





TO: Cultural Education Committee

FROM: Mark Schaming 

SUBJECT: Libraries Serving Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

DATE: April 29, 2021

AUTHORIZATION(S): 

SUMMARY

Issue for Discussion

Lauren Moore, Assistant Commissioner for Libraries, will describe the role of libraries in digital equity and community resilience during the pandemic, by sharing examples from across the state. She will also provide an overview of the State Library's efforts to assist public libraries in reopening.

Reason for Consideration

For discussion only.

Proposed Handling

This item is before the Cultural Education Committee for discussion only.

Background Information

Throughout the pandemic libraries have taken creative and bold steps to serve the public under difficult circumstances. Libraries experimented with WiFi networks to provide household internet service, developed mobile school libraries, served as COVID testing locations, delivered fresh produce to economically distressed neighborhoods, and took great strides to ensure that community members had access to the services they needed even while physical library locations were closed. Although these innovations were spurred by crisis, they form the foundation of what many in the field expect will be a lasting expansion of equitable and accessible library services.

The State Library continues to support libraries as they navigate the steps toward reopening, including with its CARES Act and ARPA funding, and is now working with public libraries and library systems to help them meet minimum standards of service according to [Commissioner's Regulations 90.2](#)

Related Regents Items

Not applicable.

Recommendation

This item is for discussion only. There is no action required.

Timetable for Implementation

Not applicable.