



City of Arts & Innovation

Board of Library Trustees

TO: BOARD OF LIBRARY TRUSTEES

DATE: JANUARY 11, 2021

FROM: RIVERSIDE PUBLIC LIBRARY

SUBJECT: LIBRARY SERVICES DURING NOVEL CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC UPDATE

ISSUE:

Receive and file an update on library services during the Novel Coronavirus pandemic.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board of Library Trustees receive and file the update on library services during the Novel Coronavirus pandemic.

BACKGROUND:

On March 4, 2020, Governor Newsom declared a state of emergency for the State of California as a result of the threat of COVID-19. On March 11, 2020, Governor Newsom issued his policy recommending the cancellation of public gatherings of 250 people or more and limitations on gatherings of people who are at higher risk for COVID-19 to 10 people or fewer, and delaying or canceling meetings where attendees cannot observe at least six (6) feet of “social distance” from one another.

On March 8, 2020, the Riverside County’s Public Health Officer declared a local health emergency based on an imminent and proximate threat to public health from the introduction of a Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) in Riverside County. On March 10, 2020, the County of Riverside ratified the local emergency.

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized COVID-19 as a pandemic.

On March 13, 2020, President Trump declared the COVID-19 pandemic a national emergency.

On March 13, 2020, the City of Riverside declared a local emergency to increase its efforts to protect the public from COVID-19. The City of Riverside’s proclamation of local emergency notes that “there exists conditions of a disaster or of extreme peril to the safety of persons or property within the territorial limits of the City of Riverside that are beyond the control of the services, personnel, equipment and facilities of the City for the reason of COVID-19.” The declaration of local emergency was ratified by the City Council on March 17, 2020. The order was continued on May 26, 2020.

On March 19, 2020 a Minimal Staffing Order was issued to provide for minimum staffing in order to slow down the spread of COVID-19 amongst City Staff. The order was ratified by the City Council on March 31, 2020, continued for 30-days on May 26, 2020, and continued for 15-days on June 16.

Library locations closed to the public on March 13, 2020. While closed, the Library has continued to provide online access to ebooks, audiobooks, digital magazines, and other online resources. Local elected officials were recorded reading stories to kids which were shared via social media.

Beginning March 18, 2020, Library non-exempt staff began to stay home as part of the Minimal Staffing Order. The Library Director, Administrative Services Manager and Senior Management Analyst continued to work remotely. On May 15, 2020, seven (7) non-exempt staff returned to work remotely.

On June 1, 2020, Riverside Public Library launched a fully online Summer Reading Program. Participants are able to logbooks read, watch performers, enjoy story times by staff, and engage in other online activities.

On July 27, 2020, the Board of Library Trustees received the following update on COVID 19. The City worked on a "Return to Work Plan" and implemented to enable staff to return to work in a safe manner that is consistent with the stages outlined in the Governor's Resilience Roadmap. As part of this plan, seven (7) library locations are scheduled to be opened with Library-to-Go services on July 9, 2020. This service allows customers to place items on hold via phone or online and then pick them up through a contactless method outside of the Library. This process ensures staff and customers maintain social distancing guidelines, limit contact, and reduce the spread of COVID 19 while providing customers with physical books and DVDs to check out. To provide this service, on June 30 and July 1, 2020, all Librarians, Library Associates, Library Technicians and Senior Office Specialists returned to work.

DISCUSSION:

On December 3, 2020, Governor Gavin Newsom introduced a Regional Stay at Home Order that causes a minimum of a three week shutdown when a regions ICU availability rates are below 15%. There are five regions and Riverside County is in the Southern California Region. On December 5, 2020 at 11:59pm the Regional Stay Home order went into effect as intensive care unit capacity dropped below the 15% threshold in the region. The order will remain in effect for 3-week period and assessed on a weekly basis thereafter.

As part of the City response, the Library has paused Library-to-Go services and will focus on an increase in digital content and programming. Staff have been diverted to other library projects and are assisting other city departments with CARES Act projects.

FISCAL IMPACT:

There is no fiscal impact related to this update.

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