

Public Library Design Post-COVID-19



Helping libraries create flexible and engaging spaces



Creating Welcoming Library Environments Post-COVID-19



Your library has continued to be an essential pillar of learning and knowledge for your community as you've adapted your services in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

As patrons return to your physical spaces, it will be important to follow intentional design practices to adapt your library to meet safety and social distancing guidelines.

Every library has different needs, but with careful planning and the right resources, your library can continue to be the welcoming environment your patrons have come to love and rely on.

Put Safety Measures Into Place

Create a Reopening Committee

Gather key staff to serve on your reopening committee who will offer insights from all levels of library service.

Survey Frontline Staff

If your library is small enough, you can involve all staff in your reopening plans. If that's not possible, be sure to gather opinions from everyone through surveys.

Create New Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

Identify key areas of your library that will require additional disinfecting, such as shared workspaces, computers, and high-touch areas. Provide cleaning supplies throughout for patrons and staff to disinfect areas, and have cleaning schedules posted.

Arm Your Staff with Personal Protective Equipment

To ensure staff safety and help them feel comfortable dealing with the public, provide face masks or shields, install acrylic barriers between staff and patrons, and make handwashing and or disinfectant stations available throughout the library.

Ensure Your Plans are Clear to Patrons and Staff

Hold training sessions for staff and arm them with talking points. Communicate your new policies on your website and on social media, and reinforce them using clear signage throughout your library.



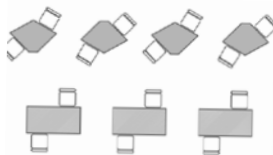
Safety Resources

- [Public Libraries: Your Planning Guide for Reopening](#)
- [High-Demand Safety Products](#)

Choose the Right Furnishings



It would be expensive and time-consuming to re-outfit your library each time you needed to make a change to your space. The key to designing libraries that are future-proof is to choose furnishings that are adaptable.



Emphasize Flexibility

Flexible tables and work surfaces give you the greatest ability to adapt your space to changing circumstances. By using stackable chairs and tables that allow you to fold, nest, and roll them off to the side, you can create agile spaces that can be used for a variety of functions.

Focus on Mobility

The best way to make your space flexible is to look for mobile furnishings, including tables, work surfaces, shelving, and even circulation desks. This will allow you to easily reconfigure your space without heavy lifting.

Create Multifunctional Spaces

In a post-COVID-19 world, it will be important that you are able to repurpose some of your spaces for other uses. You may need to close your children's area for a time or use other areas of your library to space out computers. Your furnishings should be flexible enough that you can use them in multiple ways.

Look for Easy-to-Clean Furnishings

Increasing your disinfecting procedures can be time-consuming and difficult. Make cleaning easier by looking for furnishings with antimicrobial finishes and surfaces that can be cleaned with disinfectant products.

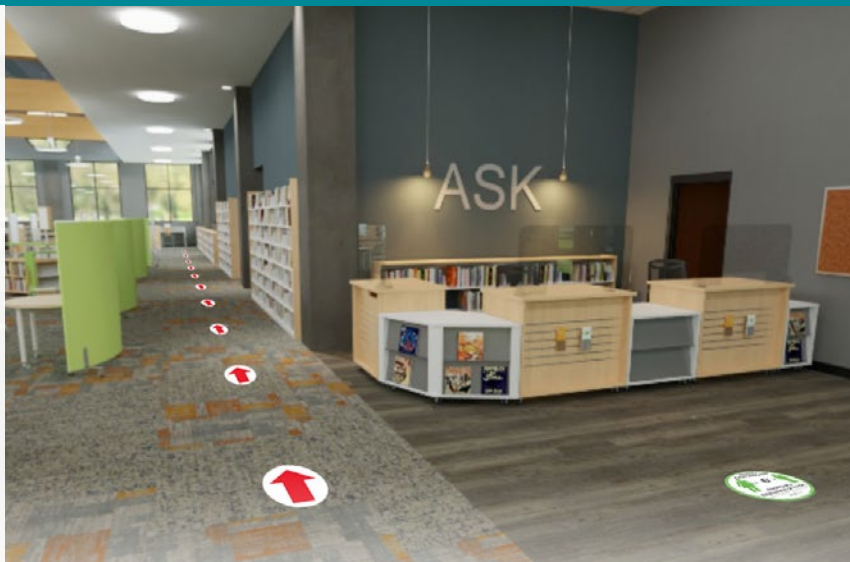
Prioritize Durability

Choose furniture that's built to last. Your public library environments will get a lot of use over time, and if your furniture is mobile and reconfigurable, it will need to meet a lot of different demands. Make sure you consider durability when investing in new pieces for your space.

Design Solutions for Safety

Figuring out the best way to arrange furnishings and plan for future library use can seem daunting, especially with the added anxiety of needing to keep staff and patrons safe. Our interior design experts can help you find solutions.

- Rearrange Furnishings
- Provide Visual Cues
- Widen Aisles
- Create Barriers with Furnishings
- Distribute Sanitation Stations Throughout
- Increase Access to Power
- Create a Virtual Communication Hub



Effective Solutions for Keeping Staff and Patrons Safe

[Explore products](#) designed to help you adapt your services, protocols, and physical spaces.

Rearrange Furnishings

Review the furniture layout in your spaces. Can you rearrange furniture pieces to ensure 6 feet of distance between patrons? If not, consider removing some pieces of furniture or moving them off to the side of the room. If furniture cannot be moved, use removable decals to mark them as "do not use."

Encourage patrons to use touch-free self-checkout stations whenever possible to help reduce the issue of multiple patrons needing to touch the same surface throughout the day.



Provide Visual Cues



Floor decals will help you encourage safe distancing. Use them anywhere patrons will be standing in line, such as at the circulation desk. Position them 6 feet apart to separate visitors, and place them throughout your spaces to serve as visual reminders for patrons to maintain their distance.

Widen Aisles



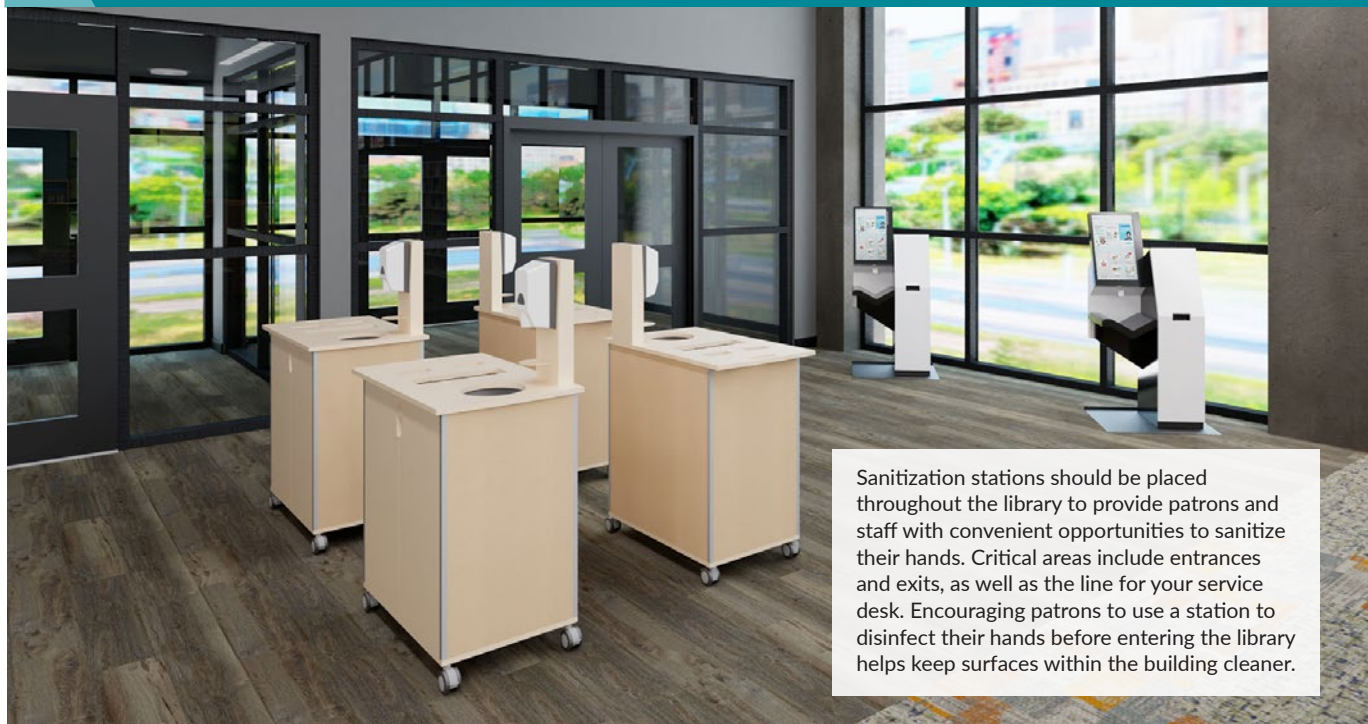
Can patrons easily pass through stacks and seating areas while maintaining 6 feet of separation? Are there pinch points where visitors can't help but bump into each other? At least in the short term, you might want to consider moving or removing some bookshelves to open up tight spaces and rearranging your furniture to allow you to create wide, one-way aisles.

Create Barriers with Furnishings

Mobile shelving, high-back seating, portable barriers such as whiteboards or room dividers, and acrylic screens can all help you create barriers between patrons and form individual workstations.



Distribute Sanitation Stations Throughout



Sanitization stations should be placed throughout the library to provide patrons and staff with convenient opportunities to sanitize their hands. Critical areas include entrances and exits, as well as the line for your service desk. Encouraging patrons to use a station to disinfect their hands before entering the library helps keep surfaces within the building cleaner.

Increase Access to Power

If possible, take advantage of perimeter walls and move workstations out to low-traffic locations. These areas usually have good access to power and position users away from the aisle. Use portable charging stations to provide access to power throughout the rest of your spaces, which allows patrons to choose spaces farther apart from each other and not congregate around power outlets. Portable laptop tables can help accommodate these impromptu work stations.



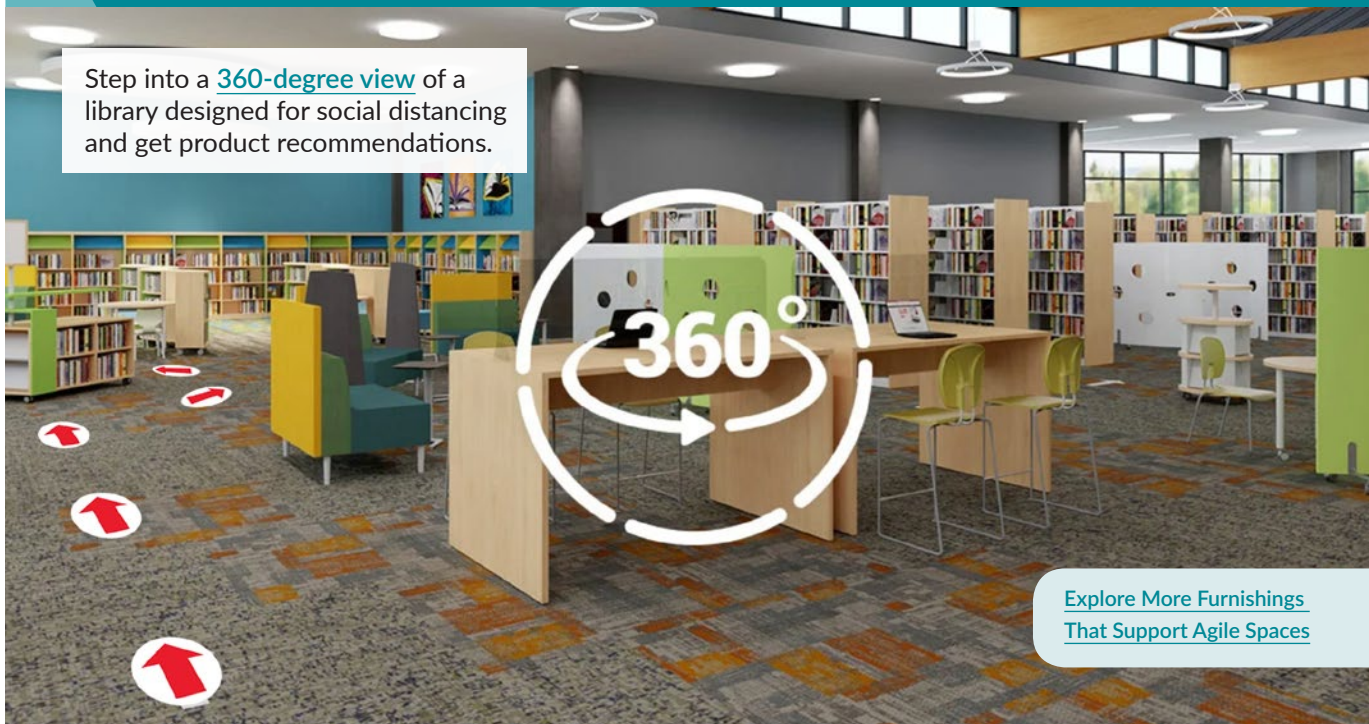
Create a Virtual Communication Hub

When the pandemic arose, library workers had to quickly pivot to providing virtual programming and information to the community. To make your job easier going forward, create a communication room or provide a portable media setup that staff can use to deliver virtual communication and programming. Outfit your area or portable kit with a camera or a tripod for cell phone cameras, a microphone, and a green screen setup.



Explore a Public Library Set Up for Social Distancing

Step into a [360-degree view](#) of a library designed for social distancing and get product recommendations.



[Explore More Furnishings
That Support Agile Spaces](#)



Go from Overwhelmed to Inspired

Your library is constantly evolving, and it can be hard to predict what steps to take next to help you best serve your community. Our dedicated learning environment designers combine the latest research, safety guidelines, and design best practices to help you create welcoming environments that will help you serve patrons now and into the future.

How We Partner with Our Clients



Needs Assessment

During this stage we'll put our heads together to outline your current state and define your needs and goals.



Design Development

From layout and design to product specification and quotation, our collaborative process will ensure a personalized result for your space.



Project Management

We'll coordinate with your partners to handle all the details of your project, from finalizing order details to final shipment coordination.



Product Consultation

We'll guide you through the process of selecting the best product solutions to meet your community's needs.



Installation

We'll coordinate with vendors and local installers to make sure that both your space and your staff are ready to open on schedule.



Follow-Up Support

We'll provide ongoing support to make sure that your new space meets all your goals and is a place your community can thrive.

Contact us today to gain a partner on your interior design project.

[Get Started](#)

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