

Somerset County Library

Pandemic Recovery Plan

Introduction

The following plan has been prepared for reopening while COVID-19 is still present in the community to some degree.

When the library reopens, it will modify operations in order to provide maximum safety for patrons and staff. Practices currently employed at essential businesses – maximized physical distancing, enhanced cleaning, and messaging throughout facilities to promote safe practices – serve as a useful guide when considering the many changes needed resume operations.

This layout of this plan assumes progress through the three stages of the Maryland Roadmap to Recovery – the resumption of “Low Risk,” “Medium Risk,” and “High Risk” activities. As noted in the Roadmap, each phase is “broad in character and contemplate(s) being multi-phased within each stage.” The Library’s ability to implement each phase will be affected by specific restrictions, including potential limits on building occupancy or gathering sizes; continuation of State orders regarding the wearing of Personal Protective Equipment in public spaces; rates of infection at both statewide and local levels; and availability of supplies.

The Library expects to open in five phases:

1. The first phase, while the Stay-At-Home Order continues to be in effect, will include preparation of facilities for the return of library staff, during Phase 2, and library patrons, beginning in Phase 3.
2. The second phase will be initiated when the Maryland Roadmap enters the “Low Risk” stage. This phase will include the return of staff, resumption of office functions, and the initiation of curbside service.
3. The third phase will be initiated when the Maryland Roadmap enters the “Medium Risk” stage. This phase will include resumption of patron access to library facilities, with social distancing guidelines in place and possible limits on building occupancy.
4. The fourth phase will follow as physical distancing guidelines continue to be lifted during the “Medium Risk” stage.
5. The fifth phase will be initiated when the Maryland Roadmap enters the “High Risk” stage. This phase represents a full return to regular library services.

Regardless of progress through these phases, the Library will return to at least Phase 2 of the Pandemic Response Plan on September 1.

Phase 1: Stay-at-Home Order

Phase 1 will continue while the State of Maryland's Stay-at-Home Order and the Somerset County Commissioner's Emergency Proclamation are in effect. During this phase, the following actions will be taken to prepare for phased reopening.

Facilities, Supplies, & Equipment

- Facilities will be cleaned and disinfected.
- Plexiglas shielding will be installed on circulation desks.
- Furniture and equipment (e.g., public PCs and copiers) will be arranged to ensure adequate physical distancing when patrons return to the libraries.
- Sanitizing stations will be installed near entrances.
- Additional bookdrop bins will be acquired to allow mass quarantine of returned materials.
- Benches will be moved away from the Princess Anne entryway to accommodate social distancing between patrons using the wifi and patrons approaching the bookdrops and entrances.
- Curbside pickup areas will be signed and staged.
- Additional self-check stations will be acquired for Crisfield and Princess Anne before Phase 3.
- The following supplies will be acquired:
 - Before Stage 2: Hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, gloves, and masks.
 - Before Stage 3: Keyboard covers and styluses for the self-check stations.

Staff

- Staff will remain on Work from Home responsibilities.
- Virtual programming, meetings, and webinars will continue.
- Branch managers will contact staff about availability for Team A (Monday – Wednesday) or Team B (Thursday – Saturday) shifts, assuming a 9-5 schedule during Phases 2 and 3.
- Online book request and program registration forms will be established for Phase 2.

Patrons

- Patrons may not enter the facilities.
- Patrons are encouraged to use digital databases, send reference questions via email, and to participate in virtual programming.

Circulation

- Due date for checked out library materials will continue to be extended until at least 21 days after Phase 2 begins.
- Book drops will remain closed.

Programs, Meetings, & Outreach

- Programs, meetings, and outreach will be conducted virtually only.
- Staff will prepare for summer programs using virtual sessions, take-home kits, or a combination of the two.
- Staff will prepare for summer learning activities using Beanstack.

Phase 2: Low Risk Activities

Phase 2 will be initiated no later than the Monday following the end of the State of Maryland's Stay-at-Home Order and the Somerset County Commissioners' Emergency Proclamation. During this phase, staff will return to library facilities and curbside service will initiate.

Facilities, Supplies, & Equipment

- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned at regular intervals.
- Only staff will be allowed inside facilities.
- Meeting rooms remain closed and will be used as a quarantine area for returned materials.
- Breakrooms will not be used for meals.

Staff

- Staff will be regularly scheduled on Team A (Monday – Wednesday) and Team B (Thursday – Saturday) shifts from 9 am to 5 pm.
 - Weekly hours in excess of 24 will continue to be treated as Work from Home or administrative leave.
 - Cross-branch shifts will not be in effect.
 - Use of Paid Time Off will be required for absences during regularly scheduled shifts after the first week of Phase 2. The waiver of the requirement for doctor's notes for use of sick leave will remain in effect.
- Staff will be required to wear gloves and masks.
- Staff will work in assigned areas to achieve physical distancing.
- Online telephone reference will initiate.
- Library material ordering and processing will resume.
- Program supply ordering will resume.
- Telephone scripts will be established to keep staff tasked with telephone reference up-to-date on the following items:
 - The reopening date (or lack thereof);
 - Announcements regarding library programs and meeting room availability; and
 - Progress with curbside program and availability of pickup times.

Patrons

- Patron interaction will be limited to curbside pick-up, online programming, and online or telephone reference.

Circulation

- All existing due dates will be set to 21 days after the initiation of Phase 2.
- Curbside pick-up will be instituted via online form or telephone request.
 - Curbside will accommodate individual title requests, genre requests, or reader's advisory requests.
 - Patrons who have existing material on hold will be emailed to set a pick-up time at least 3 days before public notice of curbside availability.
- The library will quarantine all returned materials for 72 hours before reshelving.
- Inventory will continue in Princess Anne.
- Bookdrops will be open. Materials will be returnable through bookdrops or carts staged with curbside pick-up areas.

Programs, Meetings, & Outreach:

- The 2020 Summer Reading Program will be limited and restricted to virtual events.
 - Virtual programming will expand.
 - Program sign-up will start.
 - Where feasible, take-home kits will be prepared for either individual programs or series of programs.
- Publicity will be prepared and distributed electronically and through school lunch pickup locations.
- All outreach and meetings remain virtual.
- Meeting rooms remain closed to the public.

Phase 3: Medium Risk Activities

The third phase will be initiated when the Maryland Roadmap enters the "Medium Risk" stage. This phase will include resumption of patron access to library facilities, with physical distancing guidelines in place and possible limits on building occupancy.

Facilities, Supplies, & Equipment

- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned at regular intervals.
- The Princess Anne backdoor will remain closed during library hours.
- Physical distancing protocols will be instituted by signage and marks on floors, including lines for self-checks and one-way aisles where possible.
- Hand sanitizer and sanitizing wipes will be available for patrons.
- The Princess Anne Children's Desk will not be staffed during public hours.

Staff

- Assignments to A and B teams will continue.
- Physical distancing, PPE, and sanitization practices will continue.

Patrons

- The Library will open to the public from 10 am to 4 pm to allow staff an hour before and after for staff functions in public areas and sanitization.
- Access to shared materials (pens, office supplies) will be restricted.
- While the Executive Order requiring masks to be worn in public continues, those not wearing a mask will not be allowed to enter.
- Contingent on State and local guidelines during this phase, it may be necessary to limit the number of people in a facility at any one time. Depending on the limit set, this may include:
 - Stringent monitoring of the number of people entering and exiting the libraries;
 - Limiting the number of public computers in service in excess of the limit required to achieve physical distancing;
 - Limiting laptop lending;
 - Disallowing extension of computer time; and/or
 - Limiting the time per day that any individual can spend in the library regardless of purpose.
- Library services that deviate from physical distancing guidelines (e.g., one-on-one computer assistance) will be limited.

Circulation

- Curbside service will continue.
- In-library circulation will begin using self-check stations only.
- Interlibrary loan is assumed to be available, dependent on actions taken at the regional and state levels regarding delivery.
- Returns will continue to be restricted to exterior bookdrops or curbside service carts. The quarantine of returned items will continue.
- To eliminate cash handling, certain service fees (i.e., printing and copying) will be suspended.

Programs, Meetings, & Outreach

- Use of virtual programming and take-home kits will continue.
- Meetings and outreach will continue to be conducted virtually.
- Meeting space will not be available.

Phase 4: Continued Service Expansion

The fourth phase will follow as physical distancing guidelines continue to be lifted during the “Medium Risk” stage.

Facilities, Supplies, & Equipment

- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned at regular intervals.
- Evening hours will resume, with possible early closings to allow for sanitization.

- Furniture and equipment will be gradually reintroduced, subject to physical distancing requirements or capacity limits.

Staff

- Restriction to A/B teams will be lifted, and staff will return to pre-pandemic schedules, including some cross-branch shifts.
- Physical distancing, PPE, and sanitization practices will continue.
- Hand sanitizer, tissues and wipes will be available for staff use.

Patrons

- The number of people in library facilities, or any given area, at any one time may continue to be limited.
- Hand sanitizer, tissues, and wipes will be made available for patron use.
- One-on-one computer assistance will resume.
- Fees for prints and copies will resume.

Circulation

- Curbside service will continue.
- Returns will continue to be restricted to exterior bookdrops or curbside service carts. The quarantine of returned items will continue.

Programs, Meetings, & Outreach

- Board and administrative meetings will resume in person, as long as physical distancing is maintained.
- In-house programs will resume, if physical distancing is feasible.
- Work-related travel to meetings and outreach will be allowed on the Eastern Shore.
- Meeting rooms will be available for organizations only.

Phase 5: Open to the Public

The fifth phase will be initiated when the Maryland Roadmap enters the “High Risk” stage. This phase represents a full return to regular library services.

Facilities, Supplies, & Equipment

- Library facilities will be open pre-pandemic hours.
- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned at regular intervals.
- Hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes, and tissues will be made available to the public.
- Any remaining furniture or equipment will be reintroduced.
- Supplies of gloves, masks, and sanitizers will be procured in case of further need.

Staff

- Hand sanitizer, tissues and wipes will be made available for staff use.
- Staff will be reminded to stay at home if feeling ill.
- Remaining cross-branch shifts will resume.

Patrons:

- Hand sanitizer, tissues and wipes will be made available for patron use.
- Any remaining restrictions on patron services will be lifted.

Circulation

- Curbside pickup will cease as a pandemic recovery function and be reviewed as a customer service function.
- Quarantine of returned items will cease.

Programs and Meetings:

- Regular programming will resume.
- Regular staff meetings will resume.
- Restrictions on meeting room use will be lifted.
- Restrictions on outreach and off-site meetings will be lifted.

Pandemic Preparedness

Regardless of progress between these phases, the Library will escalate to Phase 2 of the Pandemic Response Plan on September 1. If they are not continuing as part of the Pandemic Recovery Plan, the following activities will be reinitiated:

- Monitor the progress of the pandemic from official sources.
- Intensify routine environmental cleaning.
- Ensure that all chains of command are established in case of further progress in the pandemic.
- Provide staff with educational information and materials on the emergency.
- Remind staff of relevant policies and procedures in the case of resumed local impact.
- Ensure that adequate supplies are on-hand to deal with latter phases of this plan with a potential disruption of up to three months.
- Implement personal protective measures.
- Prepare for workplace sanitization in case of employee illness.

The Library expects these phases to operate on a continuum. As confirmed cases of COVID-19 rise and fall, it may be necessary for the Library to remain in one phase longer than another or to revert to a previous phase. This plan is subject to change as needed.