



Wild Days Ahead: Restarting Library Courier

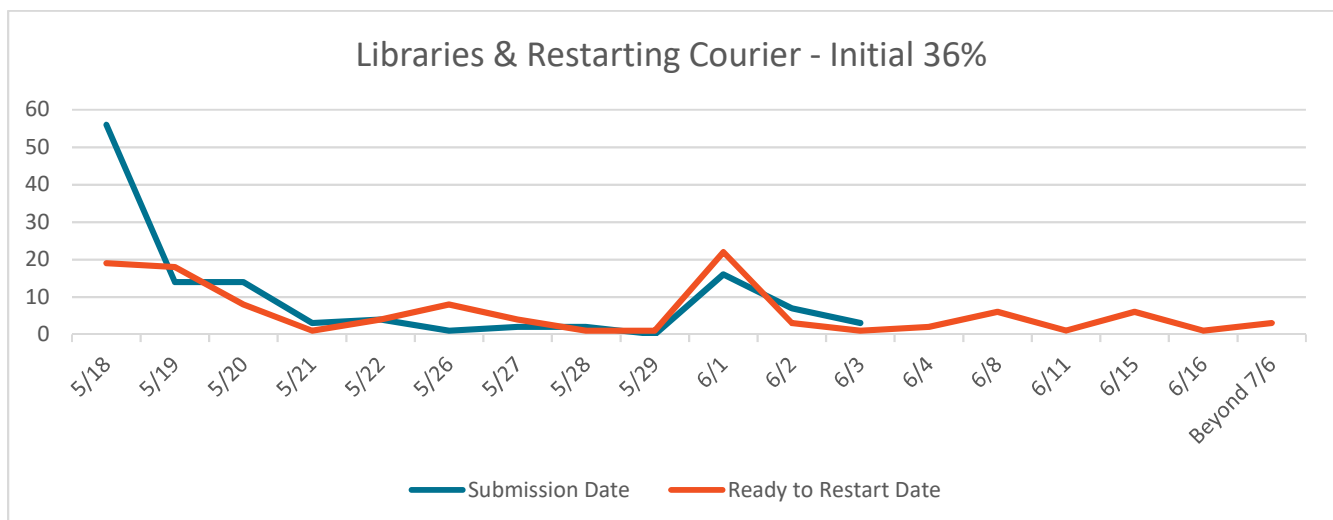
Colorado libraries continue to deploy their phased-in approaches to service -- from virtual services, curbside service & home delivery... to controlled building access (by appointment or walk-up). Before throwing caution to the wind and diving back into resource sharing (interlibrary loan), libraries want and need assurance that courier services are restarted and stable. Are deliveries consistently arriving? Is a driver coming as scheduled to pick up material? These are reasonable questions to be asking.

CLiC also has received this comment: “Most libraries are getting courier now; why aren’t we?!” Let’s unpack this situation a little bit, to bring clarity.

The hard truth: it’s June 3, and most libraries are still not seeing courier service. We’re nowhere close to stability with this statewide service. To the average library employee or patron, it must seem strange. Why can’t all these deliveries just “start up?” The answer is both simple and complex. Bottom line: it depends on libraries.

On May 18, CLiC issued its first call to libraries, “Ready to restart courier?” and within 24 hours received 56 responses. Over the next two days CLiC received another 28 responses, but then the submissions from libraries trickled to 1-4 each day. Our rebroadcast drew another bump in submissions this week.

As of June 3, only 36% of the libraries, schools, academic institutions and special libraries served by our overall statewide service have submitted their requests for courier to resume, and only 29% (90 libraries) have indicated they’re ready to restart today. A majority of libraries submitting requests are publics. *And even those public libraries are not all on the same page in terms of restart dates.*



It all comes back to the interdependent nature of Colorado's robust resource-sharing landscape. And logistics and timing. There also are complicated, on-the-ground scheduling/routing considerations where efficiency and fleet capacity come into the picture. Western Peaks Logistics is the primary contractor handling sorting and delivery of Colorado library material. Unlike the U.S. postal service, WPL doesn't deliver to every address throughout Colorado on a daily basis. Unlike Amazon, WPL isn't a trillion-dollar company.

And Then There's the Transaction Side of Things...

It's difficult to pinpoint what can be considered critical mass, and when lending/borrowing activity should be restarted through each of the four major ILL systems active in Colorado (Prospector, Marmot, SWIFT and AspenCat). Even when one library is eager to see service restart, this doesn't correlate to every library being ready. Bottom line: *not all libraries are at the same stage of readiness to restart ILL*. It comes back to local control.

News Flash! The Latest in Delivery Updates

On June 1, Western Peaks Logistics restarted another set of delivery destinations across different routes. Currently, only 23 library locations (7.4% of the courier system) are back to full service in various parts of Colorado.

During the past several weeks, CLiC has consistently referred to the statewide courier system as a complex machine, or a gigantic sea freighter slowly spinning its propellers to get up a full head of speed. This situation we're all experiencing is exactly what we were talking about.

We know it's frustrating to a handful of libraries. Our ongoing advice: please be patient. It's going to take time getting back to business. This is the first global public health crisis for all of us, and we're all doing our best.

CLiC's goal for courier service is to offer straightforward procedures, while ensuring communication is clear and consistent. Libraries choosing to participate in this resource-sharing system recognize that we're all in this together. We're a community! It's imperfect, but still works pretty darn well when we pitch in together.

Please feel free to address your questions to us through our Contact Library Courier section of the CLiC web site: <https://www.clicweb.org/library-courier/contact/>

