



# COVID-19 Library Building Reopening: Phased Plan

## Introduction

COVID-19 has forced our building 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 and community partners. 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. 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: Phased Plan*, responds to that reality by outlining proposed stages to reopen our facility and to reintroduce people to our physical space, our materials, and in-building services with new health and safety protocols in place. Each phase's details include 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 at home are reinstated.*** This document will continue to be developed as we learn more and is subject to change.

## Reopening Phases - Definitions

### Phase 1 – Library Closed, Minimal In-Building Staffing

**Context:** Governor issued mandatory stay-at-home order and Library Director, in consultation with City Manager, determined library closes to the public. Infection rates are high.

Supplies/PPE are limited and restocking ability is uncertain. **Date:** March 17 to present

**Summary:** Library building is closed to the public. Book returns are closed. Patrons are asked to safely keep all library materials in their possession until restrictions are eased; no late fees are assessed during this phase. Only digital collections are available to patrons. All programs are

either cancelled or held virtually. Literacy Center is closed. Volunteer services are suspended. Coffee service suspended. The majority of staff telework from home. Each full-time staff member takes a turn staffing the building each day, Monday-Friday 9:00am-5:00pm. When working in the building, the employee is answering the telephone, receiving deliveries, picking up mail at the post office, responding to online patron requests for assistance, working on collection maintenance projects, and other duties as assigned. When there is more than one employee in the building, they must adhere to physical distancing and recommended cleaning/disinfecting guidelines (see appendix), including wearing gloves and masks. When teleworking, employees focus primarily on their assigned duties that can be performed remotely; they also seek out professional development opportunities such as webinars and online learning and work on special projects such as the summer reading program. Teleworkers may enter the facility to receive/pickup work but should primarily work from home.

## **Phase 2 – Most Staff Return to Work in Building**

**Context:** Governor’s stay-at-home restrictions are eased, allowing employees to return to work in modified manner. Infection rates are stable or declining. Most supplies/PPE are available but may be backordered or only available in limited quantities. **Anticipated date:** May 18, 2020

**Summary:** Library building is closed to the public. Book returns remain closed for most of this phase; however, they will be reopened approximately 1 week prior to entering Phase 3. Only digital collections are available to patrons. All programs are either cancelled or held virtually. Literacy Center employee working to develop continuing operations plan. Volunteer services remain suspended. Coffee service suspended. During this phase, staff will work in pairs for half-day shifts; two staff members will work 9:00am-1:00pm and two staff members will work 1:00pm-5:00pm. Upon arrival for their shift, each employee’s temperature will be taken using the library’s newly acquired contactless forehead thermometer; any employee with a temperature of 100F or higher will be sent home. Any employee experiencing other coronavirus symptoms (see appendix) should not report for their shift. With at least two employees in the building on a regular basis, staff will be required to adhere to all physical distancing and cleaning/disinfecting guidelines; when not working at their desks or other solitary space, staff are required to wear masks as they move through the building. Staff will continue to telework for the other half of their daily shift. Staff cubicles will be further separated by clear shower curtains to prevent any airborne droplets from entering other cubicles. The library will have a 30-day supply of nitrile gloves, hand sanitizer, and disinfecting wipes on hand with additional supplies on order. In addition to the in-building duties described in Phase 1, staff will prepare the building for eventual opening under a “new normal.” This preparation includes collection development (ordering/processing) of physical items, collection and building appearance projects including enhanced cleaning projects, development of pandemic-specific processes and procedures - especially those affecting public services, and a display/infographic detailing the important work staff did during the closure. Approximately 1 week before the start of Phase 3, book returns will be unlocked and the library will begin accepting return of materials. Staff must wear gloves when handling returned materials. All returned items will be placed onto carts and stored in the community room for quarantine; current Institute of Museum & Library

Services guidelines recommend a 72 hour quarantine period before items can be processed and returned to the shelves.

**Note:** Give recognition that all staff have experienced incredible stresses and trauma during the COVID-19 pandemic; remind staff of EAP services.

### **Phase 3 – Limited Public Service Restored as Restrictions Continue to Ease**

**Context:** Phase 2 of the Governor’s re-opening plan takes effect. Library hours and staffing levels restored to pre-pandemic levels. Some public services are restored. Infection risks remain high and, as restrictions are further eased, there may be an increase in the infection rate, necessitating a return to all or parts of Phase 2. Supplies are available but possibly backordered or available in limited quantities. **Anticipated date:** June 8, 2020

**Summary:** Library building remains closed to the public with the possible exception of computer use by appointment. Book returns are open; library materials can only be returned in the book returns. All items continue to be quarantined for 72 hours following the process described in Phase 2. The library returns to pre-pandemic hours of operation (Monday-Thursday 10:00am-6:00pm, Friday Noon-6:00pm, and Saturday 10:00am-4:00pm) and staffing levels. (Employees with special health considerations may need to continue to telework. Please be considerate of their needs.) Literacy Center implements a curbside pickup plan modeled on the library’s program and/or mails learning packets to students. Volunteer services remain suspended. Coffee service remains suspended. All programs, services, and staff work described in Phase 2 continues in this phase. All physical distancing, cleaning/disinfecting protocols continue; temperature checks continue and masks/face shields are required to be worn except when an employee is working at their desk. Recognizing that not all library patrons have access to the library’s digital collections, curbside pick-up of library materials will be instituted (see separate plan). The pandemic laid bare the digital divide that exists within our community with many calls for computer/internet access. The library has made the decision to expand its hotspot lending program (10 additional hotspots are on order) and will explore the possibility of bundling a hotspot with a device for checkout; a community partnership may be required to identify those who would benefit most from such a service. In addition to the hotspot lending program, the library may develop procedures that will allow for in-building computer use by appointment; opening the building for this purpose will require additional safety precautions to be implemented. Once implemented, the library will have at least one month’s supply of disposable keyboard and mouse covers on hand (currently backordered 2-3 weeks).

### **Phase 4 – Library Building Reopens Under Grab-n-Go Model**

**Context:** Library building reopens to the public with restrictions. Infection rates and risks will inform what this re-opening looks like. Programs and most services remain virtual, including Summer Reading. Supplies are readily available but oftentimes in limited quantities.

**Anticipated date:** TBD

**Summary:** The building will reopen to the public; however, operating hours may need to be adjusted (Monday-Thursday) to give staff enough time to prepare the building for opening

under the “new normal” cleaning/disinfecting procedures. The first open hour may be set aside for patrons in high risk groups; patron demand will determine if this service is needed. Library materials can only be returned in the book returns. Literacy Center continues as in Phase 3. Volunteer services remain suspended. Coffee service remains suspended. All programs, services, and staff work described in Phase 3 continues in this phase. All physical distancing, cleaning/disinfecting protocols continue; temperature checks continue and masks are required except when an employee is working at their desk. The Fourth Street doors will be the library’s entrance doors, the west side doors will be the library’s exit doors, and the northside door will remain closed; this will allow staff to closely monitor the number of patrons in the building at any one time (max capacity TBD). Patrons entering the building will be required to wear a face mask; if they do not have a face mask, the library will provide them with a disposable face mask (300 disposable face masks are currently on order). Hand sanitizer will be available at the library entrance and exit (stands are currently on backorder) and at key “high touch” locations throughout the building. To limit cleaning/disinfecting requirements, only the gender-neutral bathrooms will be open for public use; the large bathrooms by the meeting room will remain closed. The meeting room is designated for materials quarantine and furniture storage and will remain closed to reservations for the foreseeable future. Sneeze guards have been installed at all service points as well as between computer workstations. To meet patron demand for public computers, we will place computers on tables throughout the building provided connectivity is possible and we meet necessary physical distancing guidelines. Depending on how many computers we are able to provide, computer use may remain by appointment only and with strict time limits. Other physical distancing measures will be implemented such as place markers on the floor. Most of the library is considered “high touch” so we will have to assess the risks associated with having open stacks and browsing of collections. Given limited cleaning/disinfecting services and staffing levels, the library may have to have closed stacks with staff filling patron requests. Curbside pick-up is eliminated except for those who request it. Patron holds can be picked up inside the building as in pre-pandemic days. Patrons may be restricted to borrowing only materials owned by Cook Memorial Library; procuring materials from other libraries in the SAGE network is contingent upon restoration of courier services. The intent of this phase is to provide access to materials but not to encourage extended stays or gatherings. Most seating is removed from the public floor. Study rooms will remain unavailable. While open, every attempt will be made to limit face-to-face staff/patron interaction. Staff will assist through chat (now an installed feature on the library website), phone calls, and emails. When a staff member needs to assist a patron face-to-face, they must wear a mask or face shield (both are available to staff) and maintain proper physical distance.

**Note:** Ensure that the building is safe and that it feels safe for all who enter. Provide comfort and support to patrons, as necessary.

### **Phase 5 – Majority of Library Services are Restored**

**Context:** Physical distancing guidelines have been further relaxed to safely allow for smaller group gatherings and longer stays in the building. Infection rates and risks continue to decline. Supply needs are predictable and supplies are plentiful. **Anticipated date:** TBD

**Summary:** The majority of library services and programs are reintroduced. Library materials can only be returned in the book returns. Some virtual programs may continue. Curbside pick-up remains available to those who request it. All programs, services, and staff work described through Phase 4 continue. Physical distancing and cleaning/disinfecting measures remain in place. Daily staff temperature checks are discontinued. Masks are now optional but staff and patrons are strongly urged to continue wearing them using a “we wear because we care” approach. Literacy Center may resume 1:1 tutoring provided physical distancing rules can be met; otherwise, continue as in Phase 4. Volunteer and coffee services remain suspended. Some seating will be restored and study rooms may be re-opened with limited capacity. Larger group gatherings may be limited or restricted as the community room may continue to serve as a quarantine and storage space; however, programs for children, teens, and adults may be offered in other spaces within the library or outdoors. Attendees must understand and practice safe hygiene and physical distancing protocols. The service desk is fully staffed and more than one staff person is allowed to work at the service desk at any given time, provided they follow proper distancing guidelines; face-to-face patron/staff interactions are permissible although chat, telephone, and email contact remain the preferred methods of interaction. No appointment is needed for computer use provided all have been placed back into use in physically distanced places throughout the library; disposable keyboard and mouse covers continue to be supplied.

#### **Phase 6 – New Normal**

**Context:** Infection risk is considered low or non-existent or there is a vaccine. **Anticipated date:** TBD

**Summary:** All library programs and services are restored following all COVID-19 public health guidelines. Continue curbside pick-up for those who request it. Literacy Center reopens with all COVID-19 protocols in place. Volunteer services restored as long as they follow all new COVID-19 protocols; training/education required. Consider continuing some virtual programs. Further relax or remove restrictions on computer use, seating, tables. Allow materials returns at service desk and eliminate quarantine period. Reopen community room and begin accepting reservations from outside groups. Restore library coffee service.

## APPENDIX

### COVID-19 Library Building Reopening Procedural Details

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/viruses at work.

- **Clean your hands often.** Wash your hands with soap and water, vigorously rubbing together front and back for 20 seconds. Our use alcohol-bases hand sanitizers, rubbing hands until they are dry.
- **Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough.** Sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away or 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 to four minutes.
- **Clean shared surfaces and equipment often.** Use disinfectants to clean commonly touched items such as doorknobs, faucets, copy machines, coffee pot handles, desktops, handrails, microwave buttons, keyboards, automatic door opener buttons.
- **Stay home when you are sick.** When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, check with a healthcare provider as needed, and notify the library director as needed.

**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 text 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.
- Go home for lunch. If you bring your lunch, 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) Utilize flexible schedules and telework options as possible.
- Avoid recreational or other leisure classes, meetings, activities, etc., where staff members might come into close contact with others.

**Safety/Cleaning/Disinfecting Practices:** To minimize the spread of germs/viruses staff:patrons and patrons:patrons.

- Staff will have their temperature taken upon arrival for their scheduled shifts thru phase 4. Temperatures will be taken with a contactless forehead thermometer. Anyone with a temperature of 100F or higher must go home.
- Staff and patrons will wear masks as prescribed in each phase of reopening. Disposable masks will be available to patrons who do not have one. Staff will wear gloves as prescribed in each phase and gloves will be available for patrons who want them.
- All materials must be returned in the book drop and quarantined for 72 hours thru phase 5.
- Proper hygiene signs are posted in all library bathrooms.
- Physical distancing signs and markers are in place where necessary.
- Signs posted on library doors stating anyone with COVID-19 or flu-like symptoms cannot enter building.
- All toys and soft fixtures removed from children's area at least thru phase 5, if not permanently.
- Study and meeting rooms closed as prescribed in each phase of reopening.
- Computers and furniture removed from use and/or placed back in use as prescribed in each phase.
- Volunteer services are suspended thru phase 5.
- Coffee service suspended thru phase 5.
- Water fountains are turned off and a sign posted stating why.
- Coronaviruses are susceptible to germicidal UV irradiation. The library is currently exploring the option of installing a UVC light system on its HVAC.
- All bathroom faucets replaced with touchless ones. Hand soap dispensers replaced with automatic/touchless ones. Meeting room kitchen faucet replaced with touchless one.
- Hand sanitizer stands placed at all building entrances/exits. Sanitizer made available at other key touch points in the library.
- Public and staff areas will be cleaned routinely and often throughout the day with disinfectant.
- Bathrooms, staff and public, will be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected daily; however, this may not be adequate and with limited resources the library may have to consider not providing bathrooms to the public until phase 6.
- High risk staff need to make the best and most responsible decision for themselves on whether they will return to work or continue to telework. This decision must be shared with the library director, city manager, and human resources.

### **Symptoms of Coronavirus**

People with COVID-19 have had a wide range of symptoms reported – ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear **2-14 days after exposure to the virus**. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Fever
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

This list is not all possible symptoms. Other less common symptoms have been reported, including gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.