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# Press and Publicity Report

JANUARY 2022

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# Colorado to give out free KN95 masks at libraries, but program’s rollout leads to confusion

Denver Public Library among the locations warning patrons they have no masks to give out

By **JAKE SHAPIRO** | [jshapiro@denverpost.com](mailto:jshapiro@denverpost.com) | The Denver Post  
PUBLISHED: January 19, 2022 at 7:44 a.m. | UPDATED: January 19, 2022 at 11:34 a.m.

Colorado plans to distribute free KN95 and surgical-grade masks through public libraries, fire stations and other community locations beginning this week, but the program’s rollout already has led to confusion as some agencies — including the Denver Public Library — warned the public they had no masks to offer.

Gov. Jared Polis’s office announced Tuesday afternoon the high-grade masks would be handed out at locations that also include recreation centers, VFWs, YMCAs and “high-traffic community centers” as part of the state’s ongoing effort to stop the spread of COVID-19.

Mask distribution sites are listed at [covid19.colorado.gov/freemasks](https://covid19.colorado.gov/freemasks).

“We are on a mission to help Coloradans keep themselves safe, and free medical grade masks are far more effective in preventing infection than cloth masks,” Polis said in a news release. “By making free medical grade masks available at libraries across our state and soon for home delivery, we are giving Coloradans a powerful tool to avoid infection.”

But the public announcement of the program by the governor’s office appears to have caught some off guard.

Several Front Range public library systems — including Denver, Jefferson County and Pueblo — took to social media Tuesday evening to tell their patrons that they do not have KN95 masks to give out. The Denver Public Library has since deleted its social media posts on the subject.

Nick Potter, director of community relations for the Pueblo Library District, said the announcement wasn’t a surprise, but, rather, “a matter of folks seeing the headline and skipping the details.” He said the Pueblo Library received 8,000 masks around 7 a.m. Wednesday and is planning to begin distribution Thursday.

Erika Martinez, communications director for the Denver Public Library, said the facility deleted its social media posts to avoid adding “any additional confusion to our community.” She encouraged people to seek out other locations that are scheduled to distribute the masks. In the metro area, the state’s list includes libraries in Aurora, Littleton and Westminster.

“We don’t believe it’s in the best interest of our community to discuss the behind-the-scenes activities of the rollout,” Martinez wrote in an email.

The Denver library did order KN95 masks from the state for staff use, she said, but it does not have any for public distribution.

“We are working with the state and our team to iron out the operational needs and what it would take for our organization to distribute,” she said.

Fire agencies, including the Greeley Fire Department and Adams County Fire, also posted on social media that, despite the governor’s announcement that fire stations would be among the sites participating, they were not distributing the KN95 masks.

By late morning Wednesday, the state website’s page on the free mask program was edited to remove the reference to the face coverings being available at fire stations, recreation centers, VFWs and YMCAs. “At this time, only the following libraries are offering masks,” the page now says. “More locations to follow.”

Colorado has reported more than 10,000 new cases of COVID-19 in a single day nine times in 2022, after having never reached six figures for new cases in a single day at any point prior during the pandemic. Of specimens tested last week, every case of COVID-19 in Colorado was from the omicron variant.

The new mask initiative comes as the federal government opens its program to mail free COVID-19 tests to people’s homes. State officials also had been distributing higher-quality masks at schools. According to the state, they’re offering masks to “provide high-quality personal protective equipment to Coloradans who might be especially at risk during the pandemic and future public health emergencies.”

The state recommends people upgrade from cloth masks to medical-grade masks like KN95 or surgical masks.

According to state officials, vaccination and mask-wearing are the two most essential tools Coloradans can use to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Anyone age 5 or older can access COVID-19 vaccines.

# Pueblo libraries will start KN95 and surgical-grade mask distribution on Friday



KN95 masks (WVMT)

By **Emily Keith**

Published: Jan. 19, 2022 at 8:57 PM MST | Updated: 10 hours ago

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PUEBLO, Colo. (KUTV) - Libraries in Pueblo will be distributing KN95 and surgical-grade masks to the public starting Friday, while supplies last.

Earlier this week, the Office of Governor Jared Polis announced select locations across Colorado would have masks available for pick up. Masks were in high demand at multiple locations on Wednesday and many locations ran out within one hour.

[Click here](#) to check an updated list of locations that are expected to have masks. The masks are disposable.

**Starting Jan. 21, people will be able to pick up the free masks at Pueblo libraries.**

-Masks are available on a first come, first served basis.

-There’s a limit of five masks per person, per month.

-Masks must be picked up in person.

-No proof of ID or library card is required.

-Curbside pick up is available by calling (719) 562-5600.

-There are limited quantities of each type of mask, library staff cannot control the type of masks that are available.

**Masks can be picked up during library hours at the following library locations:**

-Barkman Library, 1301 Jerry Murphy Road

-Tom L. and Anna Marie Godoni Library, 24655 U.S. Hwy 50 E.

-Greenhorn Valley Library, 4601 E. Iola Drive, Colorado City

-Lamb Library, 7525 S. Pueblo Blvd.

-Library at the Y, 3201 E. Spaulding Ave.

-Patrick A. Lucero Library, 1315 E. 7th St.

-Pueblo West Library, 298 S. Joe Martinez Blvd., Pueblo West

-Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave.

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## Colorado wants to give out free KN95 masks at your local library. But maybe call ahead first to see if they have them



By Stina Sieg, Obed Manuel, and Claire Cleveland  
January 19, 2022

After [Gov. Jared Polis announced the state's mask giveaway on Tuesday](#), multiple library systems said they did not have masks available to distribute or were not participating. While distribution did indeed begin Wednesday at some library systems, others say they may delay the start of distribution.

Denver Public Library — the state's largest library system — notably issued a quick response on Twitter saying it would not be distributing masks immediately. That tweet has since been deleted.

But, as of Wednesday, the Denver Public Library has been removed from the state's official list of distribution centers, with an amendment at the bottom.

"Denver Public Libraries are unable to distribute masks to the public at this time. The City and County of Denver is working to identify recreation centers that will have masks for public distribution. The State is also focused on identifying additional Denver-area distribution sites," read an update at the bottom [of the state's distribution center list](#).

"The locations who were originally listed filled out the form agreeing to be a redistribution hub for KN95 masks," said Conor Cahill, the governor's spokesperson. "And we are in discussions with them to be even more clear about promoting the free medical grade masks through their own communication channels."

Many confused state residents also took to social media to ask why their counties were not included in the state's distribution list. The answer is complicated. Some locations may not have opted into the state's program and others may have not have done so just yet.

### The program was news to many library systems, and not every branch will be able to start distributing at the same time.

Some libraries, like the High Plains Library District that serves most of Weld County, only found out about the mask program when the rest of the state did, according to [a Facebook post](#).

"So you've probably heard the good news that your library will have free KN95 and surgical-grade masks thanks to a state program. This is true!" the post reads. "The bad news (which isn't too bad) is that we only heard we'd be a distribution center at the same time you did! So we've relieved [sic] masks at a central location and are shipping them out to libraries as fast as we can."

The library is hoping to have masks in their locations by Thursday morning.

The state delivered 82,500 KN95 masks and 226,000 surgical masks on Wednesday, with plans of shipping out hundreds of thousands more on Thursday, according to the governor's office.

Other libraries are waiting on shipments of masks, like the Longmont Public Library. They say they'll [update their social media](#) when masks are available. The same goes for the [Boulder Public Library](#) and the [Louisville Public Library](#).

In Larimer County, interest in the free masks was high. Diane Lapiere, executive director of the Poudre River Library District, said the system had agreed to distribute masks.

"We are working with our staff to get the masks out to our various locations and will be providing them to the public on a first-come, first-served basis," Lapiere said in an email. "We have been getting lots of inquiries from our customers, so we are working to request additional supplies as it sounds like there are a lot of folks who are looking for more effective masks."

Lapiere recommended that area residents call their libraries ahead of time and to ask if there are still masks available.

The Pueblo City-County Library District received 8,000 masks, which are on a first-come, first-serve basis and limited to five masks per person, per month. Masks are available [at 8 locations in Pueblo](#), according to a statement.

### Masks are in high demand at Western Slope libraries

On the Western Slope, the free masks have also been a hot item at Mesa County Public Libraries. Of the 2,000 the libraries received, most were distributed by the end of Wednesday. At the Central Library in Grand Junction, only about 50 masks remained by around 5 p.m., and the security office was doling them out one or two at a time.

"The demand has been very strong," said Bob Kretchman, library communications manager.

"This first batch, we're just trying to get as many people as we can started with their masks."

He added there was a "good chance" the libraries would run out before the next shipment from the state — and he didn't know when that shipment would arrive or how many masks it would contain.

Kretchman said the library system had worked hard to make these masks available in every community it serves, from Grand Junction, population 65,000, to tiny Gateway, home to 20 or so people. There are also branches in Clifton, Orchard Mesa, Palisade, De Beque and Colbran.

Kretchman said the library is part of the fabric of each of these cities and towns.

"This is one way we can help fulfill that role as an integral part of every community in the county," he said.

Since the state's announcement, 57 more libraries and 6 fire departments have signed up to be distribution locations.

*CPR's Ryan Warner contributed to this story.*



News

By Aubrey Tucker

January 20, 2022 4:04 AM

Published January 20, 2022 4:00 AM



## Pueblo Libraries to start KN95 mask distribution Friday



ProtoplasmaKid / Wikipedia / CC BY-SA 4.0

PUEBLO, Colo. (KRDO)-- Distribution of KN95 and other surgical-grade masks begins Friday, Jan. 21 at Pueblo City-County Library District (PCCLD) branch locations. The Colorado Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management (DHSEM) provided the library district with 8,000 masks, in an effort to stem the ongoing spread of COVID-19.

There are a few things to keep in mind if you're wanting to pick up a free mask...

- Masks are available on a first come, first served basis.
- There's a limit of five masks per person, per month
- Masks must be picked up in person.
- No proof of ID or library card is required.
- Curbside pick up is available by calling (719) 562-5600.
- There are limited quantities of each type of mask, library staff cannot control the type of masks that are available.

Here's a list of participating Pueblo libraries...

- Barkman Library, 1300 Jerry Murphy Road
- Tom L. and Anna Marie Giordano Library, 24655 U.S. Hwy 50 E.
- Greenhorn Valley Library, 4801 Cibola Drive, Colorado City
- Lamb Library, 2525 S. Pueblo Blvd.
- Library at the Y, 3200 E. Spaulding Ave.
- Patrick A. Lucero Library, 1315 E. 7th St.
- Pueblo West Library, 298 S. Joe Martinez Blvd., Pueblo West
- Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave.

The State of Colorado's mask distribution effort to provide effective personal protective equipment to residents who might be at risk during the ongoing pandemic. The state recommends people upgrade from cloth masks to medical-grade masks, like the KN95 or surgical masks. Currently, masks are required to be worn while inside all PCCLD libraries; masks are available for patrons who do not have one.

Stay up to date with PCCLD, visit [www.pueblolibrary.org](http://www.pueblolibrary.org).



By [Michael Rummler](#)  
Posted at 1:21 PM, Jan 20, 2022  
and last updated 2022/01/20 10:01:45-05

**SOUTHERN COLORADO** — The state of Colorado announced Tuesday a program to provide Colorado residents with free KN95 and surgical grade masks at public libraries and community sites around the state.

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment told News5 that since the announcement of the program, over 100 new sites have signed up for the program, and the Department will be expanding the list with more locations as they expand the program.

While the roll out is still ongoing, and some sites do not have masks, or run out of their first shipment, the state did release a list of locations where Coloradans will be able to pick up masks. The locations around Southern Colorado are as follows:

**Alamosa** - The Alamosa Public Library

**Bueno Vista** - The Bueno Vista Public Library - Currently out of KN95 masks, but have a limited supply of surgical masks available

**Colorado Springs** - Security Public Library, Currently out of KN95 masks but still have disposable paper masks

**Crestone** - Boca Grande Library

**Elko** - Kiowa County Public Library District

**Florence** - John C. Fremont Library District

**Hugo** - Hugo Public Library

**La Jara** - Conejos County Library District

**La Veta** - La Veta Regional Library District

**Lamar** - Lamar Public Library

**Leadville** - Lake County Public Library

**Limón** - Limón Memorial Public Library

**Pueblo** -

Starting Friday, Jan. 21, all [@pueblolibrary](#) locations will distribute KN95 and other surgical-grade masks.

Read the full press release here: <https://go.kcnc.com/pueblo-library>

— Pueblo Library (@pueblolibrary) January 19, 2022

**Saguache** - Saguache Library

**Trinidad** - Trinidad Carnegie Public Library

**Walsenburg** - Spanish Peaks Library District

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## Rawlings Library in Pueblo distributes 8,000 KN95 masks in four hours

By [Jack Heeke](#)

Published: Jan. 21, 2022 at 6:32 PM MST|Updated: Jan. 22, 2022 at 10:05 AM MST

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PUEBLO, Colo. (KKTV) - Pueblo City/County Library District began distributing KN95 masks at 9 o'clock Friday morning.

They received the masks on Wednesday as part of Colorado's newest program to combat the COVID-19 virus. Dozens of libraries across the state are participating in the program. Click [here](#) for a full list.

The masks form a seal around your face which makes them extremely effective against COVID-19.

The Rawlings Library in Pueblo gave away 8,000 of the highly protective masks in just over four hours. Surgical masks are still available at the library.

Library officials tell me they will be restocked with additional KN95 masks. Reporter Jack Heeke is still waiting to hear back from the state on when exactly that will happen.

The state has also announced plans to ship KN95 masks directly to Colorado homes. It remains unclear exactly when that program will begin.

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## Pueblo libraries distributing 15,000 KN95 masks on Feb. 1



Tracy Harmon The Pueblo Chieftain

Published 2:54 p.m. MT Jan. 31, 2022 | Updated 2:58 p.m. MT Jan. 31, 2022

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Amy Nelson, left, and Cara Kelice bag KN95 face masks that will be handed out at the eight Pueblo City-County Library District branches on Tuesday, February 1. Chieftain Photo/Zachary Allen

The Pueblo City-County Library District will hand out 15,000 free masks at its eight library branches on Tuesday, less than two weeks after handing out thousands of medical-grade face coverings to protect against COVID-19.

"The first 8,000 KN95 masks we started giving out when we opened Jan. 21 and we had given away all the KN95s by noon, so they did go very, very quickly," said Ann Boyden, marketing manager for the library district. "It showed how much public interest there was to receive the masks and I think the public is really very interested in helping keep themselves and their families more secure."

The protective masks are being made available free of charge through the state in an effort to boost protection for residents during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The state has recommended people upgrade from cloth masks to medical-grade masks, like the KN95 or surgical masks, as they are believed to be more effective at limiting the transmission of the highly contagious omicron and delta variants.

"At a guess, I would say we will go through all of them by the end of the day," Boyden said of the 15,000 masks. "They are available on a first come, first served basis and we are suggesting a maximum of five per month per person."

Residents do not have to show a library card or identification to receive the masks. The libraries also still have surgical masks available.

"We are happy to hand them out and it's a great service. It is a chance to help keep our community safe and our patrons safe. Of course, masks are required inside all our library locations," Boyden said.

The distribution will begin at 9 a.m. or 10 a.m., when each library branch opens for the day.

In addition to the mask giveaway, all library locations have been hosting mobile vaccination clinics with the help of Southern Colorado Harm Reduction and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. Approximately 10,000 vaccinations have been administered since June 2021.

Just over 67% of the Pueblo County population has received at least one dose of a vaccine against COVID-19, Pueblo County Department of Public Health and Environment says on its website. The department reported 599 new COVID cases on Jan. 22 and significantly fewer new infections — 198 — four days later.

To find out more about mobile vaccination clinics, go to [pueblolibrary.org/vaccine](https://pueblolibrary.org/vaccine).

Library locations offering free masks:

Barkman Library, 1300 Jerry Murphy Road

Tom L. and Anna Marie Giodone Library, 24655 U.S. Highway 50 East

Greenhorn Valley Library, 4801 Cibola Drive, Colorado City

Lamb Library, 2525 S. Pueblo Blvd.

Library at the Y, 3200 E. Spaulding Ave.

Patrick A. Lucero Library, 1315 E. 7th St.

Pueblo West Library, 298 S. Joe Martinez Blvd., Pueblo West

Robert Hoag Rawlings Public Library, 100 E. Abriendo Ave.

Curbside pick-up is available by calling 719-562-5600.

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