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Libraries across Four County began shutting their doors in March 2020 in response to the COVID-19 virus pandemic and Governor Cuomo's Executive Orders. As New York State begins to look towards re-opening safely, the phased opening guidelines below are meant as recommendations to 4CLS libraries.

According to Governor Cuomo, each region in the state must meet and maintain core [metrics](#) to determine if they can re-open. 4CLS Libraries are located in two regions – Southern Tier (Broome, Chenango, & Delaware County) and Mohawk Valley (Otsego County).

As of May 19, 2020, the Mohawk Valley Region and the Southern Tier Region satisfied the state's requirements for reopening: <https://forward.ny.gov/regional-monitoring-dashboard>

According to New York State, reopening will occur in [phases](#) (see figure 1 below):

- Phase 1 includes manufacturing, construction, and some retail locations who must offer curbside pick-up.
- Phase 2 includes professional services, finance and insurance, retail, administrative support, and real estate.
- Phase 3 includes restaurants, food services, and hotels.
- Phase 4 includes arts, entertainment, recreation and education.

Based on the current understanding of the opening requirements from state and regional authorities, and the roll out of the state's phases, it is recommended that libraries gradually reopen in the segments noted below. This recommendation may be amended based on the issuance of further guidance from state, regional, and county authorities. Libraries should also consult with local leaders.

All re-opening phases are dependent upon libraries implementing the following actions and protocols (as listed in the NY Forward Safety Plan Template-

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/NYS_BusinessReopeningSafetyPlanTemplate.pdf)

- protective equipment (gloves, face masks, sanitizer, etc) provided free to ALL staff: <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/no-20216-continuing-temporary-suspension-and-modification-laws-relating-disaster-emergency>
- enhanced cleaning or quarantine procedures for library materials as recommended by the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC): <https://www.nedcc.org/free-resources/preservation-leaflets/3.-emergency-management/3.5-disinfecting-books>

- enhanced cleaning procedures for common areas following guidelines from the Center for Disease Control: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>.
- A plan for the protection of staff and patrons, including social distancing and reduction in workplace density
- A process for daily screening of employees entering the workplace for COVID-19 symptoms:
 - Fever over 100, loss of taste or smell, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, chills, muscle pain, or sore throat
 - Screening results must be reviewed every day and documented
- A process in place to notify public health officials, staff, and the public in the event of a confirmed case among the library staff or persons known to have used library services and to cooperate with contact tracing effort
 - Maintain confidentiality as required by state and federal laws
- A process in place to maintain a continuous log with contact information for every person, including workers and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the work site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means
- Progress through the phases will be halted or reversed if confirmed COVID-19 cases are found in staff or patrons.

CHAPTER 1

This stage goes into effect when The [NY Forward Business Reopening Lookup Tool](#) indicates it is safe. **and** the requirements listed above are met

- Staff will be allowed to continue to work from home (WFH) as much as possible. Staffing the building will be done on a staggered schedule and/or in separate areas of the building to encourage social distancing.
- Library book drops will be opened for returns and all recommended guidelines for quarantining materials for 72 hours as recommended by the NEDCC will be followed.
- 4CLS delivery will resume. Materials must be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours before being put in delivery as recommend by the NEDCC.
- Local holds will be activated on a library by library basis – contact automation at automation@4cls.org to activate local holds for your library (send the date at which to activate local holds).
- Patrons will not have access to library buildings in this stage.
- Libraries will post signage to remind personnel to adhere proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols

Chapter 2

This stage goes into effect when a region enters NYS Phase 2, the requirements listed above are met, **and** the activities listed in Chapter 1 are fully established.

- The public will not be allowed in the library to browse or read the periodicals.
- Public holds will continue to be blocked through the ILS.
- Libraries offer curbside pickup by appointment only. Libraries can choose to have patrons call or email the requested titles then set up a pick-up time outside of the building.
 - Develop a plan for no-contact interaction with patrons

- Plan for how returns will be accepted
- The ability for patrons to place local holds will be activated on a library by library basis
- Staff will wear proper protective equipment during all interactions with the public and library workers in this process.
- Libraries offer computer use with reduced session time by appointment only if they are able to maintain proper social distancing. Computers will be disinfected after each use and both staff and patrons will wear proper protective equipment.
 - Implementation of this element is subject to the physical layout of the computer area and the library's ability to ensure the safety and security of library staff and patrons
- Orders for new materials via 4CLS will begin to be forwarded to vendors for fulfillment.
- Library meeting rooms will be unavailable and library programs will be provided online only.

Chapter 3

This stage goes into effect when a region enters Phase 4, the requirements listed above are met, **and** the activities listed in Chapter 1 and 2 have been in place for at least two weeks

- Libraries offer limited access to the building. The number of patrons allowed in the building will follow an established guideline (e.g. 1 person per 4 square feet or % of maximum capacity)
 - entrances/exits locations will be monitored
- Suggested guidelines on social distancing including, but not limited to
 - Altered traffic patterns
 - Chairs completely or partially removed from tables and reading rooms to allow for greater distance between users.
 - Computer stations spaced a minimum of 6 feet apart
 - Staff work stations, offices, and break rooms will allow for physical distancing.
 - Social distancing markers using tape or signs that denote 6 ft of spacing in common areas
- All employees and patrons will wear personal protective equipment.
- Cleaning and disinfecting of all commonly touched surfaces will take place on a regular and frequent schedule and logged
- Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations for personnel including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, or an alcohol-based sanitizer containing 60% of more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible
- Computer use will be by appointment for a reduced session length.
 - Computers will be disinfected after each use and both staff and patrons must wear proper personal protective equipment.
 - The number of computer stations will be reduced to allow for greater distance between users.
- 4CLS will deactivate local holds and reactivate universal holds for library patrons.
- Programs can be held if they have low attendance and large enough room capacity to allow participants to maintain a 6-foot distance. Attendees must continue to wear masks as is required when entering the library.
- Children's programs that cannot maintain the recommended physical distance will be held virtually or postponed.
- Bathrooms with multiple stalls will be considered single-use and will be disinfected regularly.

Chapter 4

This stage goes into effect when gatherings of 50 people or less are allowed, and national, state, and regional elected and health officials no longer recommend public stay at home.

- Resumption of core services and an end to limited building access with an emphasis on social distancing and enhanced cleaning practices.
- Regular programs can be scheduled for adults and youth.
- Library meeting rooms can be used by outside groups.

Chapter 5

This stage goes into effect when all restrictions on gatherings have been removed.

- Libraries offer in-person programming and provide meeting rooms for community use.
- 4CLS staff resume site visits and in-person meetings

Figure 1 - NYS Reopening Phases

The image is a screenshot of a live broadcast from PBS News Hour. On the left, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo is seated at a desk with a microphone, looking towards the camera. A nameplate in front of him reads "Governor Andrew M. Cuomo". To his right is a large graphic titled "Phased Reopening of Business" with a large number "8" in a yellow circle. The graphic lists activities across four phases:

- Phase 1:** Construction, Manufacturing and wholesale supply chain, Select Retail – Curbside Pickup
- Phase 2:** Professional Services, Finance and Insurance, Retail, Administrative Support, Real Estate/Rental Leasing
- Phase 3:** Restaurants/Food Services, Hotels/Accommodations
- Phase 4:** Arts/Entertainment/Recreation, Education

At the bottom of the graphic, the slogan "STAY HOME. STOP THE SPREAD. SAVE LIVES." is displayed. The video player interface includes the PBS News Hour logo, a "WATCH LIVE: New York governor gives coronavirus update ..." title, "Watch later" and "Share" buttons, a progress bar at 22:31 / 1:05:53, and standard YouTube controls.