



Virginia Cooperative Extension Local Office/AREC COVID-19 Guidance Revised July 30, 2021

With the expiration of [Executive Order Seventy-nine](#) from the Commonwealth of Virginia, Office of the Governor, Virginia Cooperative Extension is adjusting operations and programming accordingly. VCE has a history of strong partnership with county and city governments and desires to be community minded. Unit office opening status is a conversation between local governments, the District Director and the Unit Coordinator as it relates to office accessibility and staffing. The health and welfare of our clients and employees is of paramount importance. Therefore, the following guidance is being provided to help with the continued transition to re-opening Extension offices/AREC's and resuming face-to-face programming.

- Vulnerable employees can seek temporary telework agreements and/or ADA accommodations to work from home.
- Employees who are symptomatic or test positive cannot return to work until they meet the [Virginia Department of Health Guidelines](#).
- Faculty and staff should work together to staff the local office/AREC during normal business hours.
- Consider continuing to provide some services through contactless methods.
- If needed, utilize appointment protocols for face-to-face meetings with individual clientele.
- Continue enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices in the workspace and other meeting spaces. Following [CDC workplace cleaning and disinfecting guidance](#) is recommended.
- Continue to adhere to both recommended and mandated public health guidelines when interacting with co-workers and clientele.
- Face-to-face programming is allowed in accordance with the following in-person programming guidance.
 - Indoor programming: There are currently no state restrictions on group size or physical distancing, however some regions may have facility and/or occupancy restrictions that limit participant numbers.
 - Outdoor programming: There are currently no state restrictions on group size or physical distancing, however some regions may have facility and/or occupancy restrictions that limit participant numbers.

- VCE employees are allowed to ask program participants, volunteers, and other employees about their vaccination status, however the individuals are not required to provide proof of vaccination to be eligible to participate in VCE programs.
- Fully vaccinated individuals are not required to wear a mask in most settings, however fully vaccinated people should wear a mask in public indoor settings in areas of [substantial or high transmission](#). Specific CDC guidance can be found [here](#).
- Some localities may implement additional mask restrictions.
- Individuals who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear masks in all settings.
- All 4-H youth program participants, both youth and adults, are required to wear an appropriate face covering/mask, regardless of vaccination status, when participating in **indoor** programs. This includes transportation (unless the transport vehicle occupants are from the same household). Vaccinated 4-H program participants are not required to wear a face covering/mask when participating in **outdoor** programs where six feet of physical distance can be maintained between individuals. Unvaccinated individuals participating in **outdoor** programs are required to wear a face covering/mask AND stay at least 6 feet apart from those that do not reside in the same household. A structure will be considered “outdoors” if there are a minimum of two sides that are open air, meaning completely open prior to opening any doors or windows and having no structural features other than support beams or support features. Specific guidance related to face coverings/masks in 4-H residential camping programs will be provided by the 4-H Educational Center where the event takes place.
- Exceptions to the face covering/mask requirement are as follows:
 - When handling an animal in certain areas where adequate physical distancing can be maintained and properly ensured, such as while on a horse, in a show ring, in a line-up area waiting to enter the show ring, or in a designated grooming area or wash rack.
 - When standing on the firing line during shooting education programs; however, six feet of physical distance is required.
 - During aquatic activities such as swimming, paddle boarding or kayaking.
 - When a medical condition prevents the participant from wearing a face covering/mask. If you are a person with a disability and desire any assistive devices, services or other accommodations to participate in this activity, please contact your local extension office to discuss accommodations at least 5 days prior to the event.
- Specific event guidance/checklist can be found on the [VCE COVID site](#).
 - The events checklist is not required, but continued use is encouraged and could be beneficial to you and your program.

- 4-H Centers can conduct 4-H programming based on the 4-H in-person guidelines found on the [VCE COVID site](#) and may resume other business operations.
- Volunteer participation must be fully voluntary.

VCE administration entrusts our faculty and staff to follow all guidelines as set forth in this document. Our goal has been and continues to be ensuring the health and welfare of our clients and employees while faithfully trying to fulfill our mission of service and education across the Commonwealth.