

## Resources of Interest to Frontline Library Workers & Invitation to frontline workers (page 3)

- Albanese, Andrew Richard. "The grand reopening." *Publishers Weekly*, vol. 267, no. 23, 8 June 2020, p. 21+  
"A recent Twitter thread asked library workers to share their biggest fears about reopening, and a common theme quickly emerged among respondents--uncertainty. Uncertainty about their personal safety, about the science behind their safety precautions, about their workload, their managers, their job security, and the risk to their health and the health of their communities."
- Ballard, T. (October 2020). A double helping of challenges during the pandemic. *Information Today*, Vol. 37(7): 6-6
- Farkas, M. (November 2020) Our collective power: coming together for mutual aid and advocacy. *American Libraries*. November 2, 2020. Viewed at <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/11/02/our-collective-power-librarian-advocacy/>  
"This pandemic has highlighted the fact that library workers need as much training in collective action and self-advocacy as they do in lobbying for library funding."
- Feldman, Sari. (November 16, 2020). Caution and optimism. *Publishers Weekly*, Vol. 267 (46): 21-23.
- Jensen, K. (April 24, 2020). Librarians under pandemic duress: layoffs, napkin masks, and fear of retaliation. *Book Riot*. <https://bookriot.com/librarians-under-pandemic-duress/>
- Kay Brown, W. (May 2020). Libraries adapt amid crisis: finding inspiration in library workers across the country. *American Libraries*, Vol. 51(5): 4
- MacDonald, AT. (2020). Library experiences during COVID-19: from crisis and uncertainty to moving forward in the new normal. *Codex*, Vol 5(4): 70-81
- Schwartz, M. (December 2020). Control COVID-19 until there's a vaccine: one step forward. *Library Journal*, Vol. 145 (12): 8.
- Stewart-Freeman, H. (May/June 2020). A brand new world for libraries. *Public Libraries*, Vol. 59 (3): 11- 12.
- Vinjamuri, D. & Huberty, J. (May/June 2020). Reopening under COVID-19: a space planning approach. *Public Libraries*, Vol. 59(3) 29-36  
"One of the under-told stories of the pandemic is the extent to which it has created a mental health crisis among frontline workers....Staff morale will be an early indicator of potential mental health strains, and the services provided should be shaped to help bolster the staff's long-term ability to cope."
- Witteveen, April. (October 2020). COVID-19 Outbreaks roll back in-person services. *Library Journal*, Vol. 145(10): 8 – 10.  
"Patron non-compliance is a great concern among library staff; many are resistant to wearing masks or social distancing, and some are confrontational."

### Associations, etc.

- American Library Association. "Public Libraries Respond to COVID-19: Survey of Response & Activities", American Library Association, March 23, 2020  
<http://www.ala.org/pla/issues/covid-19/surveyoverview>
- Institute for Libraries and Museums (United States). COVID-19 Resources for Libraries and Museums.  
<https://www.ivals.gov/coronavirus-covid-19-updates/covid-19-resources-libraries-and-museums>
- Ontario. Federation of Library Associations (FOPL). Webliography: Plans for Re-Opening the Library. Available: <http://fopl.ca/news/webliography-plans-for-re-opening-the-library/>
- Public Library Association. (2021). *Public libraries respond to COVID-19*. Survey of Response and Activities, March 24 – April 1 (data collected).

[http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/advocacy/covid-19/PLA-Libraries-Respond-Survey\\_Aggregate-Results\\_FINAL2.pdf](http://www.ala.org/pla/sites/ala.org.pla/files/content/advocacy/covid-19/PLA-Libraries-Respond-Survey_Aggregate-Results_FINAL2.pdf) Survey\_Aggregate-Results\_FINAL2.pdf

Urban Library Council. ULC Executive Board Statement: Going Forward from the Pandemic.

<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/This-Week-at-ULC---April-22--2020.html?soid=1109927824486&aid=R1x1RNKpCI>

Southern Ontario Library Service. *COVID-19: Resources for Public Libraries*.

<https://resources.learnhq.ca/c.php?g=715095&p=5131410>

## **Government**

Canada. Employment and Social Development. (n.d.). Labour: information on occupational health and safety, #4 right to refuse dangerous work. Accessed at:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/right-refuse.html>

Canada. Public Services Health and Safety Association. (n.d.). Health and safety guidance during COVID-19 for library employers. Available at:

<https://www.pshsa.ca/resources/health-and-safety-guidance-during-covid-19-for-library-employer>

Canada. Public Service and Military. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): prevention and preparedness for Government of Canada employees. Available:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/government/publicservice/covid-19/prevention-preparedness.html>

(see also : COVID-19 and psychosocial risk)

Canadian Union of Public Employees. (June 17, 2020). Preventing exposure to COVID-19 Library Sector. Accessed via:

<https://cupe.ca/preventing-exposure-covid-19-sector-specific-resources>

Ontario. COVID-19: Support for workers Guidance for health care workers and others who are on the job. Available: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-support-workers>

Ontario. Government of Ontario: Training and Development. (June 2020). Retail: Guidance for Health & Safety, Tip Sheet. Viewed at:

<https://files.ontario.ca/mltsd-retail-covid-tip-sheet-en-2020-06-08.pdf>

Workers identified in pamphlet: cashiers, clerks, cleaners and maintenance staff, stock persons, greeters, sales and customer service, security, merchandisers

Ontario. Workplace Safety and Prevention Services. Guidance on Health and Safety for Sales and Customer Service Representatives during COVID-19

<https://www.wspss.ca/WSPS/media/Site/Resources/Downloads/covid-19-sales-health-and-safety-guidance.pdf?ext=.pdf>

MAKING THE INVISIBLE VISIBLE:  
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND INCIVILITY ON  
THE PUBLIC LIBRARY'S FRONTLINES  
**Your voice matters**

On February 2, 2020, weeks before the pandemic lockdown, CBC posted a story: "Librarians face increasing violence on the job". Data collected by the Toronto Public Library revealed that the number of reported cases of violent and abusive behaviours, including threats of violence, had increased from 365 cases in 2011 to 872 in 2018, a 139% increase in incidents. This problem is not unique to Toronto, with media reporting on the more dramatic incidents that have unfolded within large urban libraries across this country, the US and abroad. Incidents occupy a continuum from **violence and death to unwelcome behaviours, i.e. sexual harassment, racism, fighting, drug use, intoxication, and pornography use as well as exposure to biohazards (i.e., urine, feces, etc.)**.

Despite significant anecdotal evidence, little is known about your lived-experiences with, and perceptions of, these serious health and safety issues, nor their impact on the quality of your working and personal life.

In order for your Local to effectively negotiate policies that ensure a healthy, enriching, and equitable workplace for all, a number of public library CUPE locals, in partnership with a researcher from the University of Toronto's Faculty of Information (Prof Siobhan Stevenson) have developed this survey to begin that important work.

Notably, this partnership developed on the eve of the pandemic shutdown and, since that time, two historic events have occurred that cannot be ignored in any study of frontline library workers' health and safety: (1) the Black Lives Matter movement and the acknowledgement that systemic racism exists everywhere, and (2) the re-opening of the economy while a cure for the virus has yet to be found and fears of a second wave persist. For these reasons, this survey discusses the option to participate in focus groups about experiences with racism (overt, covert and as microaggression) as well as some questions about your library's re-opening when the risks of contracting the virus continues (for a fulsome survey on the latter, please contact me at: [siobhan.stevenson@utoronto.ca](mailto:siobhan.stevenson@utoronto.ca) or 416.573.2373

### Who am I?

My name is Siobhan Stevenson. I am an Associate Professor at the University of Toronto but before my academic career, I spent my working life (since my teenage years) working in the North York Public Library System as a page, a clerical, and a clerk caretaker and, after completing a my library degree at Western, went on to work with the Southern Ontario Library Service in a variety of capacities. I remember frontline work well and my research passion has always revolved around labour in libraries.

To view the survey (and complete), please go to:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FrontlineLibraryWorkerSurvey8FJT3P9>

or

