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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OSU Extension offices throughout Ohio will continue existing teleworking arrangements for staff during Ohio's extended Stay Safe Ohio order

Columbus, OHIO – Ohio State University Extension will continue operating via its teleworking plan for all employees and keep physical OSU Extension offices closed to the public until further notice. This remains in accordance with The Ohio State University's decision that all university employees, with the exception of essential facilities workers, are to continue teleworking and remain off campus, physical distancing and taking all other precautions to stay safe.

Ohio Department of Health Director Dr. Amy Acton recently extended *Ohio's Stay Safe Ohio Order* through May 29. While some businesses and organizations in the state are starting to reopen as of early May, the guidelines for reopening offices via the governor's office require personnel to work from home when possible. OSU Extension has invested in technology that allows personnel to work from their homes. Programs intended to be held face-to-face have been adjusted to a virtual format; and personnel can still be contacted by phone or email. The physical Extension office in each county will remain closed through July 6, unless a decision is made by Ohio State to return sooner.

“While we are considering the guidance from the governor's office and are paying attention to how our local community leaders are planning for re-opening businesses, we are following the university's lead on the transition planning process and are still intending to telework for the near future while ensuring we are meeting the needs of our clientele and community partners,” said Jackie Kirby Wilkins, OSU Extension interim director.

“We are looking at a phased transition over time, and we have a transition team in place to ensure we have a comprehensive plan for the safe return of our employees and clientele,” said Wilkins.



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY

Per previous Ohio State decision, all university in-person events are still cancelled through July 6, and Extension activities planned through July 6 will continue to be held virtually or cancelled. Ohio State will continue to evaluate and update plans based on evolving conditions with COVID-19.

OSU Extension's recent investment in the technology needed to facilitate effective teleworking for the organization has helped Extension staff remain in continual contact with Ohioans during this challenging time. "Our clients, stakeholders, and other community members should continue to connect with any OSU Extension staff member via phone or email," said Wilkins.

"Thank you to everyone for your cooperation and collaboration related to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Like Ohio State, OSU Extension remains committed to the health and well-being of our community and serving our communities in each county as this situation evolves. These are unprecedented times, and we sincerely appreciate your flexibility and support," said Wilkins.

If you have questions, contact your local OSU Extension office. Visit extension.osu.edu/lao for office phone numbers and a direct link to each office's website and staff directory.

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Ohio State University Extension

We create *opportunities* for people to explore how *science-based knowledge* can *improve social, economic, and environmental conditions*.