

Tulare County Library

Plan for Limited Re-opening of Buildings: Browsing Service

California State Guidelines

As presented by Governor Newsom on April 6, California plans to move beyond the Blueprint for a Safer Economy to fully reopen on June 15, 2021, with industries returning to usual operations with common-sense risk reduction measures such as masking and vaccinations.

All Californians aged 16 and up are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine. Currently, Tulare County and many others in California are in the Orange Tier.

Libraries are permitted to open buildings with modifications. Further guidance on the re-opening of libraries for in-person services is provided by the California State Library and California Library Association.

Limited Reopening of Branch Libraries

We are pleased to expand library services and begin reopening our Tulare County Library buildings. On Tuesday, May 18, 2021, select branch libraries open for browsing and other services with limited patron capacity.

Other branch locations will open in the following weeks as buildings are evaluated, additional safety measures are implemented, and our project to assist with self-service in branches, which includes the installation of new and upgraded equipment, has been completed.

Expanded Library Services

Patrons can expect a quick, purposeful visit to the library. Visits are limited to 1-hour sessions. Available services include:

- Browsing stacks and collections
- Public internet computer access (1-hour sessions)
- Reference, including searching and requesting books and other items
- Printing, copying, faxing
- Self-checkout of requested books and materials
- New and replacement library cards

For the safety of the community and staff, the following services are not available at this time:

- Public restrooms, drinking fountains, and general seating
- Indoor programs and gatherings, including meeting rooms
- Children's computers, board games, blocks and other manipulatives
- History Room access, some resources may be available upon request

We continue to encourage patrons to call, e-mail, or use web chat for extensive reference requests.

WiFi is available Tuesday through Saturday 7:00am to 8:00pm. Patrons can use benches or available outdoor seating for extended WiFi use.

Most volunteer opportunities are not available. Limited activities provided Friends of the Library resume with indoor and outdoor book sales. Other volunteer opportunities and activities must be planned, presented, and approved by the County Librarian or Deputy County Librarian in advance. See details on literacy tutoring below.

Additional services will be phased in over time.

Literacy Center

Limited tutoring sessions began Monday, April 19, 2021. One tutoring pair (one tutor and one learner) at a time are allowed in the literacy center for 45-minute tutoring sessions. Pairs must reserve a time in advance for their tutoring session.

During tutoring sessions, the following services are available for tutors and learners:

- Reserved 45-minute tutoring session in the large back room for tutoring pairs
- Access to consumable workbook materials and tutoring supplies upon request
- Copy machine, upon request
- Access to literacy center WiFi while using the tutor's and learner's own devices
- Pick up service continues for tutors, learners, and Early Learning for Families participants

The following services are not available at this time:

- In-person ESL groups and Early Learning for Families storytime programs
- Browsing literacy collections
- Extended reference questions with staff (please call or email)
- Public restrooms and kitchen access

Pick Up & Browsing Service

During browsing service, patrons can enter the building to pick up requested items without calling in advance.

At-the-door pick up service is available by request.

Safety

Building Capacity:

To ensure adequate spacing for social distancing, a limited number of patrons are permitted in the building at one time.

Exceptions may be made for parents with children or family members/members of the same household who require assistance. Staff may need to limit services to accommodate.

Patrons:

- Patrons exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter the building.
- Face masks are required for entry and must cover nose, mouth, and chin. Acceptable face masks include a homemade cloth mask, gaiter, or other PPE as outlined by the CDC. Mesh coverings, masks with cutouts, or holding a cloth over face are not acceptable.
- Disposable masks may be provided when needed.
- Hand sanitizer is available.
- Service points are spaced and marked to allow social distancing. Patrons are asked to maintain a distance of 6 feet from other patrons both inside and outside the building.
- Tables and chairs have been removed or barricades established to ensure social distancing and prevent loitering.
- Public restrooms and drinking fountains are unavailable.
- Children under 8 must be accompanied by an adult.
- No book donations accepted at this time.

Staff:

Staff will continue to provide a safe environment by:

- Self-screening for symptoms before entering the building. Any staff exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 should not enter the building and must contact their supervisor. Touchless thermometers are available for staff to take their temperature upon arrival.
- Face masks are required for staff during lobby service and while working with others.
- Service points and staff workstations are spaced 6 feet apart wherever possible.
- Plexiglass shields and glass barriers are used at public service points and between most work desks.
- Hand sanitizer and hand washing stations are available to staff.
- Staff disinfects high-touch surfaces often and between each use. For example:
 - Door handles
 - Self-checkout stations
 - Circulation desk
 - Computer keyboards, mice
 - Seating at public computers and reference desks
 - Copy machine and printer
 - Pens

- Staff practice additional safety measures when handling library materials, paper forms, money, and other possibly contaminated items, including wearing gloves.
- Library materials are quarantined for 7 days before handling, including checking in.

Next Steps

We continue to evaluate our public offerings during the COVID-19 pandemic. Additional services will be re-introduced in the future dependent on further guidance from Federal, State, and local Health Departments, as well as recommended safety guidance specific to libraries from the California State Library and California Library Association.

The Library is developing plans to further expand services in Fall 2021. Most traditional Library programs and services will return in phases. We continue to offer pick up and virtual services, and develop new programs and services, in order to protect our patrons, staff, and communities.