LAKE COUNTY

■ PUBLIC LIBRARY ■

Cedar Lake Branch
Jon Davis, Branch Manager
10010 West 133rd Avenue
Cedar Lake, IN 46303
219-374-7121

Dyer-Schererville Branch
Christine Rettig, Branch Manager
1001 West Lincoln Highway
Schererville, IN 46375
219-322-4731

Griffith-Calumet Township Branch
Beth Alyea, Branch Manager
1215 East 45th Avenue
Griffith, IN 46319
219-838-2825

Highland Branch
Linda Johnsen, Branch Manager
2841 Jewett Street
Highland, IN 46322
219-838-2394

Hobart Branch
Joleen Bonner, Branch Manager
100 North Main Street
Hobart, IN 46342
219-942-2243

Lake Station-New Chicago Branch
Julie Bradford, Branch Manager
2007 Central Avenue
Lake Station, IN 46405
219-962-2409

Merrillville Branch
Erika Stolarz, Branch Manager
1919 West 81st Avenue
Merrillville, IN 46410
219-769-3541

Munster Branch
Michael Ayala, Branch Manager
8701 Calumet Avenue
Munster, IN 46321
219-836-8450

St. John Branch
Holly Koster, Branch Manager
9450 Wicker Avenue
St. John, IN 46373
219-365-5379

Administration Building
1919 West 81st Avenue
Merrillville, IN 46410
219-769-3541

Ingrid Norris
Director

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As our state moves forward with the *Roadmap to Safely Reopen Indiana* plan, our Library is thrilled to begin welcoming customers back to in-person service. We have been offering curbside at all locations for several weeks and will continue to do so. Using a phased-approach, locations will begin reopening over the next several weeks for targeted, in-person services. Our main library in Merrillville will begin providing computer appointments on June 29 and additional services on July 6th. We will reopen the majority of the other locations beginning July 6th. Two buildings, Hobart and Highland, will reopen slightly later. These dates are subject to change based on our ability to have adequate safety supplies and procedures in place.

Like all businesses and organizations across the state, our Library is adjusting to offering services in a responsible and new way because we accept that we have an additional mission to contribute to the physical and economic health of Lake County. Please know we are doing our best to balance public health needs and safety with our mission to provide services.

I have also enclosed our current *Service Restoration Plan* with this letter. As with any plans made during the pandemic, these are subject to change based on new information from health or government officials. Our most up-to-date plan will always be available at www.lcplin.org.

Some of the changes are:

- Employees, vendors, and public will be <u>required</u> to wear a facial covering.

- To accommodate limited capacity, requirements we will begin with appointment based use of the facilities and time limits.

Onward Together

- The number of computers and devices will be limited and spaced apart.

- No open seating will be available.

- Staff and public will be expected to practice physical distancing, remaining 6 feet from others at all times.

- We will request that younger children visit with supervision from a family member or caregiver to help ensure physical distancing is understood and possible.

- Portions of locations may remain closed to the public.

- Returned library material will continue to be quarantined for 72 hours.

- Self-service Print/Copy/Fax/Scan services will be available.

- We will encourage the use of our self-checkout stations.

- Remote technology assistance will be available, but we will be unable to provide hands-on personal device help.

- Open hours will be limited to provide time for enhanced cleaning and disinfecting of the public spaces.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

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Onward Together

LCPL'S Service Restoration Plan utilizes a phased approach to establishing what we anticipate will be a new normal after extended closures. This process has been determined as a best practice nationally for public libraries. This is a fluid plan and the details are subject to change based on local or state health officials' recommendations and other factors in a post-pandemic or de-escalated pandemic environment.

We believe every library visitor or employee has the right to the safest possible public place or workplace and we will incorporate all recommended practices such as the use of nonmedical face coverings, handwashing or hand sanitizer use, and physical distancing measures for both employees and visitors to show our commitment to this responsibility. Intensified cleaning and disinfecting procedures will be followed in all library facilities.

The path between phases will be dependent on the current COVID risk – elevated, moderate or reduced. The phases are Stay at Home, Employee Access Only, Limited Patron Access, and Expanded Patron Access.

CIRCULATION OF MATERIALS

Circulation of collections is a core function of the Library, but traditional checkout puts both employees and patrons at risk during a time of virus transmission. The goal is to create a balance with restoring this core service and protecting employees and patrons.

Stay at Home: Checkouts are limited to electronic services.

Employee Access Only: Normal checkout procedures cannot be managed under this restriction. Curbside pick-up service is available as well as access to book drops for library returns. All returned material is quarantined for 72 hours.

Limited Patron Access and Expanded Patron Access: Browsing (a limited touch activity) and self-checkout is encouraged.

PROGRAMMING

The community views library programs as a core service, but it has been proven that public gatherings have been one of the main methods by which COVID-19 has been transmitted. With that in mind, the Library needs to be highly cautious about when and how it reinstates in-person programming and meeting room use.

Stay at Home, Employee Access Only, Limited Patron Access: Only virtual programs will be available. All programs that have previously required materials to be submitted to the library, such as Summer Reading, will be restructured.

Expanded Patron Access: Virtual programs will be available. All programs that have previously required materials to be submitted to the library such as Summer Reading will be restructured. Small group programming feasibility will be evaluated.

COMPUTER, INTERNET, COPIER AND FAX ACCESS

The library recognizes that access to the internet is a necessity for all. In an effort to better serve the community, the library has made a significant investment in equipment and infrastructure to provide free public WiFi access outside of our buildings. Coverage has been extended to parking lots at all nine Lake County Public Library locations. This is a permanent addition to our services, available during any and all phases

Stay at Home: No employee (other than essential) or public access to the facilities.

Employee Access Only: Contactless document delivery for fax and printer of critical-need documents is offered.

Limited Patron Access: The current economic situation creates a variety of critical needs where access to the internet, computers, and fax are concerned. Access to technology will be provided at a very limited scale by appointment only and for weekly time limits. Because of the risks to employees and patrons alike, very strict social distancing procedures will need to be applied including demarcating limits for patrons and employees to ensure social distancing, restricting access to other areas of the library, disinfecting computer stations between uses, and requiring patrons and employees wear proper protective wear, such as facial coverings. Building capacity guidelines will be used to determine number of appointments.

Expanded Patron Access: More branches are available and patron access will be expanded by increasing building capacity limits.

TECHNOLOGY HELP

The library is frequently a place where patrons learn how to use various forms of technology. The spread of coronavirus and the necessity for social distancing impose unique difficulties in providing help with devices and on public computers. Because most technology help requires patrons and employees to be at close quarters, there will be limits on how help can be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted.

Stay at Home: Technology help will be provided through Callback Services, email, and our Ask a Librarian.

Employee Access Only and Limited Patron Access: Though access to internet and electronic resources will be provided, no technology help will be available except over the phone, through email, and through Ask a Librarian.

Expanded Patron Access: Limited technology help will be available following strict physical distancing rules.

ACCESS TO FACILITIES

The coronavirus is often spread among groups of people who are in close contact in an indoor space for an extended period of time. Managing physical space is the biggest obstacle we have as we continue to encourage physical distancing in the interest of public safety. The Library's goal is to return to the library that we knew and loved prior to this public health emergency, but in the meantime, in order to provide services in the safest way possible, we may need to be more restrictive than we have been in the past. As we open up for select services, one at a time, it will allow us to assess what works and what doesn't in a more controlled environment.

Stay at Home: Only employees providing essential services will enter with staggered shifts.

Employee Access Only: "Teams" of employees come into work during staggered shifts that do not overlap. The library will reconfigure workspaces to allow for necessary social distancing.

Limited Patron Access: Appointment based metered public access to the building will be offered to ensure that physical distancing is maintained and that no more than the recommended number are gathered within library facilities. Primary focus will be providing access to computers, printers, and fax/copiers. Public computers will be disabled to maintain physical distancing (6ft.) Patrons will be requested to limit their time in the building. Number of locations and public open hours will depend on availability of staffing. Public space will be

configured with physical distancing in mind. Study rooms and meetings will not be available. While open, there will be limited face-to-face employee/patron interaction. Employees will continue with staggered shifts and in teams.

Expanded Patron Access: Team Model schedule will be changed to normal shifts. Metered access to the facilities will continue with increased percent of capacity. Facilities will not all open at the same time, and open hours will be reduced. Browsing for the patrons will be available. The public will still be requested to limit their time in the building. Shelving, collection maintenance, and processing hold reports will need to be completed during non-public hours to reduce the number of people in aisles.

MOVING BETWEEN PHASES CRITERIA

- The governor's stay-at-home order has been cancelled and regional, state, and national health officials no longer recommend the public stay at home.
- Strong social distancing recommendations remain in place.
- The healthcare system has the capacity to withstand a moderate outbreak.
- The library has access to the necessary materials to administer some essential services.
- The library has access to enough staffing to run said services.
- Necessary PPE and cleaning supplies are available.
- Community members have access to efficient testing and public health officials are able to trace COVID-19 contacts.
- The library has developed the necessary procedures and trained employees on the safest method of providing the expanded service.

PREPARATION FOR PATRON ACCESS

- Use sites such as https://covidactnow.org to monitor the four COVID indicators regionally and statewide and prepare for resurgence or additional "waves" of the virus by identifying mitigation measures.

- Continue to acquire cleaning supplies, masks/face coverings and gloves, and implement personal protective policies or measures (handwashing, hand sanitizer, etc.) to limit the spread of the virus and protect employees and patrons.

- Continue to conduct health screenings to monitor employee wellness and prevent further infections. Utilize human resource policies to detail processes for sick employees or family members, as well as those exposed to the virus or showing symptoms.

- Continue to intensify cleaning, sanitizing, disinfection and ventilation activities according to CDC and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance.

- Evaluate how our nine facilities can accommodate any necessary social distancing requirements and implement.

- Evaluate how we can reduce our employee and patron exposure to COVID-19.

- Create a plan to clean and disinfect our frequently touched objects and surfaces per EPA's criteria for use against COVID-19 when patrons begin accessing the facilities.

- Create a plan for each building to incorporate social distancing measures, including limiting building capacities, continued staggered shifts, closing common areas, and installing physical barriers.

- Create a method of working with members of the public on an appointment basis using appropriate distancing procedures and personal protective equipment by both the library and the patron.