

**WTNS Radio OSU Extension Update for April 27, 2020**  
**Healthy People. Healthy Finances. Healthy Relationships.**

On today's OSU Extension update for Healthy People, Healthy Finances, and Healthy Relationships we'll talk about what to do with your stimulus check and an upcoming virtual program for women in agriculture.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was passed and signed into law on March 27. One of the many components of this was economic impact payments, or stimulus checks for taxpayers who filed tax returns in 2018 & 19 and most seniors and retirees.

For many of us, the money just showed up in our bank accounts a little over a week ago. Others are receiving a check in the mail. There is a wide variety of circumstances that individuals, couples, and families find themselves in at this time. Many people have a true need for this money right now. They may be out of work, have had a reduction in their pay, are waiting on unemployment benefits, or are facing a probable layoff.

Here are suggestions on ways to prioritize:

- Food and Prescriptions – If you are having trouble supplying prescription medications and food for your household, the first priority is to fund these two items.
- Utilities – Make sure your utilities, such as electric, water, and gas are kept on. The Home Energy Assistance Programs (HEAP) and the Winter Crisis Programs have been extended through May 1, 2020.
- Home/Shelter – Be sure to use some of the stimulus money to cover your rent or mortgage payment. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) authorized the Federal Housing Administration (FHA) to suspend all foreclosure and eviction moratorium for single family homeowners with FHA-insured mortgages for the next 60 days (Issue of notice on March 18, 2020).
- Transportation - This includes car payments, gasoline, car maintenance, public transit, and insurance.

But if your basic needs are met, then what should you do with this money? We've probably all heard the stories of people rushing out to buy big screen TV's and gaming systems. I am going to go out on a limb and assume that you have not done that with your stimulus money.

A Federal Reserve study about the Economic Well-Being of US Households in 2018, reported that if faced with an unexpected \$400 expense, 12 percent of adults would not be able to cover that expense. Only 61 percent indicated that they could pay for this with cash, savings or a credit card that could be paid off at the next statement.

If you do not currently have an emergency savings fund, then this is the time to start. Many financial experts recommend starting with a \$1,000 goal. If you have that much saved, then the next goal should be enough to cover your expenses for three to six months. If you are a double income household, then you could plan for the lower end. But with only a single income, it is best to have half a year's worth of expenses in reserve.

If you are financially secure and are weathering this storm well, you may consider using your stimulus money to help those in need. This could be through supporting local businesses or donating to a local food bank, charity, or community organization to help others during their time of need. You can find many more resources about financial wellness at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu) including a link to submit any financial questions you have.

Also, for our women in agriculture here in Coshocton County, those who have participated in an Annie's Project understand the camaraderie and friendships that are developed during the course. They also understand the value of education to improve the farm operation. Keeping those two points in mind, the Ohio Women in Ag team is hosting a virtual Annie's Project Reunion on May 6 from 9-11 a.m.

The reunion will allow past participants to catch up with each other through virtual breakout rooms and further expand their education through 3 different tracts: Farm Management, Livestock, and Food. The opening session will provide resources and inspiration for the unique challenges farms are facing right now. Breakout sessions include grain and livestock market updates, backyard poultry, food prep and preservation and more. Those who have not participated in an Annie's Project are also invited to attend to learn more! If interested, please save the date and look for registration information next week.

Remember: Keep cooking. Keep cleaning. Keep learning. Keep living. In closing, at OSU Extension, we are proud to work for Coshocton County to help improve our families, farms, and businesses. Please feel free to contact OSU Extension for more information at 740-622-2265 or visit our website at [coshocton.osu.edu](http://coshocton.osu.edu). Make it a healthy day!