



## REOPENING PLAN BOSTON FREE LIBRARY

### THE BOSTON FREE LIBRARY REOPENING PLAN

The Boston Free Library, a member of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System (B&ECPL), has formed a plan and put precautions in place for staff members as well as our community to minimize the risk of infection while strategically scaling operations. This plan does not need to be submitted to a state agency for approval but must be retained on the premises of the business and must be made available to the New York State Department of Health (DOH) or local health authorities in the event of an inspection.

#### 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 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.

**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. Boston Free Library 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.*

During STAGE I, Boston Free Library will remain closed to the public. The Boston Library will provide walk-up/curbside services (See STAGE I WALK-UP and CURBSIDE SERVICE).

**• 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 cashier-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 Boston Free 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;
- ✓ Continue Virtual/Online Program Offerings;
- ✓ 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 Boston Free Library 6/8/2020. Curbside service will also begin on this date, at this location.

- ✓ 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 (Board of Trustees) 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

- 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 Boston Free Library will observe an abundance of caution during STAGE II, and may continue to provide walk-up and curbside service. However, at the discretion of the Boston Free Library Board of Trustees and Director, following the entry of Erie County to Phase II of *New York Forward*, the building may be deemed ready to open to the public for modified hours and limited services with an anticipated date of 6/22/2020.

- **STAGE II Building Preparation:**

- ✓ See STAGE I

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

- ✓ See STAGE I;

If the Boston Free Library opens for modified hours and limited services:

- Determine Hours of Operation;
- Transactional services begin i.e. circulating materials;
- Public access computers/laptops open (limited) – social distancing and cleaning after every use required;
- No group gatherings;
- Develop/determine/modify work processes to meet required social distancing guidelines;
- Determine location to quarantine returns for 72 hours. All returns will be back-dated 3 days when discharged;
- **STAGE III (75% staff)** 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).

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.

- **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\*\*;

- ✓ Reinstated meeting room use\*\*\*;

- ✓ Reinstated programs/programming\*\*\*;

- Children’s programming such as story times might not yet resume due to the difficulty of enforcing distancing protocols with this age group.

- ✓ Reinstated gathering\*\*\*; and

- ✓ Reinstated 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.

### III. SCALING DOWN SERVICES OR SECOND CLOSURE SCENARIO

The Boston Free Library could return to STAGE III, II, or I, or revert to a full-scale closure depending on the recommendations by New York State and the County of Erie Officials. If a person who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 has been in the building, the Library will close for two days to be cleaned and sanitized.

**Scaling Down Preparation:**

- See STAGES I-III

**Second Closure Preparation:**

- The Boston Free Library Board of Trustees will meet with Director to pass a resolution to close the building;
- Inform B&ECPL administration of decision;
- Notify all employees of closure and advise to check e-mails for updates;
- Follow Emergency Closing Procedures;
- Instruct for building to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized

**Second Closure Off-Site Operational Preparation:**

- Essential staff work remotely and onsite at the designation of the Director
- Assign employee(s) to take care of building, mail, financials, and book drop if applicable;
- Enlist staff to offer online/virtual programming;
- E-mail, phone, text hold meetings via online platform to communicate with staff and delegate tasks
- Use social media and news media to connect with community
- Remind patrons to manage their accounts by going to the library website
- Encourage patron usage of free digital databases, resources, and downloadable eBooks, eAudiobooks, music, and more at [www.buffalolib.org](http://www.buffalolib.org)
- The B&ECPL as well as the Director and Trustees of the Boston Free Library will monitor the situation, prioritizing the health and safety of employees as patrons.
- When sanctioned by the State of New York and the County of Erie, the Boston Free Library will begin the phased reopening process again, following guidance from the B&ECPL. See STAGES I-IV.