



Date: July 20, 2022

To: Thomas B. Modica, City Manager 

From: Cathy De Leon, Director of Library Services 

For: Mayor and Members of the City Council

Subject: **Library Services to Temporarily Resume LBPL To-Go Service at Three Branches**

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Beginning August 2, 2022, three library locations will temporarily shift operations to the “LBPL To-Go” model of service for an estimated five months. These locations will be available to residents as pick-up locations for physical library materials, but will be closed to the public for browsing, computer use, and public programs. This will allow the Long Beach Public Library (LBPL) to continue to meet residents’ needs for print and audiovisual materials while navigating staffing shortages brought on by retirements, vacancies, and the ongoing pandemic. The three branch libraries that will implement this change are Alamitos, Brewitt, and Dana Libraries. This change is projected to last through December 2022. The Department anticipates resuming regular library operations at all 12 library locations in early 2023 once staffing vacancies have been filled.

### **How LBPL To-Go Works**

Alamitos, Brewitt, and Dana Libraries will continue to provide print, audiovisual, and technology resources such as books, DVDs, and Chromebooks for library cardholders. Residents may call these locations during regular hours to place items on hold for pickup. Residents can also place holds for items through the online catalog to be picked up at these locations. Staff will meet patrons at the door of the library during normal hours and hand deliver requested items. Residents may also apply for and pick up new library cards.

Physical space at these three locations will be inaccessible to the public during this time. Public computing areas, reading rooms, and restrooms will be closed. Patrons will be referred to alternate locations for computer use and printing, public programs, and book browsing.

### **LBPL To-Go Success Early in the Pandemic**

LBPL To-Go was first successfully implemented at multiple libraries during the earlier part of the pandemic and proved to be a practical and viable way to provide residents with baseline access to core educational and enrichment resources. When public spaces such as libraries were forced to close as a safety measure due to the unknown nature of COVID-19 transmission, LBPL continued to deliver limited library services to residents through the LBPL To-Go model. Residents expressed gratitude, relief, and anticipation at being able to still access physical books through To-Go service, especially during those early months when the stay-at-home order was in place.

To-Go locations also acted as distribution points for other City departments aiming to get resources into the hands of residents. For example, LBPL partnered with Health and Human Services and its Early Childhood Education program to distribute developmental kits to families with young children. LBPL also collaborated with Economic Development, and Technology and Innovation to promote digital inclusion and distribute hundreds of Microsoft Surface Pros and mobile hotspots to income-qualifying residents.

### **Current Staffing Challenges**

As the City mitigates ongoing challenges posed by successive waves of COVID-19 variants, LBPL has not been immune to the staffing struggles being experienced nationwide in the public and private sectors. LBPL is currently carrying multiple long-term vacancies at all levels, including seven key vacancies at the supervisory level. These vacancies combined with employees needing to periodically isolate and quarantine have negatively impacted library operations. Shifting three locations to To-Go service temporarily alleviates some of the burden by allowing Library Services to reallocate staffing resources and focus on fully operating fewer locations.

### **Selection of LBPL To-Go Sites**

The libraries chosen to operate as LBPL To-Go locations were selected to dissipate the temporary impact of physically closed library buildings and loss of public programs such as storytime. These locations either have the benefit of another neighborhood library in their council district (Brewitt and Dana) or proximity to Billie Jean King Main Library (Alamitos).

Other libraries were considered but not selected because they serve some of the City's most socio-economically vulnerable residents, where access to a public library is critical for internet access, online job searching, and providing access to reading materials and early childhood development opportunities for families.

Thank you for providing me the opportunity to share information regarding temporary modification of operations at three branch libraries and the Department's efforts to continue to meet the library needs of residents throughout the City. If you have any questions, please contact me at (562) 570-6016.

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