

Johnson Creek Public Library Plan of Action Regarding COVID-19

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The Johnson Creek Public Library (JCPL) understands that this is a time of great uncertainty and unrest and that the library is a community institution that can provide structure and guidance in a crisis. Therefore, JCPL has developed this Plan of Action (POA) to help the community understand its actions and provide structure in an unstable time.

The three parts to this POA are designed to minimize the employee's and community's exposure to COVID-19 while providing the maximum amount of library services. JCPL recognizes that ensuring the community has access to information and entertainment is an important responsibility to help the community get through troubled times. At the same time, JCPL takes the transmission of COVID-19 very seriously and will do everything advisable by federal, state, and local health officials to keep library and library items sanitized and safe.

Phase 1: Shut Down Library

JCPL will close to the public as of Tuesday, March 17. This decision is based on the following considerations:

- JCPL is part of the Bridges Library System and every other library in the system will be closed. If JCPL were to remain open, people from both counties could and would travel here and possibly expose the community and employees to COVID-19 which has been confirmed in adjoining counties.
- As of March 17, the governor of Wisconsin issued an [agency order](#) prohibiting mass gatherings of 10 people or more in order to slow the spread of COVID-19. The order is intended "keep Wisconsinites safe and healthy by reducing the spread of COVID-19, especially for those who are considered high-risk. With limited tests available nationwide and continued community spread, we have to take every precaution to protect ourselves, our families, and our neighbors" (Gov. Evers). Though a small library, JCPL can easily get groups of 10 people on a regular business day, and so closing to the public helps the community comply with the recommendations of government.
- Social distancing has been determined the most effective way to slow the community spread of COVID-19. By closing the physical building and encouraging social distancing for both employees and customers, JCPL will contribute to slowing the spread of the disease by helping to ["flatten the curve."](#) JCPL recognizes that it is our moral obligation to do our part to reduce the burden on emergency, medical, and other core services and we believe our actions will help our community stay safer and healthier in the long run.

Phase 2: Continue Library Services Remotely

Employees will not come into the library for 2 weeks, until Tuesday, March 31 and the library will continue to be closed to the public. The uncertainty of COVID-19—including transmission, viable lifetime on surfaces, availability of testing, and a longer incubation time than the typical flu virus—makes it prudent to completely close the physical library building to both customers and library employees. Because there are no tests available to the public at this time and

because it is impossible to sanitize every possible infected surface, we have to assume that COVID-19 is viable on surfaces in the library—including circulating materials that may have been in infected homes—and JCPL does not want to unknowingly put the community at risk. This decision is based on the following considerations:

- [Preliminary studies](#) indicated that COVID-19 can survive on surfaces for up to 3 days.
- The [CDC](#) warns that a period of 2 to 14 days may lapse between exposure and presentation of symptoms. Employees may already have been exposed and not know they are spreading the disease through contact with the public, contact with other employees, and contact with circulating items. Allowing a significant amount of time to pass before re-opening the library to anyone will allow employees to self-assess and ensure they are not sick before re-entering the library.
- The availability of appropriate cleaning solutions is uncertain at best. Currently the library does not have enough supplies to properly sanitize every item that would circulate on a normal day and there is no known way to sanitize paper pages.
- Delivery between libraries in the Bridges Library System has been suspended indefinitely and therefore customers would not be able to get items they have ordered anyway.

While the library building is unoccupied, there are many ways the library employees can still serve the public. Employees will continue working remotely or otherwise use sick leave time if that is not possible. Employees will continue to do the following:

- Check mail frequently. The library director will continue to pay bills and complete other administrative tasks.
- Check the drop box frequently. Items will be emptied using gloves, quarantined for 4 days, cleaned, then checked back in.
- From home, the library director will create digital content including digital storytimes and lapsits and post them to social media and on the library website.
- From home, the library director will research and share quality content that can be shared digitally with customers.
- From home, the library director will promote the digital library services already available to the public with their library cards via social media and the library website.
- The requests@johnsoncreeklibrary.org email will be checked daily and any questions from the public will be answered.

Phase 3: Reassess and Create a New Plan

On Thursday, April 2, the Library Director and Library Board will reassess the situation and create a new POA, which they will announce to the public on April 3. JCPL recognizes that the global, national, and local situation could be vastly different and entirely unknowable in only a couple of weeks, and therefore would like to revisit this POA, assess how well it has worked, and decide what to do next. This next decision will be based on the following considerations:

- Health and safety of the employees
- National and local rates of infection and death
- New guidelines and recommendations of national, state, and local resources
- Decisions of other libraries and the Bridges Library System, specifically in relation to deliveries and holds

- Viability of providing a Pop-Up Library in terms of staffing, sanitation, and logistics
- Effectiveness of digital outreach

This POA was developed with all the available research and guidelines available as of the time of writing and may change at any time depending upon the developments of the situation. JCPL will communicate with the public via its usual media outlets to inform everyone if there is a change.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on March 17, 2020

Links to resources from this statement:

Evers, Tony. "Gov. Evers Directs DHS to Limit Gatherings to Less Than 10 to Slow Spread of COVID-19." State of Wisconsin, 17 March 2020.

<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/WIGOV/bulletins/281a7bc>

Stevens, Harry. "Why outbreaks like coronavirus spread exponentially, and how to 'flatten the curve.'" Washington Post, 1 March 2020.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/world/corona-simulator/>

Gray, Richard. "Covid-19: How long does the coronavirus last on surfaces?" BBC, 17 March 2020. <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200317-covid-19-how-long-does-the-coronavirus-last-on-surfaces>

Centers for Disease Control. Coronavirus (COVID-19), 2020, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>. Accessed 17 March 2020.