



Talbot County Free Library Announces Phased Reopening

The Talbot County Free Library is diligently working on plans for a phased reopening of its services and facilities. According to Director Dana Newman, the library has adopted a plan that makes safety the top priority while also offering the essential services our patrons have so sorely missed. “We have missed our patrons, and though the date is still uncertain, we look forward to seeing and serving the community in person again soon,” said Newman. “Because of the continued threat of COVID19, the library is taking a cautious approach toward reopening which includes taking time to plan and get equipped with supplies and institute procedures needed to ensure the health and safety of our staff and patrons. I want to share my deep appreciation for the work that our library staff has done to support our virtual services and programs and to plan for reopening.”

Based on guidance from the Talbot County Health Department, the Talbot County Emergency Operations Center, the State of Maryland, and other best practices recommended by health and safety organizations, the library has implemented a more rigorous cleaning and sanitation plan; reorganized work spaces to promote social distancing; purchased face coverings, sanitizer, and cleaning supplies; and is training staff on new operations and safety procedures.

The library’s reopening plan consists of four phases. The first phase includes opening up the book drop for returns and bringing staff back to prepare for reopening. Returned books and DVDs will be quarantined for a minimum of 96 hours before being returned to the shelf. No fines will be assessed for materials that were loaned prior to the library closing. In the second phase, the library will launch a new books-to-go service so that patrons can once again reserve and pick up library materials. Future phases of the plan will include reopening the library for patrons to browse the collection, use public computers, and get help from reference and public service staff. Although dates have not yet been set for these phases, more information will be available soon on the library’s website and Facebook page as dates are determined.

In the meantime, there are a host of eResources and virtual programs available for everyone to enjoy on the library’s website at tcfl.org. Visit the eResources page for links to Libby and hoopla for ebooks, audiobooks, magazines, movies, and television programs. You can acquire a new skill with Gale online courses, learn a new language with Mango Languages, or research your genealogy through Ancestry and other sites. All of these eResources are free with a Talbot County Free Library card. If you don’t already have a library card, you can get a temporary card online at tcfl.org. Wi-Fi continues to be available around the clock outside both the Easton and St. Michaels branches.

Updates on the progress of the library’s reopening plan will be shared on the library's website, Facebook page and via media outlets. For more information, visit tcfl.org, email askus@tcfl.org, or call 410-822-1626.