

SPECIAL NOTE REGARDING PANDEMIC AND ILF IN-PERSON CONFERENCES:

The [Back on Track Indiana](#) guidelines lay out recommendations for sanitation, social distancing, and gathering sizes for industry sectors to resume services over time.

Since before the first stay-at-home order was issued in March 2020, ILF was in communication with its contracted and prospective conference venues about conditions required for safe events including staff training, increased cleaning, packaged food options, distanced seating, staggered sessions, and more. The ILF staff and Board of Directors carefully considers research, analysis, and industry best practices in decision making.

While we temporarily paused planning, ILF is finalizing speaker agreements, safe floorplan layouts, etc. to provide outstanding content through a safe conference experience. Our ILF conferences and events WILL be different, but will continue to be high-quality, interactive experiences that result in increased competencies and confidence in the skills needed to advance libraries for the future. We will continue to evolve plans according to the best information available. Assuming continued positive health indicators, both major ILF conferences, the [ILF Youth Services Conference in August](#), and the [ILF Annual Conference in November](#), will proceed with modifications as planned. People over 65 and those with high risk medical conditions should continue to adhere to social distancing guidelines and remain cautious at work and in their communities.

The ILF office surveyed public library directors in April and surveyed the library directors and school librarians in early June about planned attendance. Given the positive responses from this survey, the ILF Board met 6/11/2020 and reviewed the recommendation from staff to **move forward with both conferences**.

We understand that these precautions may not relieve your fear or anxiety. We ask anyone who feels ill, has a fever, or who has compromised immunity, to stay home from ILF events. ILF will work with registered participants who become ill or are subject to quarantine on refunds outside of the regular refund policy. Should ILF proactively cancel the conference, or if ILF is forced to cancel due to a government-ordered mandate, ILF will refund paid fees accordingly.

Uncertainty breeds procrastination. ***We hope that prospective attendees and exhibitors will register early so that we may plan for the best conference experience under these extraordinary circumstances.***

Frequently Asked Questions

ILF Conferences may include many new practices:

- Social distance seating and gatherings
- Staggered releases from breakout sessions to manage traffic in halls and restrooms
- Relaxed and updated cancellation policy
- More packaged food options rather than open trays (muffins, fruit)

The hotel / convention venues are evolving their practices as corporate, conference, and wedding events are happening this spring and summer, and additional data is learned about the virus. Here are a few practices that might help you feel more comfortable:

- Hotels are operating by a quarantine time before cleaning and reselling room
- Hotels/venues are limiting any shared items (menus, condiments, serving spoons)
- Venues are limited or changing buffets. If offered, hotel staff serve rather than allowing shared serving spoons/forks.
- Hotels have assessed updated room capacities based on social distancing guidelines.

How will ILF handle social distancing in breakout sessions?

- The maximum capacity of each event room has been updated with the new number of attendees allowed in a room based on social distancing needs.
- YS Leaders will monitor capacity and close entry upon maximum capacity. We know that it may appear that "there is still room" as some like to sit on the floor in the back or have "standing room only" sessions." We respect your cooperation in limiting numbers for everyone's safety.
- As much as we prefer classroom and round tables setup, sanitation needs require us to switch to theater seating with socially distanced chairs. ILF Youth Services leaders will help manage the number of attendees in each session by "shutting the doors" when each room is full to the maximum capacity.

What if the session I want to attend hits the max capacity before I may enter?

- Once the capacity number has been reached, attendees will be encouraged to find another session to attend. ILF always encourages attendees to choose their top 2 or 3 choices of sessions they're interested in, but with the capacities, this pre-conference step is as important as ever.
- ILF works to make available the slides and materials from all sessions (as provided and allowed by speakers) to all registered attendees.

I always enjoy visiting with exhibitors, and remember crowded exhibit space. Is there a way I can still meet with new vendors and connect with current?

- YES! ILF is working with conference venues to make sure that exhibitors are appropriately spaced. Both of the 2020 Youth Services and Annual Conference venues are larger than prior years, allowing for additional spacing.
- We will be enforcing staggered session ending times so that attendees have the opportunity to visit with vendors, the restroom, and the snack breaks in smaller groups.

I've always enjoyed the "conference experience" and the networking of ILF conferences. Will I still be able to network and connect safely?

- YES! We are working on networking events like After Hours at Youth Services and Trivia Night at Annual Conference.
- The Youth Services venue available to ILF attendees is a larger footprint than prior YS venues, allowing both in-door and outdoor socializing and networking. We will access to an outdoor patio area that will be perfect for networking and catching up with peers from around the state.

I feel comfortable with the precautions of the conference space, but can you give me more details on my overnight accommodation?

- At this time, hotels are at a lower booked capacity and have the ability to let rooms sit at least one to three days before another visitor checks in. They are also not entering guest rooms during their stay to do standard cleaning. These procedures may adapt as hotels reach their more normal capacity rates.
- Major hotels have developed new sanitation policies and practices, and trained staff on protocols. Hotels seek to provide safe experiences for return customers.

Will the sit-down meals and great snack breaks between sessions be available?

- ILF is still considering how meals and snacks will be scheduled and handled at both 2020 conferences, though we have various options that include venue staff-served buffets, box lunches, and the same sit-down options with fewer attendees at a table and no shared table items.
- Note the Youth Services hotel rooms are ALL suites with refrigerators, should attendees feel more comfortable bringing food/snacks from home.
- We'll continue to work through these options as our conference venues begin staffing events again. For breaks, we are prioritizing options that are pre-packed "grab and go" and providing multiple locations where able.

What precautions are being taken for conference speakers?

- In between sessions, ILF staff and leaders will sanitize technology equipment. We will also place the podium, or area in which the speaker will be expected to be present, further away from session attendees. We will continue to evaluate the standards within the venues and event field so that we can create a safe space to learn.

What is ILF doing about masks and PPE?

- We are having ongoing conversations about wearing face masks and will look to guidelines that are suggested and enforced at the state level. We hold a view of modeling behavior, and if masks are encouraged by the time of both events, we all ask our attendees to follow those guidelines.

ILF organizes conferences that promote hands-on and interactive learning. How will you handle this in times of social distancing?

- We are asking all speakers to consider the topic and format of their session and evaluate how it may need updated in the current environment.
- For Youth Services, we have permission to use outdoor space as well.

I am nervous about registering/paying if I may need to cancel, or if there is a chance that ILF may be forced to cancel (i.e. stay-at-home order). What do you mean by *relaxed cancellation policies*?

- ILF will be fair in this new normal. ILF members and vendor partners understand ILF's reliance on conference attendee, exhibitor and sponsor revenues to carry out our mission. ILF also understands the need for assurance that refunds will be processed.
- If ILF proactively cancels the conference, or if ILF is forced to cancel due to government order, then ILF will refund the full amount to the attendees and exhibitors. We understand that due to costs of processing and/or some benefits received in advance, some attendees or exhibitors may opt for pro-rated refunds or carry forward to future.
- If a registered attendee cancels immediately prior to conference *because they are sick or officially quarantined with COVID*, ILF will allow an alternate to attend. Should an alternate not be available to attend, ILF will handle cancellations on a case-by-case basis, recognizing that *ILF will need to recover some level of processing for last-minute changes/cancellations*.