CINCINNATI – In response to the growing COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County will close all of its facilities to the public beginning Friday, March 13, 2020 at 6 p.m.

Library leadership will reassess the closure on a weekly basis and use current information from health officials to determine the best date to reopen.

A staff member at the Library’s Distribution Center has voluntarily self-quarantined. There are no confirmed cases of COVID-19 amongst Library staff, and no reported cases of staff exposure.

“The latest information from the governor’s office, which indicates that aggressive early social distancing can stop COVID-19 from exponentially spreading, helped us make this decision. Declarations of city-wide and county-wide states of emergency, as well as the voluntary self-quarantine of a staff member, also convinced us that this closure is in the best interest of public safety. This was a very difficult decision that we did not make without much careful deliberation,” says Paula Brehm-Heeger, the Eva Jane Romaine Coombe Director of the Library.

The Library is asking customers to hold on to their materials until further notice. Due dates will be extended so fines will not be assessed.

Any Library location that is a designated polling place will remain so and will be open for voting on election day, Tuesday, March 17, 2020.

All staff not reporting to work during the closure to the public will be paid for their regularly scheduled hours based on the Library’s Absence Because of Emergency Closing Policy.

“We encourage our customers to use our robust eBranch, which features digital versions of books, audiobooks, music, movies, magazines, and more,” says Brehm-Heeger. “We’re redirecting more of our funds towards digital content to make sure even more digital resources are available for our customers during this time.”

Ohio residents have the option to sign up for a free Library card online, so they can begin using the Library's eBranch as soon as they receive their confirmation email.

For updates about Library services and responses during this time, visit CincinnatiLibrary.org/COVID19 or follow us on social media @cincylibrary.
About the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County

The Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County is one of the largest, and busiest libraries in the United States. We serve a population of more than 800,000 people with a collection of more than nine million items. Our mission is to connect people with the world of ideas and information. To learn more, visit CincinnatiLibrary.org or call (513) 369-6900.