

Re-opening Strategic Plan

The COVID-19 virus has had an unprecedented impact on libraries and the communities they serve. This plan outlines a phased reopening with an incremental easing of physical distancing measures. Library decisions about stages of reopening will be dependent on factors such as recommendations from local, state, and national health agencies, social distancing protocols, and critical community needs.

Operating Priorities:

1. Protecting the safety of public and employees.
2. Preventing potential contamination and transmission.
3. Providing services that the library is uniquely positioned to perform.
4. Communicating known risks in using library services and building and recommended protective measures.

Under this plan, the Library will implement:

1. Best practices for hygiene and health and frequency of cleaning and disinfecting.
2. Continuing to allow teleworking where it makes sense from an operational standpoint.
3. Having plans in place to encourage the most vulnerable populations to limit their time in the library and/or allow for service hours that accommodate their needs more specifically.
4. Designing/redesigning services to offer the most protection to the public and the library staff.
5. An Employee Health/Illness Policy.
6. Prohibition on book (and other things usually accepted) donations.
7. Staff required and/or encouraged to wear PPE for their own or public protection.
8. Maintain MSDS for all cleaning/sanitization agents; train staff on safe use.
9. Education for all staff on safe and healthy use of PPE.

Communications:

1. Frequent communication with employees, public, Library Board of Trustees, Town Administrator, Health Officer, about steps being taken to prevent spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.
2. Communicate expectations to employees with recommendations on steps everybody can take to prevent spread of COVID-19.
3. Post extensive signage on health policies and best practices including the need for social distancing, frequent hand hygiene/washing, and cloth face covering use when in public places.
4. Signage must be prominently posted throughout public spaces to ask customers if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms as identified by the CDC.

Procuring effective cleaning agents, recommended PPE, and hygiene materials¹:

Having a reliable supply of these materials is necessary for safe operations. Before reopening, the library will:

- Estimate quantity of PPE, cleaning agents, and hygiene materials needed in order to maintain or move to additional access or services.
- Check with facilities maintenance to see what and how much they will be providing.

- Order early from vendors to see if supplies can be delivered within a reasonable time frame.
- Investigate availability of PPE and other supplies from State agencies and departments.
- Investigate staff or volunteers' ability and willingness to provide cloth face masks.

Below are potential phases for reopening. How the library progresses from one to another will be determined by the Library Board of Trustees using guidelines listed below. Each phase represents a different level of restrictions and includes guidelines for different service areas.

Moving between phases: dimmer switch approach

If these things are true, likely to move forward; if not true, likely to revert.

1. No increase of known cases in community.
2. Healthcare system remains able to withstand a moderate outbreak.
3. Accessibility of testing.
4. Necessary materials and staffing to maintain high hygiene standards.
5. Enough staffing to run all core operations in the next phase.

STAY-AT-HOME ORDER:

Building and Interior Spaces Accessibility & Hours: Building closed to staff and public; no use of double doors separating library from town offices.

Staff: Library director may enter building as needed; staff works remotely based on Library and Town determinations.

Furniture, Shelving, Surfaces: Deep cleaning/sanitizing at beginning of closure, and of used areas as needed.

Materials Handling: Book drop closed; materials handling by staff should be extremely limited.

Circulation: Only digital/electronic circulation; remote library card registration.

Materials Ordering and Processing: Only for digital/electronic collections and resources; prepare "carts" of physical materials to be ordered.

Programs: Only virtual programs will be created or shared.

Internet Access: Public wi-fi available outside of the library building.

Technology Help: Via phone, email, or virtual conference.

Outreach: Through electronic, virtual means and phone calls.

Shared Materials in the Library: Building closed.

STRICT SOCIAL DISTANCING (some businesses/services re-open):

Building and Interior Spaces Accessibility & Hours: Building closed to public; restrooms limited to one person at a time; no use of double doors separating library from town offices.

Staff: Limited staff presence (no more than 3 staff members at one time), remote work should be continued at the determination of library director; staggered scheduling including breaks; no sharing of work spaces which must be at least six feet apart; training on cloth face coverings, other PPE, and cleaning/sanitization agents when staff member first returns to building; full screening procedures whenever staff enters building.

Furniture, Shelving, Surfaces: Limited, PPE-protected access to collections; all surfaces in used areas cleaned thoroughly between staff visits; regular sanitation of high to moderate touch surfaces at least every two hours; restrooms closed to public, cleaned daily.

Materials: Handling/Circulation: Curbside pickup and return allowed under strict scheduling and procedures; quarantines in effect.

Materials Ordering and Processing: Place orders for new and popular materials; accept public requests for purchases; staff using PPE can do minimal processing/cataloging in the library and/or remotely at the discretion of the library director; institute touchless receiving of deliveries if possible.

Programs: Only virtual programs will be created or shared.

Internet Access: Public wi-fi available outside of the library building.

Technology Help: Via phone, email, or virtual conference as staff work hours permit.

Outreach: Through electronic, virtual means and phone calls.

Shared Materials in the Library: Staff will not share supplies, equipment and will wear PPE.

PHASE III, MODIFIED SOCIAL DISTANCING, GATHERINGS OF NO MORE THAN 10

Building and Interior Spaces Accessibility & Hours: Small area of library open to not more than 10 members of public at one time (based on social distancing possible in the open square footage); restricted open days and/or hours; separate hours limited to more vulnerable populations; no use of double doors separating library from town offices [if we needed for separate exit, would town be ok? could we manage our space?]; if possible, entry and exit will happen at separate doors.

Staff: No more than five staff members at one time (to be based on social distancing possible in open square footage); as necessary, one staff person assigned to manage number of members of the public in the building at one time; work spaces in use must be at least six feet apart; one staff person per work space per day; thorough sanitization of work space before next use; screening questions and possibly temperature checks when entering the building; employees must wear, at a minimum, a cloth face covering; library will provide non-latex gloves and cloth face coverings (other PPE may be provided based on recommendations from medical officials and providers).

Furniture, Shelving, Surfaces: Deep cleaning/sanitizing in used areas when library is closed [will need to run through Nate]; no public access to shelving bays, any areas determined to be restricted; no tables, desks, etc. available to public except for one or two chairs (that can be sanitized or with covers) necessary for physical limitations and furniture for self-checkout kiosk; physical separation measures (like plastic shields or barriers) installed at public desk; disinfect all areas of hand contact and supplies every two hours at a minimum; restrooms closed to public, cleaned daily.

Materials Handling/Circulation: Curbside delivery will continue to be available; materials may also be checked out at self-check kiosks or at the protected circulation desk; materials may be returned either outside or inside (specified container), circulation desk surfaces, equipment, supplies must be wiped down with a sanitizing agent between customers; some material quarantines remain in effect (based on reliable data regarding virus viability on surfaces); reusable bags prohibited; touchless financial transactions if possible.

Materials Ordering and Processing: Increase ordering of physical materials to meet demand; staff using PPE can do minimal processing/cataloging in the library and/or remotely at the discretion of the library director; institute touchless receiving of deliveries if possible.

Programs: Only virtual programs will be created or shared.

Internet Access: Public wi-fi available inside and outside of the library building; access to two public access computers or laptops and printer by appointment.

Technology Help: Via phone, email, virtual conference, or by appointment as staff work hours permit.

Outreach: Through electronic, virtual means and phone calls; potential of remote, controlled, safe interactions between library staff and patrons (not between patrons and patrons).

Shared Materials in the Library: No shared materials without sanitation in between; only shared materials: public access computer stations/laptops, public printer, self-checkout kiosk, technology hardware, phones, supplies, equipment; use PPE and sanitizing agents as needed.

PHASE IV, MODERATE SOCIAL DISTANCING, GATHERINGS OF NO MORE THAN 25:

Building Accessibility & Hours: Some collection areas of library open (evaluate children's and teen rooms); restricted access to meeting room as determined by library director; increased number of staff in building; return to regular daily hours and 1 or 2 evenings with specific cleaning tasks done several times each day; continue separate hours for vulnerable populations; no use of double doors separating library from town offices.

Staff: Not more than five staff members at one time (to be based on social distancing possible in open square footage); one staff person assigned to manage number of members of the public in the building at one time; all work spaces used must be at least six feet apart; one staff person per work space per day; thorough sanitization of work space before next use; screening questions and possibly temperature checks when entering the building; customer service employees must wear, at a minimum, a cloth face covering; library will provide non-latex gloves and cloth face coverings (other PPE may be provided based on recommendations from medical officials and providers).

(to be based on social distancing possible in open square footage)

Furniture, Shelving, Surfaces: Limited, easily cleaned furniture available; public access to shelving bays; study carrels available with sanitizing agents available; restrooms cleaned top to bottom daily; other specified cleaning tasks (based on medical guidelines) done several times each day.

Materials Handling/Circulation: Items may be returned or picked up in outside intermediary receptacle, or returned in an inside intermediary receptacle, or checked out at self-checkout station(s) or the protected circulation desk; if recommendations for quarantines have changed, will follow new guidelines; more "normalized" circulation desk interactions while continuing best practices for hand-washing, etc.

Materials Ordering and Processing: Use statistics and budget planning to create plan for new normal spending (on physical as well as digital); processing/cataloging to be done in the building at the discretion of the library director; follow any changed recommendations for safe workspaces and shared equipment, and processes.

Programs: Virtual programs will continue to be created and shared in response to demand and available resources; consider hosting limited-attendance programs (based on up-to-date guidelines for social distancing) that require registration and/or can be offered virtually to a wider audience; Children's in-person programs will only be offered if they can be designed to overcome the difficulties in maintaining social distancing among young children.

Internet Access: Public wi-fi available inside and outside of the library building; access to physically-distanced public access computers or laptops and printer.

Technology Help: Via phone, email, virtual conference, or by appointment; allow drop-in tech help or small group education at the discretion of the library director.

Outreach: Through electronic, virtual means and phone calls; potential of remote, controlled, safe interactions; potential of partnerships with schools.

Shared Materials in the Library: Evaluate other materials that might be shared safely such as newspapers or supplies that can be disinfected regularly; staff sharing of workstations at discretion of the library directors, maintaining best practices.

PHASE V, RELAXED SOCIAL DISTANCING, GATHERINGS OF NO MORE THAN 50:

Building Accessibility & Hours: Most collection areas of library open; use of meeting room determined by library director, based on relaxed social distancing guidelines; any number of staff allowed in building; return to regular daily hours with specified cleaning tasks done several times each day; continue separate hours for vulnerable populations.

Staff:

Furniture, Shelving, Surfaces: Easily cleaned furniture available to support relaxed social distances; public access to shelving bays; study carrels available with sanitizing agents available; restrooms cleaned top to bottom daily; other specified cleaning tasks (based on medical guidelines) done several times each day.

Materials Handling/Circulation: Items may be returned or picked up in outside intermediary receptacle, or returned in an inside intermediary receptacle, or checked out at self-checkout station(s) or the protected circulation desk; if recommendations for quarantines have changed, will follow new guidelines; more “normalized” circulation desk interactions while continuing best practices for hand-washing, etc.

Materials Ordering and Processing: Use statistics and budget planning to create plan for new normal spending (on physical as well as digital); regular processing/cataloging schedule; follow any changed recommendations for safe workspaces and processes.

Programs: Virtual programs will continue to be created and shared in response to demand and available resources; consider hosting limited-attendance programs that require registration and/or can be offered virtually to a larger number of people; in-library programs can only take place if current guidelines for social distancing can be ensured; Programs such as storytimes could only be offered if they can be designed to overcome the difficulties in maintaining strong social distancing among young children.

Internet Access: Public wi-fi available inside and outside of the library building; access to physically-distanced public access computers or laptops and printer.

Technology Help: Via phone, email, virtual conference, or by appointment as staff work hours permit; assess potential to allow drop-in tech help or small group education.

Outreach: Through electronic, virtual means and phone calls; potential of remote, controlled, safe interactions; potential of partnerships with schools.

Shared Materials in the Library: Evaluate other materials that might be shared safely such as newspapers or supplies that can be disinfected regularly; more staff sharing of workstations as needed, maintaining best practices.

PHASE VI, NO DISTANCING LIMITS:

Building Accessibility & Hours: No restrictions on entering building or any library public spaces; return to regular schedule (days and hours) with “new normal” cleaning and hygiene practices and schedules; ask if community wants to continue separate hours for vulnerable populations.

Furniture, Shelving, Surfaces: Furniture for “new normal” use of library will be available (changes to types, materials, rotation could be necessary).

Materials Handling/Circulation: Materials handling and circulation can return to previous procedures though with extra protective measures as recommended or preferred by individual staff members and easy access to sanitizing products.

Materials Ordering and Processing: Ordering and processing will return to normal levels during this period as budgets allow.

Programs: Continue phasing in programs based on sizes of audiences, social distancing recommendations, demand from community; aim to provide dual access to programs (in-person and virtually); establish acceptable ways to offer children’s programming in the library.

Internet Access: Regular public use of library technology could resume with access to disinfectant wipes and other supplies.

Technology Help: Regular means of getting tech help, including drop-in, could resume with efforts to encourage people to also use other library channels.

Outreach: Outreach visits and programs could resume as normal, though with special consideration paid to those that serve vulnerable populations.

Shared Materials in the Library: Shared office supplies would be allowed, with a separation between supplies used by patrons and those used by staff; for as long as the virus continues actively circulating; some previously shared materials will remain restricted.

¹ Anticipated supplies needed will include (but not be restricted to):

- Anti-viral cleaning agents
- Masks (staff)
- Disposable masks (public)
- Gloves: non-latex
- Touchless disposal containers
- Refills for wall-mounted hand sanitizer dispensers
- Anti-viral wipes dispensers and wipes
- Hand-washing supplies
- Plexiglass or other clear barriers separating staff and public at customer service points
- Item collection or distribution drops (outside and inside)
- Packaging for item distribution and/or collection for curbside service
- Cleaning supplies appropriate & safe for different types of materials
- “Caution tape,” retractable belt barriers
- Signage
- Self-check kiosk hardware, wiring, peripherals, software, furniture
- Floor decals for information, spacing

QUESTIONS: LOCAL AND OTHER ORGS

1. Restroom cleaning frequency – how to wipe down surfaces and/or sanitize more than once/day? NATE
2. JOYCE - does she & staff feel very anxious about doing car reg etc in this way? Or does it feel like procedures in place are pretty safe? They feel completely safe with the procedures in place.
3. Will it be possible to require public to wear/use PPE in some phases? Or is it optional for public? (enforcement?) SHANTI, CHIEF, DAVID
4. How much time between phase transitions? Is this being talked about at all in the business guidelines in resources, Primex? Assessment at each stage – is it working, has transmission increased in our community, other? SHANTI
5. Limits on # people – do we include staff or not? SHANTI
6. Will there be a need and/or a plan to keep track of individuals who do enter the library in order to support contact tracing as needed? Privacy/Public Health/Logistics SHANTI
7. Stay-at-Home order through 5/31: state officials still say people in New Hampshire should stay home whenever possible in order to protect vulnerable populations. When you do go out, be sure to maintain at least 6 feet of social distance, use proper hand hygiene, and wear a mask if possible. Should part of our reasoning for not providing service be that we would be encouraging people to not follow stay-at-home? This comes up with weather closings too... [I don't think so, but I don't know if this is part of the reasoning for not opening everything] SHANTI
- 8.

COMMUNICATION DETAILS

Easter Seals early often

Be able to communicate any tentative dates as early as possible to staff

SIGNS

“If you answered yes to any of these questions, please do not put our employees and other patrons at risk – come back another day when you feel better.”

Town or Library communications to Employees

From Lara:

The physical health of our staff is the most important asset we have and we should prioritize it accordingly. That doesn't mean we don't take steps to reopen once the order is lifted, but it means all steps should be considered wisely and with "safety first" as a guiding rule. Even if staff do not get sick as a result of a premature reopen, they'll take note of how we handled this and jump ship to other libraries or other professions if we put them in the position of choosing their (in too many cases) small salaries over their (and their families') lives.

LK: Staff are left with their impression of (and the impact of) the library's/town's actions and decisions. Were we transparent? compassionate? fair? Did we have their best interests at heart?

** 5/5/2020: based on Dept Head mtg, it seems like (at least so far) Town is taking this into consideration. However, at same time, continuing calculated risks with Town Clerk – necessary contact.

AND the unemployment thing is definitely a problem (transparent, compassionate, fair)