Survey Method
Conducted by the American Library Association (ALA), with additional support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services and Colorado State Library’s Library Research Service

- SURVEY: Hosted in Survey Monkey;
- DISTRIBUTION: Survey link distributed via email, social media, and listservs;
- SAMPLE: All library types, with public, academic, and K-12 libraries representing the majority of respondents;
- ANALYTICS: Data were cleaned, de-duplicated, and anonymized.

Survey Results
The results in this report represent aggregate responses from a convenience survey.

- RESPONDENTS* 3,850 libraries;
- RESPONSE RATE: ~30% of US public library systems**; ~20% of US academic libraries; <20% of other library types;
- GEOGRAPHY: 50 US states + Washington, DC represented.

*Unless otherwise noted, n=3,850 when calculating responses.
**Public library system is equivalent to a public library jurisdiction.

Building Status
99% of respondents reported having limited access policies currently in place.

- Fully open (no restrictions) 62%;
- Open for curbside pickup 26%;
- Other limited access policies 11%;
- Fully open (no restrictions) 1%.

Re-opening Timeline
A majority of libraries that are fully closed are uncertain about when they can re-open their building(s).

- 47% of respondents do not know when their buildings would start to reopen to the public;
• 37% of respondents expect reopening to begin in June or July;
• 16% of respondents fell into the “other” category, reporting plans to reopen after July or that opening depends on state/school directives.

Planning for In-person Access
Libraries are instituting a combination of approaches for in-person access, including:

• RESPONDENTS*: 3,850 libraries;
• RESPONSE RATE: ~30% of US public library systems**; ~20% of US academic libraries; and less than 20% of other library types;
• GEOGRAPHY: 50 US states + Washington, DC represented.

Answers with 30% or higher response rate.

Processes and Procedures
Nearly all respondents will have a combination of protocols in place, including:

Staffing:
• 80%: Health and safety protocols for staff;
• 73%: Phased re-opening of operations;
• 30%: New or revised support services that require staffing (e.g., remote work, trauma response).

Safety and Sanitation:
• 80%: Sanitizing/quarantining materials;
• 76%: Social distancing requirements for patrons;
• 61%: Deep cleaning of interior spaces.

1500 examples of plans and processes were shared, which ALA and its partners will work to curate and disseminate widely.

Patron Needs
Libraries anticipate patrons’ most urgent needs in the next six months will be:

• 64% Access to physical materials and/or special collections;
• 60% Public access to computers and the internet;
• 60% Government applications and job search support.

K-20 library top needs include student success (e.g., assignment completion) and faculty/teacher support (e.g., research assistance, online teaching support).

Quote from respondent:
We checked out 143 laptops to students needing devices to do work online. This helped some students persist who may not have in this new learning environment. - Hawkeye Community College Library (Iowa)

**Student and Faculty Needs**

The top three ways all libraries are addressing student and faculty needs include:

- CURBSIDE PICKUP: Books, laptops, school materials;
- VIRTUAL REFERENCE: Via email, phone, chat;
- NEW "HOW TO" RESOURCES: For accessing virtual resources.

**Quote from respondent:**

The mother of half a dozen children, ages 4–14, who were all out of school because of coronavirus told us, "You’re a LIFESAVER!!" The kids were supposed to be reading 20 minutes a day, but after a week of lockdown were out of books. I helped the mom with our online library and reassured her she could call back any time. - Brigham City Public Library (Utah)

**Quote from respondent:**

...I am the administrator for our school's Accelerated Reading program, and I was instrumental in facilitating its use for teachers when they expanded their online resources to home use, helping with communications, troubleshooting for teachers and students, etc. – High Mount Elementary School (Illinois)

**Additional ways libraries are addressing student and faculty needs include:**

**FOR STUDENTS**

- Transitioning summer learning from in-person to virtual and adding new enrichment learning activities;
- Digitizing materials for remote use;
- Providing access to textbooks and other resources Securing and/or distributing devices for students who lack access to laptops/tablets for classwork.

**FOR FACULTY**

- Purchasing and/or curating additional online research resources, including negotiating licensing contracts Increasing access to open research in support of COVID-19;
- Working with faculty/teachers to create new open textbooks or other educational materials.

**COVID-19 Crisis Response**

Of those respondents who are involved in community crisis response, the majority reported:

- Developing new partnerships;
- Making or distributing Personal Protective Equipment (e.g., face shields or fabric masks);
- Addressing hunger relief efforts;
- Providing family-friendly facilities (e.g., for student parents);
• Relocating staff to other departments and/or helping in call centers (e.g., health, employment, 211).

Quote from respondent:
Our community has serious food insecurity issues, and we have been involved in addressing that for the past several years. COVID-19 has made the situation even worse. Ordinarily our (farmers) market has kids' activities, but those are not possible now. We are focusing solely on the food and working hard making sure those who have SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance) benefits are aware of this opportunity. - High Point Public Library (North Carolina)

Future Needs and Challenges

HEALTH & SAFETY
Respondents anticipate ongoing questions about safety protocols and having adequate PPE and cleaning supplies.

Quote from respondent:
We want our staff to be safe. We want our community's needs met. How we SAFELY get both of those goals met can be tricky. It is really a balancing act. - Spring Valley Public Library (Minnesota)

Open-ended responses: 764

UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE
Respondents reported being uncertain about how and when libraries will be allowed to make buildings accessible again; how people will continue to be affected by the virus and the ability of the library to respond; and how communities will change moving forward.

Quote from respondent:
The library's future will be dependent on the status of our course modalities (on campus, online, international), sustained enrollment, and state revenues. - Forsyth Library, Fort Hays State University (Kansas)

Open-ended responses: 764

FUNDING & BUDGET CUTS
Respondents shared their concerns around reduced funding for library budgets and anticipated staff loss due to furloughs and layoffs.

Quote from respondent:
Funding, funding, funding and advocacy for the critical importance of libraries as crucial, essential secondary responders. - Connecticut State Library

Open-ended responses: 764
Acknowledgments

The American Library Association (ALA) would like to thank all of the libraries that responded to the survey so quickly. The May 2020 "Libraries Respond: COVID-19 Survey" is one of a series of data and research projects underway at ALA to learn and share information about the impacts of COVID-19 on libraries, library staff, and our work serving our communities. Analysis of data from the survey is ongoing and will be shared in coming weeks.

We would also like to thank the Library Research Service, an office of the Colorado State Library, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services for their work helping clean and validate the survey data.

To learn more about the COVID-19 surveys and view the full sets of questions, please visit: http://www.ala.org/tools/libraries-respond-covid-19-survey.

Additional Resources:

- ALA Pandemic Preparedness Resources for Libraries
- Institute of Museum and Library Services COVID-19 Updates
- Re-opening Archives, Libraries and Museums Project

About the May 2020 Survey

The American Library Association fielded the online survey May 12–18, 2020. The online survey link was shared widely by ALA and other library organizations. Research staff from PLA, other ALA divisions and offices, the Colorado State Library’s Library Research Service, and the Institute of Museum and Library Services verified responses and removed duplicates. Survey responses represented ~30% of public library systems, ~20% of academic libraries, and less than 20% of other library types in the U.S.