

Summary: the goal of the Demmer Library administration, staff, and trustees, is to return to full and normal functions of the library with 54 hours/week service at the earliest date it is both safe and feasible to do so.

This document outlines steps for moving in the direction of full and complete reopening following the 2020 coronavirus pandemic, and some of the benchmarks that will need to be met before moving to subsequent phases of the plan. **This will be reviewed at minimum monthly at library board meetings to determine if required benchmarks have been met.**

Factor	Impact	Measures to consider for full service	Response
Changes in local infection rates	Variants, local outbreaks could cause the infection rate to increase suddenly; vaccination, seasons/social distancing could allow it to decrease	<p>Low incidence/prevalence of infection:  <math>\leq 10\%</math> of tests in Oneida County positive over last 7 days and trend is stable or downward over last 30 days<sup>1</sup></p> <p><i>(5.8% and trending up for period ending 4/13/21)</i></p> <p><math>&lt; 171</math> new cases in Oneida and Vilas counties combined over last 30 days<sup>2</sup></p> <p><i>3/9/2021 - 4/9/2021: 191 new cases</i></p> <p><math>\leq 30</math> active cases/day in Oneida and Vilas counties combined over last 30 days</p> <p><i>3/9/2021 - 4/9/2021: avg. 76 active cases per day</i></p>	<p>Goal: avoid disruptive changes to services (open hours, capacity/time limits)</p> <p>Action: Choose a response that allows the minimum number of restrictions while still allowing for public safety cushion should an outbreak occur.</p> <p>Response: When thresholds are met for a period of 1 month, return to normal hours and unrestricted services.</p>
Local vaccination levels reach "herd"	Reduces likelihood of local infections during seasons when	80%+ of eligible population in Oneida and	Goal: increase services to full and unrestricted with minimum number of

<sup>1</sup> Using City of Racine "Safer Racine" epidemiology metrics: <https://www.racinecoronavirus.org/reopening/>; source: <https://infogram.com/ochd-covid-19-data-dashboard-1hzj4odqvr7d6pw> and <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/local.htm>

<sup>2</sup> Using the Harvard Model "Yellow" case incidence, fewer than 10 new cases per 100,000/day, as a benchmark (<https://globalepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/TTSI-Technical-Advice-Handbook-2.0-June-30-2020-FINAL.pdf>); source: <https://www.facebook.com/OneidaCountyHealthDepartment> and <https://www.facebook.com/Vilas-County-Public-Health-Department-1057904490907614>

immunity”	population is stable	Vilas counties vaccinated <sup>3</sup>  <i>04/13/2021: 31.0% Oneida, 30% Vilas fully vaccinated; 44.4% / 43.5% with one dose</i>	benchmark requirements.  Action: monitor local vaccination numbers
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Specific actions to be taken in order to return to full, 54 hours/week unrestricted service

Action	Benchmark Requirement	Timeframe (may be approximate)
- <b>All staff return to their regular job duties without COVID-19 accommodations</b>	- Two weeks following final shot in vaccine series for high-risk staff - Vaccines determined to remain effective against any emerging variant threat - All staff and public continue wearing face masks	- April 2021
- <b>Begin scheduling volunteers for routine shelving, book processing, and used book sale activities</b>	- Volunteers are willing and interested in returning - Volunteers are vaccinated (completing at least 2 full weeks following last dose of vaccine regimen) - Volunteers continue to wear face masks	- April 2021
- <b>End metering capacity in main library area (i.e., giving each person entering a number)</b>	- Users still receive 30 minute visit guideline - All staff and public continue wearing face masks - Seating remains limited	- April 2021
- <b>Add 7 hours of library open time (including 2 additional evening hours): Mondays 12 – 7 PM</b>	- Complete re-training of front desk staff who have been on alternate duty for 1 year+ - All staff and public continue wearing face masks	- May 3, 2021

<sup>3</sup> Using DHS herd immunity benchmark, <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/contracts/covid-19-vaccination-community-outreach.htm>; source: <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-data.htm#residents>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>End quarantining of library materials after return; begin accepting returns inside of library building</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- WVLS quarantine recommendation lifted OR</li> <li>- Health authorities determine vaccination levels adequate to meet “herd immunity” (70-80%) of adults</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible late June/early July</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Remove time restrictions on persons using the library</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Epidemiology benchmarks for new cases, positivity rate, or case prevalence met</li> <li>- Health authorities determine local vaccination levels adequate to meet “herd immunity”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possible late July/early August</li> <li>- Target: after Labor Day (September)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Remove all capacity restrictions on persons using the library</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance from state/local health authorities</li> <li>- Masks continue to be worn indoors (if still recommended by state/local health authorities)</li> <li>- Children under the age of 16 are eligible for vaccination OR it is determined children are not a risk for spreading COVID-19 or variants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target: October</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Return to in-person indoor programming with no restrictions</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Guidance from state/local health authorities</li> <li>- Masks continue to be worn indoors (if still recommended by state/local health authorities)</li> <li>- Children under the age of 16 are eligible for vaccination OR it is determined children are not a risk for spreading COVID-19 or variants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target: October</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Resume normal operating hours and staffing</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local/state health authorities lift indoor capacity restrictions</li> <li>- State and local health authorities determine vaccination levels adequate to meet “herd immunity”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target: October</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Face masks/coverings no longer required</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- State and local health departments determine adequate vaccination levels have been reached</li> <li>- State and local health authorities determine vaccines are effective against new virus variants</li> <li>- Universal masking no longer recommended by local health departments)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- TBD</li> </ul>

# Wisconsin Public Libraries

## Addendum to Reopening: Return to Full Service

*Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, Division for Libraries & Technology*

*April 6, 2021*

### Addendum Introduction

The Department of Public Instruction (DPI), in collaboration with the Wisconsin public library community, has developed this addendum of best practices to the Reopening Guide. The principles of personal safety, risk mitigation, transparency, and capacity continue to guide the ongoing development and application of this document.

As we advance through the “vaccination phase” of the pandemic, Wisconsin’s public libraries, in coordination with their communities, continue to navigate difficult decisions about when it is safe to relax restrictions. This addendum provides a list of best practices regarding three key areas of concern: public health factors including vaccination and positivity rates, quarantine of materials, and other factors to consider when deciding to increase access to services.

### Continue the Good Work

**Continue to seek guidance from your local health department.** Ensure that your library complies with all applicable local public health orders. Continue to communicate with other libraries within your county and with your regional library system staff for additional information.

**Continue to work with your municipal governing body** when making decisions based on local factors. Maintaining these relationships now will have lasting benefits.

**Continue to have conversations with your library system and its other member libraries** to help make decisions appropriate for your region. While these decisions are matters of local control, some level of continuity of service helps to smooth the path forward for both library workers and regional residents.

**Continue to practice the best way of mitigating the risk of spreading COVID-19:** through mask-wearing, thorough hand washing, and physical distancing. **Both DHS and DPI recommend continued mask-wearing regardless of mask mandate status.** Sick people should stay home, hand sanitizer should be relied upon only when soap and water are unavailable. **Continue to avoid crowded spaces and poorly ventilated areas.**

## Public Health Factors

### Consider the Metrics

Health departments across the state have a slightly varied approach to their guidance; however, the following metrics help them to develop their guidance:

- Number of COVID-19 cases in the past 7-14 days
- Case trends (up or down)
- Positivity rate, in percent
- Hospital capacity
- Availability of testing
- Contact tracing
- Vaccination rate

The CDC updated their [Operational Strategy for K-12 Schools Through Phased Prevention](#) guidance on March 19, 2021, to include revisions to physical distancing requirements, clarifications to ventilation strategies, and the role of community transmission levels in decision-making. All of this information can prove very useful to public libraries as well. Table 1 of this document provides "Indicators and Thresholds for Community Transmission of COVID-19." **Please note that the changes in physical distancing relate to the school setting only.**

The [City of Milwaukee](#), for example, has indicated that all restrictions will be lifted when there are between 0 and 9 new cases per 100,000 people in the past 7 days, when the positivity rate is below 5%, and when the adult vaccination rate is at or above 80%.

The [City of Racine](#) would reopen when the positivity rate is below 10% and cases are trending downward, among other factors (see page 7 for metrics).

[Trempealeau County](#) uses the [Harvard Model](#) for its guidance, which strives for less than 1 new case and fewer than 6 hospitalizations per 100,000 people, per day.

Hospital capacity, availability of testing, and prompt contact tracing are also important factors, as are the availability of personal protective equipment.

Vaccination is a critical tool for containing the virus and minimizing the adverse impact of COVID-19. The State of Wisconsin seeks to achieve herd immunity for COVID-19 across Wisconsin by immunizing approximately 80% of the eligible population. <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/contracts/covid-19-vaccination-community-outreach.htm>

## Compare Your Community Data with the Metrics

Community data can then be found on the DHS website.

- Disease activity rates can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/disease.htm>
- Hospital capacity can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/capacity.htm>
- Vaccination data can be found at <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/vaccine-data.htm>

When accessing this data, consider the public health trends of your entire service area. For some libraries, the service area may be limited to the municipality. For others, it may be the entire county or multiple counties. Libraries may wish to consider whether their community serves as a regional hub for shopping, health care services, or if it is a commuter community for a more metropolitan area. If so, it may be necessary to consider the public health data in those areas as well. Those libraries experiencing different usage trends compared to pre-pandemic usage may wish to examine circulation statistics to verify that they are getting the most accurate picture of their current service area.

Only increase access to materials, services, and facility features when the positivity rate in the community is decreasing. If the positivity rate in your service area begins to rise, dial back your higher contact services.

Consider when all individuals seeking vaccination will have access to it, and the time it takes to build immunity.

Talk to nearby businesses to learn more about their decisions and mitigation strategies, and what data they are using to make decisions. A business may appear to have relaxed restrictions but may have employed other protocols not visible to the public, such as increased ventilation, staff symptoms screening, etc.

The increase of other services, such as programs and meeting room use, will be based on factors that determine the use of the rest of the library, like occupancy, distancing protocols, and staff capacity.

The [Occupancy Calculator](#) has been updated to include 75 percent occupancy. NOTE that you must make a copy of the calculator for your own use; you will not be given access to the document.

## Quarantine of Materials

Initially, to limit the potential transmission of COVID-19 by surface contact, quarantine of materials was a safe, effective, low cost, low effort way of mitigating the risk of spread of live virus to library workers and users. Good hygiene practices are believed to limit risks from surface contact.

The Oregon Health Authority provided [guidance on materials handlings in libraries](#) on October 5, 2020, which Wisconsin DHS supported upon request from DPI, which states that “when considering the relatively low amount of virus transferred to a surface, how much virus becomes nonviable within a day, how much the next person picks up, and how often they touch eye/nose/mouth, our conclusion of quarantine between overnight and 24 hours is reasonable.”

Currently, some libraries continue to quarantine for 24 hours, some quarantine book drop materials overnight, and some have successfully eliminated quarantine altogether.

Major retailers who previously suspended store returns due to COVID-19 resumed their regular store return policies as early as last summer. Such retailers include Whole Foods, Walmart, Costco, and Kroger. Research suggests that libraries are the only industry that continues to employ materials quarantine procedures.

Vaccinated staff can be assigned to process book returns and ILL to mitigate any risk to workers who have not yet been vaccinated.

Continue to work with your regional library system and other member libraries to determine an appropriate level of quarantine, if any. Your public library system should be made aware of any changes you make regarding materials quarantine.

If materials quarantine has been contentious or controversial in your area, or if you anticipate that changes in your quarantine procedure may create community pushback, you may want to consider being proactive and creating messaging that can be shared in a variety of ways. Depending on the level of concern, messaging could be in the form of a script provided to frontline staff to be used only when someone inquires about it, a sign at the door or by the service desk, or a bookmark inserted in items checked out. Here is an example of such language:

*Upon consideration of the evidence, including scientific research, health authority guidance, and industry practices, [Your] Public Library has determined that quarantine of library materials is no longer necessary. We will continue with internal hygiene protocols that are proven most effective in mitigating the risk of spreading COVID-19. If you are concerned about the lack of a [insert the duration of your previous quarantine, i.e. 24 hours] quarantine of library materials, we recommend that you self-quarantine any materials checked out from the library prior to use.*

## Update Your Communications Plan

The following resources may help you to determine any signage or communications you may need for your library.

- [Community-Based Organizations COVID-19 Vaccine Communication Toolkit \(CDC\)](#)
- [Event Planning and Readiness \(CDC\)](#)
- <https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/covid-19/employers.htm>
- [Pierce County Public Health COVID-19 Business Toolkit](#)
- Madison and Dane County Public Health has a good resources page. While the requirements may not pertain to you, many of the resources may be of use, including the [self-assessment for readiness to be open](#).
  - <https://publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus/forward-dane/requirements>
- Limiting Workplace Violence Related to COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/limit-workplace-violence.html>