

## April Staff Survey results

May 10, 2021

The March survey had 88 respondents. The April survey had 84. In general, April survey results indicate staff are becoming more comfortable with reopening plans and rollout. As in March, many respondents stated support for how things are going.

- *Library management has been very proactive and safety conscious. I can't think of anything else that should be done.*
- *Think if we are careful, go slow, we should be ok....?! Appreciate and respect that staff members input is being taken so seriously!!! Very nice!*
- *I think the library is doing a good job of providing a safe place to work.*
- *I think everyone's safety is being accounted for. I appreciate that!!! Very important!!! Premise is TERRIFIC!! Just have to be careful- go slowly and carefully. Home stretch is important!! We made it this far!!!! I think that these surveys are very nice and important. Appreciate that they are seriously being considered before decisions are being made. Good for staff morale. An effective metric!! Not to be taken for granted or lightly!!*
- *Thank you for all you have done. I have seen how other employers have been operating with little or no concern for their employees. I am very grateful and appreciate "the overabundance of caution" that has been in place during COVID. Thank you very much!*
- *I believe there has been good decision making by our department heads and board.*

### Concerns from March, addressed

Concerns expressed by staff in the March survey and how the library has responded include:

Difficulty getting access to the vaccine. In response, the Board approved staff use of paid time off from work to receive their vaccination and to stay home if they experienced side effects. An RIS librarian available to assist staff who need help navigating the vaccination resources available through [guides.VAPLD.info/coronavirus](https://guides.VAPLD.info/coronavirus). The measures appear to have worked: April survey results show that all employees who intend to be vaccinated have been able to get appointments.

Working a public service desk before being fully vaccinated. April survey results show that all employees who intend to be vaccinated will be fully vaccinated before we open the building to the public. Also, the library will make accommodations if an employee has a medical reason that prohibits them from working directly with the public.

In March, many staff expressed concerns about whether we would continue safety precautions such as masking, capacity limits, and social distancing, and how we intend to enforce those restrictions with the public. Of these, only concerns about enforcement of rules with patrons when we open and a request for a safety monitor and/or manager to be present during all operating hours were repeated in April — largely because staff have not yet had personal experience with how that will work.

In the April survey, staff raised concerns about the proposed operating hours, which we discussed and subsequently plan to reopen with their recommended hours: 9-9 Monday through Thursday, 9-5 Friday and Saturday, and 10-5 Sunday.

## Vaccination status

83 people answered this question. Extrapolating from March survey results, we predicted the percentage of staff who were fully vaccinated could be as high as 32% by April 5. When the April survey closed on May 2:

- 42% of respondents reported that they were fully vaccinated (14+ days since their final dose)
- Another 52% reported they had received their first dose and intend to get their second
- In total, 94% of employees are expected to be “fully vaccinated” by the end of May.

## Feeling safe while working at the library

The percentage of those reporting to the building who indicate they feel safe doing so rose from 96% to 98.5%.

When asked “What would make you feel more safe?” staff indicated:

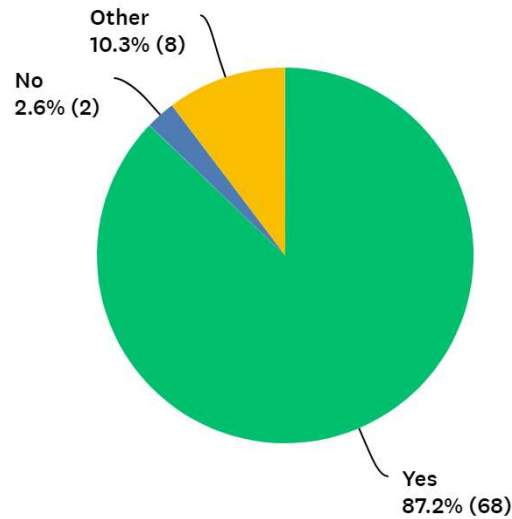
- More certainty about the vaccination status of those they interact with (both coworkers and patrons)
- Continued safety measures (by both coworkers and patrons: mask use, social distancing, library-provided PPE)
- Limiting numbers in the building

Other specific requests included:

- Maintaining the coolest comfortable temperatures possible in the main building to keep germ levels down (as they do in surgical rooms)
- Breaks from mask-wearing / an outdoor, screened tent to provide fresh air without bugs
- Allowing shorter in-person shifts if people want them

## Building reopening plan

DO YOU FEEL SAFE WITH THIS PLAN?



2 people indicated they do not feel safe with the building reopening plan.

- One notes they would like us to require all employees to be vaccinated
- The other "no" respondent might actually be a mistake. In answers to other questions, that respondent indicated they have received a full course of vaccine and they have no concerns about opening the building to the public, the metrics being used, or any other component of the plan.

8 people indicated "other"

- 1 indicated they don't feel "entirely" safe but "safe enough by following proper mitigations"
- 3 indicated they needed more information about what their interactions with the public and coworkers would look like
- 1 concern about unvaccinated patrons
- 1 wants us to follow Restore Illinois
- 1 indicated we should "just open" and let people make their own choices
- 1 indicated ongoing concerns about variants and the wider effect of relaxed restrictions when so many people are still unvaccinated

## Employee concerns

**Do you have concerns about the metrics being used?**

- 72 of 80 expressed no concerns
- 8 feel the metrics are too conservative

### **Do you have concerns about drive-up service?**

- 74 of 84 expressed no concerns
- 10 shared a variety of questions
  - Concerns about face-to-face interactions with patrons (the window is contactless/through glass)
  - If a microphone/speaker is used, how will that experience be for people with hearing loss?
  - What about library materials that don't fit?
  - How many return slots are along the outer drive-up wall? Are there separate ones for books and DVDs?
  - Will people be allowed to return larger items/electronics through the drive-up window, or will they need to bring them inside?
  - Will the checkout counter/self-check stations be in the same place as now?
  - How will this all work in the catalog? Will patrons have the ability to change where the hold pickup is in case they change their mind?
  - patrons need to have library card, not hand us their drivers license
  - Will there be a way to block the sun coming in the window so we will be comfortable looking out and the temperature will be comfortable inside?
  - How many people will be working near drive-up? How closely? How often?
  - Where will we be in relation to patrons coming in the front door?
  - How much room is there for holds shelves, bins, check-in carts?
  - Will drive-up be available for reciprocal borrowers?

### **Do you have concerns about opening the building to the public?**

- 56 of 84 expressed no concerns
- 28 expressed concerns about
  - Enforcement of policies with patrons (12)
  - Mask use
  - Public unhappiness about the building being closed
  - Limiting / enforcing the number of patrons in the building

### **Do you have concerns about vaccinations, working in the building, the building reopening plan or another related issue?**

- 62 of 84 expressed no concerns
- 24 expressed concerns

The most common concern cited was the vaccination status of their coworkers (6). This sentiment was raised in responses to other questions as well.

- *Already mentioned that it would be nice if all staff were required to be fully vaccinated before opening to the public.*
- *I would love to see every employee get vaccinated. That would make me feel safer.*
- *I hope that most, if not all, library workers get vaccinated before we open.*
- *I do also wonder if we know if our cleaning staff is vaccinated, as they continually pass through all areas of the building and touch our desk areas.*

- Working with fellow staff members who (for whatever reason) are not vaccinated is a point of concern.
- I wish everyone working in the building would be vaccinated.
- The more staff members that are vaccinated, the safer I feel. I know we aren't requiring vaccinations, but knowing some people might choose not to get it leaves a question mark as we go about our work.
- [I would feel more safe] if all staff were required to get fully vaccinated although I realize that this legally may not be possible.
- Require all employees to be vaccinated.
- If everyone were vaccinated, especially those working with the public.
- If vaccination were required for staff, no transmission to or from the public. No one not vaccinated should work with the public, for all sakes.
- it would be nice if all staff were required to be fully vaccinated before opening to the public.

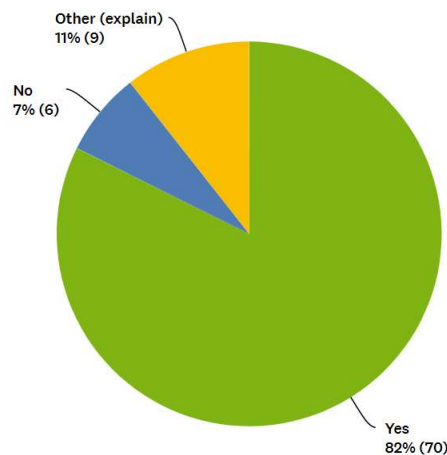
### Tension among coworkers

- Differing levels of personal caution may lead to discord
- Differing in-person requirements for different positions
  - “If it is safe for some staff to work everyday, full or part time in the building, then it is safe for ALL staff to work some or all of their hours in the building. The idea that some staff can continue to work from home while others are not given that option (even when there is work they could do from home) is not equitable. Either the building is safe or it is not. Everyone should have to report to the building to work.”

### New: employee concerns about patron sentiment

In March, we asked “Assuming that local measures of COVID-19 community spread are equal to or better than where we are today, would you feel comfortable working in the library later this spring (with additional staff but before inviting the public into the building)?”

At that time, 82% said that sounded fine and 18% had some concerns.



At the April board meeting, the board affirmed a reopening plan with that requirement: that community spread was “equal to or better” it was at the time of the March survey — that is, at a CDC designation lower than “High.”

Then, in the April all-staff meeting and in this set of survey results, there was a marked increase in staff expressing concern about patrons being unhappy with our approach.

In the April survey, 14 of 84 respondents expressed concern about patron discontent:

1. *We were the only library that I knew of that wasn't open at all last summer, and we were being overly cautious, and I appreciate that. However.... the level of cases is SIGNIFICANTLY lower, no matter the "high" or "substantial" levels. Plus, by the time we open, most (if not all) of us who want to be vaccinated are (or will be) vaccinated, same as the public. I don't think that we should continue to be the ONLY library (being closed for construction doesn't count) that isn't open, again. Our patrons are getting angrier by the day, and it is extremely bad for staff morale and the views the community take of the library. They want to come in and browse, they will understand that we can't do programs, etc... but if they can go to a retail store or eat in a restaurant, they can come to the library.*
2. *I wish we could open to the public sooner and remain open. I am concerned that we are losing new and regular patrons. With libraries closing or not being funded enough all over the nation, we really need to advocate for libraries and librarians and promote our services. We couldn't really do that for the past year.*
3. *Very cautious and over thought. I think some public use would help ease our patron's frustration. I do not work with our patrons, but anyone I meet that knows I work for the library asks me if we are open, and are surprised. An explanation must be given, with minimal acceptance.*
4. *[Metrics are] they're overly restrictive. Where is there ANY shred of evidence between higher risk of infection at our institution vs positivity rate in the area? We're socially distanced out the ass, it would literally be a miracle if someone caught covid here. There isn't going to be 1000s of people coming in. Open [the building]. Let people make their own choices. I'm not a child. ...just open it before we get shut down / funding pulled for not providing much service to the public while employing... 100 employees?*
5. *My only concern is using an element other than Covid to postpone reopening. I understand that the parking lot needs to be redone (although it is hard to see - maybe because it is no longer up to code and needs to be connected to the new part in front?). I'm afraid patrons will become really upset if there is further delay. It made me feel so bad for the folks in RIS, hearing about the calls that many of them are receiving. no one should be treated that way. I think the reason that some of the information that came out at the last meeting was different from the first survey, is that there weren't very many questions related to patron response. or maybe I just wasn't thinking in that way. I appreciate what the library is doing to keep us safe. But I also know I need to get back to work sooner rather than later.*
6. *Yes, I'm concerned that we are alienating our public because we are still closed and almost everything else is open --not just libraries. Now that anyone can get a vaccination, it seems much harder to justify staying closed. I think we've done a great job keeping everyone safe, now I think it's time to move forward a little, and start letting patrons in for browsing.*
7. *[re: Metrics being used] impact of our measurement on our patronage and their trust in us. Concern of backlash from patrons about not opening earlier to have at least tried.*
8. *The public may think [the metrics being used] are too extreme. I think the management team has done a good job so far planning for the opening. I just worry about the COVID fatigue that some of our patrons will have by the time we open. Could be a stressful few weeks.*
9. *I think we need to reopen some in-person/in-building services as soon as possible following construction. Practically all other area libraries offer some in-person/in-building services now and have managed to do so with reasonable limitations and providing reasonable safety precautions. Public patience for our continued closure is running thin.*
10. *My concern is in relation to the long-term effects of our over-precautiousness. If we are continuing to remain closed while libraries in the area are open, no amount of CDC explanation will make our patrons feel like their tax dollars are being wisely spent.*
11. *I think we are being ultra conservative - probably more than I am in my life. I think we have stretched the goodwill of our patrons for a long time now. It is time to open.*

12. *[metrics are] very restrictive and other places have figured out ways to accommodate the public. lofty to think the public will continue to be understanding and that we need to contribute "0" to community spread at large.*
13. *I wish we could open to the public sooner and remain open. I am concerned that we are losing new and regular patrons. With libraries closing or not being funded enough all over the nation, we really need to advocate for libraries and librarians and promote our services. We couldn't really do that for the past year.*
14. *I personally feel that staff morale is at an all time low. It feels like management just doesn't care that staff are unhappy and that the job is starting to impact their mental health.*