**Template letter to county public health departments, 1/11/2021**

***Areas in [brackets] should be customized by library; other language is suggested but may certainly be edited as well depending on library needs/interest.***

[Date]

[County] Department of Public Health

[Address]

[City, IL zip code]

Dear [Public Health Administrator Name]:

We are reaching out to you as an important, public-facing pillar of community support and service in [municipality] to request that **library workers be eligible to receive a COVID-19 vaccine during Phase 1b, along with educators, or at the latest, 1c of statewide distribution**. We are directing this request to you, rather than to the state, because throughout the pandemic the availability of public, in-person library services has been determined on a local, not statewide, basis.

The [library name] Public Library serves residents with vital resources such as [list them]. After the first stay-at-home orders were issued in March 2020, we closed our doors to in-person public services in the interest of combatting community spread, and virtual services not only remained, but increased [list examples of online story time, redirected expenditure toward increased e-books, remote/phone reference service, etc.]. As the Restore Illinois plan began to re-open the state, libraries too are re-opening gradually to in-person public service, starting with curbside pick-up of library materials, capacity limits based on retail guidelines as advised by the Illinois Department of Public Health, limited computer use and assistance, and [add any additional examples]. Sadly, as cases have surged again in the state, some of us are having to close our doors again, as staff members are diagnosed and/or the spread in our communities has increased.

We have been gratified by the public demand for our collections, services and programs. No one wants the library to be fully open more than librarians ourselves. When a staff member receives a positive diagnosis, several additional staff must be quarantined, compounding the impact on our ability to serve. [Note an example without identifying individuals, if you have an example]. Our patrons deserve reliable, consistent availability; opening and then having to close again is disruptive to work, remote schooling, and all the other vital services our communities need. [IF your library serves as a blood drive or flu shot location and you are willing to serve as a vaccination site, note that here].

In order to continue to respond fully to residents’ needs for our services, it is vital that library staff receive vaccines. When we are fully open, we see [number] of patrons per day [or month, or year, or any stat you have that reflects visits] come through our doors. **We want the library to continue to serve as a key partner in the re-opening of our state, and we want to do so safely--both for the sake of the library staff and their families, and also to prevent the library, where so many members of the public gather, from becoming a point of community spread.**

I would be happy to speak with anyone further about library services and the importance of library staff receiving the vaccine. Please reach out to me with any questions or concerns about this. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[library director and/or chair of the board of trustees]