

Phased Reopening Guidelines: For Monticello Public Library

Created: 04/22/2020

Revised: 05/19/2020

Approved: 05/26/2020

The COVID-19 virus has had an unprecedented impact on libraries and the communities they serve. This plan explores several possible reopening scenarios, each dependent on factors such as recommendations from local and national health agencies, social distancing protocols, and critical community needs. The primary consideration in this plan is maintaining the safety of library patrons and staff while finding ways to provide necessary services that the library is uniquely positioned to perform. The most likely scenario may be a scaled reopening with an incremental easing of physical distancing measures.

In all of the scenarios the Library will implement the following:

1. Improved disinfectant cleaning procedures for cleaning and disinfecting common areas.
2. Allowing staff to wear protective gear such as masks and gloves while administering public services.
3. Continuing to allow teleworking where it makes sense from an operational standpoint.
4. Encourage or require testing of staff for the virus and/or for immunity to the virus.
5. Messaging and plans in place to encourage the most vulnerable populations to limit their time in the community and/or allow for service hours that accommodate their needs more specifically.

What if the Stay at Home Order is lifted too early?

If the Stay at Home Order is lifted before public and staff safety can be assured, other factors will be used in determining what level of services the Library will offer. Among these are:

1. A sustained reduction in new COVID-19 cases within the community for at least 14 days.
2. The local healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
3. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID-19 contacts.
4. The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain high disinfectant cleaning standards.
5. The library has access to enough staffing to run all of its core operations.

Below are a number of reopening scenarios divided by service area. These are determined by local recommendations, what safety measures can be instituted, and the availability of disinfectant cleaning supplies and personal protective equipment. Each service area is divided into four scenarios marking different levels of restrictions which are reflective in the [Badger Bounce Back Order \(#31\)](#):

- **Under Stay at Home Order: Currently [#12](#) and [#28](#)**
- **Phase 1: Gatherings of no more than 10**
- **Phase 2: Gatherings of no more than 50**
- **Phase 3: No distancing limits**

Entrance and Exit into the Building

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

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Entrance to the building is restricted to staff performing critical operations and staff obtaining supplies needed to work. The public is not allowed inside the building to keep risk of contamination low.
- **Phase 1:** Staff will enter and exit the building to obtain materials, and potentially work with members of the public through the use of the entryway and closed stacks so long as appropriate distancing procedures and personal protective equipment as achievable.
- **Phase 2:** Staff resume some desk functions, but the number of people in the building would need to be limited through monitoring procedures during open hours. Separate hours for vulnerable populations will be considered.
- **Phase 3:** Entrance to the building would not be restricted, though it may still make sense to establish separate hours for vulnerable populations.

Holds Pickup

The method for holds pickup could be scaled based on the severity of social distancing recommendations.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** No holds pick ups may take place unless explicitly outlined in the order. If permitted, traveling to the library to obtain materials is optional as long as strong social distancing structures are in place in compliance with the order.
- **Phase 1:** Holds may be picked up from a staff member at the desk across the entryway. Limits are imposed on entrance and exit to the building as well as increased disinfectant cleaning procedures.
- **Phase 2:** Normal hold pickup could take place, but limits are imposed on entrance and exit to the building as well as increased disinfectant cleaning procedures.
- **Phase 3:** Normal hold pickups occur, but depending on recommendations,

specialized hours for vulnerable populations could be instituted.

Materials Handling

Materials handling is one of the most complex areas of operations during a pandemic due to the potential of virus transmission on shared objects such as books and DVDs. Current studies suggest the virus remains present on plastic surfaces for up to 72 hours and on cardboard and paper surfaces for up to 24 hours. With this in mind different material types may require different handling or all materials may require quarantine for some period of time. Current recommendations state that using cleaning products such as Lysol, bleach or other disinfectants may not completely remove the virus from surfaces.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Material returns may be handled with mask and gloves by staff and quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours before being wiped down and checked-in. The book drop may be used and must be monitored for proper use. Return services may be suspended if abused.
- **Phase 1:** If the Stay at Home Order is lifted, it will be possible to reopen book drop for all hours. However, materials returned will still need to be quarantined for 72 hours before being made available to the public or being handled by staff without protective measures.
- **Phase 2:** If social distancing is lessened to the point where medium sized gatherings are allowed, the library may be open for select services, including some circulation of materials. The library will develop protocols for processing materials to be put back into circulation. Chief among these is finding space to quarantine materials before they are shelved, go back into circulation, go onto the hold shelf, or are routed to other libraries.
- **Phase 3:** If distancing limits are lifted completely, materials handling may commence being done in the usual fashion, though with extra protective measures such encouraging staff to wear gloves during the process of sorting

items, shelving materials and checking items out to patrons.

Checkouts

Circulation of collections is a core function of the Library, but traditional checkout puts at risk both staff and patrons during a time of virus transition. The goal is to create a balance with restoring this core service and protecting staff and patrons.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Checkouts are limited to electronic services. Curbside may be offered following social distancing guidelines with access to disinfectant cleaning supplies.
- **Phase 1:** Checkouts will be managed by a single staff member retrieving the items in closed stacks and checking them out to the patrons across the entryway. Limits are imposed on entrance and exit to the building as well as increased disinfectant cleaning procedures.
- **Phase 2:** Limitations would need to be imposed on how many people were in the building at any given time and disinfectant cleaning supplies offered to all staff who work with the public.
- **Phase 3:** Normal checkout may occur, but depending on recommendations, specialized hours for vulnerable populations may be instituted. Staff may be encouraged or required to take protective measures such as wearing masks or gloves while assisting patrons.

Programs

The community views library programs as a core service, but as we have seen public gatherings have been one of the main methods by which COVID 19 has been transmitted. With that in mind, the Library needs to be highly cautious about when and how it reinstates programming.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Only virtual programs are allowed under a Stay at Home Order.

- **Phase 1:** Likewise, only virtual programs are allowed under this guideline.
- **Phase 2:** If gatherings of up to 50 are allowed, the Library may consider hosting programs geared toward economic development and other critical services only if strong social distancing measures can be employed and only in cases where attendees have pre-registered by phone or virtually. Programs such as storytimes would still be disallowed due to the difficulty of enforcing distancing protocols with children.
- **Phase 3:** If all distancing recommendations are lifted, the library could return with an active slate of programs with an increased emphasis on economic development focused programs.

Outreach Visits

Visits to facilities to provide programs or other services help encourage community use of the library and assist in providing high priority services to the community, but they also pose a transmission risk.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Only virtual programs and outreach would be allowed under a Stay at Home Order.
- **Phase 1:** Only virtual programs and outreach would be allowed.
- **Phase 2:** Some outreach visits may occur on a facility by facility basis. This would also depend on the venue where services are being offered. Considerations may include: Is there a way to monitor and control how many people enter the venue? Are there typically more than fifty people inside the venue at any given time? Does the venue predominately serve more vulnerable populations? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, it is best to forego offering services in these locations until restrictions are fully lifted.
- **Phase 3:** Outreach visits and programs may resume as normal, though with special consideration paid to those that serve vulnerable populations.

Home Delivery

Home delivery, in many cases, is the only way in which elderly or sick patrons receive library services. It often plays an important social role as well. In a pandemic, however, it is another vector of exposure for those who are most likely to become critically ill or die from a virus.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** No home delivery services will be offered because they are not classified as essential travel under a Stay at Home Order and pose a high risk for those using the service.
- **Phase 1:** Some home delivery may be possible on a case-by-case basis with staff employing extra protective measures such as wearing face masks, gloves and ensuring that all distributed materials have been quarantined for an adequate length of time. To some degree, these services may be limited on a case-by-case basis by individual residential facilities who may impose stricter limits due to primarily housing vulnerable populations. Staff and those receiving services would be required to follow strict social distancing procedures. Materials will be dropped at doorsteps as opposed to handed to patrons.
- **Phase 2:** Similar to the measures listed above, services could be provided on a case-by-case basis.
- **Phase 3:** Services could return to normal, but with increased disinfectant cleaning procedures implemented.

Internet Access

Internet access is a critical resource for the community especially during times of economic distress. 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 danger to

patrons and staff.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** The current economic situation creates a variety of critical needs where access to the internet is essential. Under these restrictions the Library can boost wireless signals.
- **Phase 1:** Under these restrictions the Library could provide access to computers at a very limited scale by appointment only. Because of the risks to staff and patrons alike, very strict social distancing procedures will need to be applied including demarcating limits for patrons and staff to ensure social distancing, restricting access to other areas of the Library, disinfecting computer stations between uses, and requiring patrons and staff wear proper protective wear.
- **Phase 2:** Under these restrictions it may be possible to allow use of the computer stations in the main part of the library, however, to maintain recommended social distancing computers will be placed at least 6 feet apart and disinfected between uses. Access to computers would need to be limited in conjunction with imposed capacity limits on how many people are present in the Library at any given time.
- **Phase 3:** If distancing recommendations are canceled normal use of the Library's computers could commence with improved disinfectant cleaning, including supplying access to disinfectant wipes for both patrons and staff.

Technology Help

The library is frequently a place where patrons learn how to use various forms of technology. The spread of coronavirus and social distancing impose unique difficulties in providing help with devices and on public computers. Because most technology help requires patrons and staff to be at close quarters, there will be limits on how help can be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Though access to the internet might be

provided, no technology help would be available, except over the phone or through email.

- **Phase 1:** Like under the Stay at Home Order, technology help would not be provided except in cases where social distancing can be maintained.
- **Phase 2:** With a recommendation of gatherings of no more than 50 in place, we would likely reopen partial computer services, with this would come the increased demand for computer help. One potential solution for this would be to offer staff remote control of computer stations at the desk, though this would have considerable privacy implications and require additional IT support and training.
- **Phase 3:** Normal technology help recommendations could commence with improved disinfectant cleaning procedures.

Materials Processing and Ordering

With physical materials not circulating, processing and ordering materials besides digital materials is of diminished importance. As services begin to scale up as restrictions are lifted, a progressive ramping up of ordering and processing will be necessary to prepare for demand once the pandemic cycle has ended or slowed.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Ordering may be focused on digital materials and high demand future releases for physical items. Processing of newly arrived orders may wait until some restrictions are lifted.
- **Phase 1:** Ordering may remain focused on digital materials. As the Stay at Home Order is lifted, it will be time to consider commencing to order more bestsellers and other high circulation new items in preparation for further lifting of gathering or social distancing recommendations. Processing can occur if it can be done safely while maintaining social distance in work spaces.
- **Phase 2:** Ordering and processing of physical materials will ramp up during

this period, though it still may be necessary to process materials in shifts so that social distancing can be maintained within work spaces.

- **Phase 3:** Ordering would continue as normal during this period as budgets allow.

Shared Materials in the Library

Libraries frequently provide access to shared materials in their spaces ranging from office supplies such as staplers and hole punches to equipment like headphones and VR headsets. The Library also provides a wide variety of in-house games and toys. The risks of these shared items vary widely, but any shared items worn around the head and face or toys which children may put in their mouths constitute a high risk as potential vectors for disease transmission.

- **Under Stay at Home Order:** Under this order no shared items would be provided, excepting the possibility of public printers through the curbside pickup service if patrons are willing to share documents virtually for printing purposes.
- **Phase 1:** As under the Stay at Home Order, no shared materials would be offered besides public printers.
- **Phase 2:** Some shared materials could be offered under this recommendation, including shared office supplies as long they are disinfected regularly. Shared headphones, VR headsets, toys and games may not be allowed in circulation.
- **Phase 3:** Shared office supplies would be allowed, however, as long as the virus continues actively circulating it may be wise to restrict the use of shared headphones, VR headsets and toys.

Possible Scenarios for Phased Reopening

When the Stay at Home Order is lifted a variety of possible scenarios may come to pass.

There is the possibility of the complete removal of restrictions, but more likely is a progressive phasing out of restrictions or a possible return to restrictions if the virus begins to spread more actively within the community. Below are some possible scenarios for reopening the library with various restrictions along with possible criteria for when each scenario might be enacted.

Scenario 1: Limited critical services

Criteria:

1. The governor's stay at home order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.
2. Strong social distancing recommendations remain in place.
3. Gatherings are limited to less than ten people.
4. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
5. The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some essential services.
6. The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.

Possible services:

- Access to wireless internet broadcast from library.
- Appointment based access to library computers to be used to secure critical needs.
- Curbside hold pickup service from outside the building.
- Access to book drops for library returns.
- Virtual programs.
- Assistance via email and phone.
- Resumption of some home delivery services with enhanced distancing and disinfectant cleaning procedures.

Preparation:

- Secure staffing for essential tasks and services.
- Develop a procedure for curbside pick up.

- Secure and schedule staffing for curbside pick up.
- Secure protective gear for staff working in the public.
- Secure adequate stores of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer.
- Secure staffing to unload, sort, and move materials to quarantine from drop box.
- Determine a location to quarantine materials.
- Determine which home delivery locations are viable.
- Secure staffing for home delivery.
- Determine whether a requirement to wear masks may be imposed on the public and/or staff.
- Restore mail and package services.

Scenario 2: Reopening with some social distancing requirements

Criteria

1. The Stay at Home Order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.
2. Strong social distancing recommendations remain in place.
3. Gatherings are limited to less than fifty people.
4. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts.
5. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
6. The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some critical services.
7. The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.

Possible services:

- Metered access to the building by the public to ensure that social distancing is maintained and that no more than the recommended number are gathered within library facilities.

- Core desk functions could resume with the use of personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and sneeze guard screen.
- The ordering and processing of new physical library materials.
- The shelving of returned library materials after a quarantine period.
- Access to library collections by the public.
- Public programs with pre-registration and defined social distancing protocols on specific topics such as economic development that are deemed critical community needs.
- Resumption of home delivery services where appropriate.
- Access to computers with improved social distancing measures, such as the removal of some stations.
- Possible computer help through virtual means such as screen sharing.

Preparation

- Determine library hours.
- Determine a method to meter access to the building.
- Secure staffing for the main service desk.
- Develop a procedure for in-building holds pickup that allows minimal staff contact.
- Develop a check out procedure that ensures social distancing.
- Schedule staff for ordering and processing duties.
- Design protocols for social distancing in programs.
- Identify key programming where essential community needs are delivered.
- Determine which outreach visit locations are viable.
- Determine which home delivery locations are viable.
- Secure staffing for outreach functions such as outreach visits and home delivery.
- Rearrange the computers to allow adequate social distancing.
- Investigate screen sharing software as a possibility for providing computer help while maintaining social distance.

- Determine whether a requirement to wear masks may be imposed on the public and/or staff.
- Restore mail and package services.

Scenario 3: Full-scale reopening

Criteria

1. The Stay at Home Order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials have canceled current social distancing and gathering recommendations.
2. A sustained reduction in new COVID 19 cases within the community for at least 14 days.
3. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
4. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts.
5. The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain high disinfectant cleaning standards.
6. The library has access to enough staffing to run all of its core operations.

Services:

- A resumption of all core services with an increased emphasis on disinfectant cleaning.

Preparation

- Restore any computers that have been removed to accommodate social distancing.
- Clear backlog of quarantined items and return to conventional turnaround on shelving items.
- Restaff and schedule for all operations.
- Determine how virtual programs fit into the spectrum of services going forward.

- Ramp up ordering and processing of materials and clear any backlog.
- Reset changes to due dates and patron block criteria changed at the beginning of the crisis.

Scenario 4: Reopening followed by scaling down services or a second closure due to virus circulation

Criteria

1. The governor and/or regional and state health officials release a second order mandating social distancing or a stay at home order
2. There is a sustained increase in community spread.
3. Local hospitals are no longer able to safely treat all patients requiring hospitalization.
4. Effective testing is not available within the community.
5. The library is unable to maintain the disinfectant cleaning or staffing necessary to operate.

Services:

- What service would be accessible would depend on the restrictions inherent to any recommendation. The Library could return to Scenario 1 or 2 or revert to a full-scale closure as appropriate.

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