

Public Library of Brookline Reopening Plan 2020

INTRODUCTION

Along with schools and other Town buildings, the Public Library of Brookline facilities closed to the public effective March 13, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting State of Emergency declared by Governor Baker.

Virtual library services continued with telephone and email reference, e-content collection development, and the invention of virtual programming for children, teens, and adults via Facebook Live and Zoom platforms.

The ultimate goal is full restoration of library services, but there are many environmental factors that we do not yet know and cannot predict. Therefore, a staged, evidence-based approach is required where the health, safety, and well-being of our staff, volunteers, and patrons guides our progress toward full restoration. Libraries are only socially useful if we can protect and uphold the public trust.

This document will evolve as information changes.

Key unknowns for MA workers:

- Timeline for restoration of child care facilities.
- Timeline for reopening public schools.
- Mass transit options.
- Accommodations for staff in high-risk categories.

Main priorities:

- Guaranteed safety of staff and patrons
- Staged resumption of public service
- Offering pleasant, frictionless service/Minimizing negative interactions

Our plan takes into account the many unknowns and uncertainties of our situation, prioritizes the safety and well-being of staff and patrons, emphasizes as much public service as is safe for the Brookline community, and is in line with most of the Minuteman Library Network, Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Massachusetts Library Association, New England Library Association, American Library Association, and state government recommendations.

Depending on more information, the dates of this plan are flexible and dates can be adjusted incrementally as needed, contractually union members must be given two weeks notice of changes in schedule.

STAGE 1:

Today-June 15: Library remains closed in line with the Governor's order for schools and daycare centers, as well as the need to provide safe haven for Company 1 of the Brookline Fire Department, and the ability to safely conduct the June 9 election.

Rationale:

- Due to school closures, offering in-library service will quickly prove unmanageable as patrons look to return to work themselves.
- Social distancing and public service are incompatible at this time, considering the need to clean and quarantine any materials/surfaces that staff and patrons touch.
- Robust service is currently being offered virtually, in Brookline and ALL surrounding communities.
- Staff with children are unable to safely source child care at this time.

Throughout this period staff will be working entirely remotely, book drops will remain locked.

Remote Work:

- New Library Cards
- Email reference
- Chat reference
- Story Times
- Craft programs
- Book Groups
- ELL/ESL instruction
- Expanded social media presence
- Materials Ordering
- Budgeting (remaining FY20, FY21)
- Statistics
- Continuing Education/Professional Development
- Grant applications
- Ethics training
- Summer Reading

Stage 2:

June 15-July 5, 2020: Library remains closed to the public, staff return to buildings.

Rationale:

- Approval granted by Governor to re-open.

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be available to all staff (including but not limited to:
 - hand sanitizer
 - masks
 - gloves
 - face shields
- Social distancing facilities modifications:
 - Plexiglas
 - gates at all service desks
 - floor decals
 - stanchions
 - signage

Throughout this period the staff will be deployed to their home locations in order to receive training on new protocols, install facilities modifications, process the backlog of delivery, hold list, and to process new materials. There are currently 40 library employees:

- BV:
 - 4 Admin
 - 5 Tech Services
 - 4 Circulation
 - 5 Youth Services
 - 2 Custodial
 - 8 Reference
- CC: 8
- Putt: 4

(The deployment of this amount of staff to BV will likely have to be reconsidered pending needs of Fire) Social distancing will be practiced among staff, including adding an additional break room, bathroom assignments, and entry/egress assignments.

- Book drops open.

Stage 3:

July 6, 2020: Library Reopens with contactless pickup/book drop return only

Rationale:

- Exposure to the public should be minimized as they acclimate to the new social protocols. Library services will be, and will remain, greatly reduced. In some instances businesses have opened and been forced to close again due to an inability to enforce safety protocols.

- Provision of physical materials, while preserving all remote services, will offer a semblance of normalcy

Contactless Pickup:

Plan/Goal: To create a scheduled contactless hold pickup system. This will provide access to materials to patrons in the safest way possible, and without the need for direct contact with staff.

Procedure:

- Patrons will be able to pick up holds by booking appointments in 1-hour windows
 - Patrons may only book appointments after they receive a notification (or a call) that their items are ready.
 - We will be increasing the amount of times notifications get sent each day and increasing the amount of times we run the holds list.
- Appointments will be booked using an internal form
 - We will be limiting how many pickups can be scheduled per hour to 20 max.
 - Patrons can access appointment booking on our website, or may call us
 - Booking for patrons will look the same as registering a patron for an event
- Pickup shelf will be placed in the entry vestibules at each location.
 - Each day, holds will be checked out, bagged, stapled, and labelled for each patron pickup appointment window. Bags will be put out at the top of each hour.
- Patrons may come up to the pickup shelf during their 1-hour window appointment and grab their bag of holds.
 - For items not picked up within the booked time frame: staff will bring items in after each appointment, and put the new pickup bags for the next appointment.
- All returns must be placed in the book drop. No person to person returns will be allowed. The contents of the book drop will be quarantined for at least 72 hours before check in.

Policies and guidelines:

- If a patron misses their 1-hour window, they may call to reschedule or reschedule online. We will not be able to run anything out to a patron.
- Only items that are ready at the time of booking a pickup appointment are guaranteed to be in the patrons pick up bag.
- Appointments are next day. Same day appointments are not available.
- Items must go through the procedure of being placed on hold, and then pulled with the holds list. We cannot grab anything off the shelf on-demand or “shelf-check” for items.
- Speed Reads will be temporarily changed to “regular” copies of books and be holdable to provide access.
- Non Brookline materials will become available when state wide delivery resumes.

Safety standards:

- We will be placing tape or markers on ramp outside to mark safe social distancing standards

Stage 4:

Indeterminate Timing: Library re-opens to the public in limited fashion. stage 4 is too far out to be accurately predicted for timing purposes.

- All virtual services remain, including all programming
- Patron load/capacity limits will be determined and enforced for each location.
- Entry/Egress protocols designed and enforced
- Book drop return only continues, along with material quarantining
- No room rentals
- Patrons will be issued a beeper with admittance to the library, they will have 25 minutes to browse and then the beeper will go off and they will leave.
- No public computing
- No staying to study/read
- Senior hours in the morning?
- Reduced service hours pending FY21 budget
- Masks required for entry

Stage 5:

At conclusion of stage 4: Library re-opens at conditions that comply with the “new normal”

- Computer use
- Studying/Loitering
- Room reservations
- Live programming

Staffing Considerations:

- Office safety protocols
- Dividing into teams
 - Team A: works onsite for two weeks, providing in person service, pulling holds, etc
 - Team B: works from home for 2 weeks, providing phone/chat reference, placing holds
- Limits on staff in back of the house spaces
- Addition of extra break room
- Masks required
- Gloves optional, but provided
- Temperature taken at home/at door to library
- Hours reductions
- Weekend hours
- Increased cleaning protocols for custodians
- HR/Medical/HIPA concerns

Additional Considerations:

- Trustee, Friends, Foundation: continue remote meetings?
- Modification of ongoing Friends book sale, change to semi-annual? Online?
- Safety/security: details? Police?
- Cleaning protocols may exceed manpower
- Ongoing budgetary constraints

Additional Resources:

MBLC: <https://mblc.state.ma.us/news/news-releases/2020/nr200318.php>

MLA:

[https://www.masslib.org/resources/Documents/Official%20Statements/MLA%20Statement%20on%20Protecting%20Library%20Staff.docx%20\(1\).pdf](https://www.masslib.org/resources/Documents/Official%20Statements/MLA%20Statement%20on%20Protecting%20Library%20Staff.docx%20(1).pdf)

NELA:

<http://nelib.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/NELA-Public-Statement-on-Public-Library-Closures.pdf>

PLA Survey Response:

https://ala.informz.net/ala/data/images/PLA%20Libraries%20Respond%20Survey_Aggregate%20Results_FINAL.pdf

ALA:

<http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/04/ala-praises-impls-rapid-release-covid-19-relief>

<http://www.ala.org/news/press-releases/2020/03/ala-executive-board-recommends-closing-libraries-public>

MLS: <https://www.masslibsystem.org/blog/2020/04/29/mls-update-4-28-20/>

MULTIPLE: <https://guides.masslibsystem.org/COVID19/MLSMBLCUpdates>

PUBLIC LIBRARY OF BROOKLINE:

Virtual Services: <https://www.brooklinelibrary.org/2020/05/01/library-services-online-2/>

Instant Library Card: <https://www.brooklinelibrary.org/how/library-card/>

Calendar: <https://www.brooklinelibrary.org/events/>

MASS.GOV:

<https://www.mass.gov/resource/information-on-the-outbreak-of-coronavirus-disease-2019-covid-19>

CDC:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Findex.html

WHO: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1

Further aspects of this plan not included here include a more formal PR campaign for the public to know what to expect, formal internal procedures for staff to handle materials safely and maintain social distancing among themselves, and assisting our patrons with these changes.

Thank you,
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