



Report on results of the MLA survey: Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

June 2, 2020

Welcome to the 2020 COVID19 survey results!

Manitoba Library Association, along with assistance of Public Library Services Branch, circulated a survey of public libraries in Manitoba on a number of topics, including operating during the COVID19 response, successes and challenges. Of 55 separate public library systems in Manitoba, 44 responses were provided – thank-you!

The survey closed on May 21, and as we promised to share the results in early June, what follows are a summary of the results without significant analysis. To help provide a meaningful summary, on occasion we have lumped several answers together or added responses from the 'other' category to what appeared an obvious response. Of course we have the original 'raw' data, and should anyone be interested in this information it is available.

We expect that there are many valuable lessons that can be learned, and conclusions drawn or developed from the survey results. Firstly, public libraries stepped up during the early stages of the pandemic, providing credible information and services even while being forced to close their buildings to the public. Public libraries demonstrated by their services, resiliency and innovation that they were considered by many in the community to be an essential service.

MLA and PLSB are each interested in what public libraries and boards think these results tell us.

Please let us know what you think!

Contents

Section 1 of 6: Facilities2

Section 2 of 6: Services5

Section 3 of 6: Communications7

Section 4 of 6: Staffing9

Section 5 of 6: Connecting12

Section 6 of 6: Wrapping up (optional)16



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Section 1 of 6: Facilities

1 and 2.

44 of 55 public library systems completed the survey.

3. Prior to May 4th, my library system's building(s) status was:

Open	2%
Closed to public, open to some or all staff	91%
Closed	7%

"Closed to the public, open to all staff" and "Closed to the public, open to essential staff" were combined into one category. Within the combined category, 59% were "essential staff" compared to 41% "all staff".

"Other" answers which included a relevant category were counted in that category.

4. What factors led to the decision about your library building(s) status identified above?

Board decision	65%
Municipal Council decision	39%
Public Health Authority order	30%
MLA information	7%
PLSB information	4%

A number of joint school/public libraries indicated that this was a school decision.

5. As of May 4th the Province has announced that public libraries may reopen provided they follow its Phase I guidelines. If your status is changing, what best describes your new status?



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

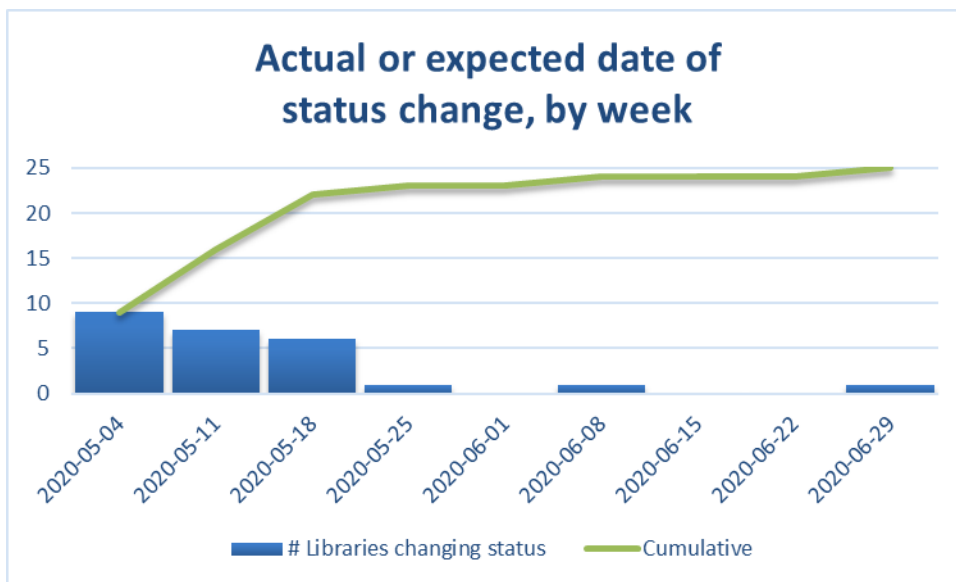
Open	38%
Close to public, open to some or all staff	60%
Closed	2%

“Closed to the public, open to all staff” and “Closed to the public, open to essential staff” were combined into one category.

“Other” answers which included a relevant category were counted in that category. Many “other” answers stated that they were closed to the public but open to (some) staff, without a clear indication of whether that meant essential or all staff.

“No change” answers were counted in the categories those libraries had indicated in question 3.

6. If you’ve indicated that your status is changing, above, what is your (completed/expected) date for the change?



Despite being allowed to reopen May 4, many libraries needed time to properly prepare for reopening

Week of May 4 – 9 reopened



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Week of May 11 – 7 reopened

Week of May 18 - 6 reopened

Only completed by 26 libraries; therefore we would assume that as of mid-May 20 libraries hadn't yet made a decision to reopen.



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Section 2 of 6: Services

7. Prior to May 4th, how was your library continuing to offer services?

Providing some level of services, all staff	14%
Providing some level of services, essential staff	48%
Providing digital services / not requiring staff	16%
All services suspended	23%

“Providing some level of services...” combines at-work and remote work, maintaining the distinction between all staff and essential staff.

8. On or after May 4th, how is your library continuing to offer services?

Providing some level of services, all staff	41%
Providing some level of services, essential staff	50%
Providing digital services / not requiring staff	2%
All services suspended	7%

“Providing some level of services...” combines at-work and remote work, maintaining the distinction between all staff and essential staff.

9. Please check any of the following services that have changed in response to COVID-19:

	Online checkout services	Online renewal policies	Virtual programming	Online / virtual reference	Phone reference	Item delivery	Curbside pickup
Expanded service	33%	56%	34%	28%	28%	26%	70%
Same level of service	35%	28%	12%	43%	47%	5%	0%
Decreased level of service	13%	5%	12%	5%	19%	24%	3%
Not applicable	20%	12%	41%	25%	7%	45%	28%



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

10. Listed below are various options for offering public internet service. For each option, indicate which response best fits your library:

	Leaving the public wifi turned on when the building is closed to the public	Ensuring that wifi can be accessed outside of the building (e.g. from the parking lot)	Checking out hotspots to patrons or organizations
Continued the existing service	69%	70%	5%
Expanded the service	8%	3%	3%
Added the service	5%	5%	3%
We do not offer this service	18%	23%	89%

11. As your library develops plans for service restoration, what are some of the key considerations your library needs to work through? Check all that apply.

Compliance with social distancing, building capacity and building entry restrictions (Phase I guidelines)	93%
Library material re-circulation protocol	73%
Staff education and safety	71%
Staffing decisions	49%
Communications of status to public	80%
Being able to adapt and flexible to changing situation	76%



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Section 3 of 6: Communications

12. What are your library’s communication and public awareness activities in response to COVID-19?

Updating our web page with COVID-19 information	44%
Using social media to share COVID-19 information	49%
Updating our web page to share changes in library services (e.g., applying online for library card, closed book drops)	64%
Using social media to share changes in library services	80%
Using social media to promote library services	73%

13. Where are you getting information about COVID-19 response?

Mainstream media outlets	60%
MLA	53%
PLSB	44%
Provincial government	84%
Federal government	58%

14. Have you found information circulated by MLA during the pandemic useful?

Yes	88%
No	5%
I have not seen or received any	7%



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

15. Which MLA information channels do you use?

MLA News	47%
Facebook	16%
Twitter	0%
Website	13%
Email	76%
I don't use any MLA information channels	4%

16. Have you found PLSB newsletter articles useful?

Yes	80%
No	18%
I have not seen or received any PLSB newsletter articles	3%



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Section 4 of 6: Staffing

17. Does your Business Continuity policy address issues like working remotely, essential employees and services?

Yes	18%
No	3%
We don't have a Business Continuity Plan	65%
I don't know	15%

18. If staff are or have been working remotely, please share the kinds of work they are or were able to do away from the physical library building. Check all that apply.

Cataloguing	41%
(email, chat, phone)	97%
Administrative work	72%
Program planning	55%
Virtual sessions (webinars)	41%

36% of survey respondents provided no answer to this question. The percentages indicated above are of those who provided an answer.



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

19. Please indicate any wage/salary changes for staff who are not working (in-person or remotely):

	Salary, no change	Hourly wages, no change	Taking sick or vacation time	Reduced hours	Laid off	Total responses in category
Libraries with full-time staff (MLIS)	2	3	1	0	0	6
% within this staff category	33%	50%	17%	0%	0%	
% across all staff categories	2%	3%	1%	0%	0%	
Libraries with full-time staff (Technician)	6	1	2	0	0	9
% within this staff category	67%	11%	22%	0%	0%	
% across all staff categories	6%	1%	2%	0%	0%	
Libraries with other full-time staff	11	10	1	1	3	26
% within this staff category	42%	38%	4%	4%	12%	
% across all staff categories	12%	11%	1%	1%	3%	
Libraries with part-time staff	5	13	1	6	12	37
% within this staff category	14%	35%	3%	16%	32%	
% across all staff categories	5%	14%	1%	6%	13%	
Libraries with temp staff	0	2	0	2	8	12
% within this staff category	0%	17%	0%	17%	67%	
% across all staff categories	0%	2%	0%	2%	8%	
Libraries with other staff not otherwise listed	0	3	0	0	2	5
% within this staff category	0%	60%	0%	0%	40%	
% across all staff categories	0%	3%	0%	0%	2%	
Total	24	32	5	9	25	95
	25%	34%	5%	9%	26%	

20. If there have been wage/salary changes for staff, when was that implemented?



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

	Count	Percent
February	1	6%
March	5	28%
April	8	44%
Currently being considered	4	22%
Total excluding "Not applicable"	18	



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Section 5 of 6: Connecting

21. How often do you connect with your library board (whether full meetings or just status check-ins)?

	Count	Percent
More than once a week	6	15%
Once a week	10	24%
Less than once a week, but more than monthly	11	27%
Once a month	7	17%
Less than once a month	6	15%
Not at all	1	2%

22. How often do you connect with colleagues in other libraries to share information (or even just to be social)?

	Count	Percent
More than once a week	13	31%
Once a week	7	17%
Less than once a week, but more than monthly	8	19%
Once a month	2	5%
Less than once a month	9	21%
Not at all	3	7%

23. How often do you connect with your town/municipalities (e.g. to coordinate messages and/or support municipal endeavors)?



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

	Count	Percent
More than once a week	2	5%
Once a week	5	12%
Less than once a week, but more than monthly	17	40%
Once a month	7	17%
Less than once a month	8	19%
Not at all	3	7%

Question 24, 25, 26 and 28 are open-ended questions. Responses are shown on separate pages at the end of this report.

27. What aspect(s) of library operations would you want the most support with during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Human Resources (including Workplace Health & Safety)	32%
Collection Development	3%
Facility	14%
Finance	15%
Communications	22%
Technology	15%

“Other” answers which included relevant categories were counted in those categories.



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

24. How is the library supporting your community's COVID-19 response?

Precautions have been put in place to provide for the safety of staff and patrons.
We continue to reassure patrons that they can always contact the library and we will help them in any way we can.
helping everyone with online reading
We are providing digital resources to all community members free of charge, assisting with signing up and accessing these, and we are planning to provide physical library materials through a curbside pickup approach soon (still ironing out the details and waiting for approvals). We have been sharing resources and activity ideas through social media channels as well.
We offered curbside pickup and contactless delivery of materials. The goal with delivery from week 1 (which was the same week we closed) was to keep people occupied and staying at home.
Good
Encouraging residents to stay home as much as possible while trying virtual connections. Increasing access to electronic books has been appreciated for individuals and families.
I'm not sure "supporting" is the correct word. We are following procedures as dictated by government and doing our part in preventing the spread of COVID-19.
Sharing Social media of Health authority and City posts to our large group of Facebook and instagram followers. Providing a wifi hot spot in parking lot.
We strive to serve our community while maintaining the rules of social distancing.
We have opened to curbside pickup; during closure we were one of the few businesses that offered wifi service in the parking lot.
The Library has been very open with the public as to how we are offering services, and what safety measures are being taken. Communicating with the few that are shut-in and offering delivery service.
Our response has been consistent with that of all municipal services.
The library was told by municipal officials that there in no community wide response to Covid-19, however, the library is responding to the health & safety of the community it serves.
We are quarentining the books that get returned before putting them back in circulation, and offering a curbside service.
Promoting our resources and generating a sense of community even when we are apart.
It is very important to stop the virus and keep everyone safe and we just keep to the guidelines of safe distancing and sanitizing. limit the people coming in, this is a small rural Library and there have been no issues but will continue to safeguard the spread. Simply following the necessary measures.
Following protocol set by the community, providing curb side pick up.
We remain closed to the public.
We are here for our community as it needs us!



Report on results of the MLA survey:
 Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

<p>We emailed or called patrons to offer free libby app. We answered email inquiries up until April 10th. We are offering modified library services. Appointments only, one family member per library visit. Making patrons use hand sanitizer upon entry. Returned books are to be in tied plastic bags where they sit for two days before being sanitized using gloves and mask. They are then placed on a separate shelf for two more days before being shelved with regular circulation. We have a new book/material sign out station to follow 6' social distancing. Staff are sanitizing between patrons. We are offering low contact library services. Patrons can call or email to order books. As always we are promoting website to search our catalogue and or place books on hold to be picked up later, or library staff will deliver labeled bags to senior housing units in town. (Placed inside the door on the bench to be picked up by patrons).</p>
<p>We began offering 'Curbside' Book service at the end of March with strict policies and procedures in place for cleaning and quarantining books and the pick up area.</p>
<p>We are following the protocols as set out by our Municipalities, especially where our buildings are located in shared facilities.</p>
<p>providing information to the public on provincial and federal guidelines</p>
<p>We are sharing reliable information as it comes to us, and doing our best to engage our patrons in different manners to boost community morale.</p>
<p>We try to follow the lead of our municipal council.</p>
<p>Reminders of social distancing and hand washing/sanitizing.</p>
<p>Information, curbside pickup</p>
<p>WPL had 78% of staff redeployed (FT staff) or laid off (PT staff). Remaining staff focused on online services and planning for next phases.</p>



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

Section 6 of 6: Wrapping up (optional)

25. What is your greatest success story during this pandemic that might inspire other libraries?

Our Board Chair reached out to each of our funding partners and shared what the library has been able to do during this time. Patrons that were dormant became active again and new patrons joined to have electronic access to material.
I feel that we have done a great job with curbside deliveries.
We are very proud to say that we implemented Curb-side pick-up service with all protocols 7 safety measures in place prior to May 4th. The community has shown great thanks and support.
trying to help as many patrons with online reading and setting up new patrons with a library card online.
Our patrons have been so supportive and understanding. We understand this is hard for everyone, and we are trying our best to continue to provide valuable services and resources to the community even while we are operating with less than 50% of staff. We are looking forward to starting our curbside pickup system and seeing the patrons again (even if it means only waving from the window as we watch them pickup outside). So, our success stems from the understanding, patience and resilience of our community as we battle this thing together.
We offered pickup/delivery from the same week we closed. Its a small community and the service was offered in a limited capacity twice a week.
People are happy to get books through curb side pick up
The four full-time staff did an awesome job of coming up, on their own, with a list of questions that the board needs to answer before patrons are allowed to be in the building. The staff also did an amazing job of creating front-door pick up procedures that included how library material would be quarantined (considering we don't know how long the virus lasts on material), how library material would be handled, what patrons needed (an extra week so they can quarantine books they've taken home), etc. The process the staff put in place has worked smoothly with no real issues.
Storytime programming via Zoom. Providing guidance to other libraries as we tended to be the first to have a Pandemic plan, track down PPE, start Curbside services as a larger library.
Reaching out by phone to a few of our senior patrons who would normally visit the library for social interaction.
I think being proactive to offer Curbside and other services, while gathering information from all resources, the province, public health inspectors. Mirroring the safety precautions that grocery stores are taking will go a long way in opening to the public. Also I have a grant that was approved for a Library computer networking upgrade during this time and have a contractor that will be doing the work while the Library is still closed. (\$3,000 + grant)
Our virtual storytime has reached over 8000 people. Feedback from families is that they're using it as part of their home schooling
we worked through it all until we opened to public
Maintaining staff morale (for the most part) and keeping everyone busy and working. We also did a good job promoting ourselves virtually.



Report on results of the MLA survey: Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

The people have recognized Libraries to be an essential service and truly they are
Our community is realizing (more than ever) the importance of our Library, and feeling very fortunate to have the service available. Makes us feel proud to be part of that. Positive messages via social media are a pick-me-up most days. It's the small things that matter now; the things we have taken for granted for too long.
We put our free time to good use and did an audit.
Patrons telling us how much they enjoy their books or free libby app.
We kept our library going and our patrons were providing reading material to have during quarantine.
Virtual storytime to connect with families and provide some normalcy for kids
Our online presence has been expanded greatly during this time, and the response has been amazing. Especially with our Read-aloud chapter book sessions uploaded to youtube.
Being able to open up and offer patrons access to computers and printers so they can get their documents in to the band office. They had no where to do that during our closing period.
We quickly enacted online registration to allow non-users the chance to get their library card; social media team became especially critical; Ask Us online team handled large uptick in usage for online inquiries.



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

26. What are the greatest challenges you are facing as your library responds to COVID 19?

Staying on top of the continual changes and managing communication to the Board, staff and patrons.
Fear and uncertainty
I find that the greatest challenge is the uncertainty of what to do and how to proceed. Given the implications, it is stressful to have to "make it up as you go" without clear directives.
keeping the rules applied to all that enter the library. Low numbers
We are located in a school, so in addition to having to comply with regulations/direction regarding public library reopening, we also have to comply with school and school division policies. It has been a challenge to figure out how to proceed while keeping in compliance with all guidelines applicable to us. Access to proper PPE is also a challenge, as these are items we may not typically have on hand, and PPE seems to be in short supply these days.
Cleaning. We generally only have 2 staff in the building with public computers, public washrooms.
Short staff
Starting the restoring services process and not knowing the impact this will have on the spread of COVID-19.
Not having information on how long the virus lasts on library material. Not having access to PPE.
Lack of leadership from PLS Branch. We get our Provincial updates from the Provincial press conferences and not PLS as PLS tends to be 2-3 days behind. The announcement for being phase one opening and NO warning or consultation from PLS Branch was huge issue. The Branch should have been involved with the Province making that decision and consulting and preparing WPL, MLA and the rural and Northern Libraries. The PR nightmare this caused the Libraries could have been avoided if PLS Branch was doing their job as the Provincial Branch with the responsibility for Public Libraries.
- Uncertainty of this virus - so much is unknown at this time. - Lack of proper cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer - Financial support from local sources may decrease
The provincial guidelines under "museums, libraries & galleries" are too vague! Are books considered "high touch displays" and if so, when is that guideline lifted?
Making sure the public adheres to our safety protocols.
Managing community expectations (You're opening May 4th right?) with the reality of needing a lot more time to get ready. Understanding when opening our doors to the public will be ok.
Public compliance with social distancing protocols and with current library restrictions.
n letting public access computers
That patrons adhere to the covid rules
All of the unknowns and making decisions. Having a large staff and the dynamics of that across a number of branches is challenging without a pandemic. Ensuring staff understand and can implement directives, when each of their communities has unique needs and challenges.
Being closed to the public was extremely hard Also very necessary



Report on results of the MLA survey:
 Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

<p>The schizophrenic actions of the provincial government make it very difficult to develop any substantial plans, as there is a genuine concern they will try to cut funding to public libraries. There is also very little to no real communication between the province and public libraries, or even between the Department of Sport, Culture, and Heritage (including Public Library Services Branch) and public libraries.</p>
<p>During this time of closure, some patrons not realizing why we had to close to the public. Three out of four days of the week we are open only one staff member is working which makes it difficult to abide by Phase 1 Rules, with limiting the number of people entering the building, answering phones, check outs, etc. Our budget does not allow both of us to be here every day we are open. A lot of our patrons, especially elderly do not have access to eLibraries and rely on print material on a regular basis.</p>
<p>Getting people to social distance!</p>
<p>Getting our message out to everyone. A lot of our seniors don't have facebook or emails or computers. So we are placing signs in senior's housing or around town and on the library front door.</p>
<p>Keeping staff informed of the ever-changing situation is the biggest challenge. What they hear on the news does not always pertain to the libraries.</p>
<p>Staff fear / mental health</p>
<p>We've had to re-invent ourselves, and figure out how to serve our communities with the doors shut to the public. With very little direction, we've basically been "going it alone." Also, preparing and buying supplies to keep ourselves and patrons safe for when we do reopen to the public is getting quite costly.</p>
<p>Finding the sufficient supplies to open to the public Location... not walking distance for many in the area.</p>
<p>Supplies for keeping library sanitized.</p>
<p>Safe distancing</p>
<p>Lack of staff (laid off, etc.); accessing PPE; lack of direction and support from Province on "reopening" announcement (we sourced information elsewhere)</p>



Report on results of the MLA survey:
Manitoba Public Library Responses to COVID-19

28. Is there anything else you would like to tell us about actions that MLA could do on behalf of the library community?

I think the outreach provided to share amongst the libraries made a big impact on our library. It is nice to see what others have in place and why they feel that service is necessary.
Keep us informed on which libraries are opening to the public as it occurs.
Thank you for what you have done for the library community during the pandemic!
It would be helpful to have firm guidelines to follow, or best practices to implement as we work through the gradual reopening process. For example, direction about how to treat returned materials (should we quarantine the books? If so, for how long? Should we be cleaning them with disinfectant?), process of how curbside pickup could work for different facilities.. these are all questions we are asking ourselves and trying to figure out, so some direction and/or ideas would be helpful.
I have really appreciated the support MLA has offered libraries during this difficult time. MLA was very quick to reach out to the library community after the COVID-19 shutdown. I would like to see MLA continue with their offered support and help with the bridging of provincial information and what is expected of libraries during this time. This will help with the cohesion of the library community.
Not at this time.
I am pleased the way MLA has stepped forward and acted to help Libraries in communicating with each other. If MLA could continue to share information, advocate and highlight best practices that would be wonderful.
MLA has been great! Thank you for listening to our concerns and offering support.
I think communicating to Libraries what is working for other Libraries, without putting too many restrictions on them they can't function. If the numbers stay low in Manitoba, I feel that Libraries will have to start offering regular services, less in-person programming. We have to accept that it is up to the individual patron that staying safe is their own personal priority. Libraries really aren't any different than grocery stores, people will touch things, we can't sanitize the whole collection after every patron.
I've appreciated the MLA's response and found it to be much more timely than PLBS'.
no
However your organization can continue to bring us together across the province is beneficial. Ensuring that information is shared and networks are established.
Just thank you for your continued support
More information from Library Associations as to how long the virus can live on book covers and pages.
Keep doing what your are doing. Thank you.
Just keep on being our voice. The services and connections MLA has provided during this time of crisis has been invaluable and I feel we have become more connected as rural libraries. Thank you!
I struggle to find clear guidelines (and they likely don't exist) as to the risk of contamination from books and other library surfaces.