

Remote Services Libraries Can Provide

These are services library staff can perform if the library is closed to the public. Pick one or add your own! This document is editable.

1. Offer ebooks, streaming video, and other digital materials.
2. Make a video about how to access the library's digital resources.
3. Develop, share and maintain a [community resource guide](#) that tells your patrons what is going on locally. Remember that they are shut in!
4. Help your academic or government community transition to remote working. Pull together the resources, technology and Internet requirements needed for each part of the organization. Offer your IT and educational leadership skills to senior staffers.
5. [Become a Zoom expert](#).
6. "Skype a librarian." Set hours for patrons to Skype the library for help with technology, questions about ebooks or their library cards, or just some personal interaction.
7. Make sure your library's website is accessible to people with disabilities. Add descriptions to images. Try to navigate the site with a text-to-speech device, or ask a friend who uses one to test it.
8. "Dial-a-story." Ask patrons to call the library and have staff read them a brief story or poem.
9. Online storytime. Use Facebook Live or Zoom to do storytime for children.
10. Ask library staff to stream something every day on Facebook Live or Zoom. Don't give them a topic--let them pick!
11. Start an online club for kids who are journaling about their pandemic experiences. Let kids read from their journals if they want. Watch documentaries or share other readings and information about children who have kept journals during scary times.
12. Online events. Hire some of your usual presenters to do Facebook Live videos for your patrons.
13. Write a guide or make a video about how to set up your phone as a hotspot. Most service providers have lifted data caps.

14. Take non-emergency calls about people's needs during the lockdown, and connect them to the appropriate resource. Follow up to make sure they have been taken care of. Provide a personal connection and take pressure off overtaxed emergency services.
15. Read book reviews and professional publications; catch up on the trends and latest research.
16. Learn another language to better serve your patrons. See if you can practice with a native speaker over video.
17. Research how other libraries are dealing with the pandemic and incorporate that into your plans.
18. Develop or expand your pandemic and remote work policies based on your recent experiences. What's working? What isn't?
19. Inventory your library's emergency supplies. What could you share with other departments that are providing emergency services? Don't let masks, gloves, sanitizer, soap, webcams, hotspots, and other library tools and equipment collect dust. Use your knowledge of local government to put those supplies where they are needed.
20. Establish connections with your usual community partners. Check in with your local agency contacts. Figure out how to provide services you were providing before in a different way.
21. Participate in a live webinar to develop your professional skills.
22. [Become an online notary](#). Find out your state's rules for this service, take classes, get registered and start providing remote notary services.
23. Start an online study group with high school students. Help them learn to cite sources, find credible information, and do research online.
24. Schedule an information literacy class that will help patrons sort through misinformation and propaganda.
25. Create a pandemic book club. Read books like *Station Eleven* and *Severance*. Have a discussion on video, on a conference call or by text. If that's too dark, create a cozy mystery book club!
26. Livestream your hobby such as knitting, painting or embroidery. Ask patrons to conference in while they are doing their own hobby during a certain time of the day. "Library Craft Hour!"
27. Train to become an IRS Tax Volunteer, and then help senior patrons fill out their taxes.

28. Set up a chat with tweens and teens to talk about current events. Ask kids to bring a newspaper article they read this week NBC that they are thinking about. Help the group evaluate the articles. Talk about why they chose that article, credibility, media bias, how headlines are written, and what the information means to them.
29. Find a way to let patrons know the library staff is OK. Do a group video (make sure to stay separated and don't crowd around the camera) or get together for coffee with patrons on a conference platform.
30. Redesign your library's website to reflect your COVID-19 response.
31. If you're still going out to work, prepare for remote working just in case. Make sure all your coworkers have access to technology and know how to use a common web conferencing platform. Go into different offices and practice working together online. Create a contact plan and make sure everyone understands it.
32. Create or improve Wikipedia pages about your local area.
33. Document any disaster-related expenses the library has. Retain paperwork and receipts. You may be able to file for reimbursement from FEMA.
34. Call your elderly regulars to check in on them.
35. Work with your local Health Department and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) to provide academic research services and summarize latest news and best practices.
36. Use your cataloging skills to take on data entry tasks for emergency operations. Enter disaster requisitions, fill out forms, enter info into databases, follow up on problems, call FEMA etc.
37. Edit your library's Policies and Procedures manual. Fix all typos, correct grammar, clarify language, update policies. Submit the revised manual for official approval.
38. Prepare a pandemic response report to share with your board after the state of emergency is over.
39. Research and apply for grants. Check out state and regional innovation grants, technology grants, humanities grants, and cultural grants. Think about how to use the grant money to support remote and online programs and infrastructure.
40. Help your community document their COVID-19 experience. Set up a form or digital drop box where they can send their reflections.
41. Maintain a reader's advisory blog for materials that patrons can access remotely via Libby or Hoopla. Remember to post these reviews across multiple platforms, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

42. Use StoryCubes or randomly picked pieces of paper with characters/places/actions/etc to create story writing prompts for kids, teens, and adults. Encourage them to share their short stories in the comments.
43. Share information about your local elections, including information about how and where to get paper ballots and local deadlines.
44. Consider establishing a no-contact walk-up window to begin restoring public services. Explore what a walk-up window could safely provide (if anything) and how it would be designed.
45. Send books by mail to patrons if it is safe to do so in your area. For example, if you have a smaller library and a distributed patron base you may be able to provide mail service. Discuss options with your emergency management team and senior policy officials.
46. Add a live chat feature on your website to allow patron questions to be answered instantly.