## Gwinnett County Public Library - Phased Reopening Plans

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on GCPL and the community that we serve. While many of our staff and customers are anxious for the library to reopen, we must take a measured and fact-based approach towards reopening that leans heavily on healthcare professionals. This plan details four reopening phases that are dependent on three primary factors:

* Recommendations from local and national health agencies and experts
* State and Federal social distancing protocols and guidelines
* Critical community needs

*The single most important factor in this plan is to protect the health and safety of library staff and customers*.

As a base level of safety, the Library will implement the following:

1. Enhance hygiene procedures for cleaning and disinfecting staff and public areas.
2. Encourage staff to wear personal protective equipment such as masks and gloves while performing their duties.
3. Continue to promote teleworking where it makes sense from an operational and safety standpoint, recognizing that some Headquarters offices do not permit distancing.
4. Where teleworking is not feasible, including the branches and learning labs, reorganize staff work space to adhere to social distancing requirements and employ hygiene procedures to minimize germ spread.
5. Encourage testing of staff for the virus and/or for immunity to the virus. Once available, encourage and/or facilitate vaccination to the virus.

**What if the stay at home order is lifted before state or federal guidelines recommend?** If the stay at home order is lifted before public and staff safety can be assured then other factors should be used in determining what level of services the Library is able to offer. Many factors come from the White House’s [*Guidelines for Opening Up America Again*](https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/). Among these should be:

1. In Gwinnett and surrounding counties, there needs to be a downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period.
2. The local healthcare system has the capacity to treat all patients without crisis care, and there exists a robust testing program in place for at-risk healthcare workers, including emerging antibody testing.
3. Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID-19 contacts.
4. The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain high hygiene standards.
5. The library has access to enough staffing to run all of its core operations.

### Four Levels for Phased Reopening

#### Level 1 Reopening: No public access to library buildings - Limited critical services

**Criteria**

1. The stay at home order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.
2. Strong social distancing recommendations remain in place.
3. Gatherings are limited to less than ten people.
4. The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
5. The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some essential services.
6. The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.

**Available services:**

* Broadcast wireless internet from library facilities and/or library vehicles.
* Curbside or self-service holds pickup *outside* of the building.
* Access to book drops for library returns.
* Virtual programming.
* Assistance via email, text, chat service and phone.
* Resumption of Mailbox Book services.

**Preparation:**

* Develop a procedure for curbside holds pick up.
* Secure, train and schedule staffing for curbside pick up.
* Secure personal protective equipment for staff.
* Secure adequate stores of disinfectant wipes, soap and hand sanitizer.
* Secure staffing to safely process returned materials.
* Determine a safe location to quarantine materials.
* Determine whether a requirement for staff and/or public to wear masks within library facilities should be enacted in coordination with County, State, or Federal requirements.
* Restore mail and package services.

#### Level 2 Reopening: Metered access to libraries - Reopening with some social distancing requirements

**Criteria**

* The stay at home order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.
* In Gwinnett and surrounding counties, there needs to be a downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period.
* Social distancing recommendations remain in place.
* Gatherings are limited to less than fifty people.
* Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts.
* The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
* The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some critical services.
* The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.

**Available services:**

* Metered access to the building by the public, with limits guided by the square footage of available public space.
* Core customer service functions will resume with distanced staff.
* Book-a-librarian sessions will be used to control access to staff.
* In-building holds pickup with the use of self-checkouts.
* The ordering and processing of new physical library materials.
* The shelving of returned library materials after a quarantine period.
* Access to library collections by the public.
* Access to checkout services through the use of self check machines.
* Access to portions of the public computer areas with enhanced social distancing measures, such as the removal of some equipment or through making some computers unavailable.

**Preparation**

* Determine library hours for each location.
* Determine a method to meter access to the building.
* Secure and train staff for main service points.
* Reestablish customer self service holds pickup.
* Develop a self check out procedure that ensures social distancing. May require moving or disabling some self check kiosks.
* Schedule staff for ordering and processing duties.
* Identify key virtual programming to meet essential community needs.
* Determine which outreach visit locations are viable.
* Secure staffing for outreach functions such as outreach visits
* Rearrange the public computer area to allow adequate social distancing either by removing stations or placing stations out of order.
* Investigate screen sharing software as a possibility for providing computer help while maintaining social distance.
* Determine whether a requirement to wear masks should be imposed on the public and/or staff.
* Restore mail and package services.

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#### Level 3 Reopening: Full-scale reopening

**Criteria**

* The Stay at Home Order has been canceled and regional, state and national health officials have canceled current social distancing and gathering recommendations.
* In Gwinnett and surrounding counties, there needs to be a downward trajectory of documented cases within a 28-day period.
* The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
* Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID 19 contacts.
* The library has access to the necessary materials to maintain high hygiene standards.
* The library has access to enough staffing to run all of its core operations.

**Services**:

* A resumption of all core services with a continued emphasis on hygiene.

**Preparation**

* Restore any computers that have been removed to accommodate social distancing.
* Clear backlog of quarantined items and return to conventional turnaround on shelving items.
* Restaff and schedule for all operations.
* Determine how virtual programs fit into the spectrum of services going forward.
* Ramp up ordering and processing of materials and clear any backlog.
* Reset changes to due dates and customer block criteria changed at the beginning of the crisis.

#### Level 4: Response to return of virus

**Criteria**

* The governor and/or regional, state or federal health officials release a second order mandating social distancing or a stay at home order
* There is a sustained increase in community spread for five days.
* Local hospitals are no longer able to safely treat all patients requiring hospitalization.
* Effective testing is not available within the community.
* The library is unable to maintain the hygiene or staffing necessary to safely operate.

**Services**:

* What service would be accessible would depend on the restrictions inherent to any recommendation. The Library could return to Level 1 or 2 or revert to a full-scale closure as appropriate.