

Outagamie Waupaca Library System

Employee Handbook



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WELCOME TO THE OUTAGAMIE WAUPACA LIBRARY SYSTEM

Thank you for joining the Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS). We hope you agree that you have an important contribution to make to the services that the library system offers and that you will find your employment with OWLS a rewarding experience. We look forward to the opportunity of working together to our mutual benefit.

You have joined an organization that has established an outstanding reputation for quality. Credit for this goes to everyone in the organization. We hope you, too, will find satisfaction and take pride in your work here. As a member of the OWLS team, you will be expected to contribute your talents and energies to further improve the environment and quality of the organization.

This Employee Handbook may provide answers to most of the questions you may have about OWLS policies, benefit programs, and basic procedures. You are responsible for reading and understanding this Employee Handbook. If anything is unclear, please discuss the matter with the Business Coordinator or me.

I extend to you my personal best wishes for your success and happiness at OWLS.

Sincerely,

Bradley Shipps, Director

EMPLOYMENT AT WILL STATEMENT

This handbook contains a general explanation of our current policies, benefits, and procedures. It is for your information and guidance. It is not, however, a contract, either express or implied, guaranteeing employment. Each employee's employment is considered at will and is subject to the Outagamie Waupaca Library System's organizational requirements and decisions. No oral or written representations to the contrary may create an enforceable contract of employment, express or implied, except for a written agreement of specific duration that is expressly entered into with the OWLS Board of Trustees.

OWLS reserves the right to amend, add to, or revoke any or all of these policies, procedures, or benefits at any time at its sole discretion and without prior notice. Efforts will be made, however, to notify employees as soon as possible.

This Handbook revision is effective January 15, 2026 and replaces any previous personnel policies or handbooks. The Handbook applies to existing employees and those hired after the effective date.

¹Definition of employment at will: "Wisconsin law generally presumes that relationships between employers and employees are at-will. An at-will relationship is one that can be terminated at any time by any party for any reason, good or bad, or for no reason at all. That is, the nature of the at-will relationship does not confer any rights to the employee in a particular job, in employment with the employer in general, or to any particular benefit." (from the *Municipality*, May 2002, p. 165).

GETTING STARTED

Equal Opportunity

The Outagamie Waupaca Library System does not discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, gender, marital status, military status, sexual preference, national origin, ancestry, disability, political or religious belief, or any other protected job category of any employee or candidate for employment, and the system complies with any other protections set forth under Federal laws and regulations and under the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act and the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act make it unlawful for employers to discriminate against qualified applicants and employees who have a disability, but who can perform the job for which they are applying, with or without reasonable accommodation.

OWLS is committed to provide equal opportunity for persons with disabilities in full compliance with any applicable federal laws or regulations and in compliance with the Wisconsin Fair Employment Act (WFEA) as enforced by the Equal Rights Division, Department of Workforce Development. Our commitment includes, but is not limited to, the hiring, training, accommodation, and promotion of individuals with disabilities. If an employee is unable to perform the essential functions of a position, the employee is encouraged to inform his or her supervisor to assess any possible reasonable accommodations consistent with the requirements of any applicable federal laws and the WFEA.

Harassment

All employees of the system have the right to expect a workplace free of conduct that is harassing, abusive, disorderly, or disruptive directed toward a protected employment category. Therefore, such harassment of employees by other employees or other individuals is against policy and will not be tolerated. Sexual harassment is prohibited and is described and defined as follows:

Unwelcome sexual advances (either verbal or physical), requests for favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when:

1. Submission to such conduct is either an explicit or implicit term or condition of employment; e.g. promotion, training, time keeping, or overtime assignments; or
2. Submission to or rejection of the conduct is used as a basis for making employment decisions; or
3. The conduct has the purpose, or effect, of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

Other prohibited harassment includes (but is not limited to) comments and/or conduct related to race, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, age, or disability and any other legally protected category. Such harassment may not only violate this policy, but also be in violation of federal and state employment laws. Conduct in violation of the policy or the law will result in disciplinary action, including termination.

Any employee who feels subject to harassment should inform a supervisor with whom the employee feels comfortable discussing such matters, so that corrective action may be taken. If the employee does not feel comfortable with reporting the matter to a supervisor, the employee should report the matter to the Chair of the Board of Trustees' Personnel Committee. All complaints of harassment will be treated seriously and investigated, and to the extent possible, treated confidentially. If necessary, appropriate corrective action will be taken. Retaliatory behavior following a complaint of harassment will not be tolerated. Acts of retaliation will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Selection of Employees

The Outagamie Waupaca Library System recruits and selects employees in accordance with all applicable laws.

Whenever possible, the system will fill a position with a qualified individual from within the organization. Preference is also given to residents of the system area. On occasion, the system may actively recruit a qualified individual from outside the organization.

Applicants are not ordinarily reimbursed for expenses incurred during the interview process or for moving expenses. However, if a second interview is requested, reasonable expenses incurred by the applicant will be reimbursed at the discretion of the OWLS Director.

Definition of Employee Status

1. Salaried Employee: An employee exempt from the wage and overtime rules of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Salaried employees generally include the Director and Professional II staff.
2. Full-time Hourly Employee: An employee, subject to the wage and overtime rules of the Fair Labor Standards Act, who is hired to work forty (40) hours in one week or 2080 hours in one year. These employees generally include Professional I or support level staff.
3. Part-time Hourly Employee: An employee, subject to the wage and overtime rules of the Fair Labor Standards Act, who is hired to work less than forty (40) hours in one week or less than 2080 hours in one year. These employees generally include either Professional I or support level staff.
4. Occasional Employee: An employee who is hired for a specified period of time or to perform a specific project, and who will be separated from the payroll at the end of such period or project; or an employee who is hired as an on-call substitute with no minimum number of hours guaranteed.

WORKING AT OWLS

Regular Hours

All full-time hourly employees of the system shall normally work a 40-hour week. The office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday.

The system is committed to supporting OWLSnet libraries during all their open hours. This requires some employees to be available before and after OWLS regular office hours. Thus, the schedule of individuals may vary. Each employee's work schedule shall be approved by the employee's supervisor.

Attendance

All employees are expected to report to work at their scheduled time. If approved to work remotely, employees should be available on their OWLS cell phone and via Teams chat during scheduled hours. When unavailable during open hours, employees should use the group calendar and Teams status message to share their schedule with other OWLS staff. Habitual tardiness or unexcused absence will result in disciplinary action or discharge. In the event of illness or other unavoidable absence, the system must be informed as soon as possible.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in the OWLS office.

Acceptable Use of System Resources

OWLS provides a variety of resources—such as computers, printers, scanners, copy machines, bindery equipment, telephones, and email—for staff to use for the purpose of conducting system business. The use of these resources to solicit for commercial ventures, religious or political causes, or other organizations is prohibited. Cell phones provided by OWLS should not be used for personal calls or text messages.

It is important to recognize that electronic files, email messages, and voice mail messages are the property of the employer and may be subject to public inspection under Wisconsin's Public Records Law. OWLS has the right to but does not regularly monitor voice mail, email, or chat messages. Employees should not assume that anything stored on his or her office, desk or any other equipment is private.

Occasional, appropriate, personal use of OWLS resources is allowed, provided that the system is reimbursed for any associated costs.

Work Rules

All employees are expected to observe a high standard of behavior. This is necessary for the protection and welfare of employees and for the system to conduct its daily business in an orderly manner.

All employees are expected to treat other employees and the public with courtesy and respect. It is impossible to list all appropriate and inappropriate employee behavior. Below is a partial listing of behavior that is considered inappropriate and may result in disciplinary action or discharge.

1. Disobedience, insubordination, uncooperativeness, or refusal to perform an assigned job.
2. Stealing, destroying, or defacing system property.
3. Absence from work without notifying the system.
4. Verbal threatening, using abusive language, or inflicting bodily injury to another employee or the public.
5. Falsifying records, including employment applications.
6. Willful or reckless negligence that may result in a safety hazard.
7. Violation of system policies.
8. Use, being under the influence of, and possession of alcohol or illegal drugs at work.
9. Harassment, e.g., whether on the basis of any legally protected category or generally harassing conduct.

Drug-Free Workplace Policy

Because OWLS receives federal funds, it is required to certify that it will provide a drug-free workplace in accordance with the U.S. Drug-Free Workplace Act of 1988.

Drug and alcohol abuse impairs an employee's ability to perform his or her duties and may cause an increased risk of accidents and injuries to self or others. Such dependency constitutes a serious threat not only to productive and safe work, but also to the welfare of a person's family. Over time it can destroy one's life. OWLS strongly encourages employees needing help with substance abuse to seek assistance voluntarily.

OWLS prohibits the unlawful manufacture, distribution, dispensation, being under the influence of, or use of a controlled substance by an employee while engaged in the performance of his or her duties. Violations of this policy will result in termination of employment.

OWLS requires that employees come to work free from the influence of illegal drugs and alcohol and prohibits the possession of illegal drugs while at work. Violations of this policy may result in the employee's being required to participate in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination as determined by OWLS.

Employees must notify the Director of a criminal drug statute conviction for a violation that occurred while at work or engaged in the performance of duties no later than 5 days after such conviction. The system will require appropriate rehabilitation and/or take disciplinary action, up to and including termination as determined by OWLS.

OWLS will provide a drug-free workplace awareness program by publishing and distributing this policy statement to all its employees; by including the policy in the Employee Handbook; and by posting a notice on the employee bulletin board.

Mileage & Proof of Insurance

System employees will be reimbursed at the current IRS rate when approved for using their personal vehicles on system business. Employees may apply for mileage reimbursement from a sponsoring agency (e.g., the Division for Libraries and Technology), but must give OWLS that check if they also apply for reimbursement by OWLS. No employee may be reimbursed twice for the same trip.

Staff who use their personal vehicles for work purposes must annually provide proof of personal auto insurance that meets the legal minimum requirements in Wisconsin. This requirement does not apply if you only use your personal vehicle to commute to and from the office. Applicable uses of a personal vehicle include but are not limited to traveling for training, technical support, consulting, meetings, conferences, transporting materials, or purchasing supplies.

Telecommuting

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. OWLS considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement; it is not an organization-wide benefit; and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with OWLS.

Staff may telecommute with the approval of their supervisor and the Director. Determinations will be made on a case-by-case basis, and prior permission for remote work is not a guarantee of future permission even for the same reasons.

Staff who are approved for telecommuting must follow the OWLS Telecommuting Policy, sign a Telecommuting Agreement annually, and complete a Telecommuting evaluation and safety checklist annually.

Participation in Professional Activities

OWLS encourages its professional staff to become involved in professional organizations such as the Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) and American Library Association (ALA). Before committing a significant amount of work time to such organizations, however, professional staff should request approval from the Director.

Attendance at Conferences and Professional Meetings

The system shall reimburse employees for registration, travel, meals, and lodging for attending conferences and professional meetings when the employee's attendance has been approved ahead of time. Employee attendance at conferences and meetings within the state and in the Chicago or Minneapolis/St. Paul areas requires the approval of the Director. The Board of Trustees must approve attendance at meetings and conferences held in all other locations.

In most cases professional employees may expect to attend one national conference at least every other year. When funds are limited, an equitable distribution of money and relevance to an individual's duties and professional growth will be considered in making conference attendance decisions.

Reimbursement for lodging, meals, and other incidental expenses shall not exceed the GSA reimbursement rate for the time and place of travel except in cases where the official conference hotel rate exceeds the GSA rate or the cost of a meal served during a conference session exceeds the GSA rate. IRS rules require that employees submit receipts for their expenses on their return from the meetings and conferences.

OWLS will not reimburse the cost of alcoholic beverages. Tips are reimbursable up to 20% of the service cost and within the GSA rate. If a gratuity is automatically applied by the service provider, additional tips will not be reimbursed.

Reimbursement for travel may include parking at the hotel and the event site and transportation between the hotel and the event site by a variety of transportation modes including public transportation, ride share services, taxi, rental car, etc. The employee should use good judgment in choosing the most economical option that is practical for that event and location. Transportation and parking for leisure activities is not reimbursable.

OWLS will reimburse the cost of long-term parking at an airport and checking one bag for a flight. Other airline add-on charges are the responsibility of the employee. A seat upgrade may be reimbursed if it is the only available option, and airplane WiFi use will be reimbursable if the employee is required to work while in transit.

When hourly employees travel for work, travel time and work/conference time are compensated, but down time is not. Optional evening events are not considered work time unless the event has significant professional development content that is directly related to the employee's duties as determined by the employee's supervisor.

PAY AND PROGRESS

Payroll Information

The work week begins on Sunday and runs through Saturday. Paydays are the Thursday following the end of a two-week pay period. Checks are deposited directly in the institution and account that an employee selects.

Federal, State, and Social Security taxes will be deducted from the employee's check and paid to the appropriate agencies. If employees choose to participate in any of the voluntary benefit programs OWLS offers, any necessary deductions for those programs will also be made.

Promotion

Qualified applicants from within the organization shall have the first opportunity to fill vacant positions.

Compensatory Time Off and Overtime

Hourly employees may receive compensatory time off for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week. All compensatory time must normally be used prior to the end of the pay period in which it is earned. Compensatory time will be awarded at the rate of one-and-one-half times the hours worked, i.e., for each hour worked the employee will receive one and a half hours of compensatory time.

Hourly employees working more than 40 hours in the second week of the pay period may receive compensatory time off or overtime pay, at the discretion of the system. Since overtime work is not encouraged, employees must have their supervisor's approval prior to working in excess of 40 hours during any week. Compensatory time off shall be scheduled in coordination with the employee's supervisor.

Compensatory time off and overtime pay shall be administered in compliance with the rules established by the Fair Labor Standards Act and the State of Wisconsin.

Payments from Other Agencies

Reimbursements and honoraria received from other agencies must be turned over to OWLS when the employee is being compensated by the system for the activity involved.

If employees choose to attend meetings, make presentations, write articles, etc., on their own time, OWLS will not provide any reimbursement.

Employee Evaluations

The system's annual evaluations are designed to encourage employees to reflect on their performances and needs and to discuss those reflections with their supervisor. In turn, supervisors will share their thoughts. Together, they will set priorities or goals for the employee for the coming year. These occasions are intended to be part of an ongoing discussion, not an isolated experience once a year. Evaluations are generally held annually. The Director will review all evaluations.

Personnel Records

The system shall keep files on all personnel which include such records as W2 and W4 forms, information and forms related to hiring, grievances and reprimands, performance evaluations, vacation and sick leave balances, and requests for leaves of absence. Personnel files are considered confidential and access will be limited to the fewest possible employees.

It is important that personnel records be up to date. Employees should notify the Business Coordinator of changes in name, address, telephone number, marital status, or number of dependents. Annually, the Business Coordinator will verify with each employee that the emergency contact information for him/her is current.

An employee may inspect his or her personnel file in accordance with Section 103.13, Wisconsin Statutes. To access personnel files, talk to the Director.

Discipline

An attempt will be made to help employees having difficulty in their employment with the system. Breach of rules may subject an employee to disciplinary action or immediate discharge from employment consistent with the system's right to discharge at will. Any actions taken will be copied or summarized and put in the employee's personnel file.

The actions that might be taken are the following:

1. The employee may be given a verbal reprimand. This normally will be done in private. The supervisor will give the employee the reasons for being disciplined and the manner in which the employee shall correct the problem in the future.
2. The employee may be given a written reprimand, and a copy will be placed in the employee's personnel file. This letter will state the rule or policy broken and how to improve performance.
3. The employee may be suspended without pay.
4. The employee may be discharged by letter or immediately if circumstances warrant such action.

The fact that these actions are listed in order of severity does not imply that the employer will necessarily or regularly follow this sequence, nor is this provision in any way intended to modify the at-will employment relationship.

Grievance Procedure

The system seeks to provide a work environment in which problems or complaints are addressed effectively, but informally. The procedure below may be used to address issues concerning workplace safety, discipline, and termination when an employee does not believe that informal measures have resolved one of these matters satisfactorily. For purposes of this policy, "workplace safety" is defined as conditions of employment affecting an employee's physical health or safety, the safe operation of workplace equipment and tools, safety of the physical work environment, personal protective equipment, workplace violence, and training related to same.

Employees should first discuss complaints or questions with their immediate supervisor. Every reasonable effort should be made by supervisors and employees to resolve any questions, problems or misunderstandings that have arisen before filing a grievance.

1. The employee must present a written grievance to his or her supervisor within 5 working days of the events giving rise to the grievance. The written grievance must contain the name and position of the employee filing it, a statement of the grievance, the issue involved, the relief sought, the date the event giving rise to the grievance took place, and the employee's efforts to informally resolve the matter. The supervisor, within 5 working days of the receipt of the grievance, will meet and discuss the grievance with the employee. The supervisor will respond to the employee in writing within 5 working days of the meeting.
2. In the event that the supervisor's decision is not satisfactory to the employee, the employee may, within 5 working days, present the written grievance to the Director. The Director, within 5 working days of the receipt of the grievance, will meet and discuss the grievance with the employee. The Director will respond to the employee in writing within 5 working days of the meeting. In the event that the Director is the employee's immediate supervisor, this step is redundant and will be skipped.
3. If the Director's decision does not resolve the grievance, the employee, within 5 working days, may file with the Director a request for a review by an impartial hearing officer; appointed by OWLS. The hearing officer will not be an OWLS employee or board member. The impartial hearing officer will determine whether a hearing is necessary or whether the case may be decided based on submission of written documents. The impartial hearing officer will prepare a written decision, which will also be reported to the OWLS Board. The cost of the hearing officer shall be split equally between the employee and OWLS.
4. The impartial hearing officer's decision shall be final unless within 5 working days, an appeal is filed with the OWLS Board. The OWLS Board will review the matter at a regular board meeting as soon as practicable. A majority vote of the Board shall decide the appeal and shall be final.

If the employee fails to follow the procedures or meet the deadlines set forth above, the grievance will be considered resolved.

TIME AWAY FROM WORK

Holidays

Full- and part-time employees are eligible for the following twelve paid holidays per calendar year:

New Year's Day	Day after Thanksgiving
Memorial Day	Christmas Eve
Independence Day	Christmas Day
Labor Day	New Year's Eve
Thanksgiving Day	Personal Days (3)

Occasional employees are not eligible for paid holidays or personal days. Part-time hourly employees shall receive pay for the above holidays on a proportionate basis according to actual time worked in relation to a full-time employee. Hourly employees whose duties require them to work on a holiday will receive overtime pay for the hours worked in addition to the holiday pay they have earned.

When a paid holiday falls on a weekend, the OWLS Director will review member library closed dates and either choose an adjacent weekday to close OWLS or instruct OWLS staff to schedule a paid day off any day within the same pay period as that holiday, subject to supervisor approval to ensure adequate customer support.

The personal days are awarded at the beginning of the calendar year and must be taken by the end of the calendar year. Personal days will be awarded on a proportionate basis for new employees beginning their employment after the start of the calendar year. Pay for personal days will be paid to employees who leave employment in good standing prior to taking their annual personal days.

Upon approval of the Director, an employee may donate personal days to another employee if the recipient employee is unable to work due to a serious health condition and has no paid time off available (i.e., vacation, sick leave, personal days).

Vacation

The Director and professional staff shall be awarded 20 working days of paid vacation per year after one year of employment and 25 working days of paid vacation per year after 10 years of employment.

Support staff shall be awarded 15 working days of paid vacation per year after one year of employment; 20 working days of paid vacation per year after seven years of employment; and 25 working days of paid vacation per year after 15 years of employment.

Part-time hourly employees shall be awarded vacation leave on a proportionate basis according to the actual time worked in relation to a full-time employee.

Occasional employees are not eligible for paid vacation.

The system believes that vacations benefit both the employees and the employer. Therefore, employees must use the vacation they have earned within the period of time between one anniversary date and the 30 days following the next anniversary date. Employees who have earned more than fifteen days of paid vacation per year (i.e., 20-25 days per year) may, if they choose, ask to be reimbursed for a maximum of five days rather than take them as vacation. In addition, employees may, upon approval of the Director, donate a maximum of five vacation days to another employee if the recipient employee is unable to work due to a serious health condition and has no paid time off available (i.e., vacation, sick leave, personal days).

The system recognizes that the first year of employment is often stressful and time off is helpful. Therefore, after three months of employment, new full-time professional and support staff will receive 10 days (80 hours) of vacation. This vacation must be used by the employee's first anniversary date. New part-time hourly employees shall be awarded vacation leave on a proportionate basis according to the actual time worked in relation to a full-time employee.

Vacation leave that has been awarded and not yet taken will be paid to any employee leaving employment if the reason(s) for leaving are not for disciplinary reasons. In addition, the portion of vacation leave that has been earned since the employee's last anniversary will be paid to any employee who leaves OWLS if the reason(s) for leaving are not for disciplinary reasons.

All vacations shall be scheduled at the convenience of the system and approved by the employee's supervisor. The following general guidelines will be considered when reviewing vacation requests, and supervisors may apply additional criteria for approval.

- Someone must be available to answer the main telephone number throughout the day.
- Someone must be available to ensure that daily reports are provided to OWLSnet libraries.
- Someone must be available to pack and unpack deliveries.
- Someone must be available to provide support for and troubleshoot problems with the integrated library system application software.
- Someone must be available to provide support for and troubleshoot problems with servers and the network infrastructure.
- At least one professional and two support staff should be available on a given workday for the majority of operating hours (8:00-4:30).
- One person must open the office by 8:00 a.m.
- One person must keep the office open until at least 4:00 p.m.
- At least two people should be on site during open hours.

Time Off for Emergency Purposes

Employees may be granted time off without pay for emergency purposes at the discretion of the Director.

Inclement Weather, Power Outages, and Internet Disruptions

Inclement weather may make it impossible for employees to come to work. If this occurs, employees may work from home with the approval of the Director, make up the time missed, request that this time off be charged to unused vacation, or take the time without pay. If inclement weather requires that hourly employees leave work before the end of the day, they may work from home with the approval of the Director, make up the time missed, request that this time off be charged to unused vacation, or take the time without pay.

Power outages and internet disruptions may make it impossible for remote employees to complete their work at home. If relocating to the office for the duration of the outage is not practical, employees may make up the time missed, request that this time off be charged to unused vacation, or take the time without pay.

If inclement weather or another emergency forces the system office to close, employees who work exclusively on site may be paid at their regular rate for any hours they are scheduled to work during which the system office is officially closed, as determined by the system Director.

Jury Duty

Time off with pay will be granted to any full- or part-time employee required to perform jury duty. It is the system's intent for employees to avoid suffering a loss of pay during any time spent serving on a jury. Therefore, the system will provide the difference between their regular wages and the compensation received from the county for jury service.

Employees will be compensated by the system at their regular rate of pay for any hours that they were scheduled to work on the day when jury duty was performed. However, employees must turn over to the system any compensation awarded by the county for jury duty performed on a day for which they are also paid by the system. No employee shall receive compensation from both the county and the system for any given day.

Medical and Family Leaves of Absence

An employee who has completed at least one full year of continuous employment is eligible to request a leave of absence for one of the following reasons:

- The birth and care of a child.
- The adoption of a child or the placement of a foster child in the home.
- Caring for a family member (spouse, child, employee's parents) with a serious health condition or one's own serious health condition.

Occasional employees are not eligible for medical or family leaves of absence.

In order to secure board approval, all requests for a leave of absence must be submitted to the Director at least thirty (30) days prior to the date on which the leave is requested to begin. Leaves of absence shall be for a maximum of twelve weeks in any twelve-month period. The twelve weeks will include the use of any vacation and sick leave that the employee has accumulated. The remainder of the leave shall be without pay.

Neither vacation nor sick leave will accumulate during the unpaid portions of a leave of absence. Participation in the health insurance program will be continued during a leave of absence on the same basis as if the employee were not on leave. If the employee chooses not to return to work at OWLS at the end of the leave, the system will request reimbursement for its share of the health insurance premiums paid or request reimbursement for health insurance opt-out compensation paid during the unpaid portion of the leave.

Upon completion of a leave, the employee is reinstated in his or her former position with no loss of benefits or salary.

Sick Leave

Leave with pay for illness is earned at the rate of two and one-half days for each calendar quarter for full-time employees and accumulated to a maximum of 120 working days (960 hours). Part-time hourly employees shall be eligible for sick leave on a proportionate basis according to actual time worked in relation to a full-time employee. Occasional employees are not eligible for paid sick leave.

A new employee will not be eligible for sick leave until one full calendar quarter elapses after his date of employment; however, he will earn sick leave during his first quarter of employment. No paid sick leave may be taken in advance. The only acceptable use of sick leave is illness, disability, or a medical appointment for an employee or for the employee's immediate family. Immediate family is defined as spouse or domestic partner, children and their spouses, parents, siblings, parents-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, stepparents, or stepchildren.

When an employee is absent from work for more than five consecutive days, the Director may require from the employee's physician a written statement that the employee is able to return to work. Such a statement must describe any restrictions that apply to the employee's ability to work and estimate the length of time for which these restrictions should be observed. After the employee's accumulated sick leave has been exhausted, the remainder of a disability absence shall be without pay.

Upon separation of employment, any remaining, accrued sick leave will not be paid out.

Life-threatening Illnesses

Employees with life-threatening illnesses are encouraged to continue working as long as they are able to perform their duties and their illness presents no threat to themselves or other employees.

The system will make reasonable job accommodations where necessary to help such employees continue to work.

Fitness for Work

OWLS reserves the right to require an employee to undergo a medical examination by a doctor chosen by the employer whenever there is a question of an employee's physical, emotional, or mental fitness to work, in accordance with state and federal law.

Bereavement Leave

Up to three consecutive working days with pay is allowed for full-time employees in the event of a death in their immediate family for the purpose of attending and/or making arrangements for the deceased. Part-time hourly employees shall be eligible for bereavement leave on a proportionate basis according to actual time worked in relation to a full-time employee. Occasional employees are not eligible for bereavement leave. Immediate family is defined as spouse or domestic partner, children and their spouses, parents, siblings, parents-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, stepparents, or stepchildren.

Military Leave

OWLS military leave policy is governed by the provisions of the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA). If any statement in OWLS policy is or becomes incompatible with USERRA, the law will take precedence.

If an employee is called to active duty or enlists in one of the Armed Forces, he or she will be eligible for reemployment after completing military service provided (1) The employee has informed OWLS that s/he was leaving the job for military service; (2) The period of service has not exceeded five years; (3) he or she has completed active duty satisfactorily; and (4) he or she has reported back to OWLS in a timely manner, the exact time frame depending upon the length of the tour of duty as specified in the law.

Employees who serve in reserve units are entitled to fifteen days (120 hours) of unpaid leave each year for authorized, scheduled training and 22 days for emergency duty, as authorized by the President or the Wisconsin Governor, in support of civil authorities in the protection of life and property. The length of the leave is prorated for part-time employees.

Individuals who may request a military leave are encouraged to talk to the Director or Business Coordinator as soon as possible for more specific details.

Personal Leave

Occasionally, employees may find it necessary to conduct personal business, extend a vacation, or absent themselves from work for personal reasons. Ordinarily, vacation and personal time must be used prior to granting leave without pay. Employees who wish to request personal leave must obtain prior approval from the Director. Requests shall be made in writing stating the length of the leave and reason for same. The Director may grant up to ten (10) workdays of unpaid leave for personal reasons in each year of employment subject to the same guidelines used for approving vacation.

Vacation and sick leave are not earned for the month unless the employee works the majority of the workdays of the month. All time paid for is considered time worked.

Personal leaves of longer duration are given full consideration subject to the approval of the Director and the Board of Trustees.

INSURANCE

Health Insurance

All employees participating in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) are eligible for group health insurance coverage through the Wisconsin Public Employers' Group Health (WPE) Insurance program. Through the WPE program, employees have a choice of several participating health plans. The system pays a portion of health insurance premium costs, and employees are also required to pay a portion of their premiums. The system's contribution is effective for either single or family coverage.

Annually, the Board will determine the portion of premium costs that the system will pay for employees working at least three-fourths time, *i.e.*, 30 hours a week. The system will contribute 40% of the lowest cost plan toward health insurance premiums for employees working less than three-fourths time, excluding occasional employees.

State statute prohibits the system from contributing more than 88% of the average premium cost of a Tier 1 health plan toward any employee's health insurance premium. Annually, the Board will determine the system's maximum contribution rate, which may be less than the statutory maximum. Employees should be aware of the maximum contribution rate when selecting a health plan because the system would pay a lower percentage of premium costs for higher cost plans.

New employees must enroll within 30 days of the date of hire; coverage will be effective on the first day of the month that occurs on or after the date the application is received by the employer. Employees who are not eligible for health insurance coverage when they are first hired must enroll within 30 days of the date they do become eligible; coverage will be effective the first day of the month on or following the date the employee becomes eligible.

If employees do not enroll during one of the specified enrollment periods, coverage will be initially

limited to Standard Plan coverage and subject to a 180-day waiting period for all pre-existing conditions.

Health Insurance Opt-Out

The Outagamie Waupaca Library System (OWLS) offers a health insurance opt-out incentive to all employees working at least three-fourths time, i.e., 30 hours a week, who are enrolled in other healthcare coverage. This policy is modeled on the state group health insurance opt-out incentive available to State of Wisconsin employees.

Employees can opt out of public employees group health insurance coverage during the annual It's Your Choice Open Enrollment period. In order to receive this incentive, the employee must complete the following steps:

- For employees currently participating in OWLS health insurance, fill out the Health Insurance Application/Change form for the upcoming year, indicating that they are cancelling health insurance coverage due to eligibility for other coverage.
- Notify the OWLS Director and Business Manager in writing that they will be opting out of health insurance for the upcoming year and would like to take advantage of the healthcare insurance opt-out incentive.

New employees are also eligible to participate. If an employee makes the election to opt-out within 30 days of being hired, OWLS will prorate the stipend according to the remaining number of pay periods in the calendar year in which the election is made.

The opt-out incentive will be spread out over all applicable pay periods in the year. The payment is considered taxable income and will appear on employees' W-2 statements. In addition, the incentive payment is not considered WRS earnings.

If an employee chooses to re-enroll mid-year in OWLS provided health insurance (after experiencing a qualifying event making them eligible for a special 30-day enrollment opportunity) incentive payments will stop as soon as the employee enrolls in coverage.

The amount of the incentive will be set each year by the OWLS board at or before the annual OWLS budget meeting.

Life Insurance

Group life insurance is available to all employees meeting the eligibility requirements of the insurance carrier. The system will pay the full premium for coverage approximately equal to the employee's annual earnings.

Employees may choose life insurance coverage at two or three times their annual earnings provided they pay the additional premiums. They may also choose coverage for spouse and dependent life

insurance at their own expense.

If any employee's life insurance coverage exceeds \$50,000, the IRS requires that the system calculate and withhold FICA taxes on the cost of premiums for the insurance in excess of \$50,000. The Business Coordinator will discuss this with employees when relevant.

Income Continuation Insurance

The Income Continuation Insurance program provides replacement income during a period of disability. Benefits under the plan will not duplicate benefits available from other programs such as the Wisconsin Retirement System, Unemployment Compensation, Worker's Compensation, Social Security, *etc.*, but rather will supplement these programs. All employees who are eligible for the Wisconsin Retirement System are eligible for Income Continuation Insurance. The system pays the entire premium for those employees choosing a waiting period of 120 days before benefits begin. If employees prefer a 30, 60, or 90-day waiting period before benefits begin, they will have the additional cost of their premiums deducted from their paychecks.

The Income Continuation Insurance program provides replacement income as a percentage of average monthly earnings from the previous year. A maximum of \$120,000 in annual earnings are covered.

Worker's Compensation Insurance

The system is required to carry Worker's Compensation Insurance that provides accident insurance for system employees injured while on duty.

Supplemental Insurance

All employees participating in the Wisconsin Retirement System (WRS) are eligible for supplemental dental, vision, and accident insurance coverage through the Wisconsin Public Employers' Group Health (WPE) Insurance program. Employees are responsible for the entire premium, which can be automatically deducted from the individual's paycheck.

OTHER BENEFITS

Employee Development and Education

The development and training of employees is strongly supported by the system. Some employees are required to engage in job-related continuing education activities each year, and all are encouraged to do so. When a supervisor, with prior approval from the Director, asks an employee to attend a conference, workshop, or class, the system will fully reimburse the employee for the time and expenses associated with it. When an employee asks for permission to attend a conference or workshop, the supervisor will make a recommendation to the Director.

The Board of Trustees may, on a case-by-case basis, reimburse up to one half of the tuition for academic courses. Employees should request such reimbursement in a letter, submitted to the Director, describing the course's content and its relevance to the employee's job. In all cases, reimbursement shall be contingent upon receipt of attendance or performance reports, as well as expense reports.

Charging Expenses

OWLS professional staff each receive an OWLS credit card in his/her name for the purpose of buying job-related items and paying conference expenses. A credit card may be issued to support staff responsible for regularly making purchases. Details regarding the use of credit cards are spelled out in OWLS Credit Card Use Guidelines:

OWLS has arranged for corporate credit cards for employees designated by the Director. These "OWLS credit cards" are for the use of employees subject to the following guidelines:

1. OWLS credit cards may be used for the following purposes. In all cases, charges are only authorized up to the amount budgeted annually for the stated purpose.
 - a. To pay for the employee's expenses related to attendance at conferences or meetings. In accordance with OWLS policy on "Attendance at Conferences and Professional Meeting," employer-paid expenses include registration, travel, lodging, and meals.
 - i. Expenses for a spouse or travel companion that will not be reimbursed by OWLS may not be charged on an OWLS credit card.
 - ii. Employee automobile mileage is reimbursed at the current IRS rate. An OWLS credit card should not be used to charge gasoline or other personal vehicle costs because reimbursements for these costs are included in the reimbursement for auto mileage driven.
 - b. To pay for professional reference books that are needed in the performance of duties.
 - c. To purchase office supplies and meeting supplies, including food and beverages.
 - d. For recurring bills, such as licensing and subscription payments.

- e. For online purchases that do not have an invoicing option or payments to vendors that do not accept checks (typically IT vendors).
2. With the prior approval of the Director, OWLS credit cards may be used for purchases other than those listed in No. 1 above.
3. Available credit is limited for each individual and is dependent upon the employee's level of responsibility and purchase needs.
4. Receipts for all credit card purchases should be emailed to accountspayable@owlsweb.org or given to the Administrative Assistant. Employees may be asked to reimburse OWLS for credit card charges without proper receipts.

Professional Dues

OWLS will pay up to \$400 per person for membership dues in professional associations for the Director and staff designated by the director. The Director must approve payment of dues for memberships in associations other than ALA and WLA.

Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program

OWLS offers its employees participation in the Wisconsin Deferred Compensation Program created in accordance with Internal Revenue Code Section 457. The program, available to all system employees, permits them to defer a portion of their wages until future years. Participation in the plan is optional. The deferred compensation is not available to employees until termination, retirement, death, or unforeseeable emergency.

Flexible Benefits Program (IRS Code Section 125)

OWLS offers its employees, excluding occasional employees, the opportunity to set aside pre-tax income for paying childcare expenses or medical expenses not covered by their health insurance policy. Each employee decides what amount to set aside for the year up to the employee contribution limit set by the IRS, and that amount is automatically deducted from the individual's paycheck. Employees submit claims when expenses have been incurred. A certain amount of this money, set by the IRS, can rollover to be claimed in the year following contribution if not used. Any money over that amount that is not claimed will not be returned at the end of the year.

Participation in the program is optional.

The OWLS Board may elect to make an employer contribution to employees' flexible spending accounts. If an employer contribution is approved for a given budget year, new employees will receive a prorated amount based on their start date.

For information about accessing, or authorizing access to, medical files related to this program, employees should talk to the Director.

Wisconsin Retirement Fund

The system participates in the Wisconsin Retirement Fund. All employees meeting eligibility requirements must participate. The fund requires an employer and an employee contribution.

LEAVING OWLS

Voluntary Separation (Resignation/Retirement)

Voluntary separations are initiated by the employee. Resignations should be submitted in writing to the Director. The official termination date shall be the day after the last day worked and after the last day for which vacation leave has been paid. Upon termination employees will not be compensated for any accumulated sick leave.

The Director may reinstate any employee who leaves in good standing. Any reinstatement of formerly accrued benefits must be approved by the Board.

Involuntary Separation

The relationship between employer and employee is terminable-at-will. An employee may be discharged for any reason, at any time, as long as the reason does not violate state or federal law.

An employee who is discharged or fails to respond to a recall when s/he has been laid off, will be regarded as permanently separated from employment with the system and shall have no rights to be considered for future employment.

When an employee is discharged, the Director shall, at the time of the action or as soon as is practicable, furnish the employee with a written discharge notice.

Upon termination employees will not be compensated for any accumulated sick leave or accumulated unused personal holidays.

Layoffs

The operation of the Outagamie Waupaca Library System is contingent upon receipt of state aid funding and fees for services. Insufficient funding may result in layoffs made at the discretion of the Director.

Employees on layoff may be recalled up to six months from the beginning of the layoff period. An employee will be regarded as permanently separated from employment with the system after the layoff period reaches six months without a recall.

Employees may have their health insurance coverage continued during layoff by assuming the full cost of the premiums of such insurance.

DOCUMENTS AND RESOURCES

OWLS Mission Statement

The mission of the Outagamie Waupaca Library System is to enable access to effective library service for all area residents by coordinating resource sharing, by providing appropriate services and programs, by developing new technologies, and by promoting desirable models for governance and funding.

OWLS Statement of Philosophy

(<https://owlsweb.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/Statement-of-Philosophy.pdf>) is an important tool that helps define what the system does.

OWLSweb

(<http://www.owlsweb.org>) is a resource that every staff person will find helpful. You'll find important information about the system and its member libraries there.

Copies of OWLS basic documents, such as job descriptions, policies and forms can be found in the OWLS Share section of Sharepoint.

The Service Requirements

are the statutory services that OWLS, and every other library system, must provide in order to receive state funding. They are found in Chapter 43 of the Wisconsin Statutes, but in brief are:

- Negotiating Membership Agreements
- Negotiating a Resource Library Agreement
- Negotiating Service Agreements with adjacent systems
- Providing Reference Referral and Interlibrary Loan services
- Providing Inservice Training for librarians and trustees
- Delivery and Communication (e.g., van delivery, email, web page, calendars)
- Working with other types of libraries (academic, school, corporate) in the area
- Developing a Library Technology and Resource Sharing Plan
- Providing Professional Consultation
- Offering or Supporting Services to Users with Special Needs

OWLS also provides some non-mandated services, notably in the areas of supporting children and young adult services and providing design and printing services for the member libraries.

RECEIPT PAGE

I certify that I have received a copy of the OWLS Employee Handbook dated January 15, 2026. I understand that it is my responsibility to read and be familiar with the Handbook and that it is for my information and guidance. I further understand that the Handbook is not a contract or guarantee of employment, that my employment is considered at will according to Wisconsin law, and that I or OWLS may terminate my employment without notice or cause at any time, and that I may not reasonably rely on any other expectation or oral or written representation about my employment. It is further understood that the Handbook provisions are simply guidelines, and that OWLS, within its discretion, may at times deviate from those provisions in making employment decisions.

Signature:

Date:

Please return to the Business Coordinator.