LIBRARY OPERATING PLAN: RESPONSE TO COMMUNITY PHASED RE-OPENING COVID-19

This document provides an overview of library operations in response to the State of Montana and Flathead County plans to re-open our community. Various operations may change or adjust as deemed safe and appropriate by Library Leadership, the local public health officer, professional library organizations, CDC guidelines and Montana Governor’s orders.

BACKGROUND

During the Governor mandated school closures and stay at home order, the library swiftly built a Virtual Branch for online services and outreach to meet community needs.

Virtual Branch services, including programming, expanded digital collections and community outreach will continue throughout all phases described below.

As community members relied more on virtual and online services, including digital collections and technology training, the library focused on online service delivery to meet those demands. Although critical, online services are not sufficient to reach all constituents and are not a substitute for in-person services.

Many people in the community do not have internet access, devices to access online services, or do not have the technical skills required. Online services are just one of many tools the library must use to provide robust educational opportunities for our community.

Throughout the building closures library staff have been working with physical collections and library facilities behind the scenes.

PHASE 1

As of April 27, 2020, Montana entered Phase One of the Reopening the Big Sky plan. The library is in the process of redesigning library buildings for safe handling of physical materials and appropriate social distancing for staff and the public.

During Phase 1 the library will reinstate the circulation of physical materials and continue to provide reference, reader’s advisory, expanded digital collections, virtual programming, and community outreach.

Public In-Person Operations

- Curbside pickup on May 4, 2020. This start date allows time for policy, procedure, and space development for three locations.
- Re-open book drops with a plan for 3-day quarantine on incoming materials

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• Redesign public spaces for the ability to apply social distancing guidelines: remove access to furniture, no services that promote lingering or gathering.
• Install plexiglass around staff work areas, directional foot traffic guides, and provide hand sanitizer throughout buildings.
• Hourly cleaning of high touch areas.
• Public computer access will resume in some form on June 1, 2020 or Phase 2.
  • Limited public access to buildings resumes on May 18, 2020
    • Specific hours designated for elders and other demographics
• Coordinate with Montana State Library Shared Catalog group to determine when statewide sharing can resume.
• Meeting room in Kalispell will be used to quarantine materials.

Staff Spaces and Operations
• Staff schedules and work stations will be modified to meet criteria for social distancing.
• Install plexiglass around work stations.
• Staff wear masks and other PPE while working in the building.
• Frequent cleaning of high touch staff areas.
• Self-screening process for staff before reporting for onsite shift.

PHASE 2
• Same as Phase 1 with additional building access
• Continue hours for vulnerable populations
• Add more computer access
• Outdoor programming with limited group sizes

PHASE 3
• Resume full operating levels, including meeting room access
• All staff resume regular work schedules and locations
• Assume increased demand and need from community experiencing a recession and collective trauma