



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION | NEWSLETTER

A Weekly Newsletter about the Kentucky State University Cooperative Extension Program

April 24, 2020

It is important that during this time we become aware of the financial crisis that many groups are facing, one of them being the Hispanic population. According to the Pew Research Center, “Hispanics are more likely than Americans overall to say they or someone in their household has experienced a pay cut or lost their job because of the coronavirus outbreak.”

Paying Your Bills and Expenses During COVID-19

A lot of people are dealing with serious financial hardships caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In some instances, people have little or no money at all due to being unable to work. Do not be ashamed of this matter, but begin taking steps to help you through this crisis. If you are able to meet your expenses and pay your bills, stay on track. If you are not able to do so, take the following steps:

- Stop all unnecessary spending.
- Look for assistance in your community with food and other items, especially if you are experiencing a severe income shortage.
- Look for ways to reduce items in your budget.
- Make a new spending plan based on your situation.
- Determine priorities for the money you have.

Set priorities for the money that you have or the things that are most important. Consider the items that will have the greatest impact on your health, safety and livelihood— food, shelter, utilities, transportation and medicine. **Take care of these items first.**



Ways of Managing Your Bills

There are ways to get help if you are struggling to pay your bills due to the financial impact of COVID-19. Again, if you can still pay your bills, you will likely be better off staying on track. Keep in mind that if you decide to use a program that lets you pause or reduce payments, you will still owe the money you have not paid once the program ends.

Remember, if you are struggling, you have options.

Contact your lenders, loan servicers and other creditors if you're not able to pay your bills on time. Check their websites to see if they have information that can help you. The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) and other financial regulators have encouraged financial institutions to work with their customers to meet their community needs. If you can't make a payment now, need more

time, or want to discuss payment options, contact your lenders and servicers to let them know your situation. Being behind on your payments can have a lasting impact on your credit. Credit card companies and lenders may be able to offer a number of options to help you. This could include waiving certain fees like ATM, overdrafts, and late fees, as well as allowing you to delay, adjust or skip some payments.

When contacting your lenders, be prepared to explain:

- Your financial situation
- How much you can afford to pay
- When you're likely to be able to restart regular payments
- Your income, expenses and assets
- How you can work with housing and credit counselors to understand the options available to you

The Consumer Financial Protection Website below will provide additional information to help you:

- If you can't pay your bills
- If you can't make your mortgage payments
- If you can't keep up with your student loans
- If you're already behind on your bills
- If you're a financial caregiver

Keeping Your Money Safe

Remember to keep your money safe. While you might wish to have a small amount of cash on hand, your money is safe in a bank or credit union because it is insured. Deposits in banks and the vast majority of state-chartered credit unions are insured up to \$250,000.

Money Saving Tip – Buy Generic

In most cases, the only thing that's better about brand-name products is the marketing. Name brand products have beautiful packaging and are placed at eye level in the grocery store. They pay a lot of that space. Generic brands cost far less than their brand-name counterparts and they taste just as good. Use generic items such as cleaning products as well. Compare the active ingredients and save the cash!



Resources

Bankston, J. (2018, August). Real Skills For Everyday Life: A Basic Life Skills Curriculum, Kentucky State University, Frankfort, KY 40601.

Consumer Financial Protection Bureau. (2020, April 3). Protect Yourself Financially From the Impact of the Coronavirus

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/>

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/coronavirus/>

<https://www.consumerfinance.gov/about-us/blog/protect-yourself-financially-from-impact-of-coronavirus/>

[Pew Research Center survey](#) conducted March 19-24.” -- Pew Hispanic Center.

For more information, contact:

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Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, I will be working remotely until further notice. You may still contact me via email.