Phased Plan for Reopening
Reviewed by the Board May 12, 2020
Updated and Revised June 9, 2020
Updates Reviewed/Suggested by the Board June 9, 2020

EO 2020-110 has allowed libraries across the state to resume operation beginning June 8th, while following guidelines for retail businesses as outlined in EO 2020-97. This plan includes proposed dates for the first three phases of the plan, but dates included here are subject to change if additional national, state, or local guidelines are released or if staff, administration, and the Board feel safer with an accelerated phased plan. With so many unknowns, it is hard to have a definite implementation date for all phases at this time.

During all phases staff are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines, to wash their hands often with soap, and not to touch their faces. The good news about this virus is it is not likely to re-aerosolize (return to the air) once it is on a surface. This means we are able to protect ourselves by washing our hands and not touching our eyes, nose or mouth. This would include handling returned library materials.

Phase 1
June 8, 2020

Staff return to the building in small groups for approximately 50% of their normally scheduled hours while working an additional 20% of hours from home. Staff will be paid for 70% of normally scheduled hours while participating in the Work-Share Plan. Additional income will be 30% of qualified unemployment and the federal pandemic stipend. A schedule will be shared with staff no later than Thursday of the preceding week. This reduced schedule will allow staff to return to the library buildings and work on projects while keeping the number of staff in the building at any time low. During this time staff will be expected to follow all state guidelines as outlined in EO 2020-97 and to wear masks if they can be medically tolerated when working in shared spaces such as the circulation desk. Staff in their own office or workspace may work without a mask if they choose. At this time staff spaces will remain as they are, but staff with a public facing desk may be moved before opening to the public. Staff will be expected to observe a minimum 6 foot social distance and to work independently at this time.

During this time, cleaning of the Main Branch will happen each morning and the Solomonson Branch twice per week. Only one staff member will be at ND so the cleaning will be handled by that staff member. At this time we are allowed to have staff in the ND Branch on Monday-Thursday until 3 PM; in shared spaces such as the hallways and restrooms, all adults at ND are required to wear a mask and absolutely no students are allowed in the building. Staff at the Solomonson Branch will work alone, but are asked to wear masks if they can be medically tolerated when working at the circulation desk. All staff will be asked to wipe down any hard surfaces before and after use. Staff may be assigned a work station and phone to be used during their shift and sharing of these items within a shift will be discouraged. Shared cups of pens and supplies will be removed and staff will be asked to use a single pen and to wipe down any shared supplies they use. Specific procedures for safe use and cleaning at each branch and work station will be provided.

During Phase 1 staff will also receive training, as required in EO 2020-97, on the Library’s COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan, daily self-screenings, workplace infection control, the proper use of PPE, steps to notify administration of symptoms or possible exposure to COVID-19, and avenues for reporting unsafe work conditions. EO 2020-97 requires we identify one or more individuals who will be present anytime staff are in the building to implement, monitor and report on the plan. Those individuals will be identified and provided with a review of responsibilities.

Staff in the building during Phase 1 will prepare for Phase 2, answer the phones, begin placing holds for patrons, answer questions, and/or provide reference assistance virtually or over the phone. Virtual programming will continue, but may be limited during this phase as we adjust to new responsibilities and procedures. Staff will also adjust workspaces to provide appropriate social distancing review protocols for cleaning all areas. The breakroom at the Main Branch will not
be used for shared meals or breaks during Phase 1, staff are encouraged to take their break outside or at their workspace to avoid congregating in small spaces.

As before, no staff member should come to work if they are feeling sick. Staff with a fever, cough, or other symptoms of the virus should self-quarantine and seek testing.

Phase 2
June 15th

The largest change from Phase 1 to Phase 2 is the beginning of curbside services. Staff will work in small groups on a limited schedule to keep our numbers in the building low. We will ideally start with pick up slots Mon-Fri between 10-1 and 3-6 at the Main; Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday at the Solomonson Branch; and 11-2 at the ND Branch on Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday. We are planning to use the window at ND for pick-up of materials to reduce the amount of time library staff spend in the hallway of the school. All staff will be asked to continue the practices in Phase 1, including requirements as outlined in EO 2020-97, using a dedicated work station, and cleaning all work areas and supplies. Virtual programming will continue during Phase 2 and staff will attend any applicable committee meetings via Zoom, even when in the building.

Specific procedures for curbside services will be provided and will include how to provide items to patrons while maintaining a safe social distance. Curbside services may include, by appointment, material pick-up, copies ($0.10 per page), faxing ($1 per page) (at the Main Branch), printing ($0.10 per page) for items sent electronically or on a flashdrive, reference assistance by phone or email with printed information provided for pick-up (no charge for up to 10 pages on COVID information/$0.10 per page), free in-county microfilm research (up to 15 minutes) with curbside pick-up of prints ($0.25 per page). All staff will wear a mask when providing curbside services. Each staff member will handle all physical items for a patron on their own (pulling items, checking items out, bagging items for pick up) and will keep track of which patrons they have provided items for. This tracking is internal and records will only be kept for 21 days. One or more staff members per shift will carry items outside the library (or place through the window at ND) and place them on the tables for patron pick up; gloves may be worn for this activity.

While the concern for an appropriate supply of disinfectant to safely handle returns continues, I believe we can safely handle returns at all branches during Phase 2. We are considering using the book returns or having a cart (or bin) outside on which patrons can place their own returns. This cart (or bin) can be wheeled inside and pushed into an area for 72 hours before staff handle the items. All returns will be cleaned following CDC guidelines before returning to the shelf. This means that all plastic, laminated, taped, or solid surfaces must be wiped down. For every 100 items returned that is about an extra 1-2 hours of staff time. All due dates will be extended until at least 7 days beyond when we begin curbside pick-up and bills will not be created during the 90 days after we resume curbside services. We may need to be flexible with patrons who have an item that goes missing during this time as we are asking them to keep track of items they checked out 4 or more months ago.

Phase 3
June 29, 2020 for Main and/or Solomonson
TDB for North Dickinson

During the time we participate in the Work-Share program we cannot schedule staff for more than 70% of normally scheduled hours per week. During Phase 3, the library would continue all services in Phase 2 and add library use by appointment for computer access, new card registration/temporary virtual card updates, privilege renewal (non-residents), and bill paying. Patrons wishing to access the library for one of these services would set up an appointing during the same times we are offering curbside services. They would be expected to wear a mask, follow all social distancing guidelines, use hand sanitizer before using any library equipment, and comply with all guidelines as outlined in EO 2020-97. We will not be able to move to Phase 3 at ND until the school allows access. We may need to move branches into different phases at different times based on many factors.
It is anticipated that many patrons will need to access the computers at the library and we hope to be able to accommodate this community need as soon as we can do so safely. Appointments will not be restricted to card holders or withheld without justifiable cause but will be limited in availability each week and a per patron limit may apply as needed.

Phase 4
TBD

Phase 4 will be very similar to Phase 3 with additional services by appointment. This phase may follow quickly after Phase 3, or may be delayed as we process the patron experience in Phase 3. During Phase 4 patrons can make appointments to use library materials that cannot be provided curbside such as Local History or Reference materials, personal use of the copy machine for documents they do not wish to have staff copy, personal use of the microfilm viewer, or limited appointments to identify needed materials. Meetings by appointment, such as AARP tax aide, may be permitted following reduced room occupancy limits, three or fewer individuals in the Local History Room and eight or fewer individuals in the Multipurpose Room and meeting rooms would be cleaned after each use. These appointments would continue to be during the times available in Phase 3, or expanded as appropriate following termination of the work-share program. Library programming would continue to be done virtually.

Phase 5
TBD

During Phase 5, the library will be open to the public without an appointment and will coincide with a return to 100% of normally scheduled hours for staff (if not already in place in a previous phase) and a return to normal hours of operation. Any limitations outlined in EO 2020-97 or future EOs providing guidance to libraries, such as occupancy, social distancing requirements, or traffic pattern signage will be reviewed, enforced, and posted as needed. If necessary, a staff member will be assigned to keep track of library occupancy and a waiting queue will be established. Meetings would continue with reservations and with occupancy limits, eight or fewer in the Local History and 15 or fewer in the Multipurpose Room to provide area to social distance. The small meeting room would be opened to individuals. All meeting rooms would continue to be cleaned after each use. During Phase 5 the Library Board would return to in-person board meetings open to the public. Patrons may be requested to wear a mask, to limit visits to a reasonable amount of time, and to avoid handling items they are not checking out. Library programming may begin to return to some in-person offerings with limitations.

Phase 6
TBD

Phase 6 is essentially a return to services as they were before COVID-19. It is the removal of requests for masks and occupancy limitations. We would remain in Phase 6 until there is no longer an anticipated risk of reoccurrence or a need to move back to Phases 1-5. Meeting rooms would return to normal occupancy and library programming would not be restricted. Cleaning schedules may be relaxed to daily or weekly in some areas.

Should we see an increase in COVID-19 positive cases in Dickinson County during Phase 2, I recommend we remain in Phase 2 for at least 14 days beyond the new peak reported (we will watch for updates and recommendations from state and local agencies). If we see an alarming increase in positive cases in Dickinson County after we have entered Phase 3, 4, or 5 it may be necessary to return to Phase 2 to maintain the health and safety of our staff and patrons based on recommendations from state or local agencies.