

Programming



Snack packs

Section 1: Index of Key Considerations

PLANNING

- Which audiences and programs are priorities for public libraries at this time?
- What do our communities need in a time of pandemic, and can we create or adapt programs to address those needs?
- What is the optimal balance between digital programming, in-person programming and outreach? What mix of program models or approaches makes the best use of resources to meet community needs?
- Should all programs require registration, to ensure we are able to assist with contact tracing if necessary?
- What should the timeline look like (flexible, staged approach)?
- What changes need to be made to program policies or procedures to reflect the above?

COMMUNICATIONS

- How will we communicate new expectations to program participants?
- How will we respond if staff or patrons test positive for COVID-19?
- How will we inform the public of safety measures we are taking?
- What strategies will we use to communicate with the public and promote programs to diverse audiences, including those who are not online?
- How will we re-engage patrons and continue to engage with new patrons in a time of service limitations?

PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

- What is the effective occupancy of program rooms or spaces given physical distancing guidelines (note, a distance of 2m on all sides of a person creates a circle with an area of 12.56 square metres)?
- Can programs be held in open or outdoor spaces?
- Based on the answers to the above, how many participants can be safely included in an in-person program?
- Can children be realistically expected to observe physical distancing guidelines?
- Can programs that normally require close contact – for example, one-on-one technology help – be effectively adapted to follow physical distancing guidelines?
- Can programs that normally involve physical activity be effectively adapted to follow physical distancing guidelines?

SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- How do we ensure the health and safety of staff, patrons, volunteers, partners and external presenters?
- What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be required for staff, volunteers, external presenters and patrons?
- What shared objects are typically used in a program (for example, toys, games, craft supplies / tools, technology)? Can these be effectively sanitized for safe use, or can the program be adapted to work without them?

- For programs that normally include snacks, is there a safe way to provide these or can the program be adapted to work without them?
- For digital programs, how do we ensure patrons' safety and privacy while using a variety of technology tools?

STAFF SUPPORT

- What training will staff need with respect to health and safety measures?
- What training will staff need to support them with new models of programming?
- How can we best support staff working with the public in a time of high anxiety?
- See the Staffing section of this Toolkit for further considerations.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- How do we make programs feel safe, welcoming and inclusive?
- How do we best reach and support vulnerable or underserved audiences?
- How do we best reach and support our Indigenous communities?
- How can we reduce or remove barriers to participation?
- Can digital programming content be shared with other libraries locally, provincially or nationally?
- How can we best work with community partners?

OPERATIONS

- Which new program models should be retained as libraries re-open?
- How will staffing models and staff roles be affected by the above questions?

Section 2: Best and Leading Practices

PROGRAMMING INSIDE THE LIBRARY

Planning

- Consult with local government, community partners and local agencies to identify how/if your community has changed. Base your learning on trends and follow privacy regulations.
- Determine which audiences and programs to prioritize. Priorities could include:
 - socio-economic well-being
 - community connectedness and reducing social isolation
 - school support
 - fostering literacy and creativity
 - strengthening partnerships
- Identify the objectives of your library's programming during and after a pandemic and how you will achieve your objectives
- Be ready to measure the success of your programming i.e. attendance, satisfaction, and impact: immediate/live – long term streaming archive
- Consult or create an inventory of your library's existing programming and identify programs that can be reformatted either as a virtual program, or an in library program that meets health directives, and evolving wants and needs of the community
- Identify new programs, including virtual programs by internal and external teams

- Identify programs that are no longer relevant or are no longer a priority and make a plan for phasing out these programs or putting them on hiatus
- Be flexible and ensure you are able to respond to unexpected changes or challenges.
- Before reinstating in person programming, undertake a risk assessment. Create a realistic timeline for phasing in programming and update related policies as needed e.g. <https://libraries.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/Vespasiam-Warner-PL-District-Reopening-SERVICE-LEVEL-TABLE.pdf>
- Determine your library's capacity to deliver on priorities; make a case for resources as necessary
- Plan for new technology and supplies. Ensure funding is in place
- Review and update code of conduct to include virtual spaces
- Support staff as they learn new skills and health procedures
- Celebrate successes along the way

Communications

- Provide current safety guidelines and physical distancing customer service training for staff, drawing on current provincial health guidelines (Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Prepare a media alert notifying your community of available services (i.e. your library's website, virtual programming, social media, etc.)
- Use the opportunity to communicate the value of the library and reassure your community
- Be prepared for increased phone, email, web and social media enquiries during the re-opening phases

Physical Distancing Measures

- Consider open hours that best address the needs of your community and staff availability
- If proceeding with programs in open areas, look at location layout changes to programming that will support physical distancing (separating program areas with signage, floor graphics, etc.)
- Consider timed library entry for patrons, based on the capacity of your location
- Consider what security needs, if any, are required to keep staff and patrons safe
- Expand physical distancing for seating and computers as required
- Share physical distancing best practices with staff before they return to work, using provincial health directives
- Provide staff customer experience training in a physical distancing world
- Schedule staff to allow for appropriate physical distancing practices

Safety Precautions

- Provide additional sanitizing supplies and PPE for staff and appropriate sanitizing supplies for customer personal use and to disinfect surfaces (gloves, wipes, masks, hand sanitizer)
- Update instructions / communications to patrons (on-site and online) as needed
- Be aware of possible direction on quarantining collections
- Implement enhanced branch cleaning procedures

Staff Support

- Provide appropriate sanitizing supplies and PPE (gloves, masks, wipes, etc.) according to provincial health directives
- Share physical distancing best practices with staff before they return to work
- Provide staff customer experience training in a physical distancing world
- Determine cleaning protocols for work spaces and program spaces
- Provide connectivity tools (laptops, phones, etc.) for staff working from home

Program Delivery

- Phase reintroduction of in library programming by limiting group sizes, numbers of programs and limiting interactive activities
- Young children are not able to physically distance themselves safely from others. Adapt in-person children's programs for online delivery (i.e., virtual storytimes using Zoom)
- Some adult programs (i.e., technology help) require patrons and staff to be at close quarters. Limits on how help can be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted should be considered
- Consider registration and promotion strategies for virtual programming
- Consider processes for identifying / booking community partner programs and recommendations for third party events
- Consider programming levels (events, presentations, small groups, one-on-one etc.) and if/how these programs can be safely delivered
- Consider including an engagement component as part of your virtual programming. There is a strong need for connection not just content. Extend or expand a virtual program with an activity or component that is not virtual e.g. take home or consumable program kits; weekly or monthly challenges
- Consider developing kits for safe pick-up/drop-off with collections, supplies and activity ideas for community members who are not online. Could be supported with DVD of staff doing program activity (e.g. copy of virtual program)
- Add or expand virtual library cards on library website for immediate patron access

Community Support

- Gain an understanding of how/if the community has changed during the pandemic. Identify who is in need of support from your library and the best way to provide that support
- Build/maintain relationships with local partner agencies
- Identify how your library can best support vulnerable people in your community
- Create a plan for programs based on the current and evolving situation
- Identify staffing and resources for program development and delivery

Operations

- Program times may need to be reconsidered to accommodate physical distancing guidelines
- Adapt in-person programs for online delivery (i.e., virtual storytimes)
- Consider programming levels (events, presentations, small groups, one-on-one etc.) and if/how these programs can be safely delivered
- Phase reintroduction of programming inside the library by limiting group sizes, numbers of programs and interactive activities

- Extend online renewal policies and material due dates
- Consider expanding online services (ebooks, streaming media, etc.)

PROGRAMMING OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

Planning

- Align plans with your library's Mission, Vision, and Values
- Consult with local government, community partners and local agencies to identify how/if your community has changed. Base your learning on trends and follow privacy regulations
- Programming that occurs outside the library could occur in a park, at a community event or in a partner agency's location
- Engage partners in open conversation about how MOUs may change and about health and safety practices. The partners should be willing and able to abide by your library's social distancing and safety practices
 - Determine which audiences and offsite opportunities to prioritize. Priorities could include:
 - socio-economic well-being
 - community connectedness and reducing social isolation
 - school support
 - fostering literacy and creativity
 - strengthening partnerships
- Identify the objectives of your library's programming during and after a pandemic and how you will achieve your objectives
- Be ready to measure the success of your programming i.e. attendance, satisfaction, and impact
- Consult or create an inventory of your library's existing programming. When it is safe to do so, resume offsite programming that continues to meet the evolving wants and needs of the community
- Identify new programming that meets the evolving wants and needs of the community.
- Identify programs that are no longer relevant or are no longer a priority and make a plan for phasing out these programs or putting them on hiatus
- Be flexible and ensure you are able to respond to unexpected changes or challenges.
- Before reinstating programming outside the library, undertake a risk assessment. Create a realistic timeline for phasing in offsite programming and update related policies as needed e.g. <https://libraries.idaho.gov/wp-content/uploads/Vespasian-Warner-PL-District-Reopening-SERVICE-LEVEL-TABLE.pdf>
- Determine your library's capacity to deliver on priorities; make a case for resources as necessary
- Plan for new technology and supplies. Ensure funding is in place
- Review and update relevant procedures
- Support staff as they learn new skills and health procedures
- Celebrate successes along the way

Communications

- Provide safety guidelines and physical distancing customer service training for staff, drawing on current provincial health guidelines (Public Health Agency of Canada)
- Prepare a media alert notifying your community of available services (i.e. your library's website, virtual programming, social media, etc.)
- Use the opportunity to communicate the value of the library and reassure your community

Physical Distancing Measures

- Share physical distancing best practices with staff before they return to work
- Provide staff customer experience training in a physical distancing world
- Schedule staff in a way to allow for appropriate physical distancing practices
- Programming should not occur if physical distancing and gathering restrictions cannot be maintained

Safety Precautions

- Provide sanitizing supplies and PPE for staff and appropriate sanitizing supplies for patrons for personal use and to disinfect surfaces
- Expand physical distancing for seating as required

Staff Support

- Provide appropriate sanitizing supplies and PPE according to provincial health directives
- Share physical distancing best practices with staff before they return to work
- Provide staff customer experience training in a physical distancing world
- Determine cleaning protocols for program spaces

Program Delivery

- Phase reintroduction of in library programming by limiting group sizes, numbers of programs and limiting interactive activities with partners
- Young children are not able to physically distance themselves safely from others. Adapt in-person children's programs for online delivery (i.e., virtual storytimes using Zoom)
- Some adult programs (i.e., technology help) requires patrons and staff to be at close quarters. Limits on how help can be provided until social distancing recommendations are lifted should be considered with partners
- Consider registration and promotion strategies for virtual programming with partners.
- Consider processes for identifying / booking community partner program space and recommendations for third party events with partners
- Consider programming levels (events, presentations, small groups, one-on-one etc.) and if/how these programs can be safely delivered
- Consider including an engagement component as part of your virtual programming. There is a strong need for connection not just content. Extend or expand a virtual program with an activity or component that is not virtual e.g. take home or consumable program kits; weekly or monthly challenges
- Consider developing kits for safe pick-up/drop-off with collections, supplies and activity ideas for community members who are not online. Could be supported with DVD of staff doing program activity (e.g. copy of virtual program)

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- Phase reintroduction of programming outside the library by limiting group sizes, numbers of programs and interactive activities

Section 3: Stories from the Field

PROGRAMMING INSIDE THE LIBRARY

The Quick Pivot to Digital

Most libraries surveyed had moved to offering at least some programming online. Most common were family storytimes, either delivered live via Zoom or Facebook/Instagram, or prerecorded and broadcast via YouTube, Facetime, library websites, etc.

For Children & Families

- Barrie Public Library is offering “Walkabout Wednesday” a short video introduction filmed outside to encourage kids to get out for a walk and look for a scavenger hunt list of items to find using Niche
- Coquitlam Public Library is offering Mother Goose in Cantonese via Zoom
- Halifax Public Libraries created a Knowledge Challenge Online Scavenger Hunt for Kids
- Hamilton Public Library is offering Online Storytimes at Home via YouTube
- Kingston Frontenac Public Library encourages people to Sign up for Storytime Express! To receive a weekly video sent by email each Monday
- London Public Library is engaging kids in a Lego Challenge from home via Zoom
- Markham Public Library is using Google Classroom to host a Virtual Spring Reading Challenge
- Saskatoon Public Library offers a new “Dance Party in Your House” daily through Spotify while Barrie Public Library is hosting a Dance Party for kids via Niche
- Wood Buffalo Regional Library opened its own “library island” in Animal Crossing
- Virtual escape rooms provide learning opportunities for kids e.g. Halifax Public Libraries created a Harry Potter Virtual Escape Room and Milton Public Library has many digital escape room games via Breakout EDU platform
- As per the CBC, Halifax Public Libraries “is distributing “take home” snacks and activities for kids through six community partners such as food centres (activity packages for adults will be coming soon too)

For Adults

- Innovative ways of offering Book Clubs include Burlington Reads @ Home for an online community read invites participation via social media and provides related links for further exploration and featured *Moon of the Crusted Snow* by Waubgeshig Rice in conjunction with Hamilton Reads Book Club Online or people in Edmonton can enjoy EPL From Home Digital Book Club via Twitter
- Calgary Public Library had 140 people attend a Zoom version of their popular Think Big program series, featuring Jay Ingram and experts from the University of Calgary's Hotchkiss Brain Institute
- Coquitlam Public Library is offering Coping with COVID-19 programs held via Zoom in various languages (e.g. Mandarin)
- Guelph Public Library is using online jigsaw puzzle software to promote their e-resources available
- Hamilton Public Library is offering a Film Forum Online to discuss films from Kanopy via Microsoft Teams
- Kitchener Public Library is partnering with their local YMCA to provide employment support through virtual Effective Resume programming via Zoom
- Vancouver Public Library offered a fulsome suite of online Indigenous Storyteller in Residence programming, including a film screening, and online storytelling and discussion sessions
- Windsor Symphony Orchestra paired up with Windsor Public Library for a Read-Aloud with the WSO program is part of the #WSOatHome programming for all those in quarantine and self-isolation

Newcomer Programs

- Surrey Public Libraries offer a variety of online programs for newcomers, including English and Citizenship classes as well as employment support through foreign credential recognition, immigrant entrepreneurship, and career paths for skilled immigrants
- Various BC libraries including Surrey Libraries, Richmond Public Library, Coquitlam/Port Moody Public are offering online training for the Library Champions Project for newcomers interested in volunteering in the community to share information about library and settlement resources with other newcomers
- Halifax Public Libraries, Hamilton Public Library and Calgary Public Library are offering Newcomer Conversation group sessions on Zoom, using break-out groups for volunteers and participants

Tech & Analog Came Together

- London Public Library is offering Project Help for Elementary & Secondary Students via telephone
- Oakville Public Library delivers Stories by Phone – "...enjoy pre-recorded stories, any time of day. We are offering three different pre-recorded story options in English: poems and short stories for adults, stories for younger children (age 7 and under) and adult fiction (one chapter a week). Hamilton Public Library is also offering Story Break where staff read stories by phone one week and participants can join in a group phone chat the following to discuss. Toronto Public Library also offers Dial-A-Story for children 12 and under, available in 16 languages

- Vancouver Island Regional Library posted colouring sheets on their Facebook page for people to print
- Halifax Public Libraries posted cooking tutorials recorded in library staff members' kitchens
- London Public Library is offering Book a Librarian services via email or phone
- Wood Buffalo Regional Library posted exercise videos filmed by a library staff member in her house

PROGRAMMING OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

The Quick Pivot to Digital

Most libraries surveyed had moved to offering at least some programming online. Most common were family storytimes, either delivered live via Zoom or Facebook/Instagram, or prerecorded and broadcast via YouTube, Facetime, library websites, etc. with partners.

Outreach & Community Engagement

While most traditional outreach stopped during the pandemic, some libraries worked to find new ways to connect with their communities.

- Nine Toronto Public Library locations became food distribution centres, in partnership with local food banks
- Hamilton Public Library features Noon Hour Concerts Online for performances of local artists
- Windsor Public Library launched its Bookmobile On Demand, where patrons could contact the library to request items be delivered to their home
- In Montreal, the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec opened the Grande Bibliothèque during the day to people experiencing homelessness
- Calgary Public Library worked with social workers at The City of Calgary to distribute Chromebooks usually used by members in community libraries to partner agencies across the city, including newcomer agencies, students, Indigenous organizations, etc.
- As per the CBC, Halifax Public Libraries “is distributing” take home snacks and activities for kids through six community partners such as food centres (activity packages for adults will be coming soon too). “Food insecurity is a significant concern in our communities, especially during this time,” says Kasia Morrison, Communications Officer at Halifax Public Libraries. “In one week we provided 1,171 snack packs and 743 activity packs.”
- Saskatoon Public Library made Outreach Workers available by phone for referrals
- Greater Victoria Public Library is promoting an online storytime feature initiated by one of the Victoria City Councillors via YouTube called 8 O’Clock Storybook Reading featuring local elected officials and celebrities
- Brampton Library staff are using the Library’s 3D printers to make protective face shields for health care workers
- Kingston Frontenac Public Library developed a StoryMe: COVID-19 Edition project to collect written stories, videos, digital photographs and audio recordings of people’s experience during the pandemic
- Powell River Public Library has created a pick-up-and-go package for a physical distancing version of summer reading club – Mission Remote Summer Reading Club 2020: Explore Our Universe!

- Salt Spring Public Library has expanded their Visiting Library Service drop-off of items outside people's homes to include seniors who cannot access e-resources
- Salt Spring Public Library is incorporating social distancing measures to offer an outdoor StoryWalk program at a local park on Salt Spring Island
- Bowen Island Public Library continues to offer the loan of medical equipment as part of their Med Shed service while the library is closed
- North Vancouver District Public Library is offering Library Takeout @NVDPL to allow for holds pick-up, as well as curated picks with a pickup time coordinated by staff

Section 4: Resources

PROGRAMMING INSIDE THE LIBRARY

- IPAC CANADA PRACTICE RECOMMENDATIONS Toys – clear guidelines for cleaning and sanitizing toys in hospitals.
- Engaging with a digital audience – Libraries Connected
- COVID-19 program ideas – ALA Public Programs Office Ideas
- Library Programming for Teens Goes Virtual During COVID-19 – Publisher's Weekly Article April 28, 2020
- Youth Program Ideas – Presentation and slide show from Librarian.Support
- Programming Ideas – Association for Library Services to Children
- How to Run a Successful Summer Reading Program Online – TD Summer Reading Site
- CFLA COVID19 Storytime Copyright – Guidance on Fair Dealing
- List of Read Aloud Canadian Stories Publishers – Access Copyright
- Virtual Literary Legos – Programming Librarian
- Storytime Online Resources – Jbrary
- Teen Literacies Toolkit – Yalsa
- Programs HQ – Yalsa
- Old-Fashioned Connection: Phone Programming in a Pandemic – ALA Public Programs Office Article
- Older Adult Online Program Ideas – Public Libraries Online
- Truth and Reconciliation Committee Report and Recommendations – CFLA
- Suggestions For Families – Supporting Learning From Home – First Nations Education Steering Committee
- Indigenous Relations in the Time of COVID-19 – Indigenous Corporate Training
- Guide to Virtual Events in 2020 – Cvent.com
- The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County Resiliency Plan – blog.cincinnati.library.org
- Museums and The Pandemic – Re-opening Considerations from American Alliance of Museums
- Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready – CDC – US

GLAM Sector Programming Examples:

- National Arts Centre created a short-term relief fund to pay artists for online performances #CanadaPerforms that also includes writers, in partnership with the Writers' Trust of Canada and CBC Books

- Open Space Gallery in Victoria is offering livestreams of weekly talks and walks online on land on Lekwungen & W̱SÁNEĆ territories featuring local Indigenous artists, educators, and knowledge keepers. They are also providing access to a [Tah'lum Indigenous Artist Collective Colouring Book](#)
- Maritime Museum of BC is offering virtual tours via Facebook Live, as well as live programs via Zoom to support school curriculum, e.g. [WWII and Women on the Home Front](#), [HBC and the Fur Trade](#)
- Vancouver's Museum of Anthropology is offering learning support to teachers and parents through [#MOAFromHome](#) as well as ways of engaging from home with [colouring cards](#) and experiments to try from home
- Royal BC Museum has regular programming for different ages that engages with curatorial staff, e.g. [RBCM@Home \(Kids\)](#) via Zoom on topics such as [Make Your Own Dinosaur Footprints](#); [RBCM@outside](#) for virtual fieldtrips; or [RBCM@home \(Office Hours\)](#) to help support teachers and parents with accessing resources and they are available online or by phone during the pandemic closure
- Royal BC Museum is also collecting [COVID-19 stories](#) for future generations. [Victoria News article](#)
- Royal Ontario Museum is offering online activities that families can do from home to support learning, e.g. [learning mining principles through chocolate chip cookie baking](#) in addition to [online storytimes](#) that connect stories to items in the ROM collection

Programming Examples from Cultural and Community Organizations:

- Pacific Opera Victoria is offering [Opera Etc.](#) online for a physical distancing alternative to opera programming
- The Calgary Zoo offers [Zoo Along with You](#), a collection of storytimes, activities, and virtual tours of the Zoo
- Barkerville Historic Town & Park is offering free virtual field trips for teachers and students
- The Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria is now providing English classes for newcomers online as well as [interactive programming online for youth](#) via Zoom

Retail & Vendor Examples

- CBC shared a map of [indie bookstores](#) across Canada that have expanded to online sales, shipping, curbside pickup and delivery
- [Hoopla Book Club Hub](#) provides an opportunity for library staff or individuals to participate in an online book club

PROGRAMMING OUTSIDE THE LIBRARY

- [A Phased Reopening Plan for Libraries as COVID 19 Restrictions Are Lifted](#) – John Thill, Medium.com
- [Health and Safety Guidance During COVID-19 For Parks & Recreation Employers](#) – Public Services Health and Safety Association
- [COVID-19: Precautions When Working As A Childcare Provider](#) – Public Services Health and Safety Association
- [COVID-19: Precautions When Working As A Recreational Worker In A Healthcare Setting](#) – Public Services Health and Safety Association

- [Guidance on Health and Safety for Food Retail Sector during COVID-19 – Workplace Safety and Prevention Services](#)
- [Communities have challenges. Libraries can help. – Turning Outward to your Community: ALA](#)
- [From Project to Branch Integration and Sustainability: Community-Led Work at Halifax Public Libraries – Public Libraries Online](#)
- [Community Led Libraries Toolkit – Vancouver Public Library](#)
- [Communication and Partnerships – Tech Soup for Libraries](#)
- [Making Cities Stronger: Public Library Contributions to Local Economic Development – Urban Library Council](#)
- [Community Reference: Making Libraries Indispensable in a New Way – American Libraries](#)
- [Considering Outreach Assessment: Strategies, Sample Scenarios, and a Call to Action – In the Library Open Access](#)

FRENCH RESOURCES

- [Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques \(FCAB\). Heures de conte en ligne : lignes directrices en matière de droit d'auteur pour les bibliothèques publiques canadiennes pendant la pandémie de la COVID-19.](#)
- [Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec. Heureduconte.ca](#)
- [Bibliothèques Longueuil. Page Facebook.](#)
- [Bibliothèque d'Alma. Page Facebook.](#)
- [Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec \(BAnQ\). Activités à heures fixes.](#)
- [Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec \(BAnQ\). Mon territoire, mon arc-en-ciel.](#)
- [Ville de Beaconsfield. Page Facebook.](#)

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TOOLKIT DISCLAIMER : This Toolkit and its parts were developed by a series of working groups comprised of CULC/CBUC members in May 2020. CULC/CBUC has endeavoured to make the content relevant to most public libraries, however, all libraries operate within their own context, and any use of this toolkit must consider a library's particular governance context whether provincial, territorial, regional, or municipal, and reflect the needs

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