

April 6, 2020

Colleagues:

For over 100 years, the University of Maryland Extension has been serving our communities, providing science-based education and outreach in essential areas such as public health, youth development, financial wellness, food safety, and agricultural production.

History has proven time and again that our educators and staff are able to quickly adapt to challenging times and unpredictable environments, and the current pandemic is no different. We are committed to maintaining the same level of education and community involvement, taking advantage of the unique talents of our people and advanced technologies to transition our programming to virtual platforms.

We would like to share updates with you and your constituents as we build educational programming and information in digital formats, and remind you of the breadth of our services, especially those serving our essential workforce and youth.

- Agricultural Services & Natural Resources

Our agents are still available to the farming community and can be contacted through phone, email, and online teleconferencing. Our lab and field faculty, as well as the [Home and Garden Information Center](#), are able to assess problems and diagnose issues through photo uploading and our [Ask An Expert](#) online tool.

- Family & Consumer Sciences

Focusing on public health and wellness topics, from nutrition and [food safety](#) to financial security and [stress management](#), our FCS program is delivering credible information crucial to communities struggling with economic downturn, food shortages, and anxiety over health and safety through a variety of digital platforms including [blogs](#), [social media](#), and [comprehensive factsheets related to COVID-19](#) and other health and wellness topics, available through the [Extension website](#). Additionally, we are continuing a concerted effort to deliver several trainings focusing on the opioid crisis, now in a virtual format.

- 4-H and Youth Development

With schools out and continuing education at home a challenge for many parents, our 4-H and youth development teams have quickly transitioned meetings and activities to online formats. Youth are receiving [instruction on various activities](#) and STEM projects through Facebook and [on our website](#), providing those lessons not only for children in their counties, but for the whole state. Group meetings have continued through video platforms allowing youth to connect with their peers and maintain a sense of social interaction.

While these are only a small handful of examples of the extensive programming we're continuing to offer across the state, we will be sharing regular updates, and highlighting an impactful story each week with you and your team, to keep you informed of the essential services we are providing, as well as key partnerships we are building, within our communities.