

## **Coloma Public Library Reopening Plan**

*This plan is subject to change as necessary and appropriate.*

**This document is originally based on  
Recommendations for Library Services During the Covid-19 Pandemic  
as prepared by Regents Public Library Advisory Council (RPLAC):**

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**Various contributions from sample draft re-opening plans from  
other libraries were used where appropriate.**

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## **Coloma Public Library ReOpening Plan**

*This ReOpening Plan policy was developed in compliance with Executive Order 2020-97. However, for the safety of the staff and public, the Library has the prerogative to continue to implement this plan, wholly or in part, in the event the order is rescinded while a pandemic is still occurring. This ReOpening Plan is not intended to supersede or change any Library employment policies.*

### **Introduction & Purpose**

This policy is intended to outline basic procedures for reopening and implementing library services after an extended closure due to a pandemic outbreak. Library services and workflow will be adapted as the pandemic evolves; and new information is received.

### **Library Service During Pandemics and Infectious Outbreaks**

The Centers for Disease Control recommends that organizations take a phased approach in dealing with infectious outbreaks.

Per CDC recommendations

- Patrons should not enter the Library with symptoms of an infectious disease.
- Patrons with an infectious illness such as the flu must not enter the Library until at least twenty-four (24) hours after they are free of fever (*100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C*) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications.
- The Library shall provide notice on the Library doors of the patron responsibility requirements currently in effect.

### **Considerations for Core Library Services**

Restrictions on those coming and going from the building will vary based on the social distancing recommendations currently in place by local government and public health agencies, especially those establishing recommended limits for gatherings.

**Internet Access:** Internet access is a critical resource for the community. Patrons require internet access to apply for unemployment insurance, access social services, apply for jobs, and access educational resources. Moreover, internet access can be provided to patrons with a limited amount of risk to patrons and staff.

**Digital Materials:** Electronic content continues to be a popular choice for people who want efficient access to materials. During times of pandemic and quarantine, demand will increase. It will remain a vital point of service for the public when the library must restrict physical access to materials.

**Cardholders:** Libraries recognize the importance of broad community access to resources. Flexibility in issuing cards and removing barriers to cardholder access to library resources when regular services are disrupted is crucial to continue engagement and connection.

**Programing & Outreach:** In-person library programs as a core service though group gatherings have been the main method by which infectious disease has been transmitted. With that in mind, the Library should be cautious about reinstating programming. Outreach visits encourage community awareness and assist in providing high priority services to the community, but they also pose transmission risk.

**Physical Materials:** Circulation is a core function of the Library. However, traditional checkout puts at risk both staff and patrons during a time of virus transmission. The goal is to determine how to restore this core service while protecting staff and patrons.

**Holds pickup:** The method for holds pickup may be altered based on the severity of social distancing recommendations.

**Technology Help:** The library is frequently a place where patrons learn how to use various forms of technology. The spread of contagious illness and social distancing impose unique difficulties in providing direct staff assistance. Because most technology help requires patrons and staff to be at close quarters, there may be limits on how much help may be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted.

**Shared Materials Within the Library:** Libraries frequently provide access to shared materials such as office supplies, equipment, toys, etc. Handling shared items may constitute potential risk for contagious transmission.

### **Phased Library Services and Staffing Plan**

The headings below describe the Library's service and staffing levels during phases of the pandemic.

The Library Director determines which phase is in effect based on requirements, mandates, as well as recommendations from local government and public health agencies. Phase criteria will be adapted as new information is learned.

### **Initial Determinations**

The following list are considerations to be taken into account before the Coloma Public Library resumes operations after closures due to ongoing public health emergencies. This list is not complete and may be amended as needed to protect the health and safety of the staff and public.

- Review requirements in place via Executive Order and or municipal or health department directive.
- Determine initial activities to be undertaken. This could include materials return acceptance.
- Obtain approval of plan/reopening procedures by Board.
- Determine social distancing requirements in effect by state and local agencies. Plan how these requirements will work in your library.
- Secure personal protective equipment as available and appropriate to the function and location of staff within the library location.

- Prepare work accommodation strategies for staff vulnerable to infectious disease.
- Implement a health screening process for workers that complies with government mandates and meets privacy laws. Screenings may take place at home or on site.
- Determine procedures for closing/notification if infectious disease outbreak is reported on site.
- Require employees who exhibit signs of the illness of the pandemic/epidemic to stay home from work or to seek medical attention.
- Determine Staff training on appropriate hygiene necessities, appropriate use of PPE, and safe handling of sanitizing chemicals.
- Clean and sanitize building, especially common surfaces, high-traffic areas, bathrooms and break/kitchen areas in accordance with CDC guidance.
- Determine if a sanitization/quarantine process for returned materials is needed.
- Determine Staff procedures on enforcement of new rules for masking and social distancing.
- Create and post appropriate warning and notification signage in staff/public areas.

### **Progressing from a phase to the next one**

*May be based on guidelines from the CDC as well as state government officials.*

To move forward from one phase to the next, the following criteria is recommended:

1. Stay at home orders have been cancelled due to decreased numbers of positive cases. Regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.
2. The Library has in place protective equipment and supplies as may be recommended by government and health agencies.
3. The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain appropriate and reasonable hygiene standards.
4. The library has enough staffing to run all of its core operations for each phase.

### **Library Services Phase 1-2: Library is Closed to the Public**

Physical Location(s): The library building will be closed to the public in compliance with government and health agency mandates. The Library may also close when determined necessary for health and safety of staff and the public by the Board of Trustees and Library Director.

### **Public Service Responses During Closure**

- Internet Access: As possible, boost wireless signals at library locations to provide free and open public wi-fi. Encourage patrons accessing wifi from outside the building to maintain proper social distancing.

- Digital Materials: Purchase, promote, and make available digital materials within budget constraints.
- Cardholders: Expand the number of cardholders, either via temporary digital cards, or other means. Temporary fines and fees embargoes will be put in place. Due dates for materials shall also be extended at least until library buildings are reopened.
- Programs & Outreach: Transition programming to a virtual environment. Outreach visits and in-person programs should not occur.
- Technology Help: Technology help, if available, should only be provided over the phone, through email, through webforms and chat.
- Materials in the Library: Library materials including holds will not be available for pickup. Checkouts are limited to electronic services. It is recommended essential staff practice safe handling of items as recommended by health officials when clearing book drops.

### **Staffing Practices**

- During extended closures due to pandemic, only essential staff will be allowed in a building to perform critical duties. Other staff may only be permitted when Stay-At-Home orders are not in effect.
- The Director and Assistant Director are designated “essential”.
- The following duties will be considered priority:
  - Information/Communication services for the public
  - Payroll
  - Accounts Payable
  - Facility Maintenance
 Other work tasks may include
  - Catalog and Process items for the collection. \*Some of this work may be done from home.
  - Acceptance of regular mail and deliveries.
  - Answer phones, and provide remote reference. \*Can be performed by staff working from home.
  - Handle vital fiscal, personnel, and statistical responsibilities.
- If more than one essential staff member is working in the building at a time, implement screening process before beginning work, if required by law.
- Wear masks in compliance with the law and library policies.
- When handling library materials, avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth. Gloves and face masks may be used. Handwashing after handling library materials is recommended.
- Returned library materials may be quarantined. Consult the OSHA Guidelines.

### **Recommendations to be completed before moving to Phase 3**

- Secure adequate stores of appropriate PPE and other hygiene supplies.
- Determine and install needed safety equipment.
- Designate spaces for:

- isolation for any person(s) exhibiting symptoms as may be required by government and health agencies
  - materials quarantine.
- Determine work hours for staff.
- Develop procedures for curbside service.
- Communicate protocols for quarantine and curbside service to patrons.
- Secure and schedule staffing for:
  - cleaning the library,
  - quarantining materials,
  - providing curbside service,
  - implementing outreach services (if possible; determine which locations are viable.)
- Explore and determine potential “By Appointment” services; prepare as appropriate.
- Determine hours for public service.
- Investigate options for providing computer assistance while maintaining social distance.
- Rearrange computer stations to allow adequate social distancing.
- Determine processes for disinfecting equipment as may be recommended by health officials.
- Map out public traffic throughout building and apply signage as needed.
- Determine whether public will be required to wear face coverings, and whether masks will be provided.
- Implement plan for seating/furniture to maintain social distancing.
- Determine safe building capacities. These may be mandated by government officials.

### **Library Service Phase 3-4: Curbside and Service By-Appointment**

Physical Location(s): Library service is available to the public with limitations during this phase.

#### **Staffing Practices**

As described in Phase 1 and 2 with non-essential staff returning to duty to help implement Curbside and By-Appointment Services.

#### **Public Services**

- Limited access to library building may still be in effect based on state and health official guidelines such as:
  - Limited numbers of group gatherings
  - Directed traffic flow and distance maintained between patrons during checkout, and/or physical barriers for high-use areas.
- Computer use by appointment only. Patrons will be offered disposable sanitary wipes to clean their computer station.
- Public Access to parts of the Library Collections may be restricted.
- Programs & Outreach activities would not occur in this stage.
- Shared Materials in the Library: Passive activity and play stations may continue to be unavailable.

## **Patron Behavior**

- Patrons will be expected to comply with **Code of Conduct** Policy, as well as any precautions deemed necessary by the Library for the safety and security of the public as well as staff.
- During **Phases 3-5**, patrons may be required to wear protective masks as well as maintain social distancing from staff and other patrons.
- The Library Administration may suspend library privileges to patrons not in compliance with this Plan or any other Library Policies.

**Right of Appeal** Patrons may appeal a decision to remove a patron or deny entry to the Library by sending a written appeal to the Library Board. The appeal must be sent to the President of the Library Board. The decision of the Library Board is final.

**Hours of Operation during phases with limited services.** The Coloma Public Library Board of Trustees establishes Library hours of service. When this plan is in effect, the Director may modify service hours to account for fewer staff on duty and limited service offerings.

## **Recommendations to be completed before moving to Phase 5**

- Secure staffing for:
  - Service desks,
  - Outreach functions,
  - Other activities as permitted by current safety guidelines.
- Determine programming.
- Develop procedures for in-building activities while maintaining minimal staff contact.
- Restore any computer stations and furniture that have been removed to accommodate social distancing.
- Staff and schedule for all regular operations.

## **Library Service Phase 5: Return to Full Services**

Physical Location(s): Library building is open to the public though some limitations may be kept in place during this phase. Masking, social distancing, and other precautions may still be required if determined necessary by the Board of Trustees.

## **Staffing Practices**

- Staff schedules, onsite presence, and library hours of operation will return to pre-pandemic levels.
- Staff may continue to use PPE based on personal preference as reasonable.
- Material Handling: Consult state and CDC guidelines to determine processes for material handling.

## **Public Services**

- Resume core services.
- Normal hold pickups and checkouts could occur, but curbside services may still be available as a regular service. Physical barriers for service desks may continue to be used.

Computer and Internet Access: If distancing recommendations are canceled, normal use of the Library's computers could commence.

- Programs & Outreach: In-person programming may require advanced registration and limited attendance based on current state and CDC guidelines. If all distancing recommendations are lifted, the Library could return with an active slate of programs. Outreach visits and programs could resume as normal, though with special consideration paid to those that serve vulnerable populations.
- Shared Materials in the Library: Public Access to Library Collections may be resumed.

### **SAFE HANDLING OF MATERIALS: QUARANTINE PROCESS**

As of the initial drafting of this document, quarantine of library materials was considered an effective known method to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

The Library will set up an area of the building as a materials isolation zone for those items that may have recently been exposed to viruses for the purpose of quarantine:

- Daily groups of returned items will be labeled with dates of when those items entered quarantine and when they may be re-shelved.
- Courier totes, bins, and carts may be quarantine.

\*As more information from credible scientific sources is received, any part of this plan may be adjusted accordingly.

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