COVID-19 LIBRARY BUILDING RE-OPENING PLAN

Approved by Board of Trustees on Tuesday, April 28, 2020
Updated: Friday, May 8, 2020

INTRODUCTION
COVID-19 has forced our library buildings to close temporarily, but it has not closed our library. Virtual and digital services continue, developed and provided through the talents and creativity of the library’s extraordinary staff. 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, such as when governmental orders to shelter in place and to permit only “essential” services to continue will be lifted. 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 stages and in large part will determine when we re-open our facilities.

This document, COVID-19 Library Building Re-opening Plan, responds to that reality by outlining proposed stages to re-open our facilities and to reintroduce people to our physical spaces, our materials, and building-bound services with new health and safety protocols in place. Considerations for each stage 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 stages if new infections occur and government mandates to shelter are reinstated. This document, therefore, will continue to be developed as we learn more and is subject to change.

In approving this COVID-19 Library Building Re-opening Plan, the Board of Library Trustees authorizes the Library’s Executive Director and the ED’s Leadership Team to execute it, to adjust it as needed according to the most authoritative and reliable information available to them, and to inform the Board of Trustees promptly regarding the time and manner of its execution.

REOPENING SERVICE LEVELS

Preparations for re-opening
Library buildings are closed to the public. Staff come in to prepare to reopen the buildings. Anticipated date is dependent on local and state assessment of risk. Length of time for preparations is a minimum of one week.

Context: Stay-at-home order is lifted by state and local authorities for the Oak Park region. Physical distancing is required. Infection risks are still high. Supplies are limited and restocking ability is uncertain.

Service Level 1
Main Library reopens to provide limited access to physical materials (books, movies and music), but with reduced hours and no access to stacks. Other services are limited or restricted. Materials returns will be gradually accepted and quarantined before check-in. Dole and Maze Branches remain closed. Anticipated Date is dependent on local and state assessment of risk.
Context: Physical distancing is required. Infection risks are still high. We have enough supplies to comply with safety recommendations for public and staff, but supply needs and availability are uncertain.

Summary: Our intention is to provide access to materials (with possible self-service holds or materials pickup in the lobby offered during specific hours and no-contact home delivery), but not to encourage extended stays or gatherings. Numbers of people in the building and time spent in the building may be limited. Seating is removed from the public floors. No reservations for study rooms or meeting rooms are accepted and spaces are locked. Computer access may be offered by appointment or will be limited to express stations. Open hours are reduced from our regular schedule to allow for materials to be shelved and holds pulled before the library opens to the public. Specific hours for vulnerable patrons may be established. Home delivery resumes for registered patrons. While open, there is limited face-to-face staff/public interaction. Staff assist through chat, phone calls, emails and by appointment. Many staff continue to work from home as much as possible.

Service Level 2
Additional library services are added at the Main Library and we return to regular hours. Dole and Maze Branches remain closed. Home delivery services may expand to include new patrons prioritizing seniors, families of young children, and patrons without internet access. **Anticipated Date is dependent on local and state assessment of risk.**

Context: Physical distancing is still recommended, but infection risks are declining. Supply needs are predictable and supplies are plentiful.

Summary: Some seating is re-introduced but configured to allow for physical distance. Study rooms may be used with one or two people. Computers are accessible at socially distant intervals. Desk staff are available on the service desks but only one staff member per desk. RAILS delivery may be reintroduced.

Service Level 3
The majority of library services are reintroduced and all locations re-open. There may be limitations on larger group gatherings for meetings and programs. Programs for children in grade school and older may be offered as well as adult and teen programming, but children must be able to understand and practice safe hygiene and physical distancing. Community engagement and outreach to young children in-person is still suspended. **Anticipated Date is dependent on local and state assessment of risk.**

Context: Physical distancing guidelines have been relaxed to allow for smaller group gatherings. Large group gatherings are still considered a risk.

Summary: Service desks are fully staffed. Device checkouts are permitted and all computers are in operation. All seating areas are back on the floor.

Service Level 4
Full Service return to "our new normal". **Anticipated Date is dependent on local and state assessment of risk.**

Context: Infection threat is considered low or non-existent or there is a vaccine.

Summary: Larger group gatherings of all ages for meetings or library programs are allowed in meeting spaces at all locations. The Community Engagement team makes Book Bike visits and attends other outreach events. Visits to preschools resume.