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A Program of the
BOARD of REGENTS
State of Louisiana

LOUIS Phased Reopening Guide for Libraries
Report and Recommendations
May 18, 2020
Approved by the LOUIS Executive Board

Report by the Reopening Libraries Work Group

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Purpose

This document outlines four possible phases during a lengthy emergency situation, from immediate closure to reopened full library services, with key considerations, observations and recommendations for each phase. At the time of initial submission to the LOUIS Executive Board (5/18/2020), most libraries were in Phase 1 or 2.

This is a living document. It is recommended to be used as a template for addressing logistical concerns when reopening, based on safety of both employees and the public. It is advised that this information be continually updated as new information becomes available.

Phases, stages and recommendations should be adapted to each emergency situation and facility.

It is recommended that all decisions be based upon prevailing guidance and direction from state, local, and institutional or agency officials, and that non-library departments or offices within the building be informed, if not consulted.

Phase 1 - Closure Due to Emergency

At this time, it is in the best interest of library employees and library users to close the building.

Assessments and Considerations

- Is there a building operation plan in place to handle emergencies which may interrupt or interfere with normal operations?
- How to ensure the health, safety and well-being of employees and library users.
- What services are essential?
- What services and resources can be offered remotely, and how?
 - Fair Use
 - Document Delivery
 - Online Reference Desk/Library Chat



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- Modify loan periods or due dates
- E-books, e-journals, streaming videos
- Temporary free online access to resources offered by vendors(?)
- What are the roles of employees?
 - Opportunity to cross-train employees to ensure continuation of service
- What do employees need to continue operations remotely?
 - Appropriate technology, ability to access personal/shared work drives, contact information for all employees, pertinent files from the office
- How will building maintenance provided by external sources continue?
 - Security, tech support, HVAC, housekeeping, utilities, etc.
- Are there other departments within the building?
- What is the plan for internal/external communication?

Recommendations

- Building remains closed until it is determined to be safe to move to Phase 2.
- Update or create a Continuation of Operation Plan template, which can be adapted to the changing situation.
 - Work from home/remote work guidelines
 - Internal/external communication guidelines
 - Services structure and guidelines
- Communicate new roles and responsibilities to employees
 - Provide necessary tools to continue operations
 - Create training guidelines
 - Cross training
- Only essential and healthy employees are in the building with clear written approval from building or campus officials.
- All new and developing building guidelines, policies and procedures must be shared in a timely manner with library employees, and if applicable, other departments within the building.
- Establish and follow a clear plan for transparent internal and external communication.



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Phase 2 - Internal Reopening

At this time, some employees may return to the building. Some operations may resume while the building remains closed to the public. Use this time to plan for gradual reopening to the public.

Assessments and Considerations

- What is the availability of employees?
 - Physical and mental well-being and health
 - Household health
- How to ensure the health, safety and well-being of library employees?
- What services can continue to be performed remotely, and how?
 - What new services can be offered remotely?
- What operations can safely resume?
- What services and resources do library users need or want?
- How will building maintenance provided by external sources continue?
 - Security, tech support, HVAC, housekeeping, utilities, etc.
- Pandemic considerations
 - Building traffic and high-traffic areas
 - Congregation areas
 - Social distancing, sanitization supplies, thermometers and PPE
 - Where is it coming from?
 - Who is paying for it?
 - Will it be available to employees and the public?
 - Who is going to manage/enforce these measures?
 - What are the consequences of non-compliance?

Recommendations

- Building remains closed to library users
- Healthy employees begin returning to building to complete approved operations and preparations



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- Provide sanitation supplies and PPE for employees
- Establish social distancing and sanitation policies
- Modify collection handling, mail, package and other delivery-handling processes.
 - Establish a quarantine period and location
- Continue remote services and expand remote services where possible
- Establish a clear design template for external communication during the event
 - Signage, social media, electronic communication, etc
- Communicate established social distancing and sanitation policies to external sources entering the building

Phase 3 - Gradual Reopen

At this time the building may reopen to the public on a gradual or limited basis with extra precautions, including adjusted or limited staff and services, population restrictions, space availability and operating times.

Assessments and Considerations

- Building considerations. Does your building have:
 - Study rooms?
 - Multiple levels?
 - Seating or spaces allowing for groups?
 - Modifiable spaces and furniture
 - Staircases and/or stairwells?
 - Elevators?
 - Interactive touch points that increase instances of surface contact?
 - Touchscreens, kiosks, vending, water fountains, door handles, displays
 - Multiple or complex entrance and exit points?
 - Security system, cameras, personnel?
 - Public computers?
 - Public restrooms?



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- Soap dispensers and hand drying options
 - Antibacterial soap
 - Multiple stalls
- Assigned cleaning/sanitation staff?
- What is a manageable population while enhanced procedures are in place?
 - How to manage the population?
- What is the balance between safety of employees and users, and privacy?
- Does the local healthcare system have the capacity to withstand another outbreak?
- What services can continue in a touchless environment, and how?
- What is building/campus security policy on enforcement of new policies?
 - Will they help enforce policies?
- Are physical barriers feasible in all service locations?
 - Adds additional surface requiring sanitization
 - Large or open desks may not be suitable for this type of safety measure
 - Permanent or temporary?
- For academic libraries, ensure support for a library reopening plan that differs from campus-wide reopening plan

Recommendations

- Determine what level of services should be offered when public and employee safety can be assured.
- Gradual and modified reopening, adding services to ensure that new and modified processes and procedures are in place.
- Evaluate restrictions for compliance and effectiveness and be prepared to modify if necessary
- Establish a manageable building occupation limit, including employees
- Gradually reopen to public on a limited scale
 - Open by appointment
 - Limit time in library
 - Open by role (students and faculty, then alumni, community, for example)
 - Require ID/scan entry
 - Post monitor at door to manage count



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- Establish and ensure enforcement of safety protocols
 - Require PPE for employees, external service providers and library users
 - Require temperature taking upon entry
 - Utilize barriers where feasible
- Assess building, modify available features as needed
 - Adjusted building hours, service hours, work schedules
 - Restrict access to study rooms and unmonitored levels of buildings
 - Restrict ability to congregate by rearranging or removing furniture
 - Limit access to elevators, stairwells, restrooms and other high-traffic areas
 - Disable interactive touch points to reduce surface contact
 - Limit entrance and exit points.
 - Establish a clear path from entrance to exit to manage traffic and observe social distancing
 - Increase frequency of cleaning and sanitizing public hygiene areas and water fountains.
- Create and post physical and digital signage containing restrictions and an indication of enforcement by building/campus security.

Phase 4 - The New Normal

At this time, policies and procedures to protect the library employee and user population have been established. Continuously review previous phase key assessments and considerations. Compliance with health safety protocols need to be enforced. The library has resumed most or all services and operations with modifications as needed.

Assessments and Considerations

- Does the building already have a safety officer or committee?
 - Update and maintain history of events and policies/procedures
 - Maintain Continuation of Operations Plan template and modify based on current situation



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Recommendations

- Complete weekly to monthly assessments of modified processes, policies and procedures.
- Maintain transparent internal/external communication



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