



Pandemic Recovery Plan

An Action Plan for Re-opening the
Woodstock Public Library after the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Introduction

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic have been felt across all segments of our community. As we have made steady progress in the fight against this deadly virus, modelling by health experts shows early signs that the enhanced public health measures, which have included social isolation, physical distancing and hand-washing, are working to slow and stop the spread of the virus, and flatten the curve of the outbreak.

On April 27, the Province of Ontario announced its plan, [A Framework for Reopening Our Province](#). With the release of this document, the Library needs to begin planning for the eventual reinstatement of library services to the community.

This action plan is to provide a framework on how the Library will recover and operate in a post-pandemic world.

Assumptions

The recovery plan is based on a number of assumptions as follows:

- **Incremental Return to Full Library Services**

The resumption of library services to the community will be gradual and not all at once.

- **Possibility of Second Wave and Future Pandemics**

We may experience a second wave of the pandemic in our community and may see similar outbreaks in the future. Some responses to the pandemic may be temporary or permanent in nature, and impact on how and what services the Library will provide in the future.

- **Unknown Timelines for Implementation**

Timelines are not known and conditions for the resumption of services are dependent on the Province's decision to reduce restrictions based on a decline of COVID-19 cases over a 2 to 4-week period. It's unclear in what stage of the Province's framework for reopening that public libraries would fall under. Stage 2 of the Province's roadmap is detailed as "open more workplaces and outdoor spaces, allow some larger gatherings". Stage 3 is described as "further relax the restrictions on public gatherings, opening all workplaces responsibly". The number of people in social gatherings is not stated in either, although reference is made to "large public gatherings such as concerts and sporting events will be restricted for the foreseeable future". Depending on the level of service, the Library could be reopened under Stage 2 with "curb-side pick-up" service. Likewise, the Library may not be permitted to fully open until Stage 3 or even after.

- **Low Programming Attendance**

Patron attendance at library programs and events will be low. Latent anxieties and fear of the pandemic may cause patrons to avoid public places and large gatherings. We believe that there will be an initial decrease in patron attendance at library programs and events, which should increase over time as patron confidence builds.

- **Increased Circulation Activity**

There will be a resurgence in circulation due to an unmet need for library materials during the closure. Borrowing books will help patrons re-assert and reclaim their public and social lives. We anticipate an initial surge of use once the Library re-opens access to its physical collections.

- **Customer Service vs. Safety**

The safety practices imposed during the initial reopening of the Library may conflict with the anticipated surge in demand for access to our physical collections. We anticipate long line-ups for check-out and other services due to physical distancing measures.

- **Co-ordination with the City**

The Library will need to communicate and synchronize whenever possible its activities with other municipal recreational and cultural services.

- **Dealing with the Unknown**

The plan will change and evolve in response to a rapidly changing environment.

Mission Statement

The Woodstock Public Library will resume library services to the public in an efficient, effective and safe manner through an incremental approach in accordance with directives from the municipality, province and local health authorities.

Action Plan Objectives

Flexibility: The plan will need to be very responsive to any changes due to the progression of the pandemic and health restrictions issued by the Province and local health authorities. These decisions will most likely necessitate the need for an incremental return to full library services.

Safety: The safety of our patrons and staff will be of paramount priority.

Staffing: Returning laid-off library staff back to a safe work environment as soon as possible. Sufficient staffing will allow the Library to meet the anticipated surge in borrowing expected on re-opening and help to meet patrons' service expectations.

Communication: A communication strategy that clearly announces what levels of service have been restored and that manages public expectations.

Build Confidence: Our cleaning practices and safety procedures will generate confidence and trust in our patrons and staff. This will position the library as an agent of social change as a site of well-being, and as an indicator of a progressive return to normality.

Recovery Plan

Recovery Plan – Stage 1

Description

Curb-side pick-up of holds.

Service Level

- Library holds pick-ups in front of the Library.
- Holds placed via library catalogue or via phone. Library building remains closed to public to ensure safety of staff.

Public Access

- No public access to building to ensure safety of staff.
- Book return re-opened.
- Back log of holds requested cleared before allowing patrons to place new holds.

Hours of Operation

- Reduced Hours to be implemented (e.g. Monday to Saturday from 10:00am to 6:00pm) or Summer Hours as deemed appropriate.

Staffing Levels

- 2 Circ Staff
- 2 Page
- 1 Supervisor/Manager or 2 Librarians

Safety

- Practice and promote physical distancing.
- Physical distancing lines on sidewalk
- No direct contact with staff – drop holds on table and go.
- Quarantine of returned materials for 72 hours.

Technology

- Configuration of holds and hold notices in ILS.
 - Re-enabling of hold request function in online catalogue.
- Frequent generation of holds lists.
- Phone system automated attendant to direct calls for holds pick-up.

Recovery Plan - Stage 2

Description

Limited library services with restrictions and protective measures in place.

Service Level

- Library Holds Pick-up and Check-out via kiosk and check-out counter.
- Express Collection & Selection of New & Best Sellers for quick browsing.
- Closed stacks to public – Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) access to place holds on demand.
- Readers' Advisory and OPAC assistance at Children's Desk by a Librarian.
- On Demand item retrieval by Pages for patrons.

Public Access

- Public access to main lobby via Program Room.
- Public Washrooms open.
- Possible limits to number of patrons allowed in the building.

Hours of Operation

- Summer Hours instituted earlier than normal.
- Seniors' Hours from 10:00am to 11:00am each day.

Staffing Levels

- 2 Pages (Shelving and Holds Retrieval) per shift
- 2 Circ Clerks – (Program Room and Check-out Counter) per shift
- 1 Librarian per shift.

Note: number of staff may be dictated by provincial restrictions.

Safety

- Practice and promote physical distancing.
 - Physical distancing stickers, arrows and lines on floor.
 - Signage to remind patrons.
 - Routing of patrons to services
 - Entrance via Program Room
 - Egress through security gate exit.
 - Arrows to direct flow from holds shelf to check-out counter or self-check kiosk.
- Cough barriers on counters, Children's reference desk and table in Program Room.

- Staff training in the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Masks, glasses/face shields and gloves required for staff in public areas (e.g. lobby, Program Room) and while handing returned items in book drop room.
- Increased level of cleaning regiment of lobby, counters, self-check kiosk, and washrooms. Staff workstations and counters to be wiped down at the end of every shift. Frequent cleaning of public areas.
- Quarantine of returned items for 72 hours.
- Staff are to conduct self-assessment prior to reporting for their scheduled shift. They are not to report to work if they have any symptoms, or have been in recent close contact with someone diagnosed or under investigation for COVID-19.

Technology

- Expected heavy use of the self-check kiosk. The introduction of the new self-check kiosks will most likely be delayed until late summer.
- Frequent generation of holds list for retrieval by Pages.
- Use of social networking software for book clubs, reading clubs, etc., as alternative delivery methods.
- Walkie-talkies for internal communication (Program Room <-> counter)
- Reconfiguration and deployment of computers. Dual barcode scanners on CKO stations to prevent library cards from being a virus transfer vector.

Recovery Plan - Stage 3

Description

Some library functions with continued heightened protection and some restrictions. Some services may be restricted by provincial requirements on gathering sizes, physical distancing practices, etc.

Service Levels

- Open collections for browsing while practicing and promoting physical distancing.
- Directional arrows between stacks. Physical distancing stickers on floors.
- Circulation functions remain behind cough barrier at counters.
- Children's desk open with full cough barriers in place.
- Adult Reference desk open with cough barrier.

Hours of Operation

Return to normal hours of operation.

Staffing Levels

Return to normal staffing schedule.

Safety

- Continue to practice and promote physical distancing in the library.
- No public seating or study space in the library.
- No public Internet stations use.
- Continued use of cough guard barriers at all service desks and counters.
- Continued use of personal protective equipment by Library staff.
- Continued quarantine of returned items.
- Continue self-assessment by staff prior to reporting for scheduled shift.

Technology

As required.

Recovery Plan - Stage 4

Description

Full library services with limited study space, public seating and public Internet stations availability. Selective return to library programming.

Service Levels

- Limited public seating and study space.
- Limited public Internet stations access.
- Limited return of one-on-one library programming (e.g. Book a Librarian).

Hours of Operation

Normal hours of operation.

Staffing Levels

Normal staffing schedule.

Safety

- Continue physical distancing protocols.
- Temporary cough barriers remain in place.
- Continued use of personal protective equipment by Library staff.
- Limited occupancy levels as established by the Province or local health authorities.
- Discontinue quarantine of returned materials.

Technology

As required.

Recovery Plan - Stage 5

Description

Return to normal library programming and events.

Service Levels

Full library services with programming and library events reinstated.

Hours of Operation

Normal hours of operation.

Staffing Levels

Normal staffing schedule.

Safety

- Removal of temporary cough screens and discontinue use of protective personal equipment.
- Discontinue use of protective personal equipment and physical distancing practices.
- Ensure that an adequate supply of personal protective equipment for next pandemic is maintained.

Technology

As required.

After Action Review

- Review the pandemic response plan and recovery plan.
- Make adjustments and refinements based on lessons learned and best practices from other libraries and public institutions.
- Consider how the design of the Library lay-out helped or hindered pandemic safety practices.
- Consider the use of technology by the Library during the pandemic.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of communications strategy, both internally and externally.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of support provided to Library staff.