



Michigan Public Libraries: Re-opening Considerations after closures during the Covid-19 Pandemic

Intent, Scope and Purpose of this document:

Intent – to identify areas of concern that member libraries may need to address when determining temporary procedures upon reopening to the public.

Scope – to consider what type and level of measures would be needed to protect the staff and the public.

Purpose – to generate a list of possible issues that a reasonable person would generally find to be of concern in the current COVID-19 work environment. The list shall be representative in nature only and is not meant to be exhaustive; the administrators of member libraries are encouraged to consult with the director of their county health department and legal counsel for further information on requirements.

Deepest gratitude to Dale Parus, director, Ionia Community Library, and to the Library of Michigan, the Michigan Library Association, and Midwest Collaborative for Library Services for their multiple webinars and shared resources that were instrumental in creating this document.

Please contact your Cooperative Director for further questions and information. We are here to help!

Michigan Library Cooperative Directors Association
April 17, 2020

LIST OF POSSIBLE CONCERNS:

Library Hours:

- Part time?
- Full time?
- Extended time?
- Special Hours for At-Risk patrons, children? (Check with your attorney – legal implications.)
- Stacks access only hours?
- Program hours?
- Stagger hours for cleaning mid-day?
- Anticipate that hours may change as we go forward.

Re-open in phases:

- Check with your local health department - get them to have a training session as needed on PPE and its effective use (NOTE: We may be offering a webinar on this.)
- Coordinate with other libraries in your county to provide similar or same services to ease patron confusion.
- Do a virtual or physical walk-through of your floor plan and address each area.
- Create multiple checklists and action plans as you prepare to open.
- Plan soft and hard re-openings.
- Follow Local and State orders; rules and procedures are reviewed and followed.
- Disinfecting, cleaning etc. is complete.
- Social distancing precautions are established.
- Staff arrives first for set time.
- Returns and Curbside Service are rolled out. (Consider traffic patterns/parking lot)
- Social Distancing precautions are reviewed.
- Lobby and Circulation Desk open.
- Full or limited access?
- Programming resumes (offer virtual access to all programs?).
- Board approved policies in place.

Social Distancing:

- How will the 6 ft. rule of thumb come into play in the library?
- Does the library put “taped x’s” in certain areas?
- What procedure is to be used when asking violators to disengage or leave? [possible examples: snuggly teens, family members, etc.] (Consider amending patron behavior policy to be applied consistently.)
- Limit number of patrons in the stacks?
- Limit entry points?
- Limit restrooms?
- Computer workstation use – spacing and cleaning considerations
- Children’s toys and play area concerns – delay reintroducing?
- Space out furniture/Limit seating.
- Meeting rooms available for small groups of less than 10 with social distancing?

- Small study rooms remain closed or limited to only one user.
- Utilize timers to control how long patrons can be in the library for crowd control.
- Utilize Zoom or remote access application within the library for patron/staff tutorials.

Facilities:

Building Capacity

- Should the capacity of the library be limited during this time? If so, by how much? For how long?
- Just the public capacity or also the staff capacity? In certain areas or in total?
- How is this determination derived? By whom?
- Should only one family member be given entry? Encouraged, or mandatory (check with your attorney)?
- How is the temporary building capacity to be enforced? Who takes care of violations and determines the severity of an infraction? (again, attorney.)

Building Logistics

- Traffic Control
 - Should traffic in the building be restricted to one entrance and/or one exit door?
 - Should traffic in the building be directed in a “one-way” fashion?
 - One-way stacks with patron limits per stack.
 - Aisleways be designated “one way.”
- Should some sections of the building remain closed until further notice?
- Should seating capacity be greatly reduced? (computer areas, study rooms and tables, etc.)
- Do you need a “holding room” for staff and patrons who appear ill?
- Provide a floor plan of the library (online and in-house) showing which areas are opened or closed.
- How will restrooms be cleaned and sanitized?
- Will you need increased maintenance services?

Staff:

- Physical and mental health considerations of staff:
 - Should temperatures of staff be taken prior to beginning a shift?
 - Grief, economy, fear, mental health
 - Anxiety about working with the public
 - Will reassignments or other accommodations need to be made?
 - Safety with or without PPE
- Is shift work a better option to limit contact, number of people in building at one time?
- Do you need a counter at the door to provide access, PPE, directions etc.?
- Should only one person staff a task area, esp. if two or three staff was typical in the past?
- Continue to allow staff to work at home?
- Continue virtual story times and programming?

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and other supplies:

- Should Plexiglass protectors be installed at task desks? Local sign shops are a great option

for these. Average price is between \$100-200 per shield.

- Should front-line staff wear masks? Optional or mandatory?
- Should front line staff wear gloves? Optional or mandatory?
- Should all staff wear some sort of PPE in the library, even if they never come in contact with the public? Optional or mandatory?
- If mandatory, then it would be expected that the library shall pay for the equipment. If optional, who supplies and pays?
- If mandatory, what level of PPE masks will be provided? Regular disposable, intermediate washable, or N95, etc.?
- How to dispose of PPE?
- Create a list of supplies and order additional essential supplies, anticipating possible interruptions of services from vendors. Look for group purchase opportunities through MEDC or your cooperative.

Materials:

- This IMLS webinar with the CDC is very helpful for general information:
<https://youtu.be/iiuczcz4BR0>
- This ALA article has information on sanitization of materials, etc.
<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/how-to-sanitize-collections-covid-19/>

Returning of Items

- Should “drop boxes” continue to be used?
- Should all items be left in the “drop box” or a specified inside bin?
- Should items be quarantined for 24 hours prior to staff handling? Where to store such items?
- Do we disinfect items?
- How do we disinfect items?

Checkout of Items

- Is it safe for staff to handle and check out an item that a patron just got off the shelf and passed to them?
- Is there a way to have no-contact check out?
- Is there funding to develop/run a “books by mail” program or other options?
- Do you utilize outdoor lockers for checkouts, holds etc.?

Self-Checkout Stations

- Should the use of self-checkout stations by the public be encouraged or discontinued?
- If in use, then how often should the stations be disinfected? By whom?

Loaning Items in the Building

- Should the library no longer loan out headphones (or similar items)? When, if ever, shall the library loan them out again?
- If loan continues, then how often are the headphones or the like disinfected? By whom?
- What about loaning pens, pencils, other items such as “Library of things?”
- Provide pens and pencils (local business can provide) that patrons can just take rather than having to disinfect.

Delivery of materials (RIDES, Local for some Coops)

- What do libraries do before RIDES resumes or if it doesn't resume?

- Should the materials that were just delivered to the library sit for 24 hours before processing?
- If items must be quarantined, then where and how should materials be stored? Quarantined in one direction of the delivery chain, or both ways?
- If it is determined that drivers are to wear PPE, then should the PPE be worn at all times or just when entering the library?

Patrons:

Physical and Mental Health of Patrons

- Can we require masks? (Check with your attorney – legal implications.)
- Can you ask a visibly ill patron to leave or use a holding room? (need policy)
- Are DHHS employees available to talk with patrons on an appointment basis?
- MI Works employee available to help with unemployment/employment issues?
- Provide a list of agencies and contact information for organizations like Michigan Works, DHHS, local food pantry, suicide prevention, shelters etc.
- Provide a list of online schooling resources for students (MeL, MVHS, etc.)

PPE

- If mandatory, what level of PPE masks will be provided? Regular disposable, intermediate washable, or N95, etc.?

Food and Beverages

- Should “outside” food and beverage consumption by the public in the library be discontinued? Limited to items purchased in the library only? Completely discontinued?
- What about staff consumption in public/semi-public areas?

Services:

- Have a greeter at the entrance for traffic and crowd control, to distribute maps, masks etc.
- Provide Telephone Reference for unemployment, government loans, health insurance, etc.
- Offer Reference by Appointment via chat, face to face with PPE, phone, email, etc.
- Consider drive-in programs where patrons stay in cars.
- Focus on digital services.
- Use outdoor areas.
- Send print and digital newsletters.
- Extend Wi-Fi service area and purchase hot-spots (for use at/around the library or check out – need policy/procedure)
- Will you accept cash for transactions?
- Can people use a PC, tablet, keyboards, scanner/copier and other equipment? How do you clean between uses?

Management:

- Flexibility and creativity are key. Things will change, morph and remain fluid for quite some time.
- Adjust budgets as needed including planning for decreases in revenue streams like penal fines, monetary donations, interest income, etc. for future planning over multiple years.
- Consider staffing needs.

- Consider voluntary retirements.
- Don't sweat the small stuff.
- Embrace the "new normal."
- Focus on safety, sanitization and simplicity.
- Test assumptions.

General/Miscellaneous:

- Signage – what type of signage is needed? Public only, or signage for staff, too?
- Should the hours of operation be limited? For how long? Determined by whom?
- What procedures to implement if a staff member tests positive for COVID-19? Do we shut down the library for a day or two?
- When do you start to accept material donations?
- When can Friends Groups resume activity in the building, open up their bookstores?
- Can the library work with other partners (schools, township, etc.) to coordinate services if possible?
- Use a local newspaper and signage outside the library and in your community to educate the public of your new hours, limited service, etc. for those without internet access.

Policies

- Will the library have new/different circulation periods or policies?
- Patron behavior policy - need any changes in light of a soft re-opening/COVID-19?
- Is the existing Internet policy okay?
- Meeting room - delay reopen or schedule for small groups?

For COVID-19 information, here is a page for Ploud libraries compiled by Sonya Norris:

<https://www.michlibrary.org/covid-19-resources>

Colorado Library Consortium's "Returning to Service":

<https://www.clicweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Libraries-Returning-to-Service-and-COVID-19.pdf>