Libraries are facing unprecedented uncertainty, making planning for the future challenging. This tool provides a framework for moving forward using scenario planning. Taking guidance from [this McKinsey & Company article](https://www.mckinsey.com/business-functions/strategy-and-corporate-finance/our-insights/getting-ahead-of-the-next-stage-of-the-coronavirus-crisis), confronting uncertainty means:

1. Gaining a realistic view of the *current state*.
2. Developing *multiple versions* of the future using scenarios.
3. Anchoring on a *broad direction* of travel.
4. Use the scenarios to confidently develop *strategic moves*.
5. Determine what will inform *trigger points* for change.

Never done scenario planning before? [This Inside Higher Ed article](https://www.insidehighered.com/views/2020/03/13/using-strategic-thinking-and-scenario-planning-deal-coronavirus-opinion#.XpXcSAisfCU.twitter) has scenario planning examples and the below table is prepopulated with what might fit in these boxes. There are no wrong answers! Use the tool for high-level discussion and brainstorming, so add questions and modify as needed. Revisit these questions as the unknowns become known, revise, and refine. After a robust discussion with your team, use the responses in the table to create action plans and stakeholder communication. Want to talk about how to facilitate a meeting using this tool? Contact me at [amanda@standerferconsulting.com](mailto:amanda@standerferconsulting.com).

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| **Guiding Principles:** A recent webinar from [The Bridgespan Group](https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/nonprofit-management-tools-and-trends/scenario-and-contingency-planning) (“Scenario Planning During Moments of Crisis” ([slides](https://www.bridgespan.org/bridgespan/Images/webinar-materials/2020/Bridgespan-April-2020-Scenario-Planning-Webinar-Presentation.pdf) and see this [website for some info on scenario planning)](https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/nonprofit-management-tools-and-trends/scenario-and-contingency-planning)) urged organizations to set guiding principles as anchors for their scenario planning. These simple statements can be used as part of communication when asked “why” the library moved in the way that they did.  *Example guiding principles:*  1) Staff members are our biggest asset.  2) Balance service to the community with responding to the public health crisis.  3) Stay true to our mission and strategy while being fiscally responsible. |

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|  | **Now  (Current State)** | **2-4 weeks** | **3-6 months** | **1-2 years** | **Next normal** |
| ***What is happening?*** | -Library closed  -Staff working remotely  -Remote Board meetings  -Services and programs moving online |  |  |  |  |
| ***What should we be looking for?  (Trigger points for change)*** | -Communication from state and local officials  -Guidance on protecting staff and the public when we reopen |  |  |  |  |
| ***How will we respond?*** | -Prepare to open  -Shift even more online |  |  |  |  |
| ***What do we need to do to prepare for our response?*** | -Review strategic plan and realign  -Watch for mission creep  -Talk with colleagues  -Purchase masks |  |  |  |  |
| ***What do we hope to gain?*** | -Public confidence  -Use of eResources |  |  |  |  |
| ***Special areas of attention:*** | -Staff culture  -Board member connections |  |  |  |  |