet with your supervisor to figure out the best way to use vacation and telecommuting hours to cover the scope of your responsibilities.

Q: If we or someone in our family gets COVID-19 and we need to take time, do we use sick time and/or FMLA?

A: Human Resources is checking into this.

Q: Does telecommuting have to be between 8am-5pm?

A: Track time effectively. Some work time can be made up after children are asleep, if needed. However, most of our time should be during business hours so we are accessible to clientele. Physical office coverage must be during regular business hours.

Q: What about Sea Grant offices?

A: It is up to the Sea Grant employees' supervisors; but if they want to be worked into the office coverage, they can do so from our perspective.

Q: How do we communicate telework or other things to stakeholders?

A: Jackie is working on signage for doors and sample language to communicate with stakeholders. More information will be available soon.

Q: What if employees feel they do not have enough work to do?

A: Personnel are encouraged to be creative with their time – organizing things in the office or at home, working on fliers, or reviewing other county website content to see what their peers are doing. They can also participate in online training sessions through BuckeyeLearn or other continuing education resources. They could organize "Box" folders. We will be sharing additional ideas in the near future.

Q: If an office is closed and an employee does not have internet access at home, can they work in the office but without a public interaction?

A: Jackie is checking on a further definition of what HR will consider as "essential." There *may* be an option to change a person's status to "essential," if they must do their work from the office – but this is not guaranteed.

Q: Will student workers be paid even if they are not allowed to work?

A: See the "student employees" section in the March 13 afternoon update via Jackie.

▼ TELECOMMUTING – IT NEEDS

Reach out to the **CFAES IT Service Desk** for any IT-related issues. Phone, email and self-service request support is available 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

Q: What if I do not have adequate computer equipment to work at home?

A: Refer to the details included in the March 16 (8:30am) note from Jackie about "computer needs for telecommuting/equipment and internet access." OCIO has both iPads and laptops to assist us as we move through the next few weeks.

Q: What about support staff who do not have laptops?

A: Support staff can use home computers or iPads if they have them. Some things also can be done without computers (i.e. using the phone to help answer calls and requests from others).

Q: How do we request laptops?

A: Let Mike Chakerian (chakerian.1@osu.edu) know what your estimated office needs are, but the actual request needs to flow through supervisors with a help desk ticket submitted by the individual who needs each laptop. Remember to make sure you get an email with an acknowledgement of your help desk request; otherwise, the request may not have been received by the help desk online system. **Note:** The OCIO has a limited supply of loaner laptops for the entire university. They are collecting the need information and will be working through the request. We do not have a timeframe of when laptops will reach county personnel. If you have a desktop and a personal laptop at home, please try to remote into the system. If this works for you, let IT know and they can remove you from the laptop request list.

Note: Loaner laptops will have installed the Adobe Creative Suite, Zoom link, and Skype for Business. This [Skype for Business link](#) shares some good tips and tricks.

Q: Will we be charged for loaner computers?

A: There will **not** be a charge assessed to the county for laptops that are shipped to counties because these are loaned equipment required for teleworking. However, if they are not returned upon the end of telework restrictions and our eventual move back to offices, a charge will be assessed.

Q: Where can I find additional IT assistance for working remotely?

A: Visit the [Keep Working website](#) for temporary remote working resources; and use the [MITS tab](#) for more info.

Q: How do I remote into an OCIO-managed Windows desktop from a personal device or loaner laptop?

A: To connect to your OCIO-managed Windows desktop computer from either another OCIO-managed computer (such as a loaner laptop) or from a personal device, use the [OCIO Remote Access Portal](#) (powered by Guacamole). If you are unable to use Guacamole, contact the [IT service desk](#). This option works to remote into Windows desktops only. **Note:** *It is not recommended to use Skype for voice calls when on Guacamole. You can have calls forwarded to your mobile device and/or disconnect from Guacamole to use Skype on your computer.*

Q: What about "hot spots" or WiFi boosters?

A: These too should be included in the summary of needs to Mike Chakerian (chakerian.1@osu.edu), but they also should be submitted via a help desk ticket by each individual who is requesting this.

Q: If we have personal hot spots, can we use them and be reimbursed for their use?

A: This is being explored.

Q: If hot spots are not available, can an exception be made for reimbursement if we go over our personal cell phone data?

A: This is being explored.

Q: Are MIFI devices available?

A: The OCIO has a very, very limited supply of MIFI devices. Only people with NO internet access at their house should request a MIFI device.

Q: Can I get reimbursed if I buy a headset?

A: This is being explored.

Q: What about IT equipment for new hires?

A: All requests for IT equipment for new hires will be handled on a case-by-case basis to determine the best way to facilitate each request. Hiring managers should expect contact from an OCIO associate in advance of the requested date of dispatch for any equipment for instructions on how equipment can be picked up or shipped to the employee. This will include instructions on next steps once the equipment is received. All onboarding technology requests should continue to be made through the college-wide Technology Request Form, which can be initiated by your Human Resources consultant.

Q: Is there outdoor WiFi in our various campus parking lots?

A: There has been WiFi available in some parking lots to-date, and it is being upgraded/added in other lots. The status as of March 20 is: Newark – complete (existed previously); Columbus Carmack 5 – complete; Lima – complete; Wooster – targeting end of day; Marion – targeting end of day; Mansfield – targeting Saturday, March 21.

▼ **COUNTY OFFICE FISCAL AND MAIL MANAGEMENT**

Q: May the PCard manager take the card home?

A: Yes, the PCard manager may take the card home; and PCard managers have been asked to take the card home, with the same responsibility for the card as when on-site in your office. The card can also be located up in the office if necessary. All policies and procedures are still in place. eRequests will need to be entered and legible copies of receipts uploaded (jpg files are fine if other scanning options are not available). Staff may route requests for purchases through the PCard manager to make the purchase on their behalf, either online or over the phone.

Q: May we take the local checkbook home?

A: No, you should not take the local checkbook home and should avoid writing any checks during the duration of the temporary office closure, due to segregation of duties. All business purchases may be made with a PCard or purchase order (eStores, etc.). Note: It will be difficult to have deliveries made to other locations besides the office for purchase orders, especially eStores orders. If there is a critical order, you may want to work directly with the company's university contact to be sure the item is delivered appropriately.

Q: What should we do about deposits?

A: We are waiting on further guidance from the university treasurer's office, and will forward that information as soon as it is available. For now, please do your best to deposit any checks or cash that you have received as of this week. If you are unable to perform a deposit, be sure the checks and cash are in a secure location in your office, and their receipt has been documented appropriately on your receipts ledger. If your mail is stopped, and the office is closed for walk-ins, we should not run into a situation where it is necessary to make a deposit.

Q: What should we do with change fund cash/petty cash?

A: Our change funds and petty cash funds are very small dollar value. Be sure the cashbox/drawer

is secured within your office appropriately. No need to deposit the cash, and do not take it home with you.

Q: How should we handle incoming mail?

A: Please contact USPS to put a hold on mail delivery to your office address. Mail can be held by the post office for 30 days, and the hold can be canceled at any time. If you are in a building (county government, etc.) where mail will still be received, it is fine to allow delivery to continue so long as you are comfortable that it is secure.

Q: Can mail be forwarded to an employee's home?

A: No

Q: When mail is stopped, how do we handle vendor invoices?

A: Accounts payable will continue to process vendor payments for purchase order invoices on their regular schedule; however, processing may be slightly delayed due to teleworking. While most vendors will send their invoices directly to accounts payable for processing, if you are aware of any vendor invoices that you regularly get in the mail at your office and forward to accounts payable, please do your best to reach out to those vendors and see if an electronic invoice would be available to send to you or directly to accounts payable. This may be particularly important for utility payments. Due to these extenuating circumstances, your PCard manager may also use the department card to make emergency invoice payments to avoid disruption in services.

Please see the additional detailed explanation about mail and deliveries in Jackie's March 26 system update message. This includes guidance from the CFAES Business Office on receiving checks/payments.

▼ **4-H INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL – SUMMER EXPERIENCES**

As with all other Ohio State summer international experiences for students, our *outbound* Ohio 4-H youth exchange trips this summer have been cancelled. In-bound hosting of youth from Japan is yet to be determined.

▼ **4-H SPECIFIC INFORMATION**

ALL 4-H programs, activities, and events scheduled between now and July 6 must be held virtually, postponed, or cancelled. No in-person programming is allowed. This includes all 4-H programs, activities, and events, including project judging that normally would have taken place at the county fair. In addition, we've made the very difficult decision to cancel all in-person 4-H camps thru August 31. Virtual programming will continue.

****More detailed information about numerous 4-H questions is available in the "March 25: late afternoon 4-H update" and April 7 "Follow-up to this morning's announcement" message – both by Kirk Blair, state 4-H leader (sent to the 4-H Professionals listserv).***

Q: What about club and affiliate lists?

A: Support staff can take home club and affiliate lists with EIN#s and file the IRS 990N ePostcard. The deadline is 5/15/2020.

Q: When can 4-H clubs meet?

A: Per Kirk Blair, state 4-H leader, clubs may not meet until we are informed by the state 4-H office that this is possible – date to be determined.

Q: What about strategies for 4-H clubs and members while they are not meeting face-to-face?

A: Tip sheets for club leaders with options and ideas for holding virtual club meetings are available at go.osu.edu/4Hadvisorinfo. We will continue adding information to this site.

Q: What about enrollment deadlines for 4-H membership?

A: The message you can send to 4-H members and volunteers is this: "XXX is the enrollment deadline for our county. If you have challenges with this, please contact the Extension office for accommodations."

A: Please consider these extenuating circumstances and allow for late enrollments. Note: Senior fair boards will make determinations for junior fair deadlines.

A: To be proactive about contingency plans for upcoming summer programs, counties will refrain from sending camp registration materials or accepting camp payments until April 15.

Q: What activities are considered mission-critical?

A: CARTEENS – when these programs are court-mandated IF the court is continuing the program during this time, continue as planned.

A: New volunteer and policy 1.50 training are considered to be mission-critical, BUT must be conducted virtually until after March 30 at least. If there are connectivity challenges, make arrangements for individual instruction.

Q: What about Ohio Youth Quality Assurance (YQCA, in-person QA sessions, etc.)?

A: For livestock quality assurance (QA) for 2020 only: QA must still be completed before the opening day of exhibition, however the 45-day prior to the opening of the exhibition requirement will not be enforced; and youth livestock exhibitors (ages 8-18) may take the online YQCA certification. For other these and other questions, contact Lizz Share (share.8@osu.edu).

Q: How do 4-H books get picked up?

A: Project book distribution is being discussed, and information will be available soon.

▼ PESTICIDE APPLICATOR CERTIFICATION TRAINING AND EXAMS

As of March 17, OSU Extension will not be hosting ODA pesticide license exams until further notice. Pesticide applicator exams at the ODA Reynoldsburg campus are suspended until April 10. Commercial pesticide applicator courses will not be held in person.

All remaining private applicator recertification classes are postponed immediately until further notice. Ohio Department of Agriculture public facilities are closed until April 11. For more information, visit www.pested.osu.edu.

▼ PERSONNEL INFO – HIRING, INTERNSHIPS, ETC

Q: What does the university's hiring "pause" mean?

A: Per the university, all positions that have accepted offers with confirmed start dates will proceed as normal. HR consultants will coordinate onboarding logistics with hiring managers and serve as the point of contact for general questions.

No positions that were vacant as of noon on March 20 should be filled *unless an offer has already been extended, the candidate accepts by March 27, and has an identified start date*. HR consultants will reach out to hiring managers where this is applicable.

No new positions should be created without prior approval. Any hiring through June 30 should focus on maintaining adequate staffing levels in these essential service areas within CFAES: law

enforcement and public safety; facility utilities; residential support; key faculty positions; key research positions; or others deemed essential by the university.

We will suspend student or intern hires for the summer, including those currently in process. Students who have already been hired can continue to work virtually if you continue to have work for them. HR will be providing a new position request procedure for any positions that might fit the exception criteria for teaching or research positions; they will share this in the near future. Extension positions that were already in process were submitted for consideration of essential/critical status; feedback will be shared as soon as it is available. If they are student positions, they will more than likely not be approved.

Q: What about the summer 2020 OSU Extension internship program?

A: Given the university direction to limit discretionary spending and retain as much of our FY20 budget as possible, Extension Administration has decided to suspend the 2020 OSU Extension Summer Internship Program. The LOD team will be in touch directly with the people who had applied for the internships to date. We know the internship program is highly valued by the areas/counties and the students involved. The LOD team had previously planned to lead a series of discussions on how to improve the program, and that work will go forward. You will receive an invitation to participate in focus groups via Zoom during late summer 2020. This pause gives us the opportunity to be thoughtful and intentional about the summer 2021 internship program. If you have questions or concerns, contact Jared Morrison (morrison.332@osu.edu) or Teresa McCoy (mccoy.860@osu.edu).

▼ **PERFORMANCE REVIEWS**

At this time, expect that your performance review will be conducted remotely, and that the performance review schedule will remain as is. CFAES Human Resources will update Jackie if this changes, and Extension employees will be notified as necessary.

▼ **PUBLICATION PURCHASES AND SHIPMENTS**

Because county Extension offices in Ohio are closed at this time, shipments to those locations have been suspended. Ohio county Extension personnel are asked to refrain from placing new orders at this time. **Ohio residents and others can still place orders to be shipped directly to their homes, although they will have to pay slightly higher prices plus shipping.** We are working to offer more options to Ohio residents—like reduced prices—after April 1. If you have any general questions, contact Jane Wright at wright.646@osu.edu. Questions about specific orders should go to Dave Davisson at extension-pubs@osu.edu. Thank you for your patience as we navigate these changing circumstances.

You can still visit extensionpubs.osu.edu at any time to explore more about all of the publications offered by OSU Extension.

▼ **GRADUATE STUDENTS**

Graduate associates can keep working in labs, and to assist getting materials online; to review materials that may need to be altered given online components, etc. Graduate associates will continue to be paid.

Graduate student defenses can be held in the next few weeks. If a student is not be able to come to campus (self-quarantine, illness), we will be flexible and assist with planning an examination that both verifies the identity of the student and maintains the integrity of the examination process. For

example, if video is used, this is relatively easy to comply as the student can be seen by the examination committee and either a proctor or a scan view of the environment will be expected to ensure no one is in the room assisting the student (unless prior approved as a proctor), the student doesn't have assisting materials that were not permitted, or another person is providing prompting. For these examples of the student not being able to be on campus for the examination, please have the person in charge of the examination (advisor, a coordinator or other administrative graduate personnel) contact Tim Watson (Director of Graduation Services) to be sure these requirements are appropriately met. For other "virtual" methods, such as interactive on-line (no video) etc., please direct the person responsible for setting up the examination to contact Tim Watson to move it forward.

▼ COURSES AND INSTRUCTION

As you plan for the next few weeks, you are not being asked to create full online courses but strategies to ensure continuity of teaching for a few weeks as we address this situation. All face-to-face instruction in classroom settings has been suspended and is to move to virtual instruction, effective March 23 through the rest of the semester. Spring break has been extended for one week, through March 22. Students will be moving out of university housing for the remainder of the year.

Action Needed: All faculty should **make it a priority to Utilize CarmenCanvas** for all courses so that resources are available electronically. At minimum, Carmen should include: the syllabus, course materials, the grade book.

Prepare alternate means of teaching to meet the learning objectives of your course(s). The university has launched keep-teaching.osu.edu to share strategies and tools that faculty can use for alternate modes of delivery. In addition to the keep-teaching.osu.edu website, the [Office of Distance Education help desk](#) can offer guidance. Additional information about methods will be shared.

Labs, practica, and internships will all be handled on a case-by-case basis with additional guidance forthcoming. Some can continue, however, if a student is unsure about continuing we can work with them individually. **For labs on a case-by-case basis, is there someone we should follow up with centrally?** Yes, and it will likely be Dean Kress and Associate Dean Kitchel. Dr. Kitchel will reach out to talk through specific situations with TIU heads once more guidance is provided from HR.

Q: Will the Zoom system hold up when the students return for online classes?

A: Zoom is not the only option for alternative instruction. They do need to be within the protocols for FERPA, etc. though. ODEE and OCIO have increased support to ~30 staff who are prepared to respond to Carmen and Zoom questions. Zoom is actively monitoring capacity and will scale up using Amazon web services to meet our demands, if needed.

▼ FACULTY/STAFF COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Q: Is there any guidance on if faculty/staff should continue committee meetings?

A: This needs to be determined locally as to whether people should come together. Regarding health and safety, it only takes one individual to compromise a group, so it is recommended to hold virtual meetings or delaying for the next couple of weeks. Small groups who are willing to come together are within the discretion of you at the departmental level or within your county.

Q: Several faculty searches and external reviews fall within this timeframe and involve people from outside Ohio State, what do we do?

A: Is it essential to getting the work done in the next couple of weeks? If yes, figure out virtual alternatives. If it can be delayed, please do that. We'll all need to be flexible with timelines because they will be changing. Just do the best you can and keep focused on the health and safety of those involved.

Q: Are we still holding the OSU Extension ANR and FCS program review external review committee meetings?

A: As of March 10, Extension Administration determined that the ANR and FCS program review external review committee meetings scheduled for March 16-17 on campus will be postponed.

▼ **PHISHING AND HACKING ATTEMPTS**

We are hearing that there is an uptick in phishing and hacking attempts, including phone scams and phishing campaigns. Several institutions have been compromised due to employees clicking on these messages. Please be vigilant about that potential, and be cautious online. See this [guideline](#) from our tech team.

You can also prevent "Zoom bombing" of inappropriate content shared during Zoom sessions, as well as unwanted participants. Visit this [online resource](#) from ODEE for tips to prevent this.

▼ **RESOURCES**

[Ohio Department of Health](#)
[Ohio State's Coronavirus Outbreak website](#)
[Ohio State Keep Teaching](#)
[Ohio State Office of Research](#)
[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)
[World Health Organization situation reports](#)
[Ohio State Employee Assistance Program](#)
[Ohio State Office of Human Resources COVID-19 resources](#)
[Ohio State wellness resources \(via Bernadette Melnyk, the university chief wellness officer\)](#)
[Info for Ohio State students, faculty and staff](#)
[CFAES Daily Health Check](#)
[County Office Physically Reopening Sign - Brief Version](#)
[County Office Physically Reopening Sign - Detailed Version](#)



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL,
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES