

## CITY OF TONAWANDA PUBLIC LIBRARY REOPENING PLAN

The City of Tonawanda Public 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 or safety 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 April 18, 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 and 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;
- Follow 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 not noted. Timeframes 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. City of Tonawanda Public Library Stages of Reopening**

**1. STAGE I (Between 25%-50% of staff in building at any time)**

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, the City of Tonawanda Public Library will remain closed to the public. If approved, the City of Tonawanda Public Library may provide transactional walk-up/curbside service to public (See CITY OF TONAWANDA PUBLIC LIBRARY 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 casher-style protection shields at public service desk;
- 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 stuffed animals and any toys/games/puzzles that cannot be cleaned using disinfectant cleaners;
- Ensure adequate office supplies and eliminate sharing items;
- 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 City of Tonawanda Public Library can provide walk-up/curbside operations (if yes, see also CITY OF TONAWANDA PUBLIC LIBRARY 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.
- Plan and begin to offer virtual programming

### **STAGE I Walk-Up and Curbside Service:**

Should the City of Tonawanda Public Library wish to proceed in opening transactional drive-through services, the Library:

- Should secure permission from local authority regarding traffic flow;
- Must inform the System of the intent to provide walk-up and curbside operations;
- Must update their respective portion of the B&ECPL website and SIRSI 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, & Local COVID-19 guidelines pertaining to employee health and safety.

## **2. STAGE II (50% of staff)**

In STAGE II, physical libraries 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.

During STAGE II, The City of Tonawanda Public Library may not immediately reopen to the public. If it is determined that the health and safety of Library staff and members of the community are at risk, the City of Tonawanda Public Library may continue to solely provide walk-up and curbside service. However, at the discretion of the City of Tonawanda Public 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 for modified hours and limited services.

### **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 gatherings;
- Review employee schedules:
  - Determine shift design;
  - Determine work location – remain at home/return to library
- 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 *Business Reopening Safety Plan*; and
- Inform staff of schedules, work location, new workflows (if applicable);

### 3. STAGE III (75% staff)

In STAGE III, the City of Tonawanda Public Library will reopen to the public – library operations will expand beyond walkup/curbside and transactional services. Walk-up and curbside may cease or continue based on the discretion of the City of Tonawanda Public Library Board of Trustees and Director. This stage should occur only when allowable by *New York Forward* and the County of Erie.

The City of Tonawanda Public Library 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 and Operational Preparation:**

- See STAGE I & 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 Minimum Standards for Public Libraries.

\*\*\* Operation may occur at the discretion of the City of Tonawanda Public Library's Director and Board of Trustees, pursuant to any social distancing and/or gathering restrictions as set forth by New York State and County of Erie.

#### **4. STAGE IV (100% staffing restored within budgetary limits)**

In STAGE IV, the City of Tonawanda Public Library will restore unrestricted library services. The City of Tonawanda Public Library will enter STAGE IV following Western New York moving to PHASE IV of *New York Forward*.

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

#### **The Scaling Down or Second Closure Scenario**

The City of Tonawanda Public Library could revert to STAGE III, II, or I, or a full-scale closure depending on the recommendations by New York State and 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:**

- City of Tonawanda Public Library Board of Trustees and Library Director will agree to any closure or change in operation status;
- Inform B&ECPL administration of decision;
- Notify all employees of closure or operational change and advise to check e-mails for updates;
- Follow Emergency Closing Procedures;
- Engage staff in thoroughly cleaning and sanitizing the building.

#### **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;
- Offer online/virtual programming as staffing allows;
- Communicate virtually with staff for operational and planning purposes;
- Use social media and news media to connect with community;
- Provide electronic resources to community to ensure continued use of the library;
- The B&ECPL as well as the Director and Trustees of the City of Tonawanda Public Library will monitor the situation, prioritizing the health and safety of employees and patrons;
- When sanctioned by the State of New York and the County of Erie, the City of Tonawanda Public Library will begin the phased reopening process again, following guidance from the B&ECPL. See STAGES I-IV.