

COVID-19 LIBRARY BUILDING REOPENING: PHASED PLAN

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 has forced our library buildings to close temporarily, but it has not closed our library. Virtual services continue, developed and provided through the talents and creativity of the library's extraordinary staff. As we commit every day to extend those services to our community, we are thinking carefully about what a return to our physical spaces must consider and include. While we assess our environment and discuss scenarios, there are elements of that environment we do not know and cannot predict, such as when governmental orders to shelter in place and to permit only "essential" services to continue will be lifted. We do know, however, that a return to physical spaces will not be an immediate return to a pre-pandemic environment. First and foremost, the health, safety, and well-being of our staff members and our patrons have guided and will continue to guide the development of these phases and in large part will determine when we reopen our facilities.

This document, *COVID-19 Library Building Reopening Phases*, responds to that reality by outlining proposed stages to reopen our facilities and to reintroduce people to our physical spaces, our materials, and building-bound services with new health and safety protocols in place. Each phase's details includes proposed timelines; restrictions and extensions on services, hours, and places; prerequisite needs for supplies and materials; plans for continuation of remote working; and descriptions of how we will determine when we would be ready to move from one phase to another. Additional assumptions include the potential for reversion to earlier phases if new infections occur and government mandates to shelter are reinstated. This document, therefore, will continue to be developed as we learn more and is subject to change.

REOPENING PHASES DEFINITIONS

Phase 1

Library buildings are closed to the public. Staff come in to prepare to reopen the buildings. Timeframe: one week before the Main Library reopens to the public. **Anticipated date:** dependent on local and state assessment of risk.

Context: Stay-at-home order is lifted by state and local authorities. Physical distancing is recommended. Infection risks are still high. Supplies are limited and restocking ability is uncertain.

Summary: Library buildings remain closed to the public. Scheduled staff (Leadership Team, Management Team, Facilities, IT, Material Services Bibliographic Team, Access and Neighborhood Services Supervisors and Clerks, and Library Assistants) start working onsite (under specific safety procedures) to prepare spaces, collections and technology for re-opening the buildings. Staff may work

in staff and public areas and may work at all three buildings, or only at the Main Library. Some staff continue to work remotely.

Phase 2

Main Library reopens to provide access to physical materials, but with reduced hours. Other services are limited or restricted. Dole and Maze Branches remain closed. External book drops are open at all locations. **Anticipated Date:** dependent on local and state assessment of risk

Context: Physical distancing is recommended. Infection risks are still high. We have enough supplies to comply with safety recommendations for public and staff, but supply needs and availability are uncertain.

Summary: Our intention is to provide access to materials (with possible self-service holds/materials pickup in the lobby offered during specific hours and contactless home delivery), but not to encourage extended stays or gatherings. Seating is removed from the public floor. No reservations for study rooms or meeting rooms are accepted. Computer access may be offered but will be limited to express stations. Open hours are reduced from our regular schedule to allow for materials to be shelved and holds pulled before the library opens to the public. Specific hours for vulnerable patrons may be established. Home delivery resumes for registered patrons. While open, there is limited face-to-face staff/public interaction. Staff assist through chat, phone calls, and emails. Many staff continue to work from home as much as possible.

Phase 3

Additional library services are added at the Main Library and we return to regular hours. Dole and Maze Branches remain closed. Home delivery services may expand to include new patrons prioritizing seniors, families of young children and patrons without internet access. **Anticipated Date:** dependent on local and state assessment of risk

Context: Physical distancing is still recommended, but infections risks are declining. Supply needs are predictable and supplies are plentiful.

Summary: Some seating is re-introduced but configured to allow for physical distance. Study rooms may be used with one or two people. Computers are accessible at socially distant intervals. Desk staff are available on the service desks but only one staff member per desk. RAILS delivery may be reintroduced.

Phase 4

The majority of library services are reintroduced and all locations reopen. There may be limitations on larger group gatherings for meetings and programs. Programs for children in grade school and older may be offered as well as adult and teen programming, but children must be able to understand and practice safe hygiene and physical distancing. Community engagement and outreach to young children in-person is still suspended. **Anticipated Date:** dependent on local and state assessment of risk

Context: Physical distancing guidelines have been relaxed to allow for smaller group gatherings. Large group gatherings are still considered a risk.

Summary: Service desks are fully staffed. Device checkouts are permitted and all computers in operation. All seating areas are back on the floor.

Phase 5

Full Service return to “our new normal”. **Anticipated Date:** dependent on local and state assessment of risk.

Context: Infection threat is considered low or non-existent or there is a vaccine.

Summary: Larger group gatherings of all ages for meetings or library programs are allowed in meeting spaces at all locations. The Community Engagement team makes Book Bike visits and attends other outreach events. Visits to preschools resume.

COVID-19 LIBRARY BUILDING REOPENING: PROCEDURAL DETAILS

HUMAN RESOURCES GUIDELINES

The health and well-being of library staff members is our highest priority. Therefore, the library will reinforce these best practices and guidelines with regard to preventative health measures throughout the phases of reopening the library.

Hygiene Practices: To stop the spread of germs at work.

- **Clean your hands often.** Wash your hands with soap and water, vigorously rubbing together front and back for 20 seconds. Or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, rubbing hands until they are dry.
- **Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.** or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away; use your arm or sleeve to cover if you do not have a tissue.
- **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** Germs need an entry point, and the average adult touches their face once every three or four minutes.
- **Clean shared surfaces and equipment often.** Use disinfectants to clean commonly touched items such as doorknobs, faucet handles, copy machines, coffee pot handles, desktops, handrails, microwave buttons, keyboards, and elevator buttons.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, check with a health care provider as needed, and notify Human Resources as needed. See the illness practices below for additional information.

Physical Distancing Practices: To minimize the spread of the disease among the staff.

During the workday, staff members are requested to:

- Avoid meeting people face-to-face. Staff are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building. Unavoidable in-person meetings should be short, in a large meeting room where people can sit at least six feet from each other; avoid shaking hands.
- Eliminate unnecessary travel and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions.
- Do not congregate in work rooms, staff rooms or other areas where people socialize. Keep six feet apart when possible.
- Bring lunch and eat at your desk or away from others (avoid staff room and crowded restaurants).
- Encourage staff members to request information and materials via phone and email in order to minimize person-to-person contact. Have the materials and information ready for fast pick-up or delivery.

For outside of workday activities, staff members are encouraged to the extent possible to:

- Avoid public transportation (walk, cycle, drive a car) or go early or late to avoid rush-hour crowding on public transportation. Utilize flexible schedules and e-work options as possible.
- Avoid recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where staff members might come into close contact with others.

Illness Practices: What to do if you or a family member has signs or symptoms indicating illness.

- **Cold, Influenza (Flu)** - According to the Illinois Department of Public Health, other respiratory viruses are currently circulating in Illinois. Fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing are symptoms associated with these viruses. Staff members exhibiting any of these symptoms or other signs of illness should stay home or will be asked to return home. Staff members should not return to work until all signs and symptoms are gone, including being fever free for at least 24 hours while free from medication.
- **COVID-19** - If a staff member has signs or symptoms indicating COVID-19 (fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness), the staff member will be asked to notify Human Resources and seek medical assistance. Staff members who have tested positive for COVID-19, may be asked to submit a doctor's note indicating they are fit to return to duty prior to returning to the library.
- **Increased vulnerability to illness** - Based on CDC recommendations and other guidance, staff members over a certain age and/or with underlying health conditions may not be allowed to return to work in the library buildings. E-work may be an option, if available.
- **FMLA Leave Expansion and Emergency Paid Sick Leave due to COVID-19**
 - Guidelines
 - Emergency FMLA Leave Request Form -Use if unable to work (or e-work) due to a need to care for their son or daughter when the school or place of care has been closed, or their regular childcare provider is unavailable, due to a public health emergency with respect to COVID-19.
 - Emergency Paid Sick Leave Request Form - Use if unable to work (or e-work) due to one of the six reasons (defined in guidelines above and in the request form) related to COVID-19.

SAFETY GUIDELINES

Prior to Phase 1

- Cleaning service prepares the building.
- Staff are trained in safety protocols.

Phase 1

- Staff meetings, if held in person, allow for 6 ft physical distance between participants.
- Masks and gloves are available for staff who need them.
- Staff are scheduled to address the need for distancing in work spaces.

Phase 2

- Hand sanitizer and wipes are provided throughout the Main library for patrons for self-sanitation of hands and surfaces.
- Schedule shelvers during closed hours so that we can reduce patron contact.
- Returned materials are quarantined.
- Safety team monitors patron behavior to enforce compliance with safety guidelines

Phase 3

- 6 ft distance is marked from service points.
- Plexiglass is installed at service desks.
- Seating is arranged to allow for physical distancing.

Phase 4

- Meeting room set-ups are configured for smaller groups.

Phase 5

- Return to regular safety practices.

SPACES, SERVICES AND PROGRAMS, COLLECTIONS, TECHNOLOGY

We will coordinate our core services reopening plans/tasks with RAILS/SWAN and other partner institutions.

Phase 1 Tasks

Spaces

- Cleaning Main Library spaces
- Remove all seating from public spaces
- Prepare staff and public spaces for physical distancing
- Ordering, organizing and distributing required/recommended sanitation supplies in staff and public areas

Services and Programs

- Promoting and expanding digital library (collections, technology, services, programming)
- Providing remote tech help with digital collections and online resources
- Verifying residency of new digital accounts
- Answering contact us emails and forwarded calls
- Researching and planning remote phone and chat service
- Scheduling staff for Phases 2-5
- Updating patron records with bounced emails

Collections

- Continue selection and ordering on digital and physical materials
- Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
- Working with SWAN on holds processing setup and workflow for Phase 2
- Check-in, sorting and shelving materials after sufficient quarantine
- Cleaning discs
- Shelf-reading/organizing
- Materials and supplies inventory

Technology

- Providing tech infrastructure and support for staff working remotely and onsite
- Preparing public tech for Phases 2-5

Phase 2 Tasks

Spaces

- Areas/furniture that invite gathering that can not be removed (such as couches in Children's Services Area, window benches, public PCs areas) are blocked off with caution tape or by other methods.
- Idea box and/or Small Meeting Room are used for quarantine of returned materials (Facilities team delivers book drop pickups directly to Idea Box/Small Meeting Room.)

Services and Programs

- Promoting and expanding digital library (collections, technology, services, programming)
- Answering contact us emails and forwarded calls
- Staffing online chat service
- Providing tech help with digital collections and online resources
- Driving/delivering and picking up home delivery materials
- Staff assist the public with self check-out and technology if physical distance can be maintained or if not assist through chat
- Developing and presenting virtual programming
- Verifying residency of new digital accounts
- Contact-less home delivery resumes for registered patrons.

Collections

- Allow checkout/pickup of existing materials available on hold shelf
- Pulling OPS (Main Library only) items on hold for Oak Park cardholders (if SWAN hold map is adjusted accordingly)
- Curating materials by request for pick-up and/or delivery
- Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
- Check-in, sorting and shelving materials after sufficient quarantine
- Cleaning discs
- Shelf-reading/organizing
- Materials and supplies inventory

Technology

- Offer 1-2 public PC express stations per floor
- Possibly offer free small print jobs for pickup in the Lobby

Phase 3 Tasks

Spaces

- Some furniture is reintroduced and placed at safe physical distances.
- Signage with guidelines for study room use is posted.

Services and Programs

- Service desks are staffed at the Main Library with one person per service desk.
- Home delivery expands to include new patrons prioritizing seniors, families of young children and patrons without internet access.

Collections

- Curating materials by request for pick-up and home delivery (Children/Families, Seniors prioritized)
- Driving/delivering and picking up home delivery materials.
- Checking in materials from RAILS deliveries (when service is restored) and other returns after sufficient quarantine
- Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
- Check-in, sorting and shelving materials after sufficient quarantine
- Cleaning discs
- Shelf-reading/organizing
- Materials and supplies inventory

Technology

- Public PCs and copy/scan/print/fax stations are accessible with socially distant intervals at all locations

Phase 4 Tasks

Spaces

- Toys are reintroduced to the children's spaces.

Services and Programs

- Meeting reservations for small groups are accepted.
- Library programs are planned for small audiences 25 or fewer attendees (registration required to be able to enforce limits) Programs for children may be planned for ages 5-7 (with a caregiver) or for Grades 3 and up (children must be able to understand and comply with physical distancing and safe hygiene practices during the program)

Collections

- All collections services are fully restored at all locations

Technology

- All public technology is fully accessible at all locations

Phase 5 Tasks

- Evaluation of Covid-19 phased plan.