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.

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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/iuuczmz4BR0
→ 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
o Should "drop boxes" continue to be used?
o Should all items be left in the "drop box" or a specified inside bin?
o Should items be quarantine for 24 hours prior to staff handling? Where to store such items?
o Do we disinfect items?
o How do we disinfect items?

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

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

Loaning Items in the Building
o Should the library no longer loan out headphones (or similar items)? When, if ever, shall the library loan them out again?
o If loan continues, then how often are the headphones or the like disinfected? By whom?
o What about loaning pens, pencils, other items such as "Library of things?"
o 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)
o What do libraries do before RIDES resumes or if it doesn't resume?

- o Should the materials that were just delivered to the library sit for 24 hours before processing?
- o If items must be quarantined, then where and how should materials be stored? Quarantined in one direction of the delivery chain, or both ways?
- o 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
- o Can we require masks? (Check with your attorney – legal implications.)
- o Can you ask a visibly ill patron to leave or use a holding room? (need policy)
- o Are DHHS employees available to talk with patrons on an appointment basis?
- o MI Works employee available to help with unemployment/employment issues?
- o Provide a list of agencies and contact information for organizations like Michigan Works, DHHS, local food pantry, suicide prevention, shelters etc.
- o Provide a list of online schooling resources for students (MeL, MVHS, etc.)

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

Food and Beverages
- o Should "outside" food and beverage consumption by the public in the library be discontinued? Limited to items purchased in the library only? Completely discontinued?
- o 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

A Phased Reopening Plan for Libraries as COVID 19 Restrictions Are Lifted, John Thill