

Reopening the Allegany County Library System

Thanks to the staff and leadership at Washington County Free Library, Ruth Enlow Library of Garrett County, and The Western Maryland Regional Library for sharing their reopening plans. Their work has formed the basis of the shape and actions contained in the ACLS Reopening Plan.

Introduction

Governor Hogan has mandated that all non-essential businesses stay closed for the foreseeable future. However, at some point our libraries will reopen and the COVID-19 virus may still be present in the communities and populations we serve.

It is important to think of the reopening plan as a continuum of phases that ACLS adopts depending on the situation. In the event that the virus causes the Governor to declare additional stay at home orders, we may proceed in the direction of reducing access to ensure the health and safety of our community and staff.

The primary consideration in this plan is maintaining the safety of library patrons and staff while finding ways to provide necessary services that the library is uniquely positioned to perform.

When the library reopens it will modify operations across the board in order to provide maximum safety for patrons and staff. Practices currently employed at essential businesses—maximized social distancing, greatly enhanced cleaning, and messaging throughout the building to promote safe practices—serve as a useful guide when considering the many changes needed to the library's five main areas of operation:

- Collections
- Patrons
- Staff
- Events and Meetings
- Facilities

We are following Governor Hogan's lead in his [Roadmap to Recovery Plan](#) with a phased plan to safely reopen the Allegany County Library System.

- Phase 1 is Complete Cleaning and Disinfecting of library facilities.
- Phase 2 is Staff only in library facilities
- Phase 3 is Curbside Pickup of library materials

- Phase 4 is Limited Patron Access to library facilities
- Phase 5 is Open with extra precautions
- Phase 6 is Open to public

Phase 1. Complete Cleaning and Disinfecting of Library Facilities

As of 3/13/2020, we are in Phase 1.

Collections

- Bookdrops are closed
- Circulation is limited to ACLS online, downloadable and streaming materials.
- ACLS will not accept donations of materials during this phase

Patrons

- Patrons are complying with Stay at Home orders
- Patrons may request assistance from home via email or ACLS website
- Patron without existing library accounts may sign up for temporary cards
- Patron fines and fees will not be charged until at least August 1, 2020

Staff

- Staff are working from home
- Staff should continue to provide applicable online programming and services from home
- All staff who enter library facilities will be required to wear PPE.
- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell
- Any staff member who feels unwell or has a family member who is sick should notify their supervisor immediately and the Director of HR

Events and Meetings

- Only online programs and meetings are occurring
- Meeting and Study Rooms are closed

Facilities

- Library Facilities are closed
- Shelving from LaVale will be transported to each branch and installed in the meeting room for holding of quarantined materials

Requirements to Proceed from Phase 1 to Phase 2:

- All library facilities are cleaned and disinfected

- All library vehicles are cleaned and disinfected
- Patron queueing mechanisms installed at each library
- Decals installed to indicate proper social distancing are installed at each library.
- Each library is supplied with sufficient cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- Each library is supplied with sufficient PPE
- ACLS has a sufficient supply chain to maintain flow of needed cleaning, disinfecting and PPE supplies.
- Each library is supplied with a sufficient number of public and staff sanitizing stations
- Public Computers are spread out to insure sufficient social distancing
- Chairs, tables, and other furniture removed to insure sufficient social distancing.
- Plexiglass shields will be installed at public and staff service desks.
- Shelving for quarantining returned materials is installed at each library
- Door signage installed to indicate operating hours
- The order to reopen is given by the Governor.
- Thermometers are procured
- Staff is scheduled to return to designated libraries.

Phase 2. Staff only in Library Facilities

Collections

- Bookdrops open
- All returns must be deposited in the bookdrop
- Materials returned to book drop will be quarantined for a 72 hour period.
- After 72 hours, returned material may be checked in for re-use and reshelfed.
- ACLS will not accept donations of materials during this phase

Patrons

- Library facilities are closed to the public
- Patrons may request assistance from home via email, telephone, or ACLS website
- Patron fines and fees will not be charged until at least August 1, 2020

Staff

- Staff will receive a “goodie bag” containing 1 apron, 2 cloth masks, 1 disposable mask, 2 pairs of gloves, 1 small bottle of sanitizer and 1 packet of sanitizing wipes when returning to work.
- Staff may work shortened shifts in the library
- Staff will ensure that there is sufficient supplies of PPE, cleaning and disinfecting supplies.
- Staff should continue to provide applicable online programming and services from home
- All staff who enter library facilities will be required to wear PPE.
- Staff will empty book drops into quarantine shelving
- Staff will check in material after quarantine period
- Staff will re-shelve material
- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell
- Any staff member who feels unwell or has a family member who is sick should notify their supervisor immediately and the Director of HR

Events and Meetings

- Online events and meetings may continue

Facilities

- Libraries will continue to be disinfected and cleaned at regular scheduled times
- Library staff will clean and disinfect “high touch” items and areas like doorknobs and bathrooms frequently during operating hours.
- Libraries are closed to the public
- Library study rooms are closed to the public

- Library meeting rooms are closed to the public
- Library meeting rooms are used as the quarantine room for returned materials
- Resume delivery of mail to libraries
- Mail will be quarantined in the meeting rooms for 24 hours

Requirements to proceed from Phase 2 to Phase 3:

- Backlog of collections cleared up
- All materials are re-shelved
- Returned materials workflow understood by all staff
- Staff ensure that the meeting rooms are large enough to serve as the quarantined materials room.
- Staff understand and practice proper use of PPE
- Decide which libraries will offer curbside pickup services
- Staff have sufficient time to practice curbside pickup
- Staff have identified policies that need clarification or modification prior to going to the next phase
- Curbside pickup service parameters are determined at all branches
- Curbside pickup service is advertised and promoted at all branches
- All sanitizing supplies are well stocked and available
- LaVale collections have been distributed to other branches
- Door signage updated to indicate operating hours
- Tech Processing dept is up and running at Frostburg

Phase 3: Sidewalk Service Pickup of library materials

Please see the work plan for [Sidewalk Service Pickup of Library materials](#)

Collections

- Curbside pick up all materials
- Patrons must deposit All returns in the bookdrop
- Materials returned to book drop will be quarantined for a 72 hour period.
- After 72 hours, returned material may be checked in for re-use and reshelved.
- ACLS will not accept donations of materials during this phase
- Deliveries between ACLS branches will resume

Patrons

- Patrons interaction will be limited to curbside pick up of materials and online events.
- Curbside pickup will use designated curbside pick up zones
- Patrons must deposit All returns in the bookdrop
- Patrons will NOT be allowed inside the libraries.
- Patron fines and fees will not be charged until at least August 1, 2020

Staff

- Staff may work shortened shifts in the library
- Curbside pick up services will be available for limited hours at each library
- Staff are required to wear PPE
- All staff will be on call. If staff choose not to come in when asked, they will be required to take paid time off.
- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell
- Any staff member who feels unwell or has a family member who is sick should notify their supervisor immediately and the Director of HR

Events and Meetings

- Online events and meetings may continue

Facilities

- Libraries will continue to be disinfected and cleaned at regular scheduled times
- Library staff will clean and disinfect “high touch” items and areas like doorknobs and bathrooms frequently during operating hours.
- Phase 3 may be implemented 1 branch at a time.
- Only staff will be allowed inside the libraries
- Operating hours of library hours may be modified due to budget constraints.

Requirements to proceed from Phase 3 to Phase 4:

- Determine hours of operation and publicize them
- Office and administrative task workflows have been restored or revamped
- Staff are prepared for next phase
- Test all public facing equipment to make sure it still works
- Give staff time to practice
- Materials processing workflows are running smoothly
- Let staff get used to working in the physical presence of coworkers
- Staff are proficient in replacing disposable keyboard covers
- All sanitizing supplies are well stocked and available
- Door signage updated to indicate operating hours

Phase 4: Limited Patron Access to library facilities

Collections

- Stacks are not open to the public, patrons select materials and staff member retrieve them and execute checkout
- Staff may be assigned a particular area of the stacks and will be required to keep that area disinfected
- Staff will encourage all patrons to explore and prepare for use of online materials
- WMRL deliveries begin again
- Materials only to be returned to the book drops.
- ACLS will not accept donations of materials during this phase
- Staff will use the times the library is closed to the public to empty the book drop and sort returned materials

Patrons

- The library will be open for “At Risk” populations from 10AM to 11AM (M-Th)
- The library will be closed to the public from 11AM to 1PM. (M-Th)
- The library will be open to the general public from 1PM to 5PM (M-Th)
- Possible limit on the number of people allowed into building at one time
- Possible limit on amount of time people allowed to stay in the library
- Possible reduction in amount of time on public computers
- Public Computers will be available for applying for benefits or workforce development activities,
- Assistance with public computers limited to within social distancing protocols
- All patrons will be required to wear masks when visiting the library. Those not wearing masks will not be allowed to enter as long as the requirement is in effect.
- Sanitizing stations are available for public use.
- Patron fines and fees will not be charged until at least August 31, 2020

Staff

- Staff shifts will be limited to eight (8) hours per day from 10AM to 6PM (M-Th)
- Social Distance protocols will be enforced.
- Sanitizing stations are available for use.
- Stacks are not open to the public, patrons select materials and staff member retrieve them and execute checkout
- Staff may be assigned a particular area of the stacks and will be required to keep that area disinfected
- All staff will be on call. If staff choose not to come in when asked, they will be requested to take paid time off.

- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell
- Any staff member who feels unwell or has a family member who is sick should notify their supervisor immediately and the Director of HR

Events and Meetings

- Online events and meetings may continue

Facilities

- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned on their regular schedule
- Library staff will clean and disinfect “high touch” items and areas like doorknobs and bathrooms frequently during operating hours.
- Phase 4 may be implemented 1 branch at a time.
- The library will be open for “At Risk” populations from 10AM to 11AM (M-Th)
- The library will be closed to the public from 11AM to 1PM. (M-Th)
- The library will be open to the general public from 1PM to 5PM (M-Th)
- Operating hours of library hours may be modified due to budget constraints.
- George’s Creek and Westernport libraries may be limited to curbside pick up service in Phase 4
- See the proposed public areas for [Frostburg](#), [GCRL](#), [South](#), [West](#), [WSL](#)

Requirements to proceed from Phase 4 to Phase 5:

- Determine hours of operation and publicize them
- Office and administrative task workflows have been restored or revamped
- Staff are prepared for next phase
- Let staff get used to working in the physical presence of coworkers
- All sanitizing supplies are well stocked and available
- Door signage updated to indicate operating hours

Phase 5: Open with extra precautions

Collections

- All materials will be available for public browsing
- Patrons will be permitted to retrieve their own material from the stacks
- Patrons will be **STRONGLY** encouraged to use the book drops to return materials
- Curbside pick up will still be available
- Staff will encourage all patrons to explore and prepare for use of online materials
- Each library will designate a shelf or area to return “in-house” use materials. “In-House” materials will then be added to the cart of materials to begin the 72 hour quarantine
- ACLS will not accept donations of materials during this phase
- Staff will use the times the library is closed to the public to empty the book drop and sort returned materials

Patrons

- The library will be open for “At Risk” populations from 10AM to 11AM (M-Th)
- The library will be closed to the public from 11AM to 1PM. (M-Th)
- The library will be open to the general public from 1PM to 5PM (M-Th)
- Possible limit on the number of people allowed into building at one time
- Possible limit on amount of time people allowed to stay in the library
- Possible reduction in amount of time on public computers
- Assistance with public computers limited to within social distancing protocols
- All patrons will be required to wear masks when visiting the library. Those not wearing masks, will not be allowed to enter as long as the requirement is in effect.
- Sanitizing stations are available for public use.
- Patron fines and fees will not be charged until at least August 1, 2020

Staff

- Staff shifts will be eight (8) hours per day from 10AM to 6PM (M-Th)
- Social Distance protocols will be enforced.
- Sanitizing stations are available for use.
- Staff may be assigned a particular area of the stacks and will be required to keep that area disinfected
- All staff will be on call. Staff will be required to take paid time off if they do not wish to work.
- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell
- Any staff member who feels unwell or has a family member who is sick should notify their supervisor immediately and the Director of HR

Events and Meetings

- Online events and meetings may continue
- Events may be scheduled outside of the library where proper social distancing can be assured

Facilities

- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned on their regular schedule
- Library staff will clean and disinfect “high touch” items and areas like doorknobs and bathrooms frequently during operating hours.
- Phase 5 may be implemented 1 branch at a time.
- Potential morning hours for at-risk populations
- Scheduled hours may be limited
- Signage and social distancing marking will still direct the use of the library spaces.
- The library will be open for “At Risk” populations from 10AM to 11AM (M-Th)
- The library will be closed to the public from 11AM to 1PM. (M-Th)
- The library will be open to the general public from 1PM to 6PM (M-Th)
- Operating hours of library hours may be modified due to budget constraints.

Requirements to proceed from Phase 5 to Phase 6:

- Determine hours of operation and publicize them
- Office and administrative task workflows have been restored or revamped
- Staff are prepared for next phase
- Let staff get used to working in the physical presence of coworkers
- All sanitizing supplies are well stocked and available
- Door signage updated to indicate operating hours

Phase 6: Open to public

Collections

- All Collections and stacks open to the public
- Staff will encourage all patrons to explore and prepare for use of online materials
- Patrons will be **STRONGLY** encouraged to use the book drops to return materials
- Curbside pickup service will continue
- MILO deliveries begin again

Patrons

- Sanitizing stations are available for public use.
- Patron fines and fees will not be charged until at least August 1, 2020

Staff

- Staff should stay home if they feel unwell
- Any staff member who feels unwell or has a family member who is sick should notify their supervisor immediately and the Director of HR

Events and Meetings

- Online events and meetings may continue
- Events may be scheduled inside of the library where proper social distancing can be assured

Facilities

- Facilities will continue to be disinfected and cleaned on their regular schedule
- Library staff will clean and disinfect “high touch” items and areas like doorknobs and bathrooms frequently during operating hours.
- Phase 6 may be implemented 1 branch at a time.
- Gradual reintroduction of tables, chairs, work areas with social distancing in mind
- Signage and social distancing marking will still direct the use of the library spaces.
- The library will be open to the general public from 10AM to 6PM (M-Th)
- The library will be open to the general public from 1PM to 4M on Saturday
- Operating hours of library hours may be modified due to budget constraints.
- Door signage updated to indicate operating hours

Adopted by the Board of Trustees
Allegany County Library System
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