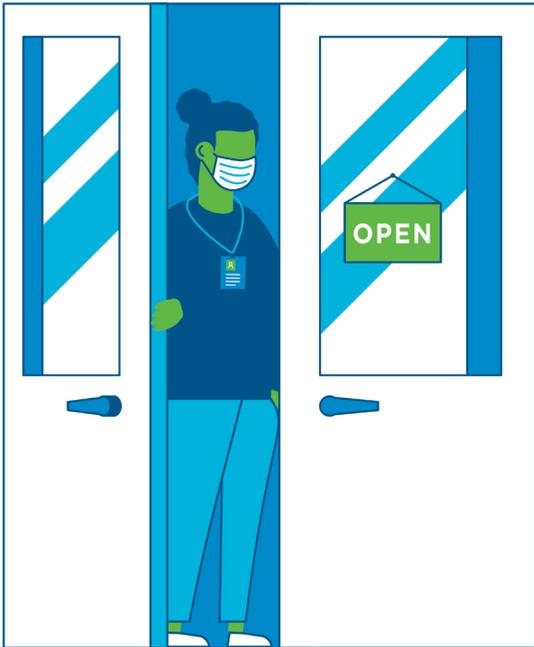


Reopening considerations for LAMs



When creating reopening plans or revising protocols to meet current conditions, reviewing what other institutions are doing can be helpful. This document synthesizes reopening plans that have been generously shared by archives, libraries, and museums (LAMs). Access to a full collection of reopening plans, sorted by category and content, is available on the [REALM website](#).

Reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by cleaning and disinfecting spaces and materials should be considered as part of a reopening plan. Consult the [REALM guide](#) for resources on quarantining, cleaning, and disinfecting.

1. PREPARING STAFF AND VENDORS

1.1 DEFINING PRIORITIES AND ROLES

Consider establishing a reentry task force to clarify immediate, mid-range, and long-term objectives. How will staff responsibilities and expectations change? These considerations might include:

- Hygiene expectations
- Mask wearing
- Health screening
- New cleaning responsibilities
- “A” and “B” staff rotation shifts
- Reporting to work, including time clock use
- Reporting sickness, travel, or possible exposure
- How policies apply to volunteers and interns

1.2 ORIENTATION ABOUT NEW OPERATING PROTOCOLS

Consider establishing regular orientations and information sharing. How will staff trainings change? New topics might include:

- Social distancing protocols
- Visitor and staff mask-wearing policies and how they will be enforced
- How to greet and communicate with visitors while wearing a mask
- What personal protective equipment (PPE) the institution will provide and how it will be distributed to staff
- Proper use and disposal of PPE
- Personal hygiene practices, such as respiratory etiquette, hand-washing techniques, and hand sanitizer use
- Sanitization/cleaning procedures, including safe use of disinfectant chemicals
- De-escalation techniques for handling confrontational/noncompliant visitors
- Staff quarantine procedures and how to call in sick
- Any changes to existing resources, such as point-of-sale systems or shared drives
- For museums: consider how to perform health screening for visitors, if applicable
- For museums: consider how to report and handle sick visitors



1.3 SECURING EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

How will staff needs change? Consider:

- Providing for employee mental health needs; refer to Mental Health America's [Mental Health and COVID-19 Information and Resources](#)
- Who on staff will answer employee questions about COVID-19
- How to accommodate social distancing in shared spaces
- Physical barriers between staff and visitors
- How to handle vulnerable employees
- How to manage staff who work in close quarters around collections items
- Practicability of regular and accessible testing, whether on-site or via local health partners
- How to address employee concerns about privacy and vulnerability
- Limiting and defining areas where staff congregate (break rooms, etc.)
- Suspending use of shared staff appliances
- Protocols for transport to and from work if staff are using public transportation

1.4 PREPARING VENDORS

How will vendors be handled? Consider:

- How and when vendors will access your facility
- Which parts of the facility vendors can access
- Expectations about health screenings
- Expectations about virtual vs. in-person meetings
- Expectations regarding changes in vendor business practices
- Differences in safety protocols for vendors versus staff, if needed
- How to communicate expectations to vendors



1.5 VISITOR POLICIES FOR MUSEUMS

What procedures will be used to support visitor health? Consider:

- Whether to perform in-person health screenings on visitors, require that visitors perform a self-screening before arrival, or take any other measure(s) of visitor health
- Installing physical barriers between visitors and staff
- Increasing access to sanitizer or hand-washing stations
- Whether to accept cash payments
- How the point of sale can be modified to increase safety



2. FACILITY CONSIDERATIONS

2.1. REOPENING METHODOLOGIES

What factors will determine when and how facilities can be reopened? How will operating procedures be adjusted to meet current conditions? Think about:

- Number and definition of phases, if full reopening is not currently possible
- What metrics will be used to determine the current phase of operation
- Which outside guidelines and regulations need to be considered in the development of reopening/operating phases
- How divisions within the organization are affected by each phase
- How changes in phases or policies will be communicated internally and externally
- Actions associated with each phase and who is responsible for executing them
- How reopening phases will impact program and service offerings (see the “Adapting programs and services” section below)

2.2 CAPACITY AND HOURS

How will the capacity and hours of operation change to create a safe and positive visitor experience? Consider:

- Reducing hours to decrease staff exposure
- Expanding hours to spread demand, resulting in fewer visitors on site at a time
- How to calculate the capacity of the facility (square footage, visitors per hour, etc.) and what guidelines or regulations to consider when setting the capacity

2.3 QUARANTINING AND CLEANING PROTOCOLS

Coronaviruses on surfaces and objects can die naturally within hours to days. Check [REALM test results](#) for information on how long the virus lasts on different materials, which can help to inform quarantining procedures. Warmer temperatures and exposure to sunlight can reduce the time the virus survives on surfaces and objects. Find out more in the [REALM literature review](#).

Collections and heritage materials require more specialized care than public space fixtures and furnishings. Check the [REALM website](#) for resources on [library materials handling](#) and [quarantine, disinfection, and cleaning](#) of museum collections and exhibits.

How will the existing cleaning regimen change to reduce the risk of transmission? Consider:

- Different cleaning strategies for public spaces versus historical assets (review [REALM's cleaning considerations](#))
- Who on staff will be responsible for cleaning what, what training they will receive, and how to ensure they have ready access to cleaning supplies
- Establishing containers where contaminated objects can be placed by visitors or staff, indicating that they need to be cleaned or disinfected
- Establishing a regular cleaning schedule for different tasks: continuous, daily, weekly, etc
- Empowering visitors to clean before and after they use shared devices or interactive exhibits by making wipes or other cleaning materials available



2.4 AMENITIES

What amenities in the facility could be a site for possible transmission? Can the approach to using these amenities be changed to reduce risk?

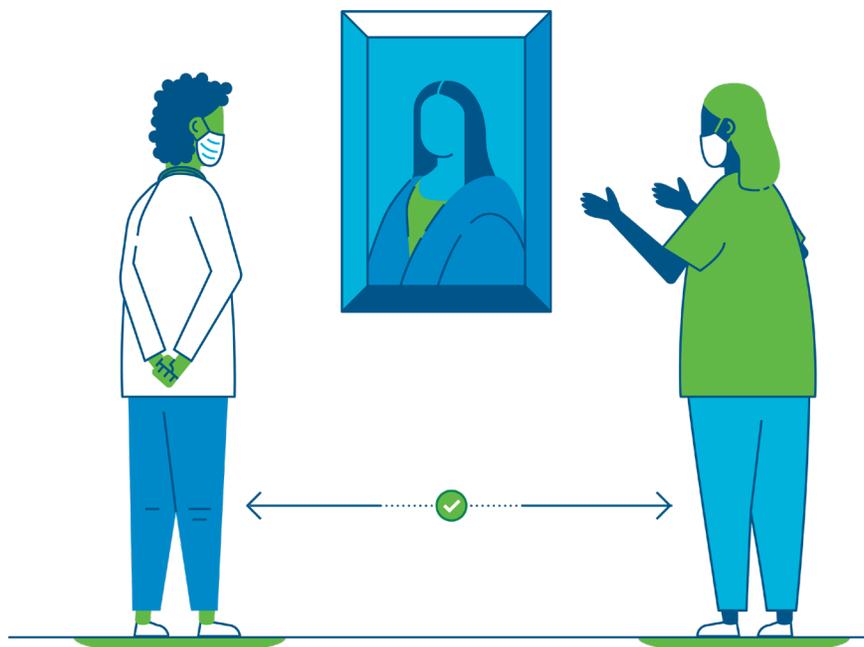
Think about these spaces:

- Elevators: Can visitors be encouraged to use the elevator one family group at a time?
- Doors: Can they be propped open to reduce the number of hands that touch them?
- Restrooms: Can visitors be encouraged to use the restroom one family group at a time? Consider installing touch-free soap dispensers and automatic hand dryers
- For museums: consider installing lockers. Would making lockers available reduce the number of personal items brought into the galleries? Can staff be available to clean lockers between visitors, or can they be provided with the caveat that they are not cleaned?

2.5 VISITOR FLOW AND ACCESS

How will the visitor experience be altered to encourage social distancing and eliminate bottlenecks?
Consider:

- Where visitors tend to congregate and why; if there is a spot where visitors consistently stop to take photos or enjoy an experience, consider installing queue markers on the ground to encourage distancing
- Spreading, dividing, or providing multiple points of access
- A phased approach to reopening spaces to visitors
- Establishing one-way pathways
- Temporarily closing small spaces that don't allow for social distancing or that have a single entrance and exit
- Arranging public furniture in accordance with physical distancing guidelines
- Using floor decals in areas where queuing is likely
- Instituting minimum six-foot distance between nonfamily members
- For museums: consider developing a visitor experience narrative to help with planning



2.6 PROTECTIONS AND PARTITIONS

- What changes can be made to promote physical distancing in the facility? These might include:
Reconfiguring workspaces to create more distance between employees
- Installing plexiglass partitions at welcome desks, office cubicles, computer stations, etc.
- Placing retractable belt barriers/stanchions in queuing areas

2.7 LIMITING USE OF AUDITORIUMS, EDUCATION SPACES, AND EVENTS

Which spaces in the facility should be closed or limited to allow for social distancing? Consider:

- Offering take-home activity kits in lieu of group workshops
- Suspending large events until further notice
- Reviewing [REALM resources on virtual programming](#) and the “Adapting programs and services” section below



3. COMMUNICATING

Coordinate reopening policies and language with local/regional cultural organizations to maximize effective communication. Libraries can consider coordinating cross-communication with other public agencies, and addressing compliance with [ADA](#) and [OSHA](#) guidelines, including those relating to discriminatory practices.

3.1 INFORMING STAFF

How will information about COVID-19 protocols and procedures be communicated internally? Consider making a plan for:

- Offering staff training on new protocols and procedures
- Explaining new procedures and protocols on all internal communication channels, including data protection and storage protocols
- Establishing who on staff is responsible for what forms of communication and the process for producing and disseminating information

3.2 INFORMING THE PUBLIC

How will information about COVID-19 protocols and procedures be communicated externally? Consider:

- Reinforcing expectations and providing reassurance throughout the visitor experience through signage and staff interaction
- Establishing targeted communications channels (social media, newsletters, websites) to pool pandemic-related information and provide updates
- Publishing and explaining new procedures and protocols on all external media channels to help manage expectations Informing pertinent public agencies about your practices
- Informing pertinent public agencies about your practices
- Coordinating reopening policies and language with local/regional cultural organizations to maximize effective communication
- For libraries: consider the library's role more generally as a public information point vis à vis public health
- For libraries: consider issuing alerts to notify the public of changes to pandemic response status
- For libraries: consider establishing a patron tip line for feedback and to instill confidence in institutional response

3.3 SIGNAGE

- What signage is necessary to communicate with visitors on site? Signage may include:
- Visitor directions for entry and exit points and one-way flow
- Where and how to wash or sanitize hands
- Social distancing reminders on floors and walls, especially at queues and exhibit elements
- External orientation signage at initial access points
- Signage regarding cleaning protocols



4. ADAPTING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

4.1 RESTRUCTURING PROGRAMS AND EXPERIENCES

Which experiences could be modified to reduce the risk of transmission? Consider:

- Offering virtual access to galleries, archives, and other spaces
- Offering virtual tours, programs, camps, and other experiences
- Reviewing the [REALM resources on virtual programming](#)
- Establishing capacity limits, distancing protocols, and sanitation procedures for in-person programs
- Updating program restrictions by phase
- For museums: consider hanging docent interpretation to allow for more distance between docents and visitors or providing a phone number for docents to answer visitor questions

4.2 MUSEUM MEMBERSHIP

What changes will be made to memberships? Some museums have tried:

- Extending memberships to cover any lost time due to closures
- Adding member-only days or times to spread demand and add value to membership

4.3 LIBRARY COMMUNITY ROOMS AND MUSEUM RENTALS

How will policies and procedures on rentals/room reservations be handled during this time? Consider:

- Attendance limits and how they will be enforced
- Permitted amenities and which rental amenities should be temporarily omitted
- Planning space layouts to permit social distancing
- Special cleaning considerations after room use
- For museums: consider opportunities to provide for micro-weddings and similar small events
- For museums: consider allowing private field trips and family groups through group reservation rate

RESOURCES

<https://www.oclc.org/realm/resources.html>
<https://www.oclc.org/realm/resources/cleaning-considerations.html>
<https://mhanational.org/covid19>
<https://www.oclc.org/realm/research.html>
<https://www.oclc.org/realm/research.html#research-documentation>
<https://www.oclc.org/realm/resources/handling-protocols-and-procedures.html>
<https://www.oclc.org/realm/resources/quarantine-disinfection-museums.html>
<https://www.osha.gov>
<https://www.oclc.org/realm/resources/virtual-programs-roundup.html>
<https://www.ada.gov>
<https://www.osha.gov>



This document was last updated February 2021. Check oclc.org/realm-project for updates.

This project was made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services, project number: ODIS-246644-ODIS-20.