



May 18, 2020

Dear Legislators:

Thank you for your continued leadership during the COVID-19 pandemic. As this crisis continues, we wanted to give you a brief update on what libraries across the state are doing to continue providing free access to reading materials, broadband, professional assistance and additional resources to Oregonians.

While most of our doors remain closed to the public during this time, we are proud of the steps we've taken to innovate and develop new ways to continue delivering the services Oregonians expect from their libraries.

There are several activities that libraries from all around the state are doing to help the public during the pandemic. Some are offering curbside pickup ("Library Take-Out") or home delivery for materials. Even more are beefing up and encouraging people to use the library's electronic resources, such as downloadable audiobooks and e-books. Libraries have been making wide use of the statewide resources provided by the State Library and State Law Library, such as LearningExpress Library and NOLO legal publications, to assist the public with questions. Answerland, the statewide virtual reference service, now offers support for Spanish speaking patrons. This service is currently supported by 15 bilingual library staff at 9 Oregon libraries who are staffing the Spanish-language questions queue. Online storytimes and book clubs are available from libraries throughout the state. And most libraries are leaving their WiFi running 24/7, allowing people, including students, to use it to do schoolwork, apply for unemployment benefits, and much more.

In addition to what's common among many libraries, several others are finding even more innovative ways to serve their communities during the pandemic:

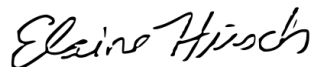
- The Helix Public Library in Umatilla County has used leftover food from a "Food for Fines" program to make a miniature food pantry outside the library.
- Several teacher-librarians, including those at the Greater Albany Public Schools, are providing technical assistance to teachers and students as schools move their classes online.
- The University of Oregon and Oregon State University Libraries are offering curbside pickup of needed materials for students and faculty and are delivering even more resources electronically by sharing online or scanned articles.
- The Lower Umpqua Library District (Reedsport), Jefferson County Library District and many other libraries are sharing daily literacy activity on social media so parents with children at home can continue to help build their early literacy skills.

- The Clackamas and Washington County Law Libraries have been offering remote legal services for the public by phone, email, and even Zoom, including services for legal professionals.
- The Oregon Historical Society Library has increased their digital outreach and content, highlighting their materials in the OHS Digital Collections, Oregon Encyclopedia, Oregon History Project, and Oregon History Wayfinder.
- Libraries in Coos Bay, Newberg, and La Grande, as well as Columbia Gorge Community College Library, have utilized their 3D printers to make mask jigs and other PPE for first responders and the public.

Additionally, the State Library of Oregon, together with the Oregon Library Association, is using the most up to date information from the CDC, OHA and OR-OSHA to craft reopening guidelines for libraries to follow when the time comes.

If you would like additional information on what libraries in your district are doing to ensure access for constituents, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Thank you for your continued support of libraries during this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Elaine Hirsch".

Elaine Hirsch
Oregon Library Association President, 2019-20