



TOWN OF
ULSTER
PUBLIC LIBRARY

Phased Reopening Plan Town of Ulster Library

Prepared May 2020

(adapted from a model provided by MidHudson Library System)

LEVEL A & B

Service Level A

Library Services Under Stay at Home Orders with 100% Workforce Reduction for Nonessential Businesses

Stay-at-home orders can mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19 by limiting person-to-person contact through respiratory droplets, which is the main way the virus is spread [1]. Under stay-at-home orders the library building will be closed to library patrons with the library supporting the community primarily through services online, by phone, and any other way patrons can interact with staff and access library resources without meeting in-person or entering the library building. Traveling to the library to obtain materials is to check out materials would violate stay-at-home orders and pose a risk to staff and public health.

Services Offered

1. **Online resources**
2. **Telephone support for reference and online resources**
3. **Online programming and events**

Considerations for Safe Operations and Services at this Service Level

Availability of PPE and Cleaning and Disinfection Supplies

1. Reusable cloth face masks (required) [10]
2. Disposable gloves (required) [4]
3. Disinfectant cleaners (required) [11]
4. Hand sanitizer (required)

Administrative Controls

1. Telecommuting

2. Social Distancing
3. Regular Handwashing
4. Staff training on employee and public safety related to COVID-19 (required) [\[12\]](#)
5. Staff training on PPE use (required) [\[2\]](#)

Policy [\[19\]](#)

1. Pandemic Policy
- 2. Telecommuting Policy**
- 3. Proactive Infection Plan [see Appendix]**
- 4. Emergency Sick Leave Policy**

Physical and Facility Controls

1. None

Library Operations at this Level of Service

Library Staff

1. Library staff will work with their supervisor to complete their work and provide library services according to the library's telecommuting policy at this service level.
2. The library will issue **two reusable cloth face masks** for staff to wear while working on behalf of the library. The library will advise staff to wash their masks routinely at least after each use and that if lost or worn out the library will take responsibility for replacing them. [\[24\]](#)
3. The library will provide disposable waterproof gloves for staff to wear while working at the library and maintain an adequate stock of gloves necessary for library staff.
4. **Library staff will receive training** for procedures at limited services levels that will require PPE and other controls to increase staff and public safety will receive training on PPE [\[2\]](#), employee and public safety [\[12\]](#), new library procedures, and the library's proactive infection plan [see Appendix].
5. Library staff will be required to wear their mask any time they are within six feet of another person except when doing so would inhibit or otherwise impair the patron's health. [\[24\]](#)
6. Shift start times for library staff will be staggered to allow social distancing. [\[24\]](#)
7. Library staff will practice social distancing while interacting with other library staff whenever possible.
8. With access to the building and regular tasks reduced, library staff will be provided with increased training to support their work for the library during the pandemic and after.

Entrance to the Library Building

1. Entrance to the building will be restricted to staff performing the operations outlined at this service level, staff obtaining supplies needed to work at home and essential visitors.

Facilities

1. Signage including the status of the library's hours and whether or not the library is accepting returns at this time will be displayed for patrons that may visit the building and find it closed.
2. The library will provide hygiene stations for handwashing that include soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels. [\[24\]](#)
3. The library will provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical. [\[24\]](#)
4. **Tightly confined spaces (small stock rooms, narrow aisles, elevators) will be limited to one staff member** unless all employees in such spaces are wearing masks. Occupancy in these spaces will not exceed 50% of the maximum capacity of the space unless it is designed for use by a

single occupant. Ventilation will be increased in these spaces when occupied by more than one staff member. [24]

5. Restrooms will not be open to the public.
6. Study areas will not be open to the public.
7. The building and facility should be checked at regular intervals to ensure there is no failure of major systems or equipment including HVAC, plumbing, electrical, and roofing systems.

Cleaning

1. The library will be cleaned according to a regular schedule or as necessary while the building is closed.

Circulation

Patrons Borrowing Materials

- Patrons will not be able to borrow physical materials from the library.

Patrons Returning Materials

1. The library will take returns through the book drop. If the library cannot take returns, the book drop will be locked, and a sign will be posted on the book drop.
2. Returned materials will be considered **to possibly have COVID-19 present for up to 72 hours.** [3]
3. Staff handling returned materials from book drops will use PPE including mask and gloves and wash hands after handling materials. [4]
4. **Markings or physical barriers will be put in place** to define social distancing boundaries in areas where multiple staff process returns.
5. If possible, materials will be quarantined on book carts or in bags or other containers for 72 hours before handling checking in or shelving in the collection or on the holds shelf. [4] **Please note: MHLS delivery bins cannot be used to quarantine materials.**
6. When checking in materials using Sierra at this level of service, **Sierra Notices should not be sent.** [5]

Patron Holds

1. MHLS will disable patrons from placing holds on physical library materials through the catalog.
2. The library will not place holds for patrons until MHLS reopens the holds system.
3. Patrons will not be able to pick up holds on physical materials at this service level.

MHLS Delivery

1. MHLS delivery may not operate at regular intervals due to restrictions at this service level.
2. MHLS may run delivery operations in special cases at this service level, and the library will look to MHLS for guidance on how to best prepare for materials delivery and pickup.
3. Outgoing materials will be forward-sorted as they would normally.
4. Sturdy boxes will be used if the library does not have enough MHLS delivery bins for outgoing materials and these boxes will be clearly labeled as outgoing materials.
5. Incoming materials received through delivery will be considered to possibly have COVID-19 present for up to 72 hours and handled as return materials described above.

Communications

1. The library will communicate with library staff using designated teleconferencing and library email accounts as well as by phone or text as necessary.
2. The library will use outdoor signage, social media, phone calls, mail, or email to communicate with patrons about library services and provide support in tones appropriate to the current climate. [6]

3. When possible, library phone numbers will be routed to library staff to answer patron questions regarding library services, resources, and general reference queries. If calls cannot be routed, voicemail will be set up and regularly checked for messages and followed up on.
4. U.S. postal mail will be forwarded to an appropriate address when necessary and possible. Delivery companies like FedEx or UPS will be notified of the building closure and arrangements will be made to hold or safely receive deliveries.

Library Programming and Events

1. In-person library programming and events will be suspended at this service level according to New York State Executive Orders. [7]
2. The library will provide library programming through online channels and other communication channels that do not require meeting in-person.

Governance and Board Operations

1. Library business and governance will be conducted through teleconferencing as much as Open Meetings Law and relevant NYS Executive Orders allow. [8]
2. Accommodations to Open Meetings Law such as transcripts and recordings of meetings required to conduct meetings via teleconference will be observed using software such as GoToMeeting. These will be provided by request or as otherwise directed by the Committee on Open Government and relevant NYS Executive Orders.

Outreach and Engagement

1. Library staff will work and meet and connect remotely with community partners to collaborate on providing support for the community.
2. Library staff will not attend in-person community meetings or meetings of other organizations.

Materials Purchasing and Processing

1. Materials purchasing will shift to support an electronic collection where possible.
2. Physical materials will not be processed in this phase.
3. New materials received from booksellers will be quarantined until the library begins processing physical materials.

Home Delivery

1. The library will not provide home delivery services at this service level.

Study Areas

1. Study areas will not be open to the public at this service level.

Public Computer Use

1. Public computers will not be accessible by the public at this service level.

Internet Access

1. WiFi in the library building will be left on for people to use from the library grounds or parking lot.
2. If this service is found to create an unsafe situation and library patrons are unable to practice social distancing while using library WiFi while the building is closed, the library will not provide this service.
3. **The library will explore providing WiFi access through community service points outside the library building.**

Technology Help

1. The library will provide tech support and other tech help to patrons over the phone and through video conferencing platforms.

Service Level B:

Curbside Service

At this level of reopening **there is still a high risk of transmitting COVID-19** through person-to-person contact, but falling hospitalization and death rates related to COVID-19 and other regional precautions put in place indicate to state and local health officials that “more essential” retail business operations and professional services with lower risk of infection can begin to reopen with precautions in place to reduce person-to-person contact and transmission of the virus including curbside pickup. [9]

At this level of service, the library will **coordinate the services offered with neighboring libraries** to avoid creating a dangerous situation where too many people are drawn to the library. The library will offer services to all MHLS member library patrons as outlined in the [MHLS Free Direct Access Plan](#). Services offered will limit public and staff access to the building and interactions where possible. Some staff may be back in the building working while others may still be telecommuting to limit unnecessary staff exposure and observe restrictions still in place from state and local guidelines.

Transmission of COVID-19 to persons from surfaces contaminated with the virus has not been documented, and the most common vehicle for transmitting the disease is through person-to-person contact. [1] The World Health Organization [3] and the Northeast Document Conservation Center [4] report that COVID-19 may live on paper and cardboard for up to 24 hours and on plastic and other surfaces for up to 72 hours, and it may be possible for a person to get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Physical library materials will be handled and processed with these risks and timelines in mind. At this level of service, all staff that are capable and whose work can be completed from home will telecommute according to the library’s telecommuting policy. The library will provide staff working at the library facility with necessary PPE.

Services Offered

1. Online resources
2. Telephone support for reference and online resources
3. Online programming and events
4. Curbside pickup

Considerations for Safe Operations and Services at this Service Level

Availability of PPE and Cleaning and Disinfection Supplies

5. Reusable cloth face masks (required) [10]
6. Disposable gloves (required) [4]
7. Disinfectant cleaners (required) [11]
8. Hand sanitizer (required)

Administrative Controls

1. Telecommuting
2. Social distancing (required) [13]
3. Regular handwashing
4. Staff training on employee and public safety related to COVID-19 (required) [12]
5. Staff training on PPE use (required) [2]
6. **Employee Screening (required)** [13, 14]
7. **Appointing COVID-19 workplace coordinator**

8. Limiting patron and staff access to building

9. Minimizing face-to-face interactions

Policy [19]

1. Pandemic Policy
2. Telecommuting Policy
3. Proactive Infection Plan [see Appendix]
4. Emergency Sick Leave Policy
5. Meeting Room Use Policy
6. Employee Dress Code
7. Patron Conduct Policy
8. Computer Use Policy

Physical and Facility Controls

1. Physical barriers like clear plastic sneeze guards
2. Floor markings and signage [15] to help with social distancing in staff areas and areas of patron interaction.

Library Operations at this Level of Service

Library Staff

1. Library staff will work with their supervisor to complete their work and provide library services according to the library's telecommuting policy at this service level to reduce building occupancy.
2. The library will issue two reusable cloth face masks for staff to wear while working on behalf of the library. The library will advise staff to wash their masks routinely at least after each use and that if lost or worn out the library will take responsibility for replacing them. [24]
3. The library will provide disposable waterproof gloves for staff to wear while working at the library and maintain an adequate stock of gloves necessary for library staff.
4. Library staff will receive training for procedures at limited services levels that will require PPE and other controls to increase staff and public safety will receive training on PPE [2], employee and public safety [12], new library procedures, and the library's proactive infection plan [see Appendix].
5. Library staff will be required to wear their mask any time they are within six feet of another person except when doing so would inhibit or otherwise impair the patron's health. [24]
6. Shift start times for library staff will be staggered to allow social distancing. [24]
7. Library staff will practice social distancing while interacting with other library staff and library patrons whenever possible.
8. **In-person gatherings of staff will be limited as much as possible in favor of video and teleconferencing.**
9. **Library staff will observe markings or physical barriers put in place to define social distancing boundaries in areas where multiple staff members share space.**
10. **Staff should avoid sharing equipment such as computers and phones when possible. Staff should disinfect shared equipment before and after use followed by hand hygiene.**
11. **Staff will disinfect shared equipment and workstation at the end of their shift.**
12. **Buffet-style and shared meals are not permitted at the library.**
13. **The library will work to provide accommodations for vulnerable employees at a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 [16] including telecommuting arrangements according to the library's telecommuting policy and tasks that reduce contact with patrons and other staff. [14]**

14. **The library will follow the approved proactive infection plan for screening library staff and in the event that a staff member becomes symptomatic or tests positive for COVID-19. [see Appendix]**

Entrance to the Library Building

2. Entrance to the building will be restricted to staff performing the operations outlined at this service level, staff obtaining supplies needed to work at home and essential visitors.
3. **The number of staff and patrons in the building will not exceed 50% of the building rated occupancy.**

Facilities

1. **The library will maintain a continuous log with contact information for every person, including workers and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means; excluding patrons, who cannot be mandated to sign the log but are welcome to do so if they would like to be notified should an outbreak be identified at the library.**
2. Signage including the status of the library's hours and services will be displayed for patrons that may visit the building and find it closed.
3. The library will provide hygiene stations for handwashing that include soap, running warm water, and disposable paper towels. [24]
4. The library will provide an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol for areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical. [24]
5. Tightly confined spaces (small stock rooms, narrow aisles, elevators) will be limited to one staff member unless all employees in such spaces are wearing masks. Occupancy in these spaces **will not exceed 50% of the maximum capacity** of the space unless it is designed for use by a single occupant. Ventilation will be increased in these spaces when occupied by more than one staff member. [24]
6. Restrooms will not be open to the public.
7. Study areas will not be open to the public.
8. **The library will ensure the ventilation systems are working and increase outside air ventilation where possible before staff return to the building.**
9. **Signage will be posted in staff areas to encourage good handwashing and social distancing and PPE best practice.**
10. **Markings or physical barriers will be put in place to define social distancing boundaries in areas where more than one staff member works.**

Cleaning

1. **The library will maintain routine cleaning and disinfection of the library facility as outlined in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) & Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)'s "Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes." [17]**
2. **The library will use disinfectants from List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2. [22]**
3. **When reopening the library building, if the library has been unoccupied for 7 days or more it will be cleaned according to a normal routine cleaning schedule before reopening. This is because the virus that causes COVID-19 has not been shown to survive on surfaces longer than this time. [17]**
4. **Frequently touched surfaces like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets and sinks, touch screens will be cleaned and disinfected daily. [21]**

5. Restrooms will be available for use by staff. Restrooms will be cleaned and disinfected daily. [21]
6. High contact areas accessed by patrons for curbside pickup will be cleaned and disinfected after each transaction when possible.
7. Staff areas will be cleaned and disinfected daily. [21]
8. Employees performing routine cleaning and disinfecting will document the date, time, and scope of cleaning performed using the cleaning log. [21]

Circulation

Patrons Borrowing Materials

Curbside Pickup [18]

1. Patrons will be able to borrow physical items from the library through curbside pickup or other means that limit staff and patron interaction and allow for social distancing.
2. The library will use outside signage or a sidewalk sign to display the services available, instructions for pickup, and hours of operation.
3. The library will post signage to reserve parking spaces near the front door for curbside pickup.
4. Markings or physical barriers will be put in place to define social distancing boundaries for patrons and staff in curbside pickup interaction and patrons lining up.
5. The library will use tables, lockers, car trunks or other means that avoid direct hand-off to patrons for curbside pickup.
6. The library will provide staff interacting with patrons with PPE including mask and gloves as well as training on proper use of the PPE [2] employee and public safety related to COVID-19, and local . [12]
7. The library will provide staff with training on curbside pickup procedure.
8. Staff will sanitize hands before and after transferring materials.
9. Staff interacting with patrons will practice regular handwashing.
10. Patrons will not be allowed in the building.
11. Staff will disinfect surfaces patrons contacted after each library materials transaction.

Patrons Returning Materials – Book Drop Only

1. The library will accept returned materials from patrons through the library book drop.
2. Returned materials will be considered to possibly have COVID-19 present for up to 72 hours. [3]
3. Staff handling returned materials from book drops will use PPE including mask and gloves and practice regular hand washing including washing hands after handling materials. [4]
4. Markings or physical barriers will be put in place to define social distancing boundaries in areas where multiple staff process returns.
5. If possible, materials will be quarantined on book carts or in bags or other containers for 72 hours before handling checking in or shelving in the collection or on the holds shelf. [4] **Please note: MHLS delivery bins cannot be used to quarantine materials.**
6. **When checking in materials using Sierra at this level of service, Sierra Notices may be sent based on guidance from MHLS. [5]**
7. **Library staff will not receive returns from patrons directly.**

Patron Holds

1. **Patrons will be able to pick up holds and requests on physical materials as described above at this service level. Availability of physical materials for patrons may be limited to the library's local holdings depending on the status of the MHLS delivery system.**
2. **If MHLS has restarted the holds system, patrons will be able to place holds on physical library materials through the catalog at this service level.**

3. **If the holds system has not been restarted, library staff will place holds for patrons received over the phone or by email.**

MHLS Delivery

1. MHLS delivery may not operate at regular intervals due to restrictions and limited member library openings at this service level.
2. MHLS may run delivery operations in special cases at this service level, and the library will look to MHLS for guidance on how to best prepare for materials delivery and pickup.
3. Outgoing materials will be forward-sorted as they would normally.
4. Sturdy boxes will be used if the library does not have enough MHLS delivery bins for outgoing materials and these boxes will be clearly labeled as outgoing materials.
5. Incoming materials received through delivery will be considered to possibly have COVID-19 present for up to 72 hours and handled as return materials described above.
6. **If MHLS delivery is running, staff will page for title and item level holds in the local collection to be put into outgoing delivery.**

Communications

1. The library will communicate with library staff using designated library email accounts as well as by phone or text as necessary.
2. The library will use outside signage, social media, phone calls, mail, or email to communicate with patrons about available library services and provide support. [6]
3. **Patron questions by telephone regarding library services, resources, and general reference queries will be answered by staff at the library.**
4. **Relevant library phone numbers will be routed to library staff to answer patron questions regarding specific library services.**
5. **U.S. postal mail and deliveries from companies like FedEx or UPS will be received at the library building.**

Library Programming and Events

1. In-person library programming and events are suspended at this service level.
2. The **library will provide library programming through online channels** and other communication channels that do not require meeting in-person.

Governance and Board Operations

1. **In-person library Board of Trustees meetings and business will resume if state and local restrictions on social gathering and space availability permit the group as well as possible public visitors to observe social distancing during the meetings.**
2. **Seating at meetings will be arranged to accommodate social distancing.**

Outreach and Engagement

1. Library staff will work and meet remotely with community partners to collaborate on providing support for the community.
2. **Library staff may attend in-person community meetings or meetings of other organizations only if the meeting space allows social distancing guidelines to be followed at the meeting.**
3. **Library staff will follow the same procedure for masks and social distancing when attending meetings in the community.**

Materials Purchasing and Processing

1. **Physical materials will be selected and purchased during this phase.**
2. **Materials will be processed in this phase.**

3. **New books received will be sequestered for 24 hours before unpacking and processing.**
4. **New DVDs received will be sequestered for 72 hours before unpacking and processing.**
5. **Markings or physical barriers will be put in place to define social distancing boundaries in areas where more than one staff member works to process materials.**

Study Areas

1. Study areas will not be open to the public at this service level.

Public Computer Use

1. Public computers will not be accessible by the public at this service level.

Internet Access

1. WiFi in the library building will be left on for people to use from the library grounds or parking lot.
2. If this service is found to create an unsafe situation and library patrons are unable to practice social distancing while using library WiFi while the building is closed, the library will not provide this service.
3. The library will explore providing WiFi access through community service points outside the library building.

Technology Help

1. The library will provide tech support and other tech help to patrons over the phone and through video conferencing platforms.