

**COVID-19 REIMAGINING & REOPENING PLAN**

**INTRODUCTION**

The pandemic has forced our library building to close temporarily, but it has not closed our library. Services continue and have flourished online, developed and provided through the talents and creativity of the library’s wonderful staff. As we commit ourselves to extending virtual services to patrons, we are thinking carefully about what a return to our building’s spaces must consider and include. Curbside circulation service is now a concrete possibility (with appropriate approvals) and WLS staff and member libraries are planning a coordinated effort to begin curbside services as early as June 15. While we assess our immediate environment and discuss possible scenarios, there is uncertainty as to the timing of opening our building. We do know, however, that a return to physical spaces will look different from pre-COVID-19 times. First and foremost, we need to follow recommended best practices, as well the NYS Governor’s reopening plan for the Mid-Hudson Region, for the well-being of our staff members and our patrons. These guidelines have informed the development of the stages of our reopening plan and will continue to guide our operations as we move forward.

This plan, ​the *COVID-19 Reimagining & Reopening Plan*,*​* responds to our reality by outlining proposed stages of reintroducing people to our physical materials and spaces with new health and best practices protocols in place. Each stage’s details include proposed timelines; restrictions and extensions on services, hours, and places; prerequisite needs for supplies and materials; and plans for continuation of remote working. Criteria for how we will determine when we would be ready to move from one stage to another follows the Governor’s New York State [Regional Monitoring Dashboard](https://forward.ny.gov/regional-monitoring-dashboard) and the [New York Business Re-Opening Tool](https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/app/nyforward). It is assumed we may need to revert to earlier stages if new infections occur and government mandates to stay home are reinstated. It is also assumed that we will be working in concert with timelines, capabilities, and approvals of the Westchester Library System (WLS), the New York State Department of Health and the Town of Pelham. This document, therefore, will continue to be developed as we learn more and is subject to change. WLS recommends, to the extent possible, a coordinated response across all of Westchester County so that no single library is overwhelmed and reminds us:

* When staff feels safe, patrons feel safe and their trust in their libraries will grow.
* When staff interact with each patron in a meaningful way, it can take the place of lingering in the spaces and busy-ness.

**Stage PAUSE: based on Governor’s Executive Order
*Core Services: Communication to Public and Digital/Virtual Resources and Programming***

**Context: ​**Stay-at-home order is in place by state and local authorities. Physical distancing is recommended. Infection risks are still high.

* Physical location closed
* Staff provides virtual service through remote access
* Public access to expanding digital content and virtual programming

**Summary:** Since the Library building closed, administrative services continue only as needed to be sure the building’s systems are functioning and maintained properly. The bookdrop is checked often and materials are set aside for 72-hour quarantine. Mail is processed and bills are paid. Some materials have been processed and cleaning has continued on a once a week basis. Phone and email are monitored offsite and staff continue to provide virtual story time and the adult book clubs from home. Also, at home, Staff have moved reference and notary services online, communicate new programs and services through the Library’s eNewsletter and eBlasts, and continue to select materials to purchase online and in print and meet often to discuss and plan for our staged reopening.

**STAGES OF REIMAGING AND REOPENING**

**Stage 1: Preparing for Curbside and In-Building Services**

Staff come in to prepare the building for curbside delivery and other Stage 2 library services.

**Timeframe**: 1-2 weeks before beginning of curbside delivery.

**Anticipated date:** Dependent on local and state approval.

**Context: ​**Partial reopening is allowed for service at 50% staff reduction following state and local authority approval and at a date according to the New York Business Re-Opening Tool (see <https://www.businessexpress.ny.gov/app/nyforward>.) (We are seeking clarity on this fluid situation from the New York State Library Association, which has sent out a notice of libraries’ reclassification on May 20.) Physical distancing, wearing face masks and handwashing or sanitizer for all staff is recommended as Infection risks are still high. Supplies are limited but manageable for the immediate future and restocking ability is uncertain.

**Summary: ​**Library buildings remain closed to the public. Staff starts working onsite under best practices procedures to prepare curbside delivery as well as spaces, collections and technology for re-opening the buildings. Some staff continue to work remotely as tasks allow. Thruway Glass Co. is installing plexiglass barriers; staff is making and putting up signage.

**Stage 2: Curbside Services Introduced**

Library has staff onsite to provide access to physical materials via curbside pickup only (contactless home delivery for homebound patrons will be considered). Virtual events, notarization and online summer reading programs will continue. External book drops are still open. Curbside printing will be considered.

**A**​**anticipated Date:​** Consistent with New York State Business Re-Opening Tool in concert with Westchester Library System which anticipates as early as June 15.

**Context: ​** Physical distancing, wearing face masks and handwashing or sanitizer is mandatory for staff and patrons. We have enough supplies to comply with best practice recommendations for staff, but supply needs and availability are uncertain. The public is not allowed in the building and no public restrooms are available.

**Summary: ​**Our intention is to provide access to materials via curbside delivery only. (Library hours are expanded if necessary, to provide access to materials without having lines and also to allow for materials to be selected, packed and scheduled for pickup. Specific hours for vulnerable patrons may be established. Home delivery may be established for registered homebound patrons. While working, there is limited face-to-face staff/public interaction. Staff assist through phone calls, and emails. Many staff continue to work from home as much as possible.

**Stage 3: Limited In-Building Access for Patrons**

The stage represents a transition to in-building services and we may return to regular hours if feasible. Patrons may be allowed in the building for browsing library materials, checking-out library materials and using the photo-copier.

**Anticipated Date:​** dependent on local and state assessment of risk as well as New York State Business Reopening Tool.

**Context: ​** Physical distancing, wearing face masks and handwashing or sanitizer is mandatory for staff and patrons. We have enough supplies to comply with best practice recommendations for public and staff, but supply needs and availability are uncertain. No public restrooms available.

**Summary:​** Our intention is to provide access to materials (with possible new self-checkout options via the Capira app) as well as continue curbside during specific hours and contactless home delivery for homebound. Other services are by appointment only. Patrons are not allowed to stay longer than one hour and social distancing is enforced. Most interior seating is removed from the public floor. Library occupancy will be limited to 25 percent. WLS interlibrary borrowing and delivery may be reintroduced.

Specific hours for vulnerable patrons may be established. While open, there is limited face-to-face staff/public interaction. Staff assist remotely through phone calls, and emails. Many staff continue to work from home as much as possible.

**Stage 4: Patrons Given Access to Computers and Workspaces**

Additional in-building services are added and we may return to regular hours if feasible or previously established. In addition to services in Stage 3, Patrons will now be allowed to make appointments for the computers for a specific period of time and bring their own devices to use in our work areas at a six-foot distance from each other.

**Anticipated Date:​** dependent on local and state assessment of risk as well as New York State Business Reopening Tool.

**Context: ​**Physical distancing is still recommended, but infections risks are declining. Supply needs are predictable and supplies are plentiful.

**Summary:​** Our intention is to provide access to materials and technology as well as work spaces on a reduced basis. Library will continue to operate a reduced capacity, possibly at 50 percent occupancy based on recommendations at that time. Public restrooms may or may not be available. Specific hours for vulnerable patrons may be established. Home delivery continues for home-bound patrons. While open, there is limited face-to-face staff/public interaction. Staff continue to assist through phone calls and emails. Staff may continue to work from home as much as possible.

**Stage 5: In-Person Programming at Safe Levels**

Programs for children in grade school and older may be offered as well as adult and teen programming, but children must be able to understand and practice best practices for hygiene and physical distancing. Storytime for toddlers will likely stay online or be held outdoors. Program attendance will be capped and registration required in order to control numbers. This represents our “new normal” and we will likely be expected to offer both virtual and in-person events for the foreseeable future. In-person community engagement resumes, but online communication remains paramount.

**Anticipated Date:​** dependent on local and state assessment of risk as New York State Business Reopening Tool.

**Context: ​**Infection threat is considered low or there is a vaccine.

**Summary**:**​** Larger group gatherings of all ages for meetings or library programs are allowed. The staff makes off-sites visits and attends other outreach events. Visits to preschools resume.

**COVID-19 LIBRARY BUILDING REOPENING: PROCEDURAL DETAILS**

**STAFF GUIDELINES**

The health and well-being of library staff members and patrons is our highest priority. Therefore, the library will reinforce these best practices and guidelines with regard to preventative health measures throughout the phases of reopening the library.

**Hygiene Practices: ​**To help prevent the spread of germs at work.

* **Wear a mask**. Wear a clean mask every day. Multiple masks will be provided and staff will need to launder them at the end of each shift.
* **Clean your hands often.​** Wash your hands with soap and water, vigorously rubbing together front and back for 20 seconds. Or use alcohol-based hand sanitizers, rubbing hands until they are dry.
* **Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough even when wearing a mask, ​**or sneeze into a tissue and then throw it away; use your arm or sleeve to cover if you do not have a tissue.
* **Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.** G**​**erms need an entry point, and the average adult touches their face once every three or four minutes.
* **Clean shared surfaces and equipment often. ​**Use disinfectants to clean commonly-touched items such as doorknobs, faucet handles, copy machines, coffee pot handles, desktops, handrails, microwave buttons, keyboards, and elevator buttons.
* **Stay home when you are sick.** When you are sick or have flu symptoms, stay home, get plenty of rest, check with a health care provider as needed, and notify your supervisor as needed. See the illness practices below for additional information.

**Physical Distancing Practices:** To minimize the spread of the disease among the staff. During the workday, staff members are requested to:

* **Avoid meeting people face-to-face in the building.** Staff are encouraged to use the telephone, online conferencing, e-mail, or instant messaging to conduct business as much as possible, even when participants are in the same building. Unavoidable in-person meetings should be short, in a large meeting room where people can sit at least six feet from each other; avoid shaking hands.
* **Eliminate unnecessary travel** and cancel or postpone nonessential meetings, gatherings, workshops and training sessions.
* **Do not congregate** in work rooms, staff rooms or other areas where people work or socialize. Keep six feet apart when possible.
* **Bring lunch and eat at your desk** or away from others (avoid staff room and crowded restaurants). Bring your own utensils and take home to clean or use disposable plates and utensils.
* **Request information and materials via phone and email** in order to minimize person-to-person contact. Have the materials and information ready for fast pick-up.
* All staff will be required to **answer a wellness questionnaire** before starting work each day.

*For outside of workday activities, staff members are encouraged to the extent possible to*:

* **Illness Practices:​** Influenza (Flu)​ Fever, coughing, and difficulty breathing are symptoms associated with these viruses. Staff members exhibiting any of these symptoms or other signs of illness should stay home or will be asked to return home. Staff members should not return to work until all signs and symptoms are gone, including being fever free for at least 24 hours while free from medication.
* **COVID-19​** - If a staff member has signs or symptoms indicating COVID-19 (fever and/or symptoms of acute respiratory illness,) the staff member will be asked to notify their supervisor and seek medical assistance. Staff members who have tested positive for COVID-19, may be asked to submit a doctor’s note indicating they are fit to return to duty prior to returning to the library.
* **Increased vulnerability to illness​** - Based on CDC recommendations and other guidance, staff members over a certain age and/or with underlying health conditions may not be allowed to return to work in the library buildings. E-work may be an option, if available.
* **FMLA Leave Expansion and Emergency Paid Sick Leave due to COVID-19**
	+ [Guidelines are linked here](https://www.dol.gov/general/topic/benefits-leave/fmla).
	+ Emergency FMLA Leave Request Form - Use if unable to work (or e-work) due to a need to care for their son or daughter when the school or place of care has been closed, or their regular childcare provider is unavailable, due to a public health emergency with respect to COVID-19.
	+ Emergency Paid Sick Leave Request Form - Use if unable to work (or e-work) due to one of the six reasons (defined in guidelines above and in the request form) related to COVID-19.

**Best Practices:**

**Stage PAUSE**

* Cleaning service prepares the building.
* Staff are trained in best practices protocols.
* Plexiglass is installed at service desks.
* Seating is arranged to allow for physical distancing.
* Returned materials are quarantined, checked-in and shelved.
* Masks and gloves are available for staff who need them.
* Hand sanitizer and wipes are provided throughout the library for staff for self-sanitation of hands and surfaces.

**Stage 1**

* Staff meetings, if held in person, allow for 6 ft physical distance between participants.
* Staff are scheduled to address the need for distancing in work spaces.

**Stage 2**

No new best practice introduced

**Stage 3**

* Hand sanitizer and wipes are provided throughout the library for staff and patrons for self-sanitation of hands and surfaces.
* Staff are scheduled in order to address the need for distancing in work spaces and to reduce patron contact.
* Team members monitor patron behavior to enforce compliance with best practices guidelines and/or government mandates.
* 6 ft distance is marked from service points.

**Stage 4**

* Staff meetings, if held in person, allow for 6 ft physical distance between participants.
* Staff are scheduled to address the need for distancing in work spaces and reduce patron contact.
* Meeting room set-ups are configured for smaller groups.

**Stage 5**

* Return to regular best practices.

**SPACES, SERVICES AND PROGRAMS, COLLECTIONS, TECHNOLOGY**

We will coordinate our core services reopening plans/tasks with WLS and other partner institutions.

**Stage 1 PAUSE Tasks**

Admin

* Ensure building equipment is maintained and functioning properly
* Prepare payroll
* Bank deposits are prepared and made and statements are reconciled
* Continue 2019 Audit and 2019 AUD until complete
* Meetings with staff, trustees, Friends and PLDA
* Materials and supplies inventory maintained
* Attending webinars and training

Spaces

* Cleaning Library spaces as needed
* Ordering, organizing and distributing required/recommended sanitation and PPE supplies in staff and public areas
* Materials and supplies inventory maintained
* Order and install spatter guards

Services and Programs

* Promoting and expanding digital library (collections, technology, services, virtual programming)
* Outreach to Pelham Schools, Pelham Together and Civics
* Providing remote tech help with digital collections and online resources
* Verifying residency of new accounts
* Answering contactus emails and forwarding calls
* Researching and planning remote phone and chat service
* Updating patron records and phoning patrons without email
* Communications including newsletters, eblasts, website posts, Facebook posts

Collections

* Continue selection and ordering on digital and physical materials
* Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
* Working with WLS on holds processing setup and workflow for Stage 2
* Sorting bookdrop materials for sufficient quarantine
* Materials and supplies inventory

Technology

* Providing tech infrastructure and support for staff working remotely and onsite
* Evaluation of Covid-19 staged plan.

**Stage 1 Tasks**

Spaces

* Cleaning Main Library spaces
* Remove all seating from public spaces
* Prepare staff and public spaces for physical distancing
* Ordering, organizing and distributing required/recommended sanitation supplies in staff and public areas

Services and Programs

* Promoting and expanding digital library (collections, technology, services, virtual programming)
* Providing remote tech help with digital collections and online resources
* Verifying residency of new accounts
* Answering contactus emails and forwarded calls
* Researching and planning remote phone
* Scheduling staff for Stages 2-5
* Updating patron records with no email

Collections

* Continue selection and ordering on digital and physical materials
* Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
* Working with WLS on holds processing setup and workflow for Stage 2
* Check-in, sorting and shelving materials after sufficient quarantine
* Shelf-reading/organizing
* Materials and supplies inventory
* Allow checkout/pickup of existing materials available on hold shelf

Technology

* Providing tech infrastructure and support for staff working remotely and onsite
* Preparing public tech for Stage 2-5
* Evaluation of COVID-19 staged plan.

**Stage 2 Tasks**

Spaces

* Areas/furniture that invite gathering that cannot be removed (such as couches in Children’s Services Area, window benches, public PCs areas) are blocked off with caution tape or by other methods.
* Program Room is used for quarantine of returned materials

Services and Programs

* Promoting and expanding digital library (collections, technology, services, virtual programming)
* Answering contactus emails and forwarded calls
* Providing tech help with digital collections and online resources
* Developing and presenting virtual programming
* Verifying residency of new digital accounts
* Staff assist the public with self check-out and technology if physical distance can be maintained or if not assist through chat

Collections

* Allow checkout/pickup of existing materials available on hold shelf
* Pulling items on hold for Pelham cardholders
* Curating materials by request for pick-up and/or delivery
* Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
* Check-in, sorting and shelving materials after sufficient quarantine
* Cleaning discs
* Shelf-reading/organizing/weeding
* Materials and supplies inventory
* Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials

Technology

* Possibly offer Printer-On print jobs for pickup curbside

**Stage 3 Tasks**

Services and Programs

* Service desks are staffed at the Library as practical
* Staff assist the public with self check-out and technology if physical distance can be maintained or if not assist through phone

Collections

* Curating materials by request for pick-up (Children/Families, Seniors prioritized)
* Checking in materials from WLS deliveries (when service is restored) and other returns after sufficient quarantine
* Receiving, invoicing, cataloging and processing new materials
* Check-in, sorting and shelving materials after sufficient quarantine
* Cleaning discs
* Shelf-reading/organizing/weeding
* Materials and supplies inventory

**Stage 4 Tasks**

Spaces

* Some furniture is reintroduced and placed at recommended physical distances.

Services and Programs

* Library programs are planned for small audiences 15 or fewer attendees (registration required to be able to enforce limits) Programs for children may be planned for ages 5-7 (with a caregiver) or for Grades 3 and up (children must be able to understand and comply with physical distancing and best recommended hygiene practices during the program).

Technology

* Offer 1-2 public PC express stations per hour
* Public PCs and copy/scan/print/fax stations​ ​are accessible with socially distant intervals at all locations

**Stage 5 Tasks**

Spaces

* Toys are reintroduced to the children’s spaces.

Collections

* All collections services are fully restored.

Technology

* All public technology is fully accessible.

As we move through each stage of this plan, the plan will be re-evaluated and any new recommendations and guidelines will be implemented.