

WSU Extension Guidance on County Reopening

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for the protection of WSU County and Tribal Extension employees, volunteers, stakeholders, and the public as individual counties exercise their Phase 2 opening option to provide essential services under the Governor's continuing proclaimed guidelines.

The following is intended as general guidance for WSU County and Tribal Extension Offices (Extension Offices) to inform plans and implementation at the local level to meet the requirements set by local government, those set by University leadership, and those set by the Governor, in order to ensure the safety and well-being of employees, volunteers and the general public. Changes may be made as the situation warrants. There are four primary areas addressed in this guidance: County and Tribal office operations, WSU Extension employees, County-paid employees in Extension offices, and WSU Volunteers; followed by general guidelines for all office personnel and requirements for open offices.

1. County and Tribal Office Operations

- WSU is a state agency and institution of higher education and must comply with all Governor's Directives regarding "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" and "Safe Start." WSU's Incident Command and President have reiterated those directives for WSU employees. It is not possible for Extension to follow those mandates in an open office environment, so Extension Offices are expected and legally required to remain closed to the public, with business being conducted at a distance (other than essential business that must be conducted on site) until the Governor orders otherwise.
- WSU Extension Offices will continue to be closed to the public unless exceptions are made at the local level and approved by WSU Extension leadership. The public will be instructed by a sign on the door to call or email with any concerns. If their need cannot be met by phone or email, and their need is deemed essential, they may be allowed into the office by appointment only, thus ensuring only one client in the office at a time. The client will not come past the front counter and will be instructed to use the provided hand sanitizer upon entering the building. Employees assisting the public will wear a mask, and the member of the public will wear a mask. Employee will remain behind the counter when assisting customer, to ensure 6 feet distancing.

2. WSU Extension Employees

- WSU employees will continue to work via telework, unless engaged in essential activities. All WSU work-related activities will be conducted with appropriate hygiene and distancing protocols, including the use of separate vehicles for work-related travel.
- All WSU personnel must complete any training required as part of reopening plans.

3. County Employees in Extension Offices

If required to return to the workplace by County HR policy, WSU office county personnel will work behind locked doors and practice all appropriate hygiene and distancing protocols, subject to the conditions outlined above for office operations.

All county personnel in a WSU office must complete any training required as part of reopening plans.

4. WSU Volunteers

- 4-H Youth Development. Given the logistics challenges of conducting 4-H operations within the constraints of the Governor's guidance, and the closure through the end of the school year for Washington public schools, WSU 4-H will continue operating only at a distance via technology

until Washington public schools resume or the host county is in Phase 4 and 4-H can operate within the constraints of that phase, consistent with specific guidance from 4-H leadership.

- **Master Gardeners:** Because all WSU Extension offices will remain closed to the public, office-based plant clinics will also remain closed. For counties in Phase 2, volunteers who are less than 65 years of age may participate in local Farmer's Markets and other outdoor clinics using appropriate precautions, and may maintain demonstration gardens provided they follow previous guidance sent about working in demonstration gardens:
 1. There should be at least two, but not more than five volunteers providing maintenance in a garden at any given time (at least two so one can respond in case of an emergency).
 2. All volunteers must be able to maintain at least six feet of distance between workers- more is better.
 3. Volunteers must wear respiratory etiquette masks as recommended by the CDC.
 4. Shared surfaces, such as tools, hose spigots or hose handles must be sanitized using approved cleaners.
 5. Landowner must be agreeable to the demonstration garden maintenance.
- **Master Food Preservers:** WSU Master Food Preservers will continue to operate only at a distance via technology.

All Extension Office Personnel

All employees, county personnel and volunteers associated with any WSU Extension office must follow the guidelines below:

- Stay home if you have symptoms consistent with COVID-19, if you had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, or if you are instructed to do so. Symptoms to monitor include but are not limited to; fever (defined as temperature of 100.4°F or higher), cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, or new loss of taste or smell. If symptoms develop while away from work, contact supervisor and do not report to work. If symptoms develop while at work, immediately go home and contact supervisor.
- Return to work after being instructed to isolate or quarantine only after being cleared to do so by a doctor or the County Health Department or cognizant medical authority. Proof of clearance must be provided.
- If the employee is feeling ill, they should not report to work and should keep in contact with the Director of the office. Unless the employee falls into one of the six categories for the Families First Coronavirus Act leave, employee will use their sick leave bank for the time missed due to illness.
- Employees who are in high-risk categories, including but not limited to those over the age of 65 or with weakened immune systems, shall notify their supervisor and are encouraged to speak with Human Resources or the Risk Management Department regarding their concerns with returning to work safely. Accommodations to the extent practicable will be made to further distance those employees from other staff, and work tasks assigned will allow for social distancing at all times. Working remotely may be allowed where deemed effective.

Requirements for Open Offices

- When WSU Extension offices do reopen or when members of the public visit those offices by appointment, they must comply with the following:

- Door handles, counters and surfaces must be disinfected with an approved disinfectant following the departure of a customer AND disinfected prior to leaving for the day. Employees will be required to wash their hands with soap and water immediately before returning to their workstation.
- Office phones, supplies and bathrooms will not be available to customers.
- The supervisor is responsible for reviewing these requirements with all coworkers weekly.
- Follow “social distancing” guidelines, both with coworkers and the public. When six feet distancing cannot be achieved due to necessary work, employees will wear appropriate Etiquette or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), including at a minimum a face covering, and gloves as appropriate.
- Sanitizing wipes and spray have been issued to each employee. High-touch surfaces such as shared telephones and keyboards, handrails, shared tools/office equipment and doorknobs must be disinfected frequently. Employees are responsible for disinfecting their workspace(s).
- Minimize unnecessary contact with the public. Remember that people can be are often contagious without showing symptoms.