

## OSU Extension Telework and Programming Updates

**(as of January 8, 2021)** Effective January 16, 2021 – OSU Extension county offices will be open again with limited staffing, moving from full telework to partial telework. Each county's arrangement will be different, depending on a local staffing plan coordinated with Extension administration. Counties will continue to take into consideration local COVID-19 circumstances, and continue to follow the guidelines around the [Ohio Health Advisory System Map](#) (see guidelines below).

At this time, in-person programming will resume after January 15, but it will still need to be conducted in accordance with existing approved exemptions. Extension employees, if you have a new exemption request that has not yet been through the process, the exemption link is available at: [go.osu.edu/CFAESf2fEventRequest](https://go.osu.edu/CFAESf2fEventRequest). If you simply need to adjust the dates of a previously approved program, reach out to Laurie Ward ([ward.676@osu.edu](mailto:ward.676@osu.edu)) directly. Contact Jeff McCutcheon, Operations director, at [mccutcheon.30@osu.edu](mailto:mccutcheon.30@osu.edu) with questions.

### County Status, per the Ohio Health Advisory System Map

**Purple Counties and Counties Approaching Purple** (as identified by an asterisk on the Ohio Health Advisory map): When a county turns **PURPLE or is approaching PURPLE, Extension offices are to be closed and employees will work virtually. Meetings and events need to be canceled, postponed, or held virtually until they are no longer in PURPLE status.**

**RED Counties:** When a county turns **RED, Extension offices are to be closed to the public for drop-in visits, but are still staffed according to their Return-to-Office plan (can still offer by appointment only).** By “appointment only” means the office is staffed, but the door to the office is locked. Clientele are required to have a timed appointment to be admitted to the office. You should attempt to have a limited number of employees in the office at any one time. You can work this out locally and make adjustments to your Return-to-Office plans. As always, if your commissioners or landlords have closed your building, you should revise your Return-to-Office plans to move to full telework. **Meetings and events, if they have received exemption approval, can be held. All other meetings and events still need to be canceled, postponed, or held virtually.**

**Orange Counties and Yellow Counties:** When a county is **Orange or Yellow, the Extension office can remain open to the public according to its Return-to-Office plan with existing safety protocols in place.** You should still attempt to have a limited number of employees in the office at any one time. You can work this out locally and make adjustments to your Return-to-Office plans. **Meetings and events, if they have received exemption approval can be held. All other meetings and events still need to be canceled, postponed, or held virtually.**



### Local Health Advisories

In addition to the guidance from the governor's Ohio Health Advisory System requirements on <https://coronavirus.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/covid-19/public-health-advisory-system>, various county health departments are releasing local health advisories limiting activities or encouraging additional caution regarding gathering and non-essential activities. **If a county has issued a local health advisory, we expect the Extension professionals in that county to follow the most restrictive guidance (Ohio State or local).** We recognize that there is a lot of room for interpretation of these advisories and that some of them appear to provide conflicting messages about gatherings and essential activities. If you are uncertain about what to do, contact your area leader, and he or she will work with our director of Operations (Jeff McCutcheon) to provide additional clarity.

### Staying the Course

We will be keeping the lines of communication open locally with stakeholders, county commissioners, and OSU Extension administration. Remember, the community spread remains fluid and ever-changing. We may need to modify this guidance at any time. Our employees are prepared to accomplish things via telework and have signage and communications prepared if a county is approaching purple or as a proactive planning measure in all counties.

Again, I truly appreciate your commitment to our mission and one another's well-being. Our priority will continue to be the health and safety of our Extension employees, as well as our clientele with whom we have regular contact. Some things are changing daily, and the health advisory system is only updated weekly. We will do our best to keep you informed about any changes we, or the university, will need to make.

**As always, decisions also are contingent upon any new data that comes from Governor DeWine in his weekly updates.** To those who have suffered or experienced loss due to COVID-19, please know that we care about you and your loved ones and express our sincere condolences. Each of you and the work we do is so very important.

### Ohio State Travel Restrictions Extended

Following the public health guidance of local, state and federal officials, the university has extended the current restrictions on domestic and international travel through June 30, 2021. More information will be shared soon about an exception process.

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