

Utah Libraries Plan for Moving Towards Full Service

By Colleen Eggett

Utah's Libraries have been closed or partially closed since [Covid-19 hit in Utah](#) and [Governor Herbert issued the "Stay Safe, Stay Home" directive](#). Most libraries have posted, "Closed until further notice." We all need to think deeply about how to return to full service in a safe and healthy manner.

1. There is excellent information on <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/>. Pay special attention to what the [CDC](#) is telling us to do.
2. Follow the instruction you are given by your boss: your Manager, Mayor, Chief of Staff, etc.
3. Excellence is defined locally. You will ultimately determine what works best for you.
4. We know that Covid-19 will continue to be a "situation" in Utah and nationwide. Here is a phased plan for reopening Utah's libraries.



Stage 1: Minimal Staff in Buildings during Health Emergency

The majority of staff should be teleworking. Skeleton crew work in the building with emphasis on social distancing. Gloves and masks should be worn in the building.

Services provided include:

- All staff in and outside of the building work on their assigned duties, including fiscal, personnel, and statistical tasks as usual
- Make sure ILS system is up and running, and other online services are operational
- In-building staff receive and sort mail
- In-building staff bring in book drop if that remains open, attaching a sign for when to check in books. Most libraries have told patrons to keep the books until the library is open again but sometimes that doesn't happen. Books are to be quarantined for 3 days before handling and checking them in. Use gloves to handle any incoming materials
- Monitor building for security issues and building systems operations
- Teleworkers may come into the building to receive work, but should primarily work from home

Preparation for this stage includes:

- The Library Admin Team should work with City/ County management and Human Resources to determine the best methods to offer teleworking, and what to do if the public is not in the building but some staff is. It needs to be determined who can telework and who cannot, with every effort made to be fair to all.
- Job duties are determined or modified if staff is to stay working during the health crisis
- Staff and supervisors determine whether telework is appropriate and are provided resources

- Janitorial services revised to reflect closure to public and precautions for virus management
- Skeleton crew develops health-safe working processes

Stage 2: Most Staff Return to Work in Buildings

Most staff return to work in the building as health mandates are eased by Governor's Office and/or local officials.

Services restored include:

- Staff with special health considerations may need to continue to telework. Please be considerate of their needs
- Staff prepare for opening to public
- Staff return desks and work areas to normal
- Office work routines restored
- Staff catches up on library materials returned by users: check in, mending, holds, notes, etc.
- Books continue to be quarantined for 3 days before handling and checking them in until released from the CDC from doing so. Use gloves to handle any incoming materials

Preparation for this stage includes:

- Give staff a couple of days or week in the building before partial opening to public
- Ensure sanitizing supplies on hand for library materials that have been returned
- Give recognition that all staff have gone through incredible stresses during COVID
- Create a display noting what staff did during closure and put this up in a prominent place
- Urge staff to successfully integrate work projects they did at home into daily work in office
- Test all public facing equipment to ensure it is in working order
- Determine whether public areas need additional cleaning prior to opening and work with janitorial staff to make that happen

Stage 3: Limited Public Service Restored as Health Emergency Continues to Ease

Buildings open to public with extra social distancing procedures (limited number of people in buildings), limited seating for the public, and adequate public area sanitation supplies.

Services restored include:

- Building is open to public with restrictions: safe social distancing, hand washing/ sanitizing
- Provide at least six feet of distance all the way around between your computer terminals. Take computers out that are too close together and put some on temporary tables using your wifi service and a plug. Or put them in study carrels, or other places. Post signs directing people to where they can find co-workers
- Add a place marker on the floor, or a sign, reminding people not to crowd a desk works
- Wireless available throughout building
- Full building janitorial and security needs to be restored, if applicable
- Reference, holds, and interlibrary loan restored

- Place hand sanitizing resources and reminder signs by places where people will be sharing resources: copiers, computer terminals, self-checkout systems, etc.
- Make sure your building feels safe and is safe. Use signing and appropriate spacing. Provide comfort and support to visitors with unique considerations
- Books continue to be quarantined upon return to the library for three days until restrictions are lifted and the Covid-19 disease is considered resolved. Gloves should be used
- Staff sanitize public areas as public leave

Preparation for this stage includes:

- Staff publicizes limited service restoration
- May need extra wireless hotspots and internet connectivity due to high demand on resources

Stage 4: Full Public Service Restored

Library building completely open to the public with business as usual

Services restored include:

- Unlimited entry to the library
- Social distancing restrictions are lifted
- Public programs restored
- Interns and volunteers can return to work within the building
- Room rentals restored

Preparation for this stage includes:

- Staff publicizes full-service restoration
- Plan and line up Storytimes and outside speakers or events

**Thank you to Patience Frederiksen of the Alaska State Library and Eli Guinee of the New Mexico State Library for their invaluable input.