



REOPENING PLAN BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY (B&ECPL) SYSTEM

I. NEW YORK STATE REOPENING PLAN

A. New York Forward

Governor Andrew Cuomo of the State of New York has developed *New York Forward: a Guide to Reopening New York & Building Back Better* as a plan which focuses on getting people back to work and easing social isolation, without triggering renewed spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). He has indicated New York will reopen on a regional basis as each region meets the criteria necessary to protect public health. A *New York Forward* Reopening Advisory Board has been created with representatives from Western New York.

Once the criteria has been met regionally, businesses may be able to open following the strategies as determined by the State of New York as set forth below:

- 1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines:** Based on CDC recommendations, regions must experience a 14-day decline in hospitalizations and deaths on a 3-day rolling average. Regions with few COVID-19 cases cannot exceed 15 new total cases or 5 new deaths on a 3-day rolling average. A region must have fewer than 2 new COVID-19 patients admitted per 100,000 residents per day.
- 2. Phasing Strategy in Accordance with the Governor of the State of New York (5/4/2020):**
 - **Phase One:** Construction, manufacturing and wholesale supply chain, select retail using curbside pickup only;
 - **Phase Two:** Professional services, finance and insurance, retail, administrative support, real estate and rental leasing;
 - **Phase Three:** Restaurants and food service, hotels and accommodations;
 - **Phase Four:** Arts, entertainment and recreation, education.

3. “Business Precautions” per New York State as of 5/4/2020: Each business and industry must have a plan to protect employees and consumers, make the physical work space safer and implement processes that lower risk of infection in the business.

- Adjust workplace hours and shift design as necessary to reduce density in the workplace;
- Enact social distancing protocols;
- Restrict non-essential travel for employees;
- Require all employees and customers to wear masks if in frequent contact with others;
- Implement strict cleaning and sanitation standards;
- Enact a continuous health screening process for individuals to enter the workplace;
- Continue tracing, tracking and reporting of cases; and
- Develop liability processes.

B. Other Considerations

Western New York, per Governor Andrew Cuomo, may enter Phase I of New York Forward, effective 5/19/2020.

In addition, it must be noted that a multitude of studies have been released in an effort to provide guidance for reopening based on “science-driven data.” On 4/18/2020, the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security issued a report offering science-based guidance for state officials including governors on how to safely reopen communities. The report offered a risk assessment for various types of businesses and public spaces, with advice on how to best ease out of social distancing without creating a spike in coronavirus cases. The 4/18/2020 report listed libraries as a “low risk” entity for the spread of the coronavirus. This report was amended on 4/20/2020 stating that “libraries that incorporate social activities or community gatherings into their services should refer to the ‘community centers’ category” which subsequently changed the risk factor to moderate.

II. B&ECPL GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING

A. Pre-opening Planning

The first priority of the B&ECPL System toward reopening is the health and safety of staff and patrons.

1. ALL libraries within the B&ECPL System will:

- Follow guidelines as set forth in New York State's *New York Forward* plan;
- Develop Business Reopening Safety Plan;
- Make available (post) for public and staff;
- Follow additional/supplemental guidelines, beyond New York State as set forth by the County of Erie;
- Follow additional/supplemental guidelines, beyond New York State and the County of Erie, as set forth by local municipalities where applicable;
- Develop a plan for staged reopening in accordance with Federal, State, County and local guidelines;
- Following screening and reporting protocols as set forth in the B&ECPL's *Personnel Policies and Procedures: Protective Measures to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19*;
- Follow *Handling Materials During COVID-19* (effective 5/13/2020) as set forth by the B&ECPL System; and
- Follow public computer guidelines set forth by the B&ECPL System.

2. The B&ECPL System will provide the following to all B&ECPL and Contract Libraries prior to reopening:

- Hand sanitizer;
- Tissues;
- Disposable gloves for employees;
- Disposable masks for employees;
- Reusable masks for employees;
- Reusable face shields - priority for employees working with the public;
- Cashier-style protective shields for public service desks - up to 4 per library*;
- Touchless thermometers;
- Health screening questionnaires and privacy notices for employees;
- Social distancing floor signage;
- Social distancing "Enforced Here" signage;
- "Masks required upon entry" signage; and
- Cleaning/sanitizing products in accordance with recommended CDC standards.

*Consideration for the System to purchase additional panels will be made on a case-by-case basis.

3. The B&ECPL System recommends a staged approach for returning staff to onsite work and for reopening library operations to the public. Timeframes for each of the STAGES are dependent upon continued expansion of *New York Forward* and authorization from the County of Erie. Prior to STAGE 1 the System will:

- Monitor *New York Forward* requirements, seek guidance and authorization from the County of Erie and report results to Contract Library Directors.
- Seek permission from County of Erie to determine if libraries may operate under the auspicious of Phase One of the *New York Forward* plan and provide walk-up and/or curbside services.

B. Stages of Reopening

1. STAGE I (recommend 25% - 50% staff)

Western New York, per Governor Andrew Cuomo, may enter Phase I of *New York Forward*, effective 5/19/2020. Per the State of New York, a maximum 50% workforce restriction is in place.

Per Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz, 5/19/2020, B&ECPL libraries, those that are municipal libraries, may begin to return staff to work in preparation of reopening to the public. Municipal libraries are asked to consider walk-up/curbside pickup. Determination to participate in such service is at the discretion of the local library Board of Trustees. Association libraries are not municipal organizations and, therefore, must wait to open until authorized by the State of New York.

During STAGE I, physical libraries may remain closed to the public. Libraries may provide walk-up/curbside services (See STAGE I WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE). The determination to offer such services is that of the local Library Board.

- **STAGE I Building Preparation:**

- ✓ Thoroughly clean building with hospital grade disinfectant cleaners – including all surfaces, door handles, restrooms, telephones, copy machines, computers, printers, etc.;
- ✓ Develop procedures for continued disinfectant cleaning;
- ✓ Confirm supply of cleaning/ disinfecting products, hand sanitizer, tissues, gloves, masks, face shields for employee use;
- ✓ Install casher-style protection shields at public service desk(s);
- ✓ Denote proper social distancing using System-provided floor and other signage denoting social distancing will be enforced in both public and staff areas;
- ✓ Remove chairs, rope/block off areas where social gathering typically occurs, arrange seating and computer access to employ social distancing;
- ✓ Remove all toys/games/puzzles OR remove all stuffed animals and any toys/games/puzzles that cannot be cleaned using disinfectant cleaners;
- ✓ Confirm supply of hand sanitizer and tissues for public and staff areas;
- ✓ Review/implement cleaning/ disinfecting protocols; and

- ✓ Other as determined required by State, County and local mandates.
- **STAGE I Operational Preparation:**
 - ✓ Develop *Business Reopening Safety Plan*;
 - ✓ Determine if library can provide walk-up/curbside operations (if yes, see also WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE);
 - ✓ Review employee schedules:
 - Determine shift design;
 - Determine work location – remain at home/return to library;
 - ✓ Develop/determine/modify work processes to meet required social distancing guidelines;
 - ✓ Review/implement health screening processes for employees per *Personnel Policies and Procedures: Protective Measures to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19*;
 - ✓ Review/implement *Handling Materials During COVID-19 (effective 5/13/2020)*;
 - ✓ Open drop box (if closed);
 - ✓ Begin materials ordering;
 - ✓ Resume delivery of supplies/materials;
 - ✓ Inform staff of requirements to operate businesses under *New York Forward*;
 - Post and inform staff of *Business Reopening Safety Plan*;
 - ✓ Inform staff of schedules, work location, new workflows (if applicable); and
 - ✓ Follow all State, County, local COVID-19 guidelines pertaining to employee health and safety.

- **STAGE I WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE:**

Walk-up service will begin at the Central library, the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch library and the Crane Branch Library 6/1/2020. Curbside service will also begin on this date, at these locations, IF required permissions regarding traffic flow and use of street parking spaces are received from the City of Buffalo.

- ✓ Should a local library determine it wishes to proceed in opening WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE, the local library:
 - Should secure permission from local authority regarding traffic flow;
 - Must inform the System of the intent to provide walk-up/curbside operations;
 - Must update their respective portion of the B&ECPL website and open/closed calendar to denote hours of operation for WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE;

- Must follow guidelines as set forth by B&ECPL regarding processes associated with WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE [ADD LINK HERE];
- Must follow *Handling Materials During COVID-19 (effective 5/13/2020)* as set forth by B&ECPL; and
- Must follow all State, County and local COVID-19 guidelines pertaining to employee health and safety.

2. STAGE II (Recommend 50% staff)

In STAGE II, physical libraries are open to the public – for limited services (see Operational Preparation). This stage should occur only when allowable by *New York Forward* and the County of Erie.

The System will continue to monitor *New York Forward* requirements, seek guidance and authorization from the Erie County Executive and report results to Contract Library Directors.

The Central Library and Buffalo Branch Libraries will resume onsite operations and open for modified hours, with limited services, following the entry of Erie County to Phase II of *New York Forward*. The anticipated date to begin these onsite operations is 6/8/2020 (subject to change based on date of Erie County's entry to Phase II).

- **STAGE II Building Preparation:**

- ✓ See STAGE I

- **STAGE II Operations and Operational Preparation:**

- ✓ See STAGE I;
- ✓ Determine hours of operation;
- ✓ Open drop box (if closed);
- ✓ Transactional services begin, i.e. circulating materials;
- ✓ Public access computers/laptops open (limited) - social distancing and cleaning after every use required;
- ✓ Meeting room use restricted to limitations as set forth by State and County officials;
- ✓ No programs scheduled;
- ✓ No group gathering (tutors may meet with a student 1:1 if both the tutor and student are wearing masks);
- ✓ Review employee schedules:
 - Determine shift design;
 - Determine work location – remain at home/return to library;

- Develop/determine/modify work processes to meet required social distancing guidelines;
- ✓ Review/implement health screening processes for employees per *Personnel Policies and Procedures: Protective Measures to Reduce Risk of Exposure to COVID-19*;
- ✓ Review/implement *Handling Materials During COVID-19 (effective 5/13/2020)*;
- ✓ Review/implement building clean/disinfecting protocols in public areas;
- ✓ Begin materials ordering;
- ✓ Inform staff of requirements to operate businesses under *New York Forward*;
 - Post and inform staff of *Business Reopening Safety Plan*; and
- ✓ Inform staff of schedules, work location, new workflows (if applicable).

3. STAGE III (75% staff)

In STAGE III, physical libraries are open to the public – library services expand beyond transactional. This stage should occur only when allowable by *New York Forward* and the County of Erie.

The Central Library and Buffalo Branch Libraries will enter STAGE III following Western New York moving to PHASE III of *New York Forward*.

- **STAGE III Building Preparation:**

- ✓ See STAGE I

- **STAGE III Operations:**

- ✓ See STAGE I and STAGE II;
- ✓ Hours of operation reinstated to meet New York State Minimum Standards for Public Libraries**;
- ✓ Reinstatement meeting room use***;
- ✓ Reinstatement programs/programming***;
- ✓ Reinstatement gathering***; and
- ✓ Reinstatement outreach***.

** System should be notified if library is unable to meet New York State Minimum Standards for Public Libraries.

*** Operation may occur pursuant to any social distancing and/or gathering restrictions as set forth by New York State and the County of Erie.

4. STAGE IV (100% staffing reinstated within budgetary limits)

In STAGE IV, physical libraries are open to the public – unrestricted library services reinstated.

The Central Library and Buffalo Branch Libraries will enter STAGE III following Western New York moving to PHASE III of *New York Forward*.