

Public Library Stats during COVID-19 Closures

June 16, 2020, 12:00-1:00 pm, 15 participants (+ 2 State Library Staff)

Introduction / LibGuide

Updated LibGuide with questions/answers and definitions for national level questions. They may seem very basic, and we may not be able to truly capture everyone's amazing efforts. The national capture will end up being a very nice data set about responding and serving local communities.

12 questions at the library level and 2 questions at the branch level.

<https://libguides.osl.state.or.us/publiclibrarystats>

A PDF version will also be available for downloading/printing

COVID related questions will be at the end of the main section of the survey tool which will open in late July / early August.

Overview of COVID-19 Questions

Yes/No questions (CV01-CV12), see: <https://libguides.osl.state.or.us/publiclibrarystats/covid19>

Q: Can we define "during pandemic" - does this relate specifically to baseline, or include Phase 1, 2, etc. ?

A: Ross will provide at least a start date for this year's survey.

Ross: "Curbside service" will have a broad definition.

Ross: Virtual Program: live versus asynchronous (on-demand, recorded content) distinction.

Ross: External wi-fi access -- trying to capture changes in access.

Ross: Two Branch-level questions:

1. Number of weeks an outlet closed due to COVID-19
2. Number of weeks that outlet had limited occupancy due to COVID19

See: <https://libguides.osl.state.or.us/publiclibrarystats/outlets>

General Questions

Q: Will there be staff reassignments questions?

Q: Will there be a question about whether library staff were laid off/furloughed?

A: There's a place for free-text narrative

Q: Also, what about working from home, previously allowed, yes/no, will continue yes/no, percent of staff?

A: Not currently a question; probably too granular to collect at the state level.

Q: What if we haven't reopened without limits by the time the survey is due?

A: Survey is to cover July 1, 2019 - June 30, 2020. So these or similar questions will be asked in next year's survey as well.

Q: Overall how will we be calculating open hours?

A: Historically have asked detailed questions about hours (daytime/evening, weekday/weekend); libraries that want to report out the exact number of open hours will need to perform the calculation themselves.

Q: Maybe a second state-only/level survey?

A: It's definitely a possibility; other states have started this and others are looking to. Oregon could do this on a volunteer basis.

Q: I'm curious about circulation statistics: I.e. we have 8 months of normal stats and then a significant drop. I hate to dilute those first 8 months but the following 4 months - it is hard to get a comparison year to year without honoring where we were before all of this.

A: This is an issue across the board for service-related statistics. General agreement that this has been a historical disruption of service and statistics should reflect that.

Q: Did I read that PLA won't be doing their yearly survey anymore?

A: Yes <http://www.ala.org/pla/resources/publications/plds>

Q: Did the state library do anything special for the state reports in 1918 (last pandemic)

A: Ross will follow-up on this question once he's able to get back into the building.

Q: How can we show how things were going pre-pandemic if we're lumping all the data for one year that doesn't make any distinction?

A: You can always just use your library's data (beyond what is collected for the annual survey and how it's collected) to communicate your library's efforts/impact before and during/after the pandemic.

General Discussion

Virtual programming

Ross: Would like to discuss virtual program attendance. Big discussion at the national level, discussions on what a definition would be. Is there interest to collect this data at the state level? Would welcome comments via email as well.

Comment: One library went the extra mile providing daily crafts and storytimes and ended up serving other localities where libraries were closed.

Q: Does that mean that the only program attendance that took place in person counts for our program attendance questions?

A: Yes, currently only count physical attendance.

Q: Would attendance be a count of video accessed vs live video?

A: At a national level, the data collection details haven't been ironed. These could be included in a second/optional survey at a later date.

Question for the group:

How have you been tracking social media engagements?

Comment:

It seems too squishy to get a complete and comparable number until we can get some of the definitions out there.

Question for the group: Have virtual programming counts been useful with local stakeholders?

Comments:

Again from this library: One library went the extra mile providing daily craft and storytime and ended up serving other localities where libraries were closed. Having something that is consistently available was huge for community members / parents.

It is good to have those numbers to show that people are wanting these programs.

Not asked for them but have used them. Used them to make the argument against furloughing staff.

We've been asked by our Board and some press releases. But the numbers are inflated because of the recordings, ongoing youtube open access, etc.

Recorded Content

Ross: Acknowledgement that Facebook stats are hard to interpret. Stats from the past can disappear.

Yes, and we also have the issue that, given copyright issues, we'll have to pull the videos offline at a certain point.

We are looking at 30 days after the program and recording them at that point. Most publishers want them down by June 30.

Also, even when we pull them, we still have to archive the video file to meet public records requirements.

Yes, there are copyright issues with online storytimes, but that is a whole different can of worms! :)

Q: What about layoffs and if they will be counted?

A: Will need to discuss if to include in the annual or in a second/optional survey.