

**Call to Meeting**  
**September 26, 2023**

The next Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System (WLS) is **Tuesday, September 26, 2023, at 6:00 p.m.** PLEASE NOTE: This meeting will take place at the WLS Headquarters, 570 Taxter Rd, Ste 400, Elmsford, NY 10523. (Masks may be required.)

***Regular Meeting Agenda***

**Minutes:** June 27, 2023

**Finances**

**Information Item**

**Information Item #1:** Employee Handbook and Policy Updates

**Action Item**

**Action Item #1:** State Aid for Public Library Construction \$34 Million Program  
FY20232024

**Action Item #2:** Extend for One Year Current Borrowing Facility

**President's Report**

**WLS Committee Reports**

**Executive Director's Report**

**PLDA Report** – Yvonne Cech, Director, John C. Hart Memorial Library (Yorktown)

**NEXT MEETING:** The next Regular Meeting will be held on Tuesday, October 24, at 6:00 p.m.

**WESTCHESTER LIBRARY  
SYSTEM  
Trustee Meeting  
June 27, 2023 – Awaiting Approval**

**REGULAR MEETING**

The Regular Meeting of the Westchester Library System was called to order by Francis Okelo at 6:00 p.m. The quorum requirement was met with the following people in attendance:

Board members present: Anthony Amiano, Andrea Bober, Robert Cartolano, Nishat Hydari, Wes Iwanski, Maureen LeBlanc, Julie Mills-Worthy, Susan Morduch, Francis Okelo, Edris Scherer, Diane Tabakman,

Board Members absent: Alice Joselow Karen Kelley, Joseph Puglia, Karen Zevin

Also present from WLS were: Rob Caluori, Pat Brigham, Wilson Arana, Kate Meyer, Allison Midgley

Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Representative: Yvonne Cech, Director, John C. Hart Memorial Library

**MINUTES**

The minutes of the May 30, 2023, meeting were approved on a motion by Ms. Mills-Worthy and seconded by Ms. Morduch. The motion passed unanimously.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

The financial report through May 2023 was presented by Mr. Caluori. Mr. Caluori noted that on the Income Statement, spending for May came under budget although it reflects an overspending in library materials especially Hoopla and Kanopy. WLS is in receipt of two insurance policy dividend checks totaling \$2,000. Mr. Caluori also noted that the Audit reports are now final, and anyone who wishes to have a printed final copy to please let him know. The Board accepted the financial report on a motion by Ms. Scherer and seconded by Ms. LeBlanc. The motion passed unanimously.

**VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT**

The Board of Trustees sends their collective condolences to Karen Zevin for her profound loss.

Mr. Okelo also noted that all Board members should have their conflict-of-interest papers filed.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

***Finance Committee:*** Ms. LeBlanc reported that the committee is making a small change to the purchasing policy and will send its recommendations to the Governance Committee.

**Governance Committee:** Ms. Morduch reported that the committee expects the employee handbook to be finalized in June 2023.

**Budget Committee:** Ms. Scherer reported that the Budget Committee will send out a note at the end of August with potential dates to convene.

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

A copy of the Executive Director's Report was mailed in advance of the meeting.

In Dr. Kirchner's absence, Mr. Caluori discussed the Strategic Plan handout and answered questions from Board Members.

An additional report was presented to the Board by Pat Brigham, Director of Development. Ms. Brigham discussed the mission, vision, and goals for Development for 2023.

- The mission of the WLS Development Department is to support WLS strategic goals.
- The vision is to build strong financial support through diversified funding sources and strategic community partners that enhance WLS Outreach Services and promote WLS' capacity to meet Westchester's emerging library services and literacy needs.
- The goals are to identify WLS funding needs and priorities, both short term and long-term; to strengthen strategic partnerships with community-based organizations, non-profits, County services and others to connect services and resources provided by WLS and the member libraries; to build awareness of services and resources provided by WLS, and to assist member libraries in building their capacity to fundraise.

## **PLDA LIASON'S REPORT**

Ms. Cech reported on the June 2023 PLDA meeting where the following was discussed:

- Construction Grants are due August 25, 2023. There will be training soon.
- The e-content committee noted that White Plains Public Library requested that e-content material no longer be shared with the member libraries. PLDA voted on a 6-month trial basis to evaluate the impact on the other libraries.
- The Civil Service Committee met with Senator Shelley Mayer regarding the New York State Civil Service process, hoping to improve the functionality of it.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Having completed its agenda, the Board adjourned its meeting at 7:20 p.m. on a motion by Mr. Iwanski and seconded by Ms. Murdoch that passed unanimously.

Respectively submitted,

Andrea Zuckerman Bober  
Secretary

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# WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

## FINANCIAL STATEMENTS WITH NOTES – AUGUST 2023

### SUMMARY

All of the figures in the accompanying notes are approximated to the nearest \$100 or 1%. The figures in the financial statements are rounded to the nearest dollar and percentages are to two decimal places.

The December 2022 figures included in this statement are now consistent with the audited financial statements. This reflects adjusting entries from the audit process as well as the application of ASC 842 (Accounting Standards Codification) which changes the way the lease for WLS's office space is recorded.

WLS is in the final stages of implementing Sage Intacct, a new financial management system. Go-live on the new system went as planned on 8/1/2023 and the final phases, which includes the implementation of paper-less and automated processes.

An Income Statement with Projections is included with the financial reports. This report currently projects that the year will end with revenues and expenses essential in line with each other. This is a significant positive variance from the original budget which called for a \$322,500 deficit. However, it is important to note that this is an early projection based on activity through August and will likely fluctuate as the year continues to progress.

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## BALANCE SHEET – AUGUST 2023

The Balance Sheet shows comparative figures for the period from month ending (ME) May 2023 thru ME August 2023. The key changes for the period are an increase in WLS's *operating cash and cash equivalents*, which is higher by \$1,840,300 and offset by changes in deferred revenue and *unconditional promises to give*. Details are discussed below.

### ASSETS:

*This section indicates the organization's liquidity by showing what assets WLS holds in cash and what assets will be available in cash in the near future.*

The chart to the right illustrates WLS's assets.

*Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents* (This shows the cash in WLS's operating and payroll bank accounts and petty cash):

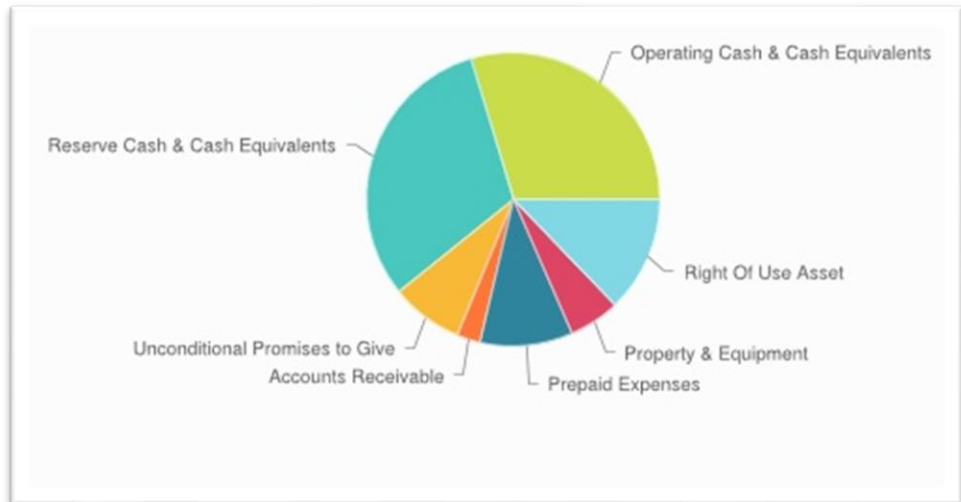
In the period, WLS's operating cash increased by \$1,840,300. With \$3,837,600 in receipts, activity included \$2,349,400 from NYS for 2023-2024 aid, \$1,110,700 in payments from member libraries for IT services, e-content, and movie licensing group purchases and, \$326,000 from Westchester County for the second quarter of 2023. Aside from rent, payroll and benefits, Internet, and delivery to libraries, the notable expenditures included \$250,200 to member libraries for Local Library Services Aid from New York State, \$106,900 to OCLC for ILL and Cataloging software subscriptions through 2024, \$49,900 to Dell for Carbon Black network security software subscriptions, and \$40,800 to Envisionware for PC reservation and print management software for libraries.

*Unconditional Promises* (These are promises to give money to WLS without any restrictions attached.): The figure in this line decreased by \$677,700 in the period. This is the result of recording \$871,300 in receivable revenue from New York State, Westchester County and eRate for 2023 aid which is offset by the receipt of \$1,549,000 in revenues received from New York State and Westchester County.

### LIABILITIES:

*This section shows WLS's near-term obligations.*

*Deferred Revenue* (Funds received which have not yet been earned): This figure increased by \$1,303,800, the result of recording and recognizing revenues from New York State, IT services, eContent group purchases, and movie licensing.



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## STATEMENT OF REVENUE AND EXPENDITURES

### COMPARISON TO BUDGET WITH PREVIOUS YEARS TO DATE – AUGUST 2023

Net revenue before depreciation was less than budgeted for August (\$32,200) and more than budgeted for the year-to-date (YTD) (\$215,200). Expense figures include all expenses including those associated with special projects. Noteworthy variances discussed below.

#### REVENUES:

Total revenue was in line with the budget for August and the YTD. This continues to be primarily driven by monthly recurring offsetting variances in *Interest* and the negative variance in *Other Revenues with Restrictions* and is discussed in greater details below.

*Interest* for August was significantly higher than budgeted. At the time the budget was created, interest rates were beginning to rise but could not be fully anticipated. Interest earned on WLS's cash balances is based on the excess balance, which is the average collected balance less minimum balance requirements and represents \$8,000 of the activity in this line. The additional 12,800 in positive activity is the result of Treasury Bills that matured in August. WLS continues to invest in 6-month Treasuries which are currently yielding more interest than longer-term options.

*Other Revenues with Restrictions* shows a negative figure for August which drove a \$20,000 negative variance against budget in the line. The negative activity was driven by the reversal of revenue in the LIU Palmer School program. The correction was the result of reconciling students that dropped the program and students that paid LIU directly against the original revenue recognition schedule. The line also includes the recording of a grant from the United Way of Westchester and Putnam which will be used to support various Outreach activities.

#### EXPENSES:

Total spending in August was more than revenues by \$60,400 and came in \$37,100 more than the monthly budget. Significant positive and negative variances are discussed below,

In addition to the notes below, it is important that the timing of recording credit card purchases has improved due to the implementation of the new financial management system. There was previously a 1-month delay in the recording of activity on the credit card (i.e. July activity recorded in August). Going forward all activity will be recorded in the month it occurred. However this also has caused credit card activity from both July and August to be reflected in the August figures in this report.

*Salaries* – This line increased slightly each month in July and August. The figure for August was slightly more than budgeted and was driven by three key factors: (1) August is one of three months have a 23 workdays where all other months have 21 or 22 days; (2) August has three payrolls which drives increased expenses; (3) Positions that were open most of the year-to-date are now filled with the exception of the open cataloging position. The line has a positive YTD variance of \$142,500 driven by the positions that were open in the first half of the year. The line is expected to come in on budget monthly and under budget for the year.

*Fringe Benefits* came in under budget for the month and the YTD driven primarily by lower than anticipated health insurance costs. Costs, which began the year slightly lower than anticipated were further lowered when NYSHIP (New York State Health Insurance Program) issued a mid-year reduction in costs starting in June.

*Equipment* ended the month \$6,300 more than budgeted. The majority of the activity in the line is attributed to a \$21,100 purchase of laptops being deployed to staff as part of the budgeted program to create a mobile-enabled and security-aware work environment. The line is \$30,000 under budget for the year to date and is not expected to exceed the budget for the year.

*Library Materials* came in \$56,000 more than budgeted, which was driven by two key causes: (1) The timing of recording the July-2023 invoice for Hoopla (Midwest Tape) downloads by patrons (\$36,200) which could not be recorded in July due to the cut over to the new financial management system; (2) increased activity in pay-per-use electronic content by patrons. The line is currently \$83,600 over budget for the YTD and is anticipated to come in over budget for the year due to the increased activity from patrons.

Westchester Library System  
Balance Sheet  
As of August 31, 2023

	Month Ending 08/31/2023 <u>Actual</u>	Month Ending 05/31/2023 <u>Actual</u>	Month Ending 08/31/2023 Period difference	Month Ending 08/31/2023 Period variance	Year Ending 12/31/2022 <u>Actual</u>
<b>Assets</b>					
<b>Current Assets</b>					
Operating Cash & Cash Equivalents	2,814,436	974,090	1,840,345	188.92 %	2,261,909
Reserve Cash & Cash Equivalents	2,822,907	2,797,195	25,713	0.91 %	2,762,472
Unconditional Promises to Give	726,218	1,403,929	(677,711)	(48.27) %	333,377
Accounts Receivable	286,661	114,924	171,737	149.43 %	126,397
Prepaid Expenses	858,072	826,000	32,072	3.88 %	723,226
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<u>7,508,294</u>	<u>6,116,137</u>	<u>1,392,156</u>	<u>22.76 %</u>	<u>6,207,381</u>
<b>Long-Term Assets</b>					
Property & Equipment	500,629	544,109	(43,479)	(7.99) %	616,574
Right Of Use Asset	1,155,488	1,155,488	0	0.00 %	1,155,488
<b>Total Long-Term Assets</b>	<u>1,656,117</u>	<u>1,699,597</u>	<u>(43,479)</u>	<u>(2.55) %</u>	<u>1,772,062</u>
<b>Total Assets</b>	<u>9,164,411</u>	<u>7,815,734</u>	<u>1,348,677</u>	<u>17.25 %</u>	<u>7,979,443</u>
<b>Liabilities</b>					
<b>Short-Term Liabilities</b>					
Accounts Payable	483,238	393,112	90,126	22.92 %	699,492
Deferred Revenue	1,534,876	231,040	1,303,835	564.33 %	6,685
Short-Term Right of Use	268,208	268,208	0	0.00 %	268,208
<b>Total Short-Term Liabilities</b>	<u>2,286,322</u>	<u>892,360</u>	<u>1,393,961</u>	<u>156.21 %</u>	<u>974,385</u>
<b>Long-Term Liabilities</b>					
Long-Term Right of Use	1,104,346	1,104,346	0	0.00 %	1,104,346
Post-Retirement Benefits Payable	3,856,991	3,856,991	0	0.00 %	3,856,991
<b>Total-Long-Term Liabilities</b>	<u>4,961,337</u>	<u>4,961,337</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0.00 %</u>	<u>4,961,337</u>
<b>Total Liabilities</b>	<u>7,247,659</u>	<u>5,853,697</u>	<u>1,393,961</u>	<u>23.81 %</u>	<u>5,935,722</u>
<b>Net Assets</b>					
Net Assets, Beg Bal	1,995,505	1,943,086	52,420	2.69 %	800,360
Change in Net Assets	(78,753)	18,951	(97,704)	(515.55) %	1,243,361
<b>Total Net Assets</b>	<u>1,916,752</u>	<u>1,962,037</u>	<u>(45,284)</u>	<u>(2.30) %</u>	<u>2,043,721</u>
<b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b>	<u>9,164,411</u>	<u>7,815,734</u>	<u>1,348,677</u>	<u>17.25 %</u>	<u>7,979,443</u>
<b>Net Asset Detail</b>					
Working Capital	5,221,972	5,223,777	(1,805)	(0.03) %	5,232,996
Long-Term Net Assets	(3,305,220)	(3,261,740)	(43,480)	(1.33) %	(3,189,275)
<b>Total Net Asset Detail</b>	<u>1,916,752</u>	<u>1,962,037</u>	<u>(45,285)</u>	<u>(2.30) %</u>	<u>2,043,721</u>



Westchester Library System  
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures  
Comparison to Budget with Previous Years To Date  
As of August 31, 2023

	Month Ending 08/31/2023			Year To Date 08/31/2021	Year To Date 08/31/2022	Year To Date 08/31/2023			Year Ending 12/31/2023
	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Actual	Actual	Budget	Variance	Total Budget
<b>Revenue</b>									
State Revenues without Restrictions	206,835	205,921	914	1,422,061	1,576,030	1,649,131	1,647,367	1,764	2,471,050
County Revenues without Restrictions	109,515	106,008	3,507	698,060	784,456	865,400	848,066	17,334	1,272,100
Federal Revenues without Restrictions	13,750	13,750	0	664,265	303,155	110,000	110,000	0	165,000
Member Technology Fees	223,327	224,833	(1,507)	1,882,906	1,867,822	1,782,857	1,798,667	(15,810)	2,698,000
Fund Raising & Contributions	0	0	0	1,138	1,006	249	0	249	0
Interest	20,879	417	20,463	1,513	3,407	77,819	3,333	74,486	5,000
CCS & Other	1,308	208	1,099	6,301	6,375	10,876	1,667	9,210	2,500
Government Revenues with Restrictions	19,195	18,959	237	333,839	146,915	152,120	151,666	453	227,500
Other Revenues with Restrictions	(5,440)	14,416	(19,857)	219,444	288,813	27,719	115,334	(87,615)	173,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>589,368</b>	<b>584,512</b>	<b>4,856</b>	<b>5,229,526</b>	<b>4,977,979</b>	<b>4,676,171</b>	<b>4,676,100</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>7,014,150</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>									
Salaries	207,406	197,935	(9,471)	1,544,617	1,570,201	1,440,933	1,583,482	142,549	2,375,223
Fringe Benefits	97,237	112,350	15,113	752,120	807,407	783,134	898,801	115,667	1,348,202
Professional Fees	360	4,275	3,915	20,500	9,178	14,486	34,201	19,714	51,300
Equipment	22,089	15,833	(6,256)	276,860	372,368	96,665	126,666	30,002	190,000
Library Materials	115,272	59,202	(56,071)	490,094	470,543	557,176	473,613	(83,562)	710,420
Rent and Utilities	34,201	29,656	(4,545)	222,658	244,035	265,830	237,247	(28,584)	355,870
Repairs and Maintenance	50,351	46,616	(3,734)	279,891	331,243	441,136	372,934	(68,203)	559,400
Supplies	492	3,796	3,304	17,853	18,542	3,160	30,366	27,207	45,550
Telephone and Internet	37,000	38,925	1,925	253,929	288,076	324,099	311,400	(12,699)	467,100
Printing and Postage	6,230	6,242	11	48,693	65,716	41,543	49,934	8,390	74,900
Bibliographic Fees	7,613	7,458	(154)	53,244	53,516	57,141	59,666	2,526	89,500
Professional Development	3,331	8,171	4,840	4,957	28,089	28,925	65,367	36,442	98,050
Travel	6,317	4,200	(2,117)	369	16,637	35,993	33,600	(2,393)	50,400
Memberships	1,752	2,333	581	14,149	15,601	16,339	18,666	2,327	28,000
Contractual Services	20,795	32,942	12,147	199,168	295,824	259,770	263,534	3,764	395,300
Delivery Service	36,002	37,583	1,582	289,383	326,525	293,605	300,666	7,061	451,000
Insurance	2,580	2,917	336	18,801	21,562	21,925	23,334	1,409	35,000
Miscellaneous	727	2,250	1,523	4,458	4,715	4,522	18,000	13,477	27,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>649,755</b>	<b>612,684</b>	<b>(37,071)</b>	<b>4,491,744</b>	<b>4,939,778</b>	<b>4,686,382</b>	<b>4,901,477</b>	<b>215,094</b>	<b>7,352,215</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue Before Depreciation</b>	<b>(60,387)</b>	<b>(28,172)</b>	<b>(32,215)</b>	<b>737,782</b>	<b>38,201</b>	<b>(10,211)</b>	<b>(225,377)</b>	<b>215,165</b>	<b>(338,065)</b>
<b>Non-Cash Activity</b>									
Depreciation	14,493	14,083	(410)	126,504	89,765	115,945	112,666	(3,278)	169,000
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investments	3,873	0	(3,872)	167	(600)	813	0	(812)	0
<b>Total Non-Cash Activity</b>	<b>18,366</b>	<b>14,083</b>	<b>(4,282)</b>	<b>126,671</b>	<b>89,165</b>	<b>116,758</b>	<b>112,666</b>	<b>(4,090)</b>	<b>169,000</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue</b>	<b>(78,753)</b>	<b>(42,255)</b>	<b>(36,497)</b>	<b>611,111</b>	<b>(50,964)</b>	<b>(126,969)</b>	<b>(338,043)</b>	<b>211,075</b>	<b>(507,065)</b>

Westchester Library System  
Statement of Revenues and Expenditures  
With Projections  
As of August 31, 2023

	Year Ending 12/31/2023	01/01/2023 Through 08/31/2023	Current Year Projected	Current Year Total Projections	Current Year Projected vs. Budget
	Total Budget	Current YTD Actual	Sept. - Dec.	Projections	Variance
<b>Revenue</b>					
State Revenues without Restrictions	2,471,050	1,649,131	824,566	2,473,697	2,647
County Revenues without Restrictions	1,272,100	865,400	432,700	1,298,100	26,000
Federal Revenues without Restrictions	165,000	110,000	55,000	165,000	0
Member Technology Fees	2,698,000	1,782,857	891,429	2,674,286	(23,714)
Fund Raising & Contributions	0	249	124	373	373
Interest	5,000	77,819	38,910	116,729	111,729
CCS & Other	2,500	10,876	5,438	16,314	13,814
Government Revenues with Restrictions	227,500	152,120	76,060	228,180	680
Other Revenues with Restrictions	173,000	27,719	13,859	41,578	(131,422)
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>7,014,150</b>	<b>4,676,171</b>	<b>2,338,086</b>	<b>7,014,257</b>	<b>107</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>					
Salaries	2,375,223	1,440,933	720,466	2,161,399	213,824
Fringe Benefits	1,348,202	783,134	391,567	1,174,702	173,500
Professional Fees	51,300	14,486	7,243	21,729	29,571
Equipment	190,000	96,665	48,333	144,997	45,003
Library Materials	710,420	557,176	278,588	835,764	(125,344)
Rent and Utilities	355,870	265,830	132,915	398,746	(42,876)
Repairs and Maintenance	559,400	441,136	220,568	661,704	(102,304)
Supplies	45,550	3,160	1,580	4,739	40,811
Telephone and Internet	467,100	324,099	162,050	486,150	(19,050)
Printing and Postage	74,900	41,543	20,771	62,314	12,586
Bibliographic Fees	89,500	57,141	28,570	85,711	3,789
Professional Development	98,050	28,925	14,463	43,387	54,663
Travel	50,400	35,993	17,996	53,990	(3,590)
Memberships	28,000	16,339	8,170	24,509	3,491
Contractual Services	395,300	259,770	129,885	389,654	5,646
Delivery Service	451,000	293,605	146,802	440,408	10,592
Insurance	35,000	21,925	10,963	32,887	2,113
Miscellaneous	27,000	4,522	2,261	6,784	20,216
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>7,352,215</b>	<b>4,686,382</b>	<b>2,343,191</b>	<b>7,029,574</b>	<b>322,641</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue Before Depreciation</b>	<b>(338,065)</b>	<b>(10,211)</b>	<b>(5,105)</b>	<b>(15,317)</b>	<b>322,748</b>
<b>Non-Cash Activity</b>					
Depreciation	169,000	115,945	57,973	173,918	4,918
Unrealized Gain/Loss on Investments	0	813	406	1,218	1,218
<b>Total Non-Cash Activity</b>	<b>169,000</b>	<b>116,758</b>	<b>58,379</b>	<b>175,136</b>	<b>6,136</b>
<b>Total Net Revenue</b>	<b>(507,065)</b>	<b>(126,969)</b>	<b>(63,484)</b>	<b>(190,453)</b>	<b>328,884</b>

**Item:** **Employee Handbook and Policy Updates**

**Background:** The WLS Governance Committee met on August 22, 2023, to review the newly revised WLS Employee Handbook and five policies: #4 Electronic Data; #13 Purchasing; #14 Credit Card Usage; #15 Gift Acceptance and #22 ADA/ADAAA.

Trustees in attendance at this meeting were Anthony Amiano (District 5), Andrea Bober (District 10), Karen Kelley (District 12), Maureen LeBlanc (District 8), Julie Mills-Worthey (District 13), and Susan Morduch (District 6)/Chair. WLS Staff in attendance were Rob Caluori (Chief Finance Officer) and Terry Kirchner (Executive Director).

**Status:** The Governance Committee reviewed and discussed the employee handbook and five policies. All items were recommended for approval by the full board at the October 24, 2023, meeting.

**Summary of documents reviewed:**

- Employee Handbook - New, revised version
- Policy 4 - Electronic Data - Significant revisions recommended
- Policy 13 - Purchasing - One line added
- Policy 14 - Credit Card Usage - Grammatical correction
- Policy 15 - Gift Acceptance - No changes recommended
- Policy 22 - ADA / ADAAA - New Policy

**Recommended**

**Action:** Approval of the recommendations submitted by the Governance Committee at the October 24, 2023, meeting.

September 26, 2023

*DRAFT – May 30, 2023 – RC – further changes based on legal 4/11/23 and meeting with TK*  
*DRAFT – April 11, 2023 – SAA – further changes from legal based on v. 10*  
DRAFT – March 10, 2023 – TK – v.10



## WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM

### EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

October 2023

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## **SECTION 1: WELCOME TO WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM**

### INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Westchester Library System (WLS). Each employee is an important member of this organization, which is dedicated to serving, celebrating and respecting the diversity within Westchester County.

Employees are encouraged to ask any questions they may have regarding any policies or procedures outlined in this handbook. A staff member's immediate supervisor can provide clarification on the information outlined below.

### ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook contains general information about employment at WLS. It is designed as a working guide for employees and supervisors, to provide staff with information on benefits, policies and practices. This version of the WLS Employee Handbook supersedes all previous versions of the handbook.

This handbook is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies, practices, or benefits described. Nothing in this handbook confers any rights or privileges upon any WLS employee. There are no promises or guarantees of any kind contained in this handbook, nor should it be regarded or construed by WLS employees as a contract between WLS and any of its employees. Please note that this handbook is subject to change, and policies may be modified or discontinued by the WLS Board of Trustees at any time.

### OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM

A focus on community engagement and outreach provides the framework for programs and services at the Westchester Library System (WLS). It is through collaboration with the member libraries, governmental agencies, service organizations, community members, Westchester County and others that WLS is able to assist them in their efforts to create and grow welcoming, inclusive services and programs for all residents of their community and the County.

WLS works to provide cost-effective approaches for administrative and technology support, cataloging assistance, delivery of materials, training of library staff and trustees, the sharing of digital resources. We do our work with a disciplined focus on equity, diversity, and access, which gives our outreach programs and member library activities the broadest reach and relevance. We are committed to providing services for the interest, information, and enrichment of all people in the communities we serve.



WLS is one of New York State's 23 public library systems and was established by State Education Law in 1958. WLS is a membership organization comprised of the 38 independent public and association libraries within the geographic boundaries of Westchester County. Each of the member libraries is an independent organization with its own board of trustees, director, staff, policies and chartered service area. WLS strives to help each member library support the specific needs and interests of its community, while also encouraging the development of critical interdependencies that result in more effective and cost-efficient library services throughout the County. To that end, WLS provides ongoing training and professional development for library directors, staff, and library trustees fostering best practices in library services, community engagement, and fiscal responsibility. WLS also provides expert guidance in complying with NYS rules and regulations to member libraries. Additionally, WLS offers robust, community centered outreach programs collaborating with libraries, community agencies and nonprofits to serve the County's most vulnerable populations.

#### MISSION STATEMENT

WLS empowers lives and communities by connecting people in Westchester County with the resources, services, and programs available through WLS and the member libraries.

#### VISION STATEMENT

WLS promotes the love of learning, discovery of new ideas and opportunities for all in Westchester County. It will strengthen the member libraries of Westchester County by enhancing their ability to share information and resources and by supporting a welcoming environment to everyone in the community.

#### CORE VALUES

WLS bases its policy and operating decisions on the following set of **core** values:

**A**dvocacy,  
**D**iversity,  
**V**alue,  
**I**nnovation,  
**C**ooperation, and  
**E**ducation.

#### GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

WLS strives to provide recognition, opportunity, and job satisfaction for all staff. To this end, the organization:

- \* Encourages respect for the individual dignity of each employee
- \* Provides leadership in which employees may have faith and confidence
- \* Cultivates current employees to advance within the organization
- \* Offers training opportunities for employees and encourages them to develop their capacities to the maximum potential
- \* Provides and continually reviews a balanced program of employee benefits
- \* Maintains open channels of communication and continually seeks ways of maintaining high morale through fair and equitable treatment of all employees
- \* Ensures that WLS personnel policies are administered fairly and consistently.

## **SECTION 2: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

### WORK SCHEDULES

#### Hours of Work

The standard workweek for WLS employees is a 5-day, 35-hour workweek. Hours may vary depending upon assignments. Some employees may be required to work evenings and/or Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Schedule adjustments may be made at the convenience of the Department, as determined by the Department Head in consultation with the Executive Director.

#### Meal Breaks

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid lunch break between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for shifts six hours or longer that extend over that period, and may take up to 1 hour.

Employees are entitled to a 45-minute meal break at the time midway between the beginning and end of a shift of more than six hours starting between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. (this is not a typical WLS workday, but could apply to special events and circumstances).

All employees are entitled to an additional 20-minute meal break between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. for workdays that extend from before 11:00 a.m. to after 7:00 p.m. (this is not a typical WLS workday, but could apply to special events and circumstances).

Staggered lunch breaks may be necessary to meet WLS needs.

#### Breaks

Full-time employees are allowed 2 paid 15-minute scheduled breaks during each 7-hour workday. One break should be taken in the morning and one in the afternoon, or one in the afternoon and one in the evening depending on the employee's work schedule.

Part-time and hourly employees are provided with one paid 15-minute scheduled break for every 3-1/2 hours worked during a given day.

Break time may not be used at the beginning or the end of a workday, may not be accumulated or attached to meal breaks and may not be used to make up lateness.

#### Religious Accommodation

WLS is committed to working with employees to provide reasonable accommodation for religious observances. To request an accommodation for a sacred day off, space to pray during the workday or other needs based on religion, please contact [REDACTED].

### ABSENCE AND LATE ARRIVAL NOTIFICATION

If an employee needs to take an unscheduled absence, a call to the appropriate supervisor must be placed by 9:00 am or within 15 minutes of the time scheduled to begin work. Employees may leave a voicemail message if the supervisor is not available.

If an employee will be unavoidably late, the same call-in procedure as outlined above should be followed. Lateness of more than one hour will be charged to vacation or personal time. Lateness may be made up with the approval of the Department Head. Only non-exempt employees may be approved to “make up” time for their lateness. (Please see page 4, “Employee Classifications,” for the definition of exempt and non-exempt employees.)

### DRESS CODE/APPEARANCE

WLS maintains a professional work environment. Although there is not a strict dress code for staff, work attire should be clean, in good repair, not pose a safety hazard and be suited to the work to be performed that day.

### INNOVATION, SUCCESSION AND TRANSFERS

WLS's policy is to cultivate the talents of current employees so they may advance within the organization. All decisions regarding new positions, promotions and transfers are made in compliance with WLS's Equal Employment Opportunity policy, strategic plan and the current Board's plans for succession and development of the workforce.

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

WLS is committed to employee training and development. Funds are budgeted to support employee participation in conferences, workshops, and trainings. Emphasis is placed upon the employees receiving training within their department. In addition, general staff meetings and/or training sessions may be conducted. At the discretion of the supervisor and with the approval of the Executive Director, an employee may be requested to attend, or encouraged to attend, training outside of the department.

Any employee wishing to apply for administrative leave to attend library related meetings, conferences and/or workshops other than those sponsored by WLS must submit a *Conference Attendance Request* form to their Department Head with a copy to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will approve or deny attendance at conferences and workshops and will determine the extent to which expenses will be paid and/or administrative leave approved when funds are not allocated.

Reimbursement for expenses or leave with pay will not be authorized without a copy of the request form approved and signed by the Executive Director. Request for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days following the conference, workshop, or other approved program.

In accordance with New York State law, all employees are required to attend approved sexual harassment prevention training on an annual basis.



## CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS

Before an appointment is granted as a librarian with WLS, a staff member must be certified by the New York State Education Department. Information about filing for certification may be obtained from the Operations Manager.

## EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

WLS complies with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding the classification of employees. An employee is classified as "Exempt" if determined to be an executive, administrator or professional, as defined by FLSA. All other employees are classified as "Non-exempt".

Based on the conditions of employment, appointments of WLS employees fall into the following categories:

- \* Full-time Regular Appointment
- \* Part-time Regular Appointment
- \* Hourly Appointment
- \* Grant/Contract Appointment
- \* Temporary Appointment
- \* Volunteer Appointment

### Full-time Regular Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work a full workweek of 35 hours per week. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in WLS's health benefits program, life insurance, tax-deferred annuity plan (403b), and leave programs, and are required to participate in the New York State Employees Retirement System or the New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Plan.

### Part-time Regular Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work at least 20 hours in a normal workweek. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in WLS's health benefits program, life insurance, tax-deferred annuities (403b), certain leave programs on a prorated basis (as more fully described in this Handbook), with optional participation in the New York State Employees Retirement System.

### Hourly Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work less than 20 hours in a normal workweek, on a schedule that may vary to meet the demands of WLS. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in tax-deferred annuities (403b), with optional participation in the New York State Employees Retirement System. In addition, employees in this classification

are eligible to earn sick leave as defined in New York State and Westchester County laws.

#### Grant-funded Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work in positions funded through a grant or contract to perform a specific job. Employees in this classification may be eligible for various benefits according to the terms of the individual grant or contract, including eligibility to earn sick leave as defined in New York State and Westchester County laws. In addition to being at-will, employees hired for these positions may have their employment terminated if grant funding or contract is not renewed.

Contract Workers Individuals contracted by WLS to work for the duration of a specific project or assignment pursuant to a contract with criteria to be independent contractors may work on site at WLS from time to time, but are not "employees."

#### Volunteers

Individuals are welcomed by WLS in an unpaid capacity to help provide extra services and/or to assist in the performance of specific routines, services, and programs. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS. Appointees to volunteer positions do not perform duties to maintain the regular operations at WLS and are not required to perform specific hours as a condition of volunteering.

#### Student Interns

Students in an accredited education program may serve as interns and work at WLS in a manner consistent with NYS Department of Labor guidelines. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS.

#### Trainees

Trainees may receive experience and instruction at WLS in a manner consistent with NYS Department of Labor guidelines. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS.

### REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENDITURES

#### Expenses for Meetings, Workshops and Conferences

In general, reimbursable expenses include approved travel, tolls, transit fares, lodging, meals (but no alcohol), registration and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in connection with WLS functions and authorized professional meetings. Employees traveling overnight will be granted a

per-diem stipend for meals and incidental expenses in lieu of submitting expenses for reimbursement. The stipend rate will be as determined by the Internal Revenue Service using the High-low Substantiation Method. Requests for advance payment for conference attendance must be submitted sufficiently in advance to allow for approval by the Executive Director, and shall be made in a manner consistent with IRS and NYS labor law.

### Personal Vehicle Use

There is no requirement that personal vehicles be used for WLS purposes. For employees who elect to operate their personal vehicle for a work-related activity (such as attending a meeting off-site), the employee must have a valid driver's license, appropriate for the type of vehicle being driven at the time of travel.

The employee will be reimbursed for mileage driven in a personal vehicle at the standard rate as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage reimbursement covers fuel, maintenance/repairs, and operating costs so these expenses are not reimbursed separately. In addition to the mileage allowance, tolls and necessary parking charges may be reimbursed.

The employee is expected to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and must abide by all traffic rules and regulations, as well as the rules of any private property being visited for work-related purposes. WLS does not assume liability for damage to personal vehicles for any reason and does not assume liability for deductibles or any other insured loss to the vehicle. Expenses for repairs to personal vehicles are not reimbursable, nor are parking fines or fees for traffic violations.

Employees are expected to complete *Local Travel Reimbursement Request* forms on a quarterly basis to obtain reimbursement. Reimbursement of expenses must be submitted within 30 days following the end of the quarter.


## PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel Records include: notice of hire, job description(s), employee evaluation materials, problem-solving documentation, notices of job change (change of duties, promotion, transfer), documentation related to requests for leave, ADA accommodation-related materials, insurance-related materials, all leave-related documentation not provided to an insurance carrier, notice of termination, requests to review Personnel Files.



Unless record-keeping requires otherwise, all records relating to individual employees are kept in the employee's personnel file. These records are maintained in a confidential manner and only the Operations Manager, Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director access to them. Individual employees may have access to their personnel records upon written request to the Executive Director, consistent with applicable law.

Records that pertain to an employee, but are not "Personnel Records" are:

- Conflict of Interest forms;
- Whistleblowing report and investigation records;
- Anti-discrimination and sexual harassment report and investigation records;
- Payroll records;
- Vacation and sick leave accrual records (note: accrual records are available to employees within three days upon request); 
- Retirement plan participation records;
- All insurance information that must be transmitted to a carrier.

Employees are responsible for notifying the Operations Manager of any change of address and/or telephone number, as well as any change that may affect payroll or benefits.

#### MANDATORY POSTINGS AREA

WLS maintains physical and electronic locations for the mandatory posting of notices to employees. The physical location is in the Employee Lounge at the WLS office. The electronic location is in the Files section within the General channel of the WLS HQ Staff group within Microsoft teams.

All WLS Board Approved Policies, including this handbook are maintained electronically and are posted at this URL:  
<https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>

## **SECTION 3: COMPENSATION**

### PAY POLICY

#### Pay Frequency

Salaries are paid bi-weekly for base salary due up to the pay date and paid every other Tuesday. Employees are paid through either pay check or direct deposit. The pay period covers 2 weeks starting on Sunday and ending on the Saturday before is deposited in each staff member's designated financial account(s). If a holiday falls on a Tuesday, employees have access to funds on the preceding Monday. Employees are encouraged to review their advice of deposit carefully each time to see that no inappropriate deductions have been taken. If an employee has any questions or believes that an inappropriate deduction has been made, the Operations Manager should be informed immediately so that a correction can be made in the following pay Period.

#### Direct Deposit

WLS offers employees the option to have their salary electronically transmitted to their bank of choice. To activate direct deposit, an employee must provide the Operations Manager a voided check and/or a deposit slip noting the amounts to be deposited (if there are multiple accounts). Due to banking requirements, several weeks may elapse before direct deposit is activated.

### STATUTORY DEDUCTIONS

#### Federal, State, City & FICA Taxes

Automatic deductions are made for Federal, State, and FICA (Social Security/Medicare) withholding taxes for all employees. City taxes will also be deducted where applicable.

#### FICA for Life Insurance

In accordance with IRS regulations, Group Term Life Insurance above the IRS-defined threshold is taxable for both the employee and the employer. FICA deductions for term life insurance are taken from the first pay period in December of each year.

#### Garnishment of Wages

When garnishment of an employee's salary is legally ordered, the Executive Director will notify the employee of the garnishment order. Deductions are made in accordance with the provisions of law and the rule or regulation of the issuing agency.

### Retirement

Employee contributions to the New York State Employees Retirement System are deducted as required by New York State law.

### VOLUNTARY DEDUCTIONS

WLS offers health insurance to all full-time staff. Employees who elect to be covered by WLS health insurance will have their share of the premiums deducted from their bi-weekly pay, as defined in the benefit schedule.

Employees may also request deductions for participation in an approved tax deferred annuity plan, credit union and/or catastrophic medical plan.

### OVERTIME PAY

Any employee whose position is classified as non-exempt and whose normal work week is 35 hours is paid additional straight time for hours worked over 35 and up to 40 hours per week, and time and one-half for time worked in excess of 40 hours in a given week. Paid days such as holidays, paid vacations, paid sick and personal time, and paid bereavement or jury duty shall be considered as hours worked in calculating eligibility for overtime pay. When possible, advance notification of overtime assignments will be provided. Part-time employees are paid at their regular rates of pay for hours worked up to 40 hours in a given week.

Individuals who are classified as exempt employees are not eligible for overtime but are responsible for completing the duties of their position regardless of the number of hours worked above the standard workweek.

## **SECTION 4: BENEFITS**

WLS reserves the right to amend, modify or terminate, in whole or part, any or all the provisions of the benefit plans described herein. The complete terms of all WLS employee benefit plans are contained in official plan documents and brochures, which are frequently updated and maintained by the Operations Manager. The official plan documents and brochures will govern in case of any conflict with the terms of this handbook. The descriptions in this handbook are for general information only and describe benefits currently being offered by WLS. Detailed information regarding the terms of all benefits is available from the Operations Manager.

Employees are responsible for notifying WLS of any change in their status, such as address or telephone number changes, number of dependents, marital status, etc. which may affect their benefits.

### **PAID HOLIDAYS**

WLS observes the following holidays:

- (1) New Year's Day
- (2) Martin Luther King's Birthday
- (3) Lincoln's Birthday—FLOATING HOLIDAY
- (4) Presidents' Day
- (5) Memorial Day
- (6) Juneteenth
- (7) Independence Day
- (8) Labor Day
- (9) Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
- (10) Election Day (November)—FLOATING HOLIDAY
- (11) Veterans Day
- (12) Thanksgiving Day
- (13) Christmas Day

WLS is closed on all the holidays listed above, except for the Floating Holidays. Full-time employees are granted time off with pay for holidays. Hourly or Part-time employees whose normal workday falls on a holiday, are paid for the number of hours normally scheduled for that day. For holidays that fall on Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding will be considered as the holiday. For holidays that fall on Sunday, the subsequent Monday will be considered as the holiday.

Lincoln's Birthday and Election Day (November) are designated as Floating Holidays. The WLS Headquarters will be open these days; however, employees may substitute another day for each at any point in time during the fiscal year

with prior approval of their Department Head. If time for these 2 floating holidays is not taken within the fiscal year, no time will be compensated. Coverage for each department is the responsibility of the Department Head. WLS closes early on the workday immediately preceding the holiday observance of Christmas Day unless Christmas Day falls on a Sunday or Monday.

Time required for observance of religious holidays which are not legal holidays may be requested as personal leave or vacation. Employees are encouraged to ask as far in advance as possible, so such requests can be respectfully considered and confirmed in a timely and considerate manner.

If a holiday occurs during an employee's vacation, the holiday is not charged to vacation time.

If a holiday occurs while an employee is attending a convention at the request of the Executive Director, alternate time will be granted.

### PAID VACATION

Vacation leave with pay is granted to those classified as full-time and part-time regular employees.

Hourly employees (scheduled to work less than 20 hours per week) are not granted vacation with pay.

For full-time employees, 22 days of vacation allowance is granted on January 1 of the new year (as only 10 days may be carried forward into a new year, 32 is the maximum accrual).

For part-time regular employees, vacation days are granted on a prorated basis on January 1 of the new year (as only 10 days may be carried forward into a new year, 30 is the maximum accrual).

New employees beginning work after January 1 will be granted vacation leave on a pro-rated basis in the first year of employment.

A new employee is permitted to take vacation after 90 days of employment.

Vacation leave may be taken at any time in the year, subject to the staffing needs of the department and after fulfillment of the waiting period for new employees. Vacation leave may be taken all at one time, or divided into several parts.


## Request for Vacation

Employees who wish to schedule vacation time must submit a written request (hard copy or electronic) to the Department Head for approval. The Department Head will approve or deny the request in writing. If approved, the Department Head will forward it to the Operations Manager.

No more than 10 days of vacation time may be carried over from one year to the next.

An employee who resigns with at least two weeks' notice or is terminated for anything other than misconduct will be paid for up to 10 days of unused vacation time accumulated in the prior year, as well as for any pro-rated current year unused vacation time.

## PAID PERSONAL DAYS

 Full-time employees are granted 5 personal leave days (35 hours) each calendar year. Part-time regular employees are granted personal leave on a prorated basis. Hourly employees are not granted personal leave.

Personal leave should be taken in half-day (3.5 hours) or full-day (7 hours) increments. Personal leave may not be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

Personal leave may be used for a variety of purposes such as religious observances or for transacting personal business which must be conducted during normal work hours. Personal leave may be used to cover absenteeism or lateness due to extreme weather conditions.

Personal leave may be taken the working day before or after a WLS holiday only at the discretion of the Department Head. The Department Head is responsible for seeing that the department is adequately staffed before permission may be granted.

Personal leave must be approved by the immediate supervisor at least 24 hours in advance except in emergencies.

No payment is made for unused personal days at any time during the employee's employment or at termination/resignation.

## PAID SICK LEAVE

Full-time employees are granted 12 days (84 hours) of sick leave per calendar year, which will be front-loaded on January 1 of each year.

. **ADD METHOD OF ACCRUAL.**

Part-time regular employees are granted paid sick leave on a prorated basis, but in no event shall accrual be less than 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

All other employees (hourly, grant-funded and temporary) are eligible to earn sick leave at the rate included in New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law (<https://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-paid-sick-leave>), and will accrue paid sick leave at a rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked. Sick leave is paid at the employee's normal pay rate.

New full-time employees, beginning work after January 1, **will be front-loaded sick leave on a prorated basis in the first year of employment.**

Sick leave may not be used until it has been earned. In emergency situations only, sick leave may be advanced with the approval of the Executive Director.

Sick leave may be used for any permitted reason as described in the New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law. In accordance with this law, employees will not be asked to disclose any confidential health information, including, but not limited to, providing a doctor's note to return to work. However, employees should note that may have to present documentation for other forms of leave, both paid and unpaid, including but not limited to Paid Family Leave, Family and Medical Leave Act leave, Short-Term Disability and Long-Term Disability.

**Full-time employees are permitted to accumulate up to 165 days (1155 hours) of sick leave; part-time regular employees are permitted to accumulate the prorated equivalent of 165 days. Hourly and salaried employees may carry over their unused sick days into the following year or can be paid one day of regular pay for every 3 full days of unused sick leave earned during the period of the prior year December 1 to the current year November 30. Only one option may be chosen each year.**

Upon retirement, a number of days of unused sick leave are considered by New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS) in computing retirement benefits. (Note: Credit for unused sick leave is in addition to the time required for retirement and cannot be used to meet the requirements established by NYSERS.)

Exiting employees will not be paid for unused sick time at time of separation.

#### PAID BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Full-time employees are granted 5 consecutive working days for a death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as mother, father, stepmother, stepfather, spouse, domestic partner, children, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, and spouse's or domestic partner's immediate family. Part-time and hourly employees are granted the hours they were scheduled to work on these days.

One day is granted for a death of a "Near Relative." "Near Relative" is defined as grandparents, grandchildren, aunt, or uncle. Part-time and hourly employees are granted the hours they were scheduled to work on that day.

Personal leave may be used if additional time is desired, or for absences due to the death of a non-relative.

Special circumstances may be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

A maximum of 4 working hours is granted to attend the wake or funeral of a co-worker or co-worker's immediate family, when it falls within the normal working day.

### RETIREMENT PENSION

All full-time salaried employees are required to join the New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS) or the New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Plan (NYSVDC). Membership in the retirement system is optional for part-time and hourly employees. Information regarding vesting in the pension plan can be obtained directly from NYSERS (<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/common-retirement-fund>).

### TAX-DEFERRED ANNUITY (403b) PLAN

All employees may elect to participate in a Tax Deferred Annuity (403b) plan through payroll deductions. Contributions to the plan are taken from pretax salary, and any interest and investment earnings accumulate on a tax deferred basis until withdrawal or until paid as benefits. Several firms handle WLS's program and offer a variety of plans for consideration. However, this benefit is accompanied by an important responsibility. Because the employee decides how to invest his or her funds, the employee is responsible for any financial gains or losses that result from that decision.





## PROFESSIONAL LEAVE ATTENDANCE AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND CONVENTIONS)

Professional leave may be granted to an employee for work-related attendance at professional meetings, conventions and/or workshops. Such leave will be considered in light of WLS's needs and work schedules and is granted at the discretion of the immediate supervisor, Department Head, and Executive Director. (Please refer to the **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** section for further information).

Before accepting a responsibility or an office which may require the use of work time, an employee must obtain the approval of the Executive Director.

Employees wishing to apply to attend professional meetings, conferences and/or workshops must complete the *Conference Attendance Request* form available in the Mandatory Postings Area or from the Operations Manager and submit it to their supervisor for approval. Once approved by the supervisor, the Request will be forwarded to the Executive Director for final review and approval. The Executive Director may request that the employee attend meetings which may be of value to the individual and/or WLS.

Professional leave is voluntary. While on professional leave an employee will be paid based on their regular work schedule. Overtime will not accrue while on professional leave. Professional leave will be considered "for work" and as part of professional development or work-related service.



## **SECTION 5: INSURANCE**

### HEALTH INSURANCE



WLS offers health insurance after satisfactory completion of the first 3 months of employment. Grant-funded employees may participate in the plan if health insurance coverage is included in the terms of the grant/contract.

There is an employee contribution required for individual and family health coverage; however, WLS pays the remaining portion of the premium. The portion of the health insurance coverage paid by the employee is, with written authorization by the employee, deducted from the employee's bi-weekly pay.

### EYEGLOSS INSURANCE

WLS offers eyeglass insurance coverage for the individual employee only. Dependents are not covered by the Eyeglass Insurance Plan.

### DENTAL INSURANCE

WLS offers dental insurance coverage for the individual employee only. Dependents are not covered by the Dental Insurance Plan.

### LIFE INSURANCE

For employees covered under this plan, the amount of life insurance will be equal to double their gross salary in the previous calendar year. Included in this policy is a provision for accidental death and dismemberment.

Employees who continue to work after age 65 may be subject to reduced coverage (based on the criteria of the insurance carrier, not WLS).

Term Life Insurance coverage terminates upon an employee's retirement, resignation, or termination.

## **SECTION 6: LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND ACCOMODATIONS**

### JURY DUTY

A leave of absence for jury duty will be granted to any employee who has been notified to serve on a jury. A staff member must notify their supervisor when the notice is received. During this leave, full-time employees will be paid their regular salary for a period up to 15 days within a -12-month period. This time may be taken as full or part days, as the jury service necessitates. Employees must indicate that their employer is paying them for this time when serving on jury duty.

An employee who reports for jury duty and is excused from serving before 12:00 (noon), must report to work for the afternoon, according to the work schedule of the department. However, the combination of jury duty and work hours shall not amount to more than a normal workday.

Upon completion of jury duty service, the employee must submit to their supervisor a signed Certificate of Jury Service indicating the number of days served.

### COURT APPEARANCE

An employee who is subpoenaed for a court appearance on a WLS (or WLS member library) related matter shall be considered to be performing work-related duties when responding to a subpoena.

### MILITARY DUTY

An employee who enters military service or is required to attend annual Reserve or National Guard duty will be entitled to unpaid time off and to reinstatement in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. The employee should provide the supervisor with as much advance notice as possible so that necessary staffing arrangements can be made. Employees, at their discretion, may elect to take any fully earned vacation at this time.

### SAFE LEAVE

Employees who are victims of domestic violence are eligible for up to 40 hours of paid leave under Westchester County's Safe Time Leave Law, to be used to speak with lawyers, attend court or move from an abuser's residence. WLS may require documentation in the form of an affidavit, court appearance ticket or police report to support the need for time off. These documents will be secured in the employee's personnel file. The Operations Manager will engage with the employee to determine if any staff members other than the Executive Director

and Chief Financial Officer should be informed about the leave. For more information on the Safe Time Leave Law, visit: <https://humanrights.westchestergov.com/resources/westchester-s-safe-time-leave-law>

## EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY-BASED MEDICAL LEAVES AND SOLUTIONS

WLS maintains an array of policies and insurance coverage to assist employees in balancing work with personal and family medical needs.


Employees who need to balance work with taking care of family medical needs should review the **Paid Sick Leave Policy** and, for longer-term needs, the **Paid Family Leave Policy**.

Employees who need to take sick leave for non-work-related illness or injury should first refer to the **Paid Sick Leave Policy**, and if further time is off needed, consider their options under the **Disability Policy**.

Employees who need to take sick leave for work-related illness or injury should report such illness or injury immediately, so the process for **Worker's Compensation Coverage** can be initiated.

Employees who need to request **disability accommodations**, including reduction or re-structuring of work hours (either separately or together with a type of medical leave), should review the Employee **ADA Accommodations Policy**.

These policies are described below, and further information is available from the Operations Manager.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE POLICY (PFL): Under New York State law,  Paid Family Leave provides eligible employees with paid time off to bond with a new child, provide care for a family member with a serious health condition (with both "family member" and serious health condition" as defined by the PFL law), or handle exigencies related to a family member's active military service. Leave can be taken all at once or in full-day intermittent increments. To qualify for PFL, an employee must work 20 or more hours per week and must have been employed at least 26 consecutive weeks at their current covered employer; employees working fewer than 20 hours per week must have completed at least 175 days at their current covered employer. Employees pay the PFL premium through bi-weekly payroll deduction.

**Any questions with respect to WLS's Paid Family Leave Policy should also be directed to the Operations Manager.**

### PAID SICK LEAVE POLICY

[see pages 16-17]

### EMPLOYEE DISABILITY COVERAGE

Disability forms and claims for New York State disability benefits are available from and should be filled out and returned to the Operations Manager.

### ADA ACCOMMODATIONS

In furtherance of its mission, the Library follows the Americans with Disabilities Act ("ADA") and the New York Human Rights Law with respect to disability and employment.

To that end, employment matters shall be addressed with an eye to ADA accessibility as set forth in WLS's Employee Disability Accommodation Policy, and employees may request specific disability accommodations per the policy's stated procedure.

### Reinstatement

Employees returning from a leave of absence within the time constraints specified above will be restored to the position of employment held by the employee when the leave commenced or to an equivalent position. An individual who fails to return upon the conclusion of the approved leave or any extension granted will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. Employees returning from leave due to their own serious health condition must provide appropriate medical documentation prior to returning, certifying their ability to resume the essential functions of their job. Employees should provide as much advance notice as possible prior to a planned return to work.

### HEALTH INSURANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS

WLS will continue to provide health benefits under the existing group health plan for employees out on an approved leave for up to 12 weeks, or up to 26 weeks in the case of leave to care for a servicemember, on the same basis as prior to the leave. Employees will continue to be responsible for their portion of the premium payment. Employees who fail to return after a leave will be required to reimburse WLS for the entire cost of health insurance premiums.

NURSING AND PRIVATE AREA FOR EXPRESSION OF BREAST MILK

WLS will provide a private area for the expression of breast milk for up to three years following the birth of a child. Nursing employees may take a 20-minute unpaid break every three hours. An employee may take more or less time, as needed. At the employee's choice, each break may be taken independently or right before or after a regularly scheduled paid or unpaid break. An employee may choose to work before or after regularly scheduled work time to make up for the break time taken to pump breast milk.

Accommodation for the expression of breast milk should be made in advance, if possible. WLS will provide a private location for this purpose which will include a chair, small table, and access to an electrical outlet. In addition, WLS provides access to clean water supply and a refrigerator in the employee lounge. Requests for accommodation should be made in writing to the Operations Manager.



## **SECTION 7: JOB PERFORMANCE**

### PERFORMANCE EVALUATION

Performance evaluations of employees are completed at least once per year and are designed to help employees prioritize their daily activities in support of WLS's mission, vision, values and strategic goals. Department heads are expected to work with individual employees to help support individuals to move forward on their organizational and professional goals that have been developed through ongoing discussions between the department head and employee.

Written performance evaluations must be signed by the employee as an indication that the employee has read it. Signature of the employee does not necessarily imply agreement with the evaluation.

Written performance evaluations become part of the employee's personnel file.

### PROGRESSIVE CORRECTIONS

To maintain an orderly, safe, and efficient work environment, WLS on occasion may have to respond to and correct inappropriate employee behavior or conduct. In many instances, corrective action will be progressive, beginning with an oral warning, followed by a written warning, culminating with termination of employment. Some or all of these steps may not be followed in each instance. At the discretion of the Executive Director, the progressive corrections process may be bypassed, and immediate actions may be taken.



## **SECTION 8: PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURES**

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of all complaints or employee concerns, a problem-solving procedure has been established, which employees are encouraged to use. If a staff member has a concern that they would like to have addressed, then as a first step, the employee should speak with their supervisor for further clarification.

Step 1. The employee shall take up the matter with their immediate supervisor or Department Head (if different) in an attempt to agree on a satisfactory resolution.

Step 2. In the event a satisfactory resolution is not reached in Step 1 or if for some reason the employee does not wish to discuss the problem with the Department Head, the Executive Director will review and investigate the matter and attempt to find a mutually agreeable solution to the problem.

Step 3. In the event the employee feels that the remedies from steps 1 and 2 have overlooked the nature of a severe problem, the employee may address the matter to the President of the WLS Board of Trustees. The employee should provide a synopsis of the problem as well as evaluation and/or proposed resolutions by supervisors along with any documentation. The burden of questioning the Executive Director's decision is on the employee. The President will bring the issue before the WLS Board.

Information gathered during each step of this procedure will be treated discreetly and confidentially by all parties involved.

NOTE: Complaints and investigative procedures related to civil rights reports (matters involving harassment, discrimination, ADA and retaliation), whistleblowing claims and conflict of interest concerns, all of which have precise reporting and procedural requirements, cannot be addressed using these problem-solving procedures and can be found in their respective policies.

## **SECTION 9: SAFETY AND SECURITY**

### **EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Paid leave will be granted if WLS is officially closed for the following reasons:

- \* Extreme inclement weather
- \* An extended breakdown of heating or air conditioning equipment
- \* Other adverse situations which affect working conditions.

Although employees are expected to try to get to work during inclement weather, there will be no obligation to travel placed on anyone who deems it dangerous or unsafe to do so. An employee who calls in an absence on an inclement day will be required to use personal or other leave for the entire scheduled workday, regardless of whether WLS closes any time after opening.

Employees who elect to leave early due to inclement weather will also be required to use personal or other leave for any scheduled hours not worked.

If an employee has already scheduled time off for a day when WLS closes because of inclement weather, the employee will be charged for that time.

Part-time and hourly employees are paid only for the time scheduled to work on the emergency closing day.

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, WLS will notify employees by email if the WLS offices will be closed or have a delayed opening on that day.

### **SECURITY**

Staff are to be security-conscious about safety and property. Incidents of lost or suspected stolen property caused by theft, misappropriation, malicious destruction or another criminal act should be immediately reported to a supervisor or the Executive Director.

Employees should be familiar with the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.

### **ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES**

WLS strives to provide a safe and healthy working environment, free from occupational hazards. When a work-related injury or illness occurs, it is the employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor immediately; it is the supervisor's responsibility to immediately fill out the appropriate form and ensure it is submitted as required by the WLS worker's compensation carrier.

Employees who are disabled due to a work-related illness or injury are eligible to receive disability benefits under the Workers' Compensation policy. The amount of the benefit is dependent upon the disabled employee's compensation rate and guidelines established by the State of New York.

#### WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Should a staff member suffer a work-related injury, disease, or illness, they will receive benefits under WLS's Workers' Compensation policy. To ensure the staff member's physical wellbeing and the correct processing of these claims, the appropriate supervisor should be notified immediately about any injury occurring during and as a result of employment, no matter how slight. When seeking medical attention, it is important that the staff member indicates the injury was due to a work-related accident.



## **SECTION 10: SEPARATION PROCESS**

### **RESIGNATIONS**

A written letter of resignation, addressed to the Department Head, is required of all employees intending to resign. The Department Head is responsible for forwarding the letter of resignation to the Executive Director. Letters of resignation are filed in the employee's personnel file.

To ensure a smooth transition, WLS asks that as much notice as possible be provided, preferably no less than 2 weeks. For positions at the managerial level and higher, 4 weeks notice is desirable. At least 10 days' notice is required in order for the resigning employee to receive up to ten days of accrued vacation.

Employees who resign in good standing under all WLS policies including this handbook will be eligible for reemployment for a period of up to six months from the last date of employment, with benefits tied to seniority reinstated in full. Former employees will be considered for open positions along with all other candidates. Former employees who apply for reemployment after six months will be treated as new employees for purposes of seniority-related benefits.

### **RETIREMENT**

Notification of retirement should be made in the same manner as a resignation (see above).

For employees contemplating retirement, the New York State Employees Retirement System requires notice prior to the intended retirement date. Information concerning State requirements for making application for retirement benefits may be obtained from the Operations Manager or online from the New York State Employees Retirement System (<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retirement>).

For post-retirement health insurance coverage, WLS has set the 12/31/2008 health insurance premium as a benchmark. An employee who has worked a minimum of 10 years for WLS, and who is within 5 years of the date on which he/she/they is entitled to receive a retirement allowance, is eligible for post-retirement health insurance through WLS and will be responsible for payment of any amount above the 2008 health care premium. In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Civil Service, the employee must pay the full premium, with no break in coverage, from the time of separation until reaching age eligible for receipt of the pension.

WLS will reimburse retirees for Medicare premiums, provided they are eligible for post-retirement health insurance through WLS.

### **TERMINATION**

Violations of WLS policies, rules and regulations, or poor job performance may result in discharge from employment. Termination for misconduct will result in forfeiture of termination benefits except those required by law. Terminated employees will be notified of their last date of employment in writing. Payment of final salary owed to resigning or terminated employees will be made available on the next regular payday or sooner, consistent with applicable law.

### LAST WORKDAY

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all paper and electronic files are accessible to WLS prior to the last day of employment. All information created by the employee for WLS is the property of WLS and cannot be shared with any parties outside the organization.

Employees are required to return any WLS issued property no later than their last workday.



## **SECTION 11: WLS POLICIES**

The full text of WLS policies, including the employee handbook, can be accessed on the WLS website (<https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>).

Anti-Harassment

Board Meetings (formerly Board Meeting Participation via Video Conference)

Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

*General Municipal Law Article 18 re: Conflicts of Interest of Municipal Officers and Employees*

Credit Card Usage

Data Security Program, Safeguards and Policy

Collection Development

Electronic Data and Telecommunications NOTE: (should be updated to reflect changes to labor law regarding notice about monitoring communications) – proposed amendment attached

Equal Employment Opportunity

Exempt and Non-Exempt Employee Pay

Gift Acceptance

Health Emergency Plan

Internet Safety and Use

Investment of Funds

Privacy

Progressive Discipline

Records Retention

Remote Work

Purchasing

Sexual Harassment

*Sexual Harassment Complaint Form*

Whistle-Blower Protection

Workplace Violence





**SECTION 12: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

The Employee Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with WLS.

Please sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of this Employee Handbook.

I have received and read a copy of WLS's Employee Handbook. I have also acknowledged that I have received the online link for, and have reviewed, the WLS Board approved policies. I understand that the policies and rules described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of WLS.

I further understand that my service is terminable at will, either by myself or WLS, regardless of the length of my service.

I understand that no contract of employment has been expressed or implied, and that no circumstances arising out of my service will alter my "at will" status.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and that I have received a copy of the WLS Employee Handbook.

Employee's Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



## **WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM**

### **EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

October 2023



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## **SECTION 1: WELCOME TO WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Welcome to Westchester Library System (WLS). Each employee is an important member of this organization, which is dedicated to serving, celebrating and respecting the diversity within Westchester County.

Employees are encouraged to ask any questions they may have regarding any policies or procedures outlined in this handbook. A staff member's immediate supervisor can provide clarification on the information outlined below.

### **ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK**

This handbook contains general information about employment at WLS. It is designed as a working guide for employees and supervisors, to provide staff with information on benefits, policies and practices. This version of the WLS Employee Handbook supersedes all previous versions of the handbook.

This handbook is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the general policies, practices, or benefits described. Nothing in this handbook confers any rights or privileges upon any WLS employee. There are no promises or guarantees of any kind contained in this handbook, nor should it be regarded or construed by WLS employees as a contract between WLS and any of its employees. Please note that this handbook is subject to change, and policies may be modified or discontinued by the WLS Board of Trustees at any time.

### **OVERVIEW OF THE SYSTEM**

A focus on community engagement and outreach provides the framework for programs and services at the Westchester Library System (WLS). It is through collaboration with the member libraries, governmental agencies, service organizations, community members, Westchester County and others that WLS is able to assist them in their efforts to create and grow welcoming, inclusive services and programs for all residents of their community and the County.

WLS works to provide cost-effective approaches for administrative and technology support, cataloging assistance, delivery of materials, training of library staff and trustees, the sharing of digital resources. We do our work with a disciplined focus on equity, diversity, and access, which gives our outreach programs and member library activities the broadest reach and relevance. We are committed to providing services for the interest, information, and enrichment of all people in the communities we serve.

WLS is one of New York State's 23 public library systems and was established by State Education Law in 1958. WLS is a membership organization comprised of the 38 independent public and association libraries within the geographic boundaries of Westchester County. Each of the

member libraries is an independent organization with its own board of trustees, director, staff, policies and chartered service area. WLS strives to help each member library support the specific needs and interests of its community, while also encouraging the development of critical interdependencies that result in more effective and cost-efficient library services throughout the County. To that end, WLS provides ongoing training and professional development for library directors, staff, and library trustees fostering best practices in library services, community engagement, and fiscal responsibility. WLS also provides expert guidance in complying with NYS rules and regulations to member libraries. Additionally, WLS offers robust, community centered outreach programs collaborating with libraries, community agencies and nonprofits to serve the County's most vulnerable populations.

### MISSION STATEMENT

WLS empowers lives and communities by connecting people in Westchester County with the resources, services, and programs available through WLS and the member libraries.

### VISION STATEMENT

WLS promotes the love of learning, discovery of new ideas and opportunities for all in Westchester County. It will strengthen the member libraries of Westchester County by enhancing their ability to share information and resources and by supporting a welcoming environment to everyone in the community.

### CORE VALUES

WLS bases its policy and operating decisions on the following set of core values:

Advocacy,  
Diversity,  
Value,  
Innovation,  
Cooperation, and  
Education.



GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS

WLS strives to provide recognition, opportunity, and job satisfaction for all staff. To this end, the organization:

- \* Encourages respect for the individual dignity of each employee
- \* Provides leadership in which employees may have faith and confidence
- \* Cultivates current employees to advance within the organization
- \* Offers training opportunities for employees and encourages them to develop their capacities to the maximum potential
- \* Provides and continually reviews a balanced program of employee benefits
- \* Maintains open channels of communication and continually seeks ways of maintaining high morale through fair and equitable treatment of all employees
- \* Ensures that WLS personnel policies are administered fairly and consistently.

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**SECTION 2: GENERAL EMPLOYMENT INFORMATION**

**WORK SCHEDULES**

**Hours of Work**

The standard workweek for WLS employees is a 5-day, 35-hour workweek. Hours may vary depending upon assignments. Some employees may be required to work evenings and/or Saturdays, Sundays and holidays. Schedule adjustments may be made at the convenience of the Department, as determined by the Department Head in consultation with the Executive Director.

**Meal Breaks**

Employees are entitled to a 30-minute unpaid lunch break between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. for shifts six hours or longer that extend over that period, and may take up to 1 hour.

Employees are entitled to a 45-minute meal break at the time midway between the beginning and end of a shift of more than six hours starting between 1:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m (this is not a typical WLS workday, but could apply to special events and circumstances).

All employees are entitled to an additional 20-minute meal break between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. for workdays that extend from before 11:00 a.m. to after 7:00 p.m. (this is not a typical WLS workday, but could apply to special events and circumstances).

Staggered lunch breaks may be necessary to meet WLS needs.

**Breaks**

Full-time employees are allowed 2 paid 15-minute scheduled breaks during each 7-hour workday. One break should be taken in the morning and one in the afternoon, or one in the afternoon and one in the evening depending on the employee's work schedule.

Part-time and hourly employees are provided with one paid 15-minute scheduled break for every 3-1/2 hours worked during a given day.

Break time may not be used at the beginning or the end of a workday, may not be accumulated or attached to meal breaks and may not be used to make up lateness.

**Religious Accommodation**

WLS is committed to working with employees to provide reasonable accommodation for religious observances. To request accommodation for a sacred day off, space to pray during the workday or other needs based on religion, please contact the Executive Director or Operations Manager.

ABSENCE AND LATE ARRIVAL NOTIFICATION

If an employee needs to take an unscheduled absence, a call to the appropriate supervisor must be placed by 9:00 am or within 15 minutes of the time scheduled to begin work. Employees may leave a voicemail message if the supervisor is not available.

If an employee will be unavoidably late, the same call-in procedure as outlined above should be followed. Lateness of more than one hour will be charged to vacation or personal time. Lateness may be made up with the approval of the Department Head. Only non-exempt employees may be approved to “make up” time for their lateness. (Please see the “Employee Classifications” section for the definition of exempt and non-exempt employees.)

DRESS CODE/APPEARANCE

WLS maintains a professional work environment. Although there is not a strict dress code for staff, work attire should be clean, in good repair, not pose a safety hazard and be suited to the work to be performed that day.

INNOVATION, SUCCESSION AND TRANSFERS

WLS's policy is to cultivate the talents of current employees so they may advance within the organization. All decisions regarding new positions, promotions and transfers are made in compliance with WLS's Equal Employment Opportunity policy, strategic plan and the current Board's plans for succession and development of the workforce.

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

WLS is committed to employee training and development. Funds are budgeted to support employee participation in conferences, workshops, and trainings. Emphasis is placed upon the employees receiving training within their department. In addition, general staff meetings and/or training sessions may be conducted. At the discretion of the supervisor and with the approval of the Executive Director, an employee may be requested to attend, or encouraged to attend, training outside of the department.

Any employee wishing to apply for administrative leave to attend library related meetings, conferences and/or workshops other than those sponsored by WLS must submit a *Conference Attendance Request* form to their Department Head with a copy to the Executive Director. The Executive Director will approve or deny attendance at conferences and workshops and will determine the extent to which expenses will be paid and/or administrative leave approved when funds are not allocated.

Reimbursement for expenses or leave with pay will not be authorized without a copy of the request form approved and signed by the Executive Director. Request for reimbursement must be submitted within 30 days following the conference, workshop, or other approved program.

In accordance with New York State law, all employees are required to attend approved sexual harassment prevention training on an annual basis.

### CERTIFICATION OF PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIANS

Before an appointment is granted as a librarian with WLS, a staff member must be certified by the New York State Education Department. Information about filing for certification may be obtained from the Operations Manager.

### EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATIONS

WLS complies with the provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) regarding the classification of employees. An employee is classified as "Exempt" if determined to be an executive, administrator or professional, as defined by FLSA. All other employees are classified as "Non-exempt".

Based on the conditions of employment, appointments of WLS employees fall into the following categories:

- \* Full-time Regular Appointment
- \* Part-time Regular Appointment
- \* Hourly Appointment
- \* Grant/Contract Appointment
- \* Temporary Appointment
- \* Volunteer Appointment

#### Full-time Regular Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work a full workweek of 35 hours per week. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in WLS's health benefits program, life insurance, tax-deferred annuity plan (403b), and leave programs, and are required to participate in the New York State Employees Retirement System or the New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Plan.

#### Part-time Regular Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work more than 20 hours in a normal workweek. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in WLS's health benefits program, life insurance, tax-deferred annuities (403b), certain leave programs on a prorated basis (as more fully described in this Handbook), with optional participation in the New York State Employees Retirement System.

#### Hourly Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work 20 hours or less in a normal workweek, on a schedule that may vary to meet the demands of WLS. Employees in this classification are eligible to participate in tax-deferred annuities (403b), with optional participation in the New York State Employees Retirement System. In addition, employees in this classification are eligible to earn sick leave as defined in New York State and Westchester County laws.

Grant-funded Appointment

Individuals are employed by WLS to work in positions funded through a grant or contract to perform a specific job. Employees in this classification may be eligible for various benefits according to the terms of the individual grant or contract, including eligibility to earn sick leave as defined in New York State and Westchester County laws. In addition to being at-will, employees hired for these positions may have their employment terminated if grant funding or contract is not renewed.

Contract Workers

Individuals contracted by WLS to work for the duration of a specific project or assignment pursuant to a contract with criteria to be independent contractors may work on site at WLS from time to time, but are not "employees."

Volunteers

Individuals are welcomed by WLS in an unpaid capacity to help provide extra services and/or to assist in the performance of specific routines, services, and programs. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS. Appointees to volunteer positions do not perform duties to maintain the regular operations at WLS and are not required to perform specific hours as a condition of volunteering.

Student Interns

Students in an accredited education program may serve as interns and work at WLS in a manner consistent with NYS Department of Labor guidelines. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS.

Trainees

Trainees may receive experience and instruction at WLS in a manner consistent with NYS Department of Labor guidelines. Individuals in this classification are not eligible to receive any benefits from WLS.

REIMBURSEMENT FOR EXPENDITURES

Expenses for Meetings, Workshops and Conferences

In general, reimbursable expenses include approved travel, tolls, transit fares, lodging, meals (but no alcohol), registration and other reasonable out-of-pocket expenses in connection with WLS functions and authorized professional meetings. Employees traveling overnight will be granted a per-diem stipend for meals and incidental expenses in lieu of submitting expenses for reimbursement. The stipend rate will be as determined by the Internal Revenue Service using the High-low Substantiation Method. Requests for advance payment for conference attendance must be submitted sufficiently in advance to allow for approval by the Executive Director, and shall be made in a manner consistent with IRS and NYS labor law.

### Personal Vehicle Use

There is no requirement that personal vehicles be used for WLS purposes. For employees who elect to operate their personal vehicle for a work-related activity (such as attending a meeting off-site), the employee must have a valid driver's license, appropriate for the type of vehicle being driven at the time of travel.

The employee will be reimbursed for mileage driven in a personal vehicle at the standard rate as determined by the Internal Revenue Service. Mileage reimbursement covers fuel, maintenance/repairs, and operating costs so these expenses are not reimbursed separately. In addition to the mileage allowance, tolls and necessary parking charges may be reimbursed.

The employee is expected to operate the vehicle in a safe manner and must abide by all traffic rules and regulations, as well as the rules of any private property being visited for work-related purposes. WLS does not assume liability for damage to personal vehicles for any reason and does not assume liability for deductibles or any other insured loss to the vehicle. Expenses for repairs to personal vehicles are not reimbursable, nor are parking fines or fees for traffic violations.

Employees are expected to complete *Local Travel Reimbursement Request* forms on a quarterly basis to obtain reimbursement. Reimbursement of expenses must be submitted within 30 days following the end of the quarter.

## PERSONNEL RECORDS

Personnel Records include: notice of hire, job description(s), employee evaluation materials, problem-solving documentation, notices of job change (change of duties, promotion, transfer), documentation related to requests for leave, ADA accommodation-related materials, insurance-related materials, all leave-related documentation not provided to an insurance carrier, notice of termination, requests to review Personnel Files.

Unless record-keeping requires otherwise, all records relating to individual employees are kept in the employee's personnel file. These records are maintained in a confidential manner and only the Operations Manager, Chief Financial Officer and the Executive Director have access to them. Individual employees may have access to their personnel records upon written request to the Executive Director, consistent with applicable law.

Records that pertain to an employee, but are not "Personnel Records" are:

- Conflict of Interest forms;
- Whistleblowing report and investigation records;
- Anti-discrimination and sexual harassment report and investigation records;
- Payroll records;
- Vacation and sick leave accrual records (note: accrual records are available to employees within three days upon request);

- Retirement plan participation records;
- All insurance information that must be transmitted to a carrier.

Employees are responsible for notifying the Operations Manager of any change of address and/or telephone number, as well as any change that may affect payroll or benefits.

#### MANDATORY POSTINGS AREA

WLS maintains physical and electronic locations for the mandatory posting of notices to employees. The physical location is in the Employee Lounge at the WLS office. The electronic location is in the Files section within the General channel of the WLS HQ Staff group within Microsoft teams.

All WLS Board Approved Policies, including this handbook are maintained electronically and are posted at this URL: <https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>



**SECTION 3: COMPENSATION**

**PAY POLICY**

**Pay Frequency**

Salaries are paid bi-weekly for base salary due up to the pay date and paid every other Tuesday. Employees are paid through either pay check or direct deposit. The pay period covers 2 weeks starting on Sunday and ending on the Saturday before it is deposited in each staff member's designated financial account(s). If a holiday falls on a Tuesday, employees have access to funds on the preceding Monday. Employees are encouraged to review their advice of deposit carefully each time to see that no inappropriate deductions have been taken. If an employee has any questions or believes that an inappropriate deduction has been made, the Operations Manager should be informed immediately so that a correction can be made in the following pay Period.

**Direct Deposit**

WLS offers employees the option to have their salary electronically transmitted to their bank of choice. To activate direct deposit, an employee must provide the Operations Manager a voided check, a deposit slip or equivalent document noting the amounts to be deposited (if there are multiple accounts). Due to banking requirements, several weeks may elapse before direct deposit is activated.

**STATUTORY DEDUCTIONS**

**Federal, State, City & FICA Taxes**

Automatic deductions are made for Federal, State, and FICA (Social Security/Medicare) withholding taxes for all employees. City taxes will also be deducted where applicable.

**FICA for Life Insurance**

In accordance with IRS regulations, Group Term Life Insurance above the IRS-defined threshold is taxable for both the employee and the employer. FICA deductions for term life insurance are taken from the first pay period in December of each year.

**Garnishment of Wages**

When garnishment of an employee's salary is legally ordered, the Executive Director will notify the employee of the garnishment order. Deductions are made in accordance with the provisions of law and the rule or regulation of the issuing agency.

**Retirement**

Employee contributions to the New York State Employees Retirement System are deducted as required by New York State law.

**VOLUNTARY DEDUCTIONS**

WLS offers health insurance to all full-time staff. Employees who elect to be covered by WLS health insurance will have their share of the premiums deducted from their bi-weekly pay, as defined in the benefit schedule.

Employees may also request deductions for participation in an approved tax deferred annuity plan, credit union and/or catastrophic medical plan.

#### OVERTIME PAY

Any employee whose position is classified as non-exempt and whose normal work week is 35 hours is paid additional straight time for hours worked over 35 and up to 40 hours per week, and time and one-half for time worked in excess of 40 hours in a given week. Paid days such as holidays, paid vacations, paid sick and personal time, and paid bereavement or jury duty shall be considered as hours worked in calculating eligibility for overtime pay. When possible, advance notification of overtime assignments will be provided. Part-time employees are paid at their regular rates of pay for hours worked up to 40 hours in a given week.

Individuals who are classified as exempt employees are not eligible for overtime but are responsible for completing the duties of their position regardless of the number of hours worked above the standard workweek.

**SECTION 4: BENEFITS**

WLS reserves the right to amend, modify or terminate, in whole or part, any or all the provisions of the benefit plans described herein. The complete terms of all WLS employee benefit plans are contained in official plan documents and brochures, which are frequently updated and maintained by the Operations Manager. The official plan documents and brochures will govern in case of any conflict with the terms of this handbook. The descriptions in this handbook are for general information only and describe benefits currently being offered by WLS. Detailed information regarding the terms of all benefits is available from the Operations Manager.

Employees are responsible for notifying WLS of any change in their status, such as address or telephone number changes, number of dependents, marital status, etc. which may affect their benefits.

**PAID HOLIDAYS**

WLS observes the following holidays:

- (1) New Year's Day
- (2) Martin Luther King's Birthday
- (3) Lincoln's Birthday—FLOATING HOLIDAY
- (4) Presidents' Day
- (5) Memorial Day
- (6) Juneteenth
- (7) Independence Day
- (8) Labor Day
- (9) Columbus Day/Indigenous Peoples' Day
- (10) Election Day (November)—FLOATING HOLIDAY
- (11) Veterans Day
- (12) Thanksgiving Day
- (13) Christmas Day

WLS is closed on all the holidays listed above, except for the Floating Holidays. Full-time employees are granted time off with pay for holidays. Hourly or Part-time employees whose normal workday falls on a holiday, are paid for the number of hours normally scheduled for that day. For holidays that fall on Saturday, the Friday immediately preceding will be considered as the holiday. For holidays that fall on Sunday, the subsequent Monday will be considered as the holiday.

Lincoln's Birthday and Election Day (November) are designated as Floating Holidays. The WLS Headquarters will be open these days; however, employees may substitute another day for each at any point in time during the fiscal year with prior approval of their Department Head. If time for these 2 floating holidays is not taken within the fiscal year, no time will be compensated. Coverage for each department is the responsibility of the Department Head. WLS closes early on the workday immediately preceding the holiday observance of Christmas Day unless Christmas Day falls on a Sunday or Monday.

Time required for observance of religious holidays which are not legal holidays may be requested as personal leave or vacation. Employees are encouraged to ask as far in advance as possible, so such requests can be respectfully considered and confirmed in a timely and considerate manner.

If a holiday occurs during an employee's vacation, the holiday is not charged to vacation time.

If a holiday occurs while an employee is attending a convention at the request of the Executive Director, alternate time will be granted.

### PAID VACATION

Vacation leave with pay is granted to those classified as full-time and part-time regular employees.

Hourly employees (scheduled to work 20 hours or fewer per week) are not granted vacation with pay.

For full-time employees, 22 days of vacation allowance is granted on January 1 of the new year (as only 10 days may be carried forward into a new year, 32 is the maximum accrual).

For part-time regular employees, vacation days are granted on a prorated basis on January 1 of the new year (as only 10 days may be carried forward into a new year, 30 is the maximum accrual).

New employees beginning work after January 1 will be granted vacation leave on a pro-rated basis in the first year of employment.

A new employee is permitted to take vacation after 90 days of employment.

Vacation leave may be taken at any time in the year, subject to the staffing needs of the department and after fulfillment of the waiting period for new employees. Vacation leave may be taken all at one time, or divided into several parts.

### Request for Vacation

Employees who wish to schedule vacation time must submit a written request (hard copy or electronic) to the Department Head for approval. The Department Head will approve or deny the request in writing. If approved, the Department Head will forward it to the Operations Manager.

No more than 10 days of vacation time may be carried over from one year to the next.

An employee who resigns with at least two weeks' notice or is terminated for anything other than misconduct will be paid for up to 10 days of unused vacation time accumulated in the prior year, as well as for any pro-rated current year unused vacation time.

PAID PERSONAL DAYS

Full-time employees are granted 5 personal leave days (35 hours) each calendar year. Part-time regular employees are granted personal leave on a prorated basis. Hourly employees are not granted personal leave.

Personal leave should be taken in half-day (3.5 hours) or full-day (7 hours) increments. Personal leave may not be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

Personal leave may be used for a variety of purposes such as religious observances or for transacting personal business which must be conducted during normal work hours. Personal leave may be used to cover absenteeism or lateness due to extreme weather conditions.

Personal leave may be taken the working day before or after a WLS holiday only at the discretion of the Department Head. The Department Head is responsible for seeing that the department is adequately staffed before permission may be granted.

Personal leave must be approved by the immediate supervisor at least 24 hours in advance except in emergencies.

No payment is made for unused personal days at any time during the employee's employment or at termination/resignation.

PAID SICK LEAVE

Full-time employees are granted 12 days (84 hours) of sick leave per calendar year, which will be front-loaded on January 1 of each year.

Part-time regular employees are granted paid sick leave on a prorated basis, but in no event shall accrual be less than 1 hour of paid sick leave for every 30 hours worked.

All other employees (hourly, grant-funded and temporary) are eligible to earn sick leave at the rate included in New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law (<https://www.ny.gov/programs/new-york-paid-sick-leave>), and will accrue paid sick leave at a rate of 1 hour for every 30 hours worked. Sick leave is paid at the employee's normal pay rate.

New full-time employees, beginning work after January 1, will be front-loaded sick leave on a prorated basis in the first year of employment.

Sick leave may not be used until it has been earned. In emergency situations only, sick leave may be advanced with the approval of the Executive Director.

Sick leave may be used for any permitted reason as described in the New York State's Paid Sick Leave Law. In accordance with this law, employees will not be asked to disclose any confidential health information, including, but not limited to, providing a doctor's note to return to work. However, employees should note that they may have to present documentation for other forms

of leave, both paid and unpaid, including but not limited to Paid Family Leave, Family and Medical Leave Act leave, Short-Term Disability and Long-Term Disability.

Full-time employees are permitted to accumulate up to 165 days (1155 hours) of sick leave; part-time regular employees are permitted to accumulate the prorated equivalent of 165 days. Hourly and salaried employees may carry over their unused sick days into the following year or can be paid one day of regular pay for every 3 full days of unused sick leave earned during the period of the prior year December 1 to the current year November 30. Only one option may be chosen each year.

Upon retirement, a number of days of unused sick leave are considered by New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS) in computing retirement benefits. (Note: Credit for unused sick leave is in addition to the time required for retirement and cannot be used to meet the requirements established by NYSERS.)

Exiting employees will not be paid for unused sick time at time of separation.

#### PAID BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Full-time employees are granted up to 5 consecutive working days for a death in the immediate family or the immediate family of their spouse or domestic partner. The immediate family is defined as the following relatives: parent, stepparent, spouse, domestic partner, child, stepchild, aunt, uncle, grandparent, grandchild, sibling, and stepsibling. Part-time and hourly employees are granted the hours they were scheduled to work on these days.

Personal leave may be used if additional time is desired, or for absences due to the death of a non-relative.

Special circumstances may be brought to the attention of the Executive Director.

A maximum of 4 working hours is granted to attend the wake or funeral of a co-worker or co-worker's immediate family, when it falls within the normal working day.

#### RETIREMENT PENSION

All full-time salaried employees are required to join the New York State Employees Retirement System (NYSERS) or the New York State Voluntary Defined Contribution Plan (NYSVDC). Membership in the retirement system is optional for part-time and hourly employees. Information regarding vesting in the pension plan can be obtained directly from NYSERS (<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/common-retirement-fund>).

TAX-DEFERRED ANNUITY (403b) PLAN

All employees may elect to participate in a Tax Deferred Annuity (403b) plan through payroll deductions. Contributions to the plan are taken from pretax salary, and any interest and investment earnings accumulate on a tax deferred basis until withdrawal or until paid as benefits. Several firms handle WLS's program and offer a variety of plans for consideration. However, this benefit is accompanied by an important responsibility. Because the employee decides how to invest his or her funds, the employee is responsible for any financial gains or losses that result from that decision.

PROFESSIONAL LEAVE ATTENDANCE AT PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS AND CONVENTIONS)

Professional leave may be granted to an employee for work-related attendance at professional meetings, conventions and/or workshops. Such leave will be considered in light of WLS's needs and work schedules and is granted at the discretion of the immediate supervisor, Department Head, and Executive Director. (Please refer to the **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT** section for further information).

Before accepting a responsibility or an office which may require the use of work time, an employee must obtain the approval of the Executive Director.

Employees wishing to apply to attend professional meetings, conferences and/or workshops must complete the *Conference Attendance Request* form available in the Mandatory Postings Area or from the Operations Manager and submit it to their supervisor for approval. Once approved by the supervisor, the Request will be forwarded to the Executive Director for final review and approval. The Executive Director may request that the employee attend meetings which may be of value to the individual and/or WLS.

Professional leave is voluntary. While on professional leave an employee will be paid based on their regular work schedule. Overtime will not accrue while on professional leave. Professional leave will be considered "for work" and as part of professional development or work-related service.

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**SECTION 5: INSURANCE**

**HEALTH INSURANCE**

WLS offers health insurance after satisfactory completion of the first 3 months of employment. Grant-funded employees may participate in the plan if health insurance coverage is included in the terms of the grant/contract.

There is an employee contribution required for individual and family health coverage; however, WLS pays the remaining portion of the premium. The portion of the health insurance coverage paid by the employee is, with written authorization by the employee, deducted from the employee's bi-weekly pay.

**EYEGLOSS INSURANCE**

WLS offers eyeglass insurance coverage for the individual employee only. Dependents are not covered by the Eyeglass Insurance Plan.

**DENTAL INSURANCE**

WLS offers dental insurance coverage for the individual employee only. Dependents are not covered by the Dental Insurance Plan.

**LIFE INSURANCE**

For employees covered under this plan, the amount of life insurance will be equal to double their gross salary in the previous calendar year. Included in this policy is a provision for accidental death and dismemberment.

Employees who continue to work after age 65 may be subject to reduced coverage (based on the criteria of the insurance carrier, not WLS).

Term Life Insurance coverage terminates upon an employee's retirement, resignation, or termination.

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**SECTION 6: LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND ACCOMODATIONS**

**JURY DUTY**

A leave of absence for jury duty will be granted to any employee who has been notified to serve on a jury. A staff member must notify their supervisor when the notice is received. During this leave, full-time employees will be paid their regular salary for a period up to 15 days within a -12-month period. This time may be taken as full or part days, as the jury service necessitates. Employees must indicate that their employer is paying them for this time when serving on jury duty.

An employee who reports for jury duty and is excused from serving before 12:00 (noon), must report to work for the afternoon, according to the work schedule of the department. However, the combination of jury duty and work hours shall not amount to more than a normal workday.

Upon completion of jury duty service, the employee must submit to their supervisor a signed Certificate of Jury Service indicating the number of days served.

**COURT APPEARANCE**

An employee who is subpoenaed for a court appearance on a WLS (or WLS member library) related matter shall be considered to be performing work-related duties when responding to a subpoena.

**MILITARY DUTY**

An employee who enters military service or is required to attend annual Reserve or National Guard duty will be entitled to unpaid time off and to reinstatement in accordance with applicable federal and state laws. The employee should provide the supervisor with as much advance notice as possible so that necessary staffing arrangements can be made. Employees, at their discretion, may elect to take any fully earned vacation at this time.

**SAFE LEAVE**

Employees who are victims of domestic violence are eligible for up to 40 hours of paid leave under Westchester County's Safe Time Leave Law, to be used to speak with lawyers, attend court or move from an abuser's residence. WLS may require documentation in the form of an affidavit, court appearance ticket or police report to support the need for time off. These documents will be secured in the employee's personnel file. The Operations Manager will engage with the employee to determine if any staff members other than the Executive Director and Chief Financial Officer should be informed about the leave. For more information on the Safe Time Leave Law, visit: <https://humanrights.westchestergov.com/resources/westchester-s-safe-time-leave-law>

EMPLOYEE AND FAMILY-BASED MEDICAL LEAVES AND SOLUTIONS

WLS maintains an array of policies and insurance coverage to assist employees in balancing work with personal and family medical needs.

Employees who need to balance work with taking care of family medical needs should review the **Paid Sick Leave Policy** and, for longer-term needs, the **Paid Family Leave Policy**.

Employees who need to take sick leave for non-work-related illness or injury should first refer to the **Paid Sick Leave Policy**, and if further time is off needed, consider their options under the **Disability Policy**.

Employees who need to take sick leave for work-related illness or injury should report such illness or injury immediately, so the process for **Worker's Compensation Coverage** can be initiated.

Employees who need to request **disability accommodations**, including reduction or restructuring of work hours (either separately or together with a type of medical leave), should review the Employee **ADA Accommodations Policy**.

These policies are described below, and further information is available from the Operations Manager.

PAID FAMILY LEAVE POLICY (PFL)

Under New York State law, Paid Family Leave provides eligible employees with paid time off to bond with a new child, provide care for a family member with a serious health condition (with both "family member" and serious health condition" as defined by the PFL law), or handle exigencies related to a family member's active military service. Leave can be taken all at once or in full-day intermittent increments. To qualify for PFL, an employee must work 20 or more hours per week and must have been employed at least 26 consecutive weeks at their current covered employer; employees working fewer than 20 hours per week must have completed at least 175 days at their current covered employer. Employees pay the PFL premium through bi-weekly payroll deduction.

Any questions with respect to WLS's Paid Family Leave Policy should also be directed to the Operations Manager.

PAID SICK LEAVE POLICY

[see pages 16-17]

EMPLOYEE DISABILITY COVERAGE

Disability forms and claims for New York State disability benefits are available from and should be filled out and returned to the Operations Manager.

ADA ACCOMMODATIONS

In furtherance of its mission, the Library follows the Americans with Disabilities Act (“ADA”) and the New York Human Rights Law with respect to disability and employment.

To that end, employment matters shall be addressed with an eye to ADA accessibility as set forth in WLS’s Employee Disability Accommodation Policy, and employees may request specific disability accommodations per the policy’s stated procedure.

REINSTATEMENT

Employees returning from a leave of absence within the time constraints specified above will be restored to the position of employment held by the employee when the leave commenced or to an equivalent position. An individual who fails to return upon the conclusion of the approved leave or any extension granted will be considered to have voluntarily resigned. Employees returning from leave due to their own serious health condition must provide appropriate medical documentation prior to returning, certifying their ability to resume the essential functions of their job. Employees should provide as much advance notice as possible prior to a planned return to work.

HEALTH INSURANCE AND OTHER BENEFITS

WLS will continue to provide health benefits under the existing group health plan for employees out on an approved leave for up to 12 weeks, or up to 26 weeks in the case of leave to care for a servicemember, on the same basis as prior to the leave. Employees will continue to be responsible for their portion of the premium payment. Employees who fail to return after a leave will be required to reimburse WLS for the entire cost of health insurance premiums.

NURSING AND PRIVATE AREA FOR EXPRESSION OF BREAST MILK

WLS will provide a private area for the expression of breast milk for up to three years following the birth of a child. Nursing employees may take a 20-minute unpaid break every three hours. An employee may take more or less time, as needed. At the employee’s choice, each break may be taken independently or right before or after a regularly scheduled paid or unpaid break. An employee may choose to work before or after regularly scheduled work time to make up for the break time taken to pump breast milk.

Accommodation for the expression of breast milk should be made in advance, if possible. WLS will provide a private location for this purpose which will include a chair, small table, and access to an electrical outlet. In addition, WLS provides access to clean water supply and a refrigerator in the employee lounge.

Requests for accommodation should be made in writing to the Operations Manager.

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**SECTION 7: JOB PERFORMANCE**

**PERFORMANCE EVALUATION**

Performance evaluations of employees are completed at least once per year and are designed to help employees prioritize their daily activities in support of WLS's mission, vision, values and strategic goals. Department heads are expected to work with individual employees to help support individuals to move forward on their organizational and professional goals that have been developed through ongoing discussions between the department head and employee.

Written performance evaluations must be signed by the employee as an indication that the employee has read it. Signature of the employee does not necessarily imply agreement with the evaluation.

Written performance evaluations become part of the employee's personnel file.

**PROGRESSIVE CORRECTIONS**

To maintain an orderly, safe, and efficient work environment, WLS on occasion may have to respond to and correct inappropriate employee behavior or conduct. In many instances, corrective action will be progressive, beginning with an oral warning, followed by a written warning, culminating with termination of employment. Some or all of these steps may not be followed in each instance. At the discretion of the Executive Director, the progressive corrections process may be bypassed, and immediate actions may be taken.

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**SECTION 8: PROBLEM-SOLVING PROCEDURES**

To ensure fair and equitable treatment of all complaints or employee concerns, a problem-solving procedure has been established, which employees are encouraged to use. If a staff member has a concern that they would like to have addressed, then as a first step, the employee should speak with their supervisor for further clarification.

Step 1. The employee shall take up the matter with their immediate supervisor or Department Head (if different) in an attempt to agree on a satisfactory resolution.

Step 2. In the event a satisfactory resolution is not reached in Step 1 or if for some reason the employee does not wish to discuss the problem with the Department Head, the Executive Director will review and investigate the matter and attempt to find a mutually agreeable solution to the problem.

Step 3. In the event the employee feels that the remedies from steps 1 and 2 have overlooked the nature of a severe problem, the employee may address the matter to the President of the WLS Board of Trustees. The employee should provide a synopsis of the problem as well as evaluation and/or proposed resolutions by supervisors along with any documentation. The burden of questioning the Executive Director's decision is on the employee. The President will bring the issue before the WLS Board.

Information gathered during each step of this procedure will be treated discreetly and confidentially by all parties involved.

NOTE: Complaints and investigative procedures related to civil rights reports (matters involving harassment, discrimination, ADA and retaliation), whistleblowing claims and conflict of interest concerns, all of which have precise reporting and procedural requirements, cannot be addressed using these problem-solving procedures and can be found in their respective policies.

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**SECTION 9: SAFETY AND SECURITY**

**EMERGENCY CLOSINGS**

Paid leave will be granted if WLS is officially closed for the following reasons:

- \* Extreme inclement weather
- \* An extended breakdown of heating or air conditioning equipment
- \* Other adverse situations which affect working conditions.

Although employees are expected to try to get to work during inclement weather, there will be no obligation to travel placed on anyone who deems it dangerous or unsafe to do so. An employee who calls in an absence on an inclement day will be required to use personal or other leave for the entire scheduled workday, regardless of whether WLS closes any time after opening.

Employees who elect to leave early due to inclement weather will also be required to use personal or other leave for any scheduled hours not worked.

If an employee has already scheduled time off for a day when WLS closes because of inclement weather, the employee will be charged for that time.

Part-time and hourly employees are paid only for the time scheduled to work on the emergency closing day.

In the event of inclement weather or other emergencies, WLS will notify employees by email if the WLS offices will be closed or have a delayed opening on that day.

**SECURITY**

Staff are to be security-conscious about safety and property. Incidents of lost or suspected stolen property caused by theft, misappropriation, malicious destruction or another criminal act should be immediately reported to a supervisor or the Executive Director.

Employees should be familiar with the Workplace Violence Prevention Policy.

**ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES**

WLS strives to provide a safe and healthy working environment, free from occupational hazards. When a work-related injury or illness occurs, it is the employee's responsibility to inform their supervisor immediately; it is the supervisor's responsibility to immediately fill out the appropriate form and ensure it is submitted as required by the WLS worker's compensation carrier.

Employees who are disabled due to a work-related illness or injury are eligible to receive disability benefits under the Workers' Compensation policy. The amount of the benefit is dependent upon the disabled employee's compensation rate and guidelines established by the State of New York.

WORKERS' COMPENSATION

Should a staff member suffer a work-related injury, disease, or illness, they will receive benefits under WLS's Workers' Compensation policy. To ensure the staff member's physical wellbeing and the correct processing of these claims, the appropriate supervisor should be notified immediately about any injury occurring during and as a result of employment, no matter how slight. When seeking medical attention, it is important that the staff member indicates the injury was due to a work-related accident.

**SECTION 10: SEPARATION PROCESS**

**RESIGNATIONS**

A written letter of resignation, addressed to the Department Head, is required of all employees intending to resign. The Department Head is responsible for forwarding the letter of resignation to the Executive Director. Letters of resignation are filed in the employee's personnel file.

To ensure a smooth transition, WLS asks that as much notice as possible be provided, preferably no less than 2 weeks. For positions at the managerial level and higher, 4 weeks notice is desirable. At least 10 days' notice is required in order for the resigning employee to receive up to ten days of accrued vacation.

Employees who resign in good standing under all WLS policies including this handbook will be eligible for reemployment for a period of up to six months from the last date of employment, with benefits tied to seniority reinstated in full. Former employees will be considered for open positions along with all other candidates. Former employees who apply for reemployment after six months will be treated as new employees for purposes of seniority-related benefits.

**RETIREMENT**

Notification of retirement should be made in the same manner as a resignation (see above).

For employees contemplating retirement, the New York State Employees Retirement System requires notice prior to the intended retirement date. Information concerning State requirements for making application for retirement benefits may be obtained from the Operations Manager or online from the New York State Employees Retirement System (<https://www.osc.state.ny.us/retirement>).

For post-retirement health insurance coverage, WLS has set the 12/31/2008 health insurance premium as a benchmark. An employee who has worked a minimum of 10 years for WLS, and who is within 5 years of the date on which they are entitled to receive a retirement allowance, is eligible for post-retirement health insurance through WLS and will be responsible for payment of any amount above the 2008 health care premium. In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Civil Service, the employee must pay the full premium, with no break in coverage, from the time of separation until reaching age eligible for receipt of the pension.

WLS will reimburse retirees for Medicare premiums, provided they are eligible for post-retirement health insurance through WLS.

**TERMINATION**

Violations of WLS policies, rules and regulations, or poor job performance may result in discharge from employment. Termination for misconduct will result in forfeiture of termination benefits except those required by law. Terminated employees will be notified of their last date of employment in writing. Payment of final salary owed to resigning or terminated employees will be made available on the next regular payday or sooner, consistent with applicable law.

LAST WORKDAY

Employees are responsible for ensuring that all paper and electronic files are accessible to WLS prior to the last day of employment. All information created by the employee for WLS is the property of WLS and cannot be shared with any parties outside the organization.

Employees are required to return any WLS issued property no later than their last workday.

**SECTION 11: WLS POLICIES**

The full text of WLS policies, including the employee handbook, can be accessed on the WLS website (<https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>).

Anti-Harassment

Board Meetings (formerly Board Meeting Participation via Video Conference)

Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policy

*General Municipal Law Article 18 re: Conflicts of Interest of Municipal Officers and Employees*

Credit Card Usage

Data Security Program, Safeguards and Policy

Collection Development

Electronic Data and Telecommunications NOTE: (should be updated to reflect changes to labor law regarding notice about monitoring communications) – proposed amendment attached

Equal Employment Opportunity

Exempt and Non-Exempt Employee Pay

Gift Acceptance

Health Emergency Plan

Internet Safety and Use

Investment of Funds

Privacy

Progressive Discipline

Records Retention

Remote Work

Purchasing

Sexual Harassment

*Sexual Harassment Complaint Form*

Whistle-Blower Protection

Workplace Violence

ADA/ADAAA

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**SECTION 12: ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK**

The Employee Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with WLS.

Please sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of this Employee Handbook.

I have received and read a copy of WLS’s Employee Handbook. I have also acknowledged that I have received the online link for, and have reviewed, the WLS Board approved policies. I understand that the policies and rules described in it are subject to change at the sole discretion of WLS.

I further understand that my service is terminable at will, either by myself or WLS, regardless of the length of my service.

I understand that no contract of employment has been expressed or implied, and that no circumstances arising out of my service will alter my “at will” status.

My signature below indicates that I have read and understand the above statements and that I have received a copy of the WLS Employee Handbook.

Employee’s Printed Name:

\_\_\_\_\_

Employee’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

=====

**Subject:** Electronic Data and Telecommunication

**Application:** Employees, consultants, contractors, temporaries

Westchester Library System's (WLS) electronic resources are made available to all employees to carry out legitimate business of WLS. In the context of this policy the term "electronic resource(s)" means any electronic device or system, including but not limited to the use of a computer, telephone, wire, radio or electromagnetic, photoelectronic or photo-optical systems. All electronic data, which includes but is not limited to software program, file and databases, stored in these systems is the property of WLS with the exception of data that is licensed to WLS by third parties, which is the property of their respective owners. All communications are subject to review.

Therefore, users of WLS's electronic resources, with the exception of library patrons, have no expectation of personal privacy. The privacy of library patrons is not within the scope of this policy. In the context of this policy "employee(s)" shall mean any full-time, part-time, per diem, temporary, volunteer employee or any person(s) or vendor(s) engaged in a contract with WLS using WLS electronic communication systems. This policy is notice is to all employees of WLS's compliance with Section 52-c of the New York State Civil Rights Law regarding monitoring of employees' activity while using WLS electronic resources.

In the context of this policy the term "monitoring" means the capture, inspection and any lawful use of all records and content, meaning logs, including, but not limited to, date, time, source, destination, and summary of content, as well as full-text, transcripts, voice and/or video records and recordings associated with the use of electronic resources as defined above.

As an employee of WLS, take notice that use of electronic resources may be subject to monitoring by WLS at any and all times and by any lawful means.

WLS maintains policies that address the use, monitoring, and safety of electronic resources, which can be found on the WLS website at the following URL:  
<https://www.westchesterlibraries.org/about-wls/wls-board-resources/wls-board-approved-policies/>

WLS may access its electronic resources and obtain the communications of employees within them, including Internet usage. Except in circumstances when the Executive Director believes that prior notice will result in a loss of data, WLS will provide notice to any employee prior to accessing records of their electronic communications if the reason for obtaining such access is to determine if the employee has violated WLS policy or law. WLS may obtain such access without notice in order to maintain the system or in the case of an emergency or to comply with a valid legal and regulatory order for information; or to ensure that WLS's operations continue appropriately during an employee's absence.

WLS employees are encouraged to seek out and test solutions, including open-source software, to meet organizational needs. The Information Technology (IT) department is to be consulted before the adoption of any new software for production use. Further,

unauthorized duplication of copyrighted computer software or any violation of federal copyright laws is strictly prohibited.

WLS's policy prohibiting harassment applies to the use of its electronic resources.

Electronic resources may not be used to solicit for religious or political causes.

No one may access, or attempt to obtain access, to another individual's electronic communications without appropriate authorization. Passwords to individually assigned accounts should not be shared.

Personal use of WLS equipment including, but not limited to its electronic resources is permitted provided that usage does not interfere with the employee's responsibilities or interfere with the availability of WLS systems and must be kept to a

minimum and as short as possible. Employees should be aware that usage, including email messages, is logged. Email is discoverable and as such should be maintained in accordance with Policy #8 –Records Retention and Distribution. Personal use of WLS’s email systems should be avoided whenever possible.

WLS provides resources and equipment including, but not limited to, cellular telephones, computers, printers and Internet connectivity to employees for mobile and remote work. WLS recognizes that employees may use these systems for personal use; however, all users must adhere to Federal, State and local laws as well as WLS policies.

Any employee found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, including, but not limited to, immediate termination of employment and WLS may pursue criminal charges based upon the nature of the violation.

If there is any uncertainty regarding the electronic communications and telecommunications policy, employees should speak with the head of Information Technology or the Executive Director for further clarification.

*Last approved: September 29, 2020*

**Subject:** Purchasing

**Application:** Employees

The Westchester Library System (WLS) is committed to promoting a responsible procurement process based on receiving the highest-quality goods and services while assuring the prudent and economical use of revenues. The intent of this policy is to maximize the use of the WLS funds by employing efficient and professional procurement practices and providing sound safeguards against favoritism, extravagance, fraud and corruption, while allowing appropriate decision-making flexibility for WLS staff to function effectively. This policy controls the procurement of goods and services with WLS funds. Procurement of goods and services shall be subject to the requirements and restrictions in these guidelines.

Purchasing activities may be initiated by any WLS staff member with the approval of the appropriate Department Head and/or the Executive Director. Large hardware and software purchases are the responsibility of the Director of Information Technology and/or Network Administrator, in consultation with and approval of the Executive Director. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Chief Financial Officer shall consult on and approve purchases. All purchases exceeding \$50,000 that are made without prior budget approval must be formally reported to the WLS Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting.

### **Competitive Bidding**

Under normal circumstances, contracts shall be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. Circumstances under which a contract may not be awarded to lowest responsible bidder may include, but are not limited to: (1) vendor cannot comply with the full specifications set forth in the bid; (2) vendor cannot guarantee delivery of goods or services within the time frame or under the conditions established by WLS; (3) vendor's after-purchase support services are deemed inadequate; (4) vendor's terms of payment are disadvantageous to WLS; (5) vendor's performance in previous engagements are not satisfactory.

To the extent possible, WLS will not purchase goods or services from any vendor in which a Board member or staff member has disclosed or is known to have a full or partial actual or prospective business interest.

WLS welcomes all vendors including, but not limited to, Certified Minority-Owned, Women-Owned, 2SLGBTQAI+-Owned, Veteran-Owned and Abilities-Owned Enterprises. Vendors with such certifications are encouraged to identify their certifications when submitting bids.

### **Quotes**

Competitive quotes are required when the estimated expenditure for a product or service exceeds certain thresholds, as noted below. This process allows WLS to obtain the best value for expenditure of its funds. The only exceptions to this process are for purchases in which there are fewer than the required number of competitors who offer a given product or service, or for purchases for which a "sole source" makes good business sense (see below).

**Sole Source Suppliers or Fewer-than-Required Number of Vendors**

Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary to seek quotes from fewer than the required number of vendors or make a purchase from a sole source. Sole sourcing may make sense in a situation where a specific manufacturer’s product is compatible with products already owned by the system, where a specific vendor may have special expertise related to a specific project or initiative or in a situation where it is determined that seeking competitive quotes is not advantageous to WLS. In situations where a sole source or fewer vendors will be sought, approval of the Executive Director must be obtained in advance of any purchase being made.

<b>Dollar Amount Of Purchase</b>	<b>Quote Requirements</b>	<b>Purchase Order (PO) required?</b>	<b>Payment Options</b>
Less than \$2,000	No quotes	No	1. Petty Cash (for items under \$50) 2. Vendor invoice 3. Corporate credit card
\$2,000 - \$4,999	Minimum of 2 verbal quotes	No	Vendor invoice
\$5,000 - \$24,999	Minimum of 2 written price quotes	Yes	Invoice, PO & supporting delivery documents
\$25,000 - \$99,999	Minimum of 3 written price quotes	Yes	Invoice, PO & supporting delivery documents
\$100,000 and up	Formal bid process	Yes	Invoice, PO & supporting delivery documents

**Office and Other Supplies**

Office supplies are purchased on a monthly basis. Employees make requests on a form located within the supply storage unit. Requests include the item description, name of requestor, requesting department and date. The Executive Director designates employees to serve as the Supplies Coordinator and as the Supplies Manager. The Supplies Coordinator compiles supply requests and enters an online order for these items. The order is then routed to the Supplies Manager for approval and submission. When the ordered items are received, the Supplies Coordinator reviews the order for accuracy and completeness, distributes the items to the various requestors, and submits back-up information on the order to the Operations Manager.

For purchases other than office supplies, the requestor first explores the possibility of purchasing through a New York State government agency contract or any other recognized government agencies or national discount programs for libraries which offer the potential for economies of scale.

**Cooperative Purchases for Member Libraries**

For items purchased on behalf of the member libraries, WLS recognizes that those purchases are subject to competitive bidding as outlined in General Municipal Law. Therefore, the following procedures will be implemented for these purchases:

<b>Dollar Amount Of Purchase</b>	<b>Quote Requirements</b>	<b>PO required?</b>	<b>Payment Options</b>
Less than \$2,000	No quotes	No	1. Petty cash (for items under \$50) 2. Vendor invoice 3. Corporate credit card
\$2,000 - \$9,999	Minimum of 2 verbal quotes	No	Vendor invoice
\$10,000 - \$19,999	Minimum of 2 written quotes	Yes	Invoice, PO & supporting delivery documents
\$20,000 and up	Formal bid process*	Yes	Invoice, PO & supporting delivery documents

\* Request for Proposal (RFP) or Request for Quotation (RFQ), publicly advertised, and a minimum of 3 quotations, with selected vendor approved by the Executive Director. If funds have not been previously approved by the WLS Board of Trustees, then selected vendor requires Board approval.

**Exclusions**

These guidelines do not apply to the following:

1. Purchases made through a New York State contract, when the State contract vendor offers specified goods or services at a lower cost, purchase at the lower rate is recommended, with appropriate documentation included with the purchase documents.
2. Purchases of computer hardware, related equipment and support, when standardization of equipment and support can be justified, a specification document outlining in detail the technical requirements, including when appropriate brand name specification, can be developed and with Board approval used as part of the RFP or RFQ for these goods and services.

**Awarding Contracts for Purchases made for WLS or Cooperative Purchases for Member Libraries**

The basis for all contract awards shall be the lowest responsible bid that meets the requirements outlined to the vendor(s) in a statement of specifications, a RFP or RFQ.

**Purchases for WLS or Cooperative Purchases for Member Libraries Not Subject to Bid**

1. Professional services which involve specialized expertise, use of professional judgment and/or high degree of creativity, such as: attorney, architect, engineer, land surveyor, trainer;
2. Situations when immediate action is required that cannot await competitive bidding;
3. Insurance - documentation shall include written quotations and specifications;
4. Sole-source purchases which may occur when there is no substantial equivalent, or when the product is available from only one source and deemed necessary to public interest, items included under this criteria may include, but not be limited to:
  - i. Electronic databases
  - ii. Digital content (ebooks, downloadable audiobooks, videos and music)
  - iii. Specialized hardware
5. Real property
6. Dues and memberships in trade or professional organizations
7. Library materials, including periodical subscriptions
8. Advertisements
9. Postage
10. Petty cash purchases
11. Utility services
12. Copyrighted materials, patented materials, art and artistic services
13. Employee benefits
14. Legal services
15. Fees and costs of job-related travel, seminars, registration and training

*Last approved: September 27, 2022*



**Subject:** Credit Card Usage

**Application:** Employees

The Board of Trustees permits the issuance and usage of a credit card for authorized, reimbursable Westchester Library System (WLS) business-related expenses that are incurred in the performance of work-related duties for the System. Credit cards may only be used for legitimate business-related expenditures that meet all legal and Library requirements, and to the greatest extent possible, use of the card must follow the WLS Purchasing Policy.

The type of card obtained and the number of authorized cardholders/signers for the account will be determined jointly by the Executive Director and the Chief Financial Officer, with the approval of the Board Treasurer. The criteria for choosing the card will be acceptability, annual fees, monthly payment and interest terms. Any benefits derived from the use of the credit card are the property of WLS.

The credit card is to be used to make purchases when a purchase order or a check is unacceptable or unavailable for an expense which requires immediate payment, to facilitate purchasing materials online, for professional development and travel costs, for buying supplies in bulk, and for other library-related purposes jointly approved by the Executive Director and the Chief Financial Officer. Unauthorized use or misuse of the card(s) is the personal responsibility of the cardholder(s). Under no circumstances may the card(s) be used for any personal expenses.

All transactions are to be accounted for in accordance with WLS purchasing policies and procedures for authorized library purchases, and require submission of the original receipt(s).

When the monthly statement is received, the charges must be reviewed and approved following the library expense approval policy. All charge receipts are to be attached to the monthly statement and the individual expenses must be allocated to the proper expense categories for accounting purposes. Payment of the invoice requires an itemized voucher which has been approved in accordance with WLS accounts payable procedures.

The credit card is to be surrendered immediately when the cardholder leaves the employ of WLS.

*Last approved:*

**Subject:** Gift Acceptance

**Application:** WLS trustees, employees, donors

The Westchester Library System (WLS) is a 501(c) (3) entity whose mission is to ensure that all residents have seamless access to excellent library service throughout Westchester County.

This policy will guide WLS staff and trustees when discussing gifts with donors.

WLS solicits and accepts gifts for purposes that will help the organization further and fulfill its mission. All contributions and bequests made to the WLS are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law. WLS urges all prospective donors to seek the assistance of personal legal and financial advisors in matters relating to their gifts, including the resulting tax and estate planning consequences. The following policies and guidelines govern acceptance of gifts made to WLS for the benefit of any of its operations, programs or services.

The WLS Gift Acceptance Policy is guided by the following principles:

- WLS solicits and accepts gifts that are consistent with its mission.
- Donations will generally be accepted from individuals, partnerships, corporations, foundations, government agencies, or other entities, without limitations.
- WLS may seek the advice of legal counsel in matters relating to acceptance of gifts, including deferred and non-cash gifts such as but not limited to: life insurance, annuities, real property, gifts of personal property, stock and in-kind services when appropriate.

**Restrictions on Gifts**

WLS will not accept gifts that (a) would result in WLS violating its corporate charter, (b) would result in WLS losing its status as an IRS 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization, (c) are too difficult or too expensive to administer in relation to their value, (d) would result in any unacceptable consequences for WLS or (e) are for purposes outside WLS's mission.

Decisions on the restrictive nature of a gift, and its acceptance or refusal, shall be made by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Executive Director.

**Gifts Generally Accepted Without Review**

- *Cash:* Cash gifts are acceptable in any form, including by check, money order, credit card, or on-line. Donors wishing to make a gift by credit card must provide the card type (e.g., Visa, MasterCard, American Express), card number, expiration date, and name of the card holder as it appears on the credit card.
- *Marketable Securities:* Marketable securities may be transferred electronically to an account maintained at one or more brokerage firms or delivered physically with the transferor's endorsement or signed stock power (with appropriate signature guarantees) attached. All marketable securities will be sold promptly upon receipt. In some cases marketable securities may be restricted, for example, by applicable

- securities laws or the terms of the proposed gift; in such instances the decision whether to accept the restricted securities shall be made by the Executive Committee.
- *Bequests and Beneficiary Designations under Revocable Trusts, Life Insurance Policies, Commercial Annuities and Retirement Plans:* Donors are encouraged to make bequests to WLS under their wills, and to name WLS as the beneficiary under trusts, life insurance policies, commercial annuities and retirement plans.
  - *Charitable Remainder Trusts:* WLS will accept designation as a remainder beneficiary of charitable remainder trusts.
  - *Charitable Lead Trusts:* WLS will accept designation as an income beneficiary of charitable lead trusts.

### **Gifts Accepted Subject to Prior Review**

Certain forms of gifts or donated properties may be subject to review prior to acceptance. Examples of gifts subject to prior review include, but are not limited to:

- *Tangible Personal Property:* The Executive Committee shall review and determine whether to accept any gifts of tangible personal property in light of the following considerations:
  - Does the property further the organization's mission?
  - Is the property marketable?
  - Are there any unacceptable restrictions imposed on the property?
  - Are there any carrying costs for the property for which the organization may be responsible?
  - Is the title/provenance of the property clear?
- *Life Insurance:* WLS will accept gifts of life insurance where WLS is named as both beneficiary and irrevocable owner of the insurance policy. The donor must agree to pay, before due, any future premium payments owing on the policy.
- *Real Estate:* All gifts of real estate are subject to review by the Executive Committee. Prior to acceptance of any gift of real estate other than a personal residence, WLS shall require an initial environmental review by a qualified environmental firm. In the event that the initial review reveals a potential problem, the organization may retain a qualified environmental firm to conduct an environmental audit. Payment for the cost of any environmental review and/or audit shall be the responsibility of the donor. Criteria for acceptance of gifts of real estate include:
  - Is the property useful for the organization's purposes?
  - Is the property readily marketable?
  - Are there covenants, conditions, restrictions, reservations, easements, encumbrances or other limitations associated with the property?
  - Are there carrying costs (including insurance, property taxes, mortgages, notes, or the like) or maintenance expenses associated with the property?
  - Does the environmental review or audit reflect that the property is damaged or otherwise requires remediation?

**Donation Processing**

WLS recognizes that the accurate and timely processing of gifts is important to both WLS and the donor. WLS assumes the responsibility of ensuring that gifts are recorded and acknowledged appropriately. WLS will provide a donation receipt in accordance with IRS guidelines. The donor is informed of any quid pro quo arrangements in the gift transaction or lack thereof. The 1996 IRS regulations identify the substantiation requirements for charitable gifts as follows:

- Information on how much of a charitable gift is deductible;
- Instructions on how to substantiate gifts of \$250 or more;
- Disclosure requirements for quid pro quo contributions of more than \$75.

**Recognizing Gifts**

Gifts of cash are recognized when received. The date of a gift is the date that the asset ceases to be in the donor's control and, instead, is with the control of WLS. WLS adheres to the rules of gift acceptance required by the IRS as follows:

- Mail: postmark date;
- Hand delivery: date of physical receipt;
- Wire transfer: date received in the WLS account;
- Journal entry: date of transfer into the WLS account;
- Online: date of transaction.

Pledges are recognized and recorded when they are unconditional and there is sufficient evidence or documentation that the promise was made and received.

**Processing a Cash Gift**

Any representative of WLS who receives a check or cash that is or may be a contribution shall immediately notify the WLS Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer, or Director of Development of the matter by e-mail, telephone or facsimile, and shall forward such check or cash to WLS. All such gifts shall be promptly deposited into the WLS bank account, and appropriately recorded in the fund accounting and donor management systems. The Executive Director, Chief Financial Officer or Director of Development shall inform all interested parties in the manner and procedure of acknowledging and receiving the donor's gift and recognizing the donor.

*Last approved: January 29, 2019*

**WESTCHESTER LIBRARY SYSTEM**

**POLICY #22**

**Subject:** ADA/ADAAA Policy

**Purpose**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA) are federal laws that require employers with 15 or more employees to not discriminate against applicants and individuals with disabilities and, when needed, to provide reasonable accommodations to applicants and employees who are qualified for a job, with or without reasonable accommodations, so that they may perform the essential job duties of the position.

It is the policy of Westchester Library System (WLS) to comply with all federal and state laws concerning the employment of individuals with disabilities and to act in accordance with regulations and guidance issued by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC). Furthermore, it is the company policy not to discriminate against qualified individuals with disabilities regarding application procedures, hiring, advancement, discharge, compensation, training or other terms, conditions and privileges of employment.

**Procedures**

When an applicant with a disability requests accommodation and can be reasonably accommodated without creating an undue hardship or causing a direct threat to workplace safety, the employee will be given the same consideration for employment as any other applicant. Applicants who pose a direct threat to the health, safety and well-being of themselves or others in the workplace when the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation will not be hired.

WLS will reasonably accommodate qualified individuals with a disability so that they can perform the essential functions of a job unless doing so causes a direct threat to these individuals or others in the workplace and the threat cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation or if the accommodation creates an undue hardship to WLS. Contact the Operations Manager or Executive Director with any questions or requests for accommodation.

All employees are required to comply with the company's safety standards. Current employees who pose a direct threat to the health or safety of themselves or other individuals in the workplace will be placed on leave until an organizational decision has been made regarding the employee's immediate employment situation.

Individuals who are currently using illegal drugs are excluded from coverage under the company ADA policy.

The administration of WLS is responsible for implementing this policy, including the resolution of reasonable accommodation, safety/direct threat and undue hardship issues.

## **Terms Used in This Policy**

As used in this ADA policy, the following terms have the indicated meaning:

- **Disability:** A physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities of the individual, a record of such an impairment, or being regarded as having such an impairment.
- **Major life activities:** Term includes caring for oneself, performing manual tasks, seeing, hearing, eating, sleeping, walking, standing, lifting, bending, speaking, breathing, learning, reading, concentrating, thinking, communicating and working.
- **Major bodily functions:** Term includes physical or mental impairment such as any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement or anatomical loss affecting one or more body systems, such as neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory (including speech organs), cardiovascular, reproductive, digestive, genitourinary, immune, circulatory, hemic, lymphatic, skin and endocrine. Also covered are any mental or psychological disorders, such as intellectual disability, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness and specific learning disabilities.
- **Substantially limiting:** In accordance with the ADAAA final regulations, the determination of whether an impairment substantially limits a major life activity requires an individualized assessment, and an impairment that is episodic or in remission may also meet the definition of disability if it would substantially limit a major life activity when active. Some examples of these types of impairments may include epilepsy, hypertension, asthma, diabetes, major depressive disorder, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia. An impairment, such as cancer that is in remission but that may possibly return in a substantially limiting form, is also considered a disability under the final ADAAA regulations.
- **Direct threat:** A significant risk to the health, safety or well-being of individuals with disabilities or others when this risk cannot be eliminated by reasonable accommodation.
- **Qualified individual:** An individual who, with or without reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the employment position that such individual holds or desires.
- **Reasonable accommodation:** Includes any changes to the work environment and may include making existing facilities readily accessible to and usable by individuals with disabilities, job restructuring, part-time or modified work schedules, telecommuting, reassignment to a vacant position, acquisition or modification of equipment or devices, appropriate adjustment or modifications of examinations, training materials or policies, the provision of qualified readers or interpreters, and other similar accommodations for individuals with disabilities.

- Undue hardship: An action requiring significant difficulty or expense by the employer. In determining whether an accommodation would impose an undue hardship on a covered entity, factors to be considered include:
  - The nature and cost of the accommodation.
  - The overall financial resources of the facility or facilities involved in the provision of the reasonable accommodation, the number of persons employed at such facility, the effect on expenses and resources, or the impact of such accommodation on the operation of the facility.
  - The overall financial resources of the employer; the size, number, type and location of facilities.
  - The type of operations of the company, including the composition, structure and functions of the workforce; administrative or fiscal relationship of the particular facility involved in making the accommodation to the employer.
- Essential functions of the job: Term refers to those job activities that are determined by the employer to be essential or core to performing the job; these functions cannot be modified.

The examples provided in the above terms are not meant to be all-inclusive and should not be construed as such. They are not the only conditions that are considered to be disabilities, impairments or reasonable accommodations covered by the ADA/ADAAA policy.

**Item:** State Aid for Public Library Construction \$34 Million Program  
FY2023-2024

**Background:** A total of \$34 Million was approved for the Public Library Construction Aid Program in the FY2023-2024 State Budget. For Westchester Library System, the allocation of aid available is based on population and totals \$1,605,184.

**Status:** A total of 12 applications were received for this grant cycle. All of the applications were found to meet the criteria established for the Construction Grants as required by New York State Commissioner's Regulations' [Section 90.12], which include more effective library service; more efficient utilization of the library building; improved access to and use of building services; and provision of library services in communities which are geographically isolated or economically disadvantaged.

The Public Library Directors Association (PLDA) Grants Committee made up of Chair Augusta Turner, Director of Town of Pelham Public Library; Jennifer Brown, The Field Library; Brian Kenney, White Plains Public Library; Rosemarie Gatzek, Irvington Public Library; Elizabeth Bermel, Scarsdale Public Library; Kathryn Feeley, North Castle Public Library; Tracy Wright, Eastchester Public Library; Ann Cloonan, Bedford Free Library; and Greg Wirszlya, Bronxville Public Library. WLS representatives on this committee were Dana Hysell and Terry Kirchner. The committee members reviewed and approved the construction project applications on September 7, 2023.

The Committee reviewed the applications based on the nature of the projects and aid previously received. The recommended award amounts are noted on the attached list; and copies of the Applications and Project Narratives were previously distributed to WLS Trustees.

This year's allotment to WLS equaled \$1,605,184. The Total Project Cost for all applications equals \$2,020,831; and the Total Requested Award Amounts equals \$1,156,407.

**Recommended**

**Action:** Approval of the recommendations submitted by the PLDA Grants Committee.



Library	Total Project Cost	Amount Requested	Project #	Project Description
HHF	\$19,700.00	\$9,850.00	0386-24-0479	This project will update three of our original analog cameras with newer digital cameras and will include the installation of six additional cameras.
YCR*	\$287,073.00	\$215,305.00	0386-24-0558	This project will make long refurbishments to Crestwood Library to make it safer, healthier, and more efficient. These include: Replacing its original, 1920s windows (which do not open, close or retain indoor air temperature efficiently), restoring Crestwood's iconic front door which is a main point of heat/energy loss, repointing its chimney (which is suspected to be a point of water infiltration), overhauling the fire alarm system, upgrading to LED lights building-wide, repaving perimeter walkways and regrading rear exit stairwell steps to divert water away from the building and improve safety by reducing trip/fall risks, replacing the outdated carpet in the upper level, patch, paint and refurbish interior cracking, chipping walls, and restoring the wooden trim on the exterior of the building.
LAR	\$165,000.00	\$82,500.00	0386-24-0599	Retrofit of elevator in main building installed in 1995 to include new controller, circuit board, compressor, motor, lighting, door, interior panels.
NEW*	\$144,692.00	\$108,520.00	0386-24-0606	The installation of sound-absorbing panels for noise abatement and wayfinding signage both to enhance the Patron experience inside the building.
NHU*	\$64,000.00	\$48,000.00	0386-24-0607	Improvements to 2 public restrooms in basement, replacing tiles and flooring, new toilets and urinals to be ADA compliant.
WNR*	\$88,205.00	\$66,153.00	0386-24-0613	This project will replace HVAC piping and junctures that are failing and causing water and mold issues in the library.
SOM	\$420,375.00	\$210,187.00	0386-24-0617	The renovation of Somers Library's Teen Space will increase the amount of space teens have and create a more welcoming environment for them.
YRK	\$466,220.00	\$233,110.00	0386-24-0629	Create new Teen Services and coffee area with tech-friendly seating and furnishings by reducing oversized service areas. Upgrading fire safety doors.
HAS	\$190,225.00	\$95,112.00	0386-24-0644	The project will install rooftop solar PV on the Hastings-on-Hudson Public Library to generate clean, renewable energy and reduce electricity cost.
NOR	\$34,402.00	\$17,201.00	0386-24-0650	Electrical and security upgrades for the Ruth Keeler Memorial Library. These upgrades will include a security system, an increase in the number of electrical outlets available for patrons and staff, and an upgrade in our network connectivity and Wi-Fi reach within the building. These upgrades will allow us to make the library a safer place for our patrons and staff and will increase the efficiency and functionality of the library.
CHA	\$90,939.00	\$45,469.00	0386-24-0655	The library will be renovating its 122-seat theater space and upgrading its AV for staff usability and ADA accessibility.
POU	\$50,000.00	\$25,000.00	0386-24-0678	The cedar shingle shake roof is leaking into the building. We seek Construction Aid funds to replace the cedar shake portion of the roof.
<b>Totals:</b>	\$2,020,831.00	\$1,156,407.00		
* 75% funding requested				

**Item:** **Extend for One Year Current Borrowing Facility**

**Background:** WLS has an existing Line of Credit with TD (Toronto Dominion) Bank. The facility allows WLS to borrow up to \$500,000 unsecured for a period of one year. There are neither facility fees nor covenants for this loan agreement. If borrowed against, the interest rate would be based on WSJ (Wall Street Journal) Prime + 50 bps (base percentage points), with a Floor of 3.75%. The only restriction consists of the submission of audited financial statements on the part of WLS.

**Status:** During the prior year, there were no borrowings under the facility. **At this time, we do not foresee any need to borrow under this facility for the coming year.** Given there are no encumbrances, covenants or facility fees, we recommend extending the borrowing agreement for one year to allow for financial flexibility.

**Recommended Action:** We are recommending that the Board approve the extension of the borrowing facility with TD Bank for an additional year.

Sep. 26, 2023

## **Executive Directors Report September 2023**

### **WLS Career Coaching Services**

Career Coaching Services (CCS) offered several workshops and speaker presentations during the summer.

#### **Workshops**

In June, CCS provided a Teen Job Fair workshop for the White Plains Youth Bureau to assist high school students prepare for meeting employers for summer employment. The workshop was presented sequentially during three lunch periods at White Plains High School. The students were engaged during the interactive sessions and enthusiastic about learning how to present themselves and answer employer questions.

#### ***LinkedIn Boot Camp – Summer program***

In August we offered a popular LinkedIn Boot Camp facilitated by Dr. Elisse Barnes JD, PhD to present her two-session/two-day workshop focusing on both the mechanics & strategy of using LinkedIn as a tool to conduct a successful job search. Her audience is primarily age 45+ job seekers, who are beginners with LinkedIn or want to learn more about how they can utilize it to enhance their professional career. The program was publicized to WLS staff, member library staff and library patrons.

These LinkedIn sessions were well attended and received. Participants were genuinely interested in the topic and motivated to enhance their LinkedIn presence which was reflected in the positive evaluation feedback.

#### **Speaker Series**

CCS hosts guest professionals to address trending topics as they relate to the employment market. An interesting presentation entitled 'Projecting Power and Presence' was facilitated by Damon Montal, Executive Career Management Consultant, who spoke about how to confidently develop your presentation style using personal inner power and presence to present an authentic delivery of one's story.

#### **Seminar - *Managing Your Career in Changing Times***

Our signature program, *Managing Your Career in Changing Times*, is currently being promoted and will begin in early October. This free career seminar provides participants with relevant information around self-assessment and employer hiring practices. The six-week, 90-minute sessions, are offered virtually in the fall, winter and spring.

In addition to the seminar, CCS has offered individual career coaching to individuals who are not able to participate in the seminar or have very specific needs. These services continue to be well received and participant evaluations reflect sincere appreciation for the one-one service and the advice that is provided.

### **Website development**

To offer a more dynamic digital appearance, we are working on a new website to provide career resources and tools to assist with patron career planning and job search references. Implementation is anticipated for the end of the year.

### **Workforce and Business Development Initiative**

As local employer talent needs continue to grow, we have been following the Workforce Development initiatives in place for Westchester County. Recognizing the importance of a strong local economy which is built on business development and the generation of jobs, WLS can further collaborate with County and local community organizations to support business growth and strengthen talent pipelines.

Our focus is to determine ways that WLS can build upon its current workforce-related programs as well as support small business start-up growth and its sustainability.

We are conducting a needs assessment by speaking with a local library and community-based organizations that serve under-represented communities to understand how WLS can support small business start-up and sustainability.

In addition, we are researching ways to provide business-related resources to entrepreneurs and small businesses via our website.

### **Cataloging Services**

The Equinox Open Library Initiative is conducting a system evaluation of Evergreen, the WLS integrated library system (ILS), an activity which is aligned with the WLS strategic goal of updating and improving our infrastructure. As a part of this project, Director of Cataloging Services Douglas Wray studied a sample list of apparent duplicate bibliographic records in the catalog, to determine what percentage should be merged, and which are functionally not duplicates, according to several guidelines. In August, Mr. Wray and Manager of Cataloging Services Melissa Glazer joined Executive Director Terry Kirchner, Director of IT Wilson Arana and Systems Librarian Lindsay Stratton in a meeting with Equinox's Implementation and IT Manager Galen Charlton to discuss topics currently relevant to Westchester Library System's use of Evergreen.

The latest version of the Evergreen ILS includes a catalogers' tool for uploading to the catalog images of book covers and audio-visual materials containers. This is a welcome infrastructure development, as it has been somewhat inefficient to depend on a third party to address the occasional incorrect images, and many patrons and library staff have become accustomed to relying on the images for identification. Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer went through a backlog of

incorrect images provided by vendors in the staff catalog (Evergreen) and replaced them with the correct images.

Another WLS strategic goal is the promotion of equity and access, and in this spirit WLS Cataloging Services catalogs works in many world languages. Over the past four months, Mr. Wray, Ms. Glazer and Cataloger Steven Pisani handled materials in Arabic, Chinese, French, Hebrew, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Russian and Spanish, with Ms. Glazer doing most of this non-English related work.

During the same period, the demand for cataloging music was high, and it will likely continue into the fall. Mr. Wray has been cataloging an estimated total of 700 classical music CDs for Purchase Free Library. They were a donation to the library, and most of them are new to the WLS catalog. Mr. Wray is also cataloging several hundred CDs and scores for New Rochelle Public Library, and has cataloged CDs for Yonkers Public Library, Mount Vernon Public Library and Dobbs Ferry Public Library. Finally, Mr. Wray completed the cataloging of over 200 LPs (vinyl records) for Croton Free Library. Prior to Croton's initiation of this collection, the WLS catalog contained only a handful of LPs.

In 2022, WLS Cataloging Services officially finished cataloging the collection of about 4,200 books belonging to the National Maritime Historical Society in Peekskill. During the summer of 2023, a few more of their books intermittently arrived at WLS Cataloging Services, and we added them to the catalog. This is an example of WLS striving to meet the strategic goal of expanding community, member library and partner engagement.

Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer are also hoping to expand member library engagement by offering a workshop at WLS Headquarters on September 19. The program is open to all member library staff. Mr. Wray and Ms. Glazer will explain the role of WLS Cataloging Services, offer suggestions to the attendees about increasing the efficiency of the process, discuss new challenges and concerns and answer questions.

## **Information Technology (IT) Services**

### **WLS IT Staffing Activities**

WLS IT has been actively conducting departmental job description and role reviews with staff over the past few months. This review process was instrumental in the recruitment and hiring process for new staff in the department. Andres O'Connor-Annakie and Blas Jaramillo were hired in August as Junior Systems Administrators and their skill sets will help fill in the gap which were identified during the role review process. They have been trained in WLS service protocols and have been out to the libraries to get firsthand experience of their customer base.

### **Datacenter/WLS Network Upgrades**

WLS IT has been working on cleaning up the datacenter while migrating from an aging network environment to a newer infrastructure that will provide a more robust, flexible, and secure environment. All the new network equipment will be in place by the end of September. Despite some scheduling setbacks that were experienced when working with a 3<sup>rd</sup> party and the need

to update and replace several network configurations, these setbacks were addressed in a way that resulted in no negative impact on the libraries or downtime.

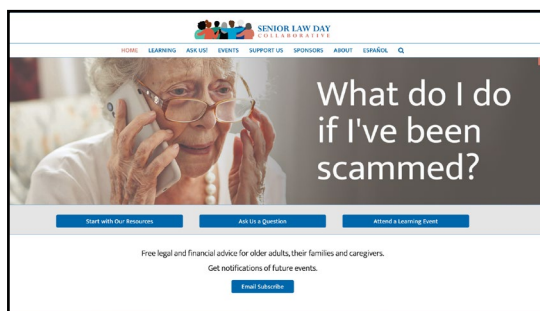
### 2024 IT Service Level Agreements

The Service Level Agreement (SLA) process for 2024 is underway. A review of the new SLA took place in June and the billing model was presented for library review in August. Libraries have been given the opportunity to add and remove services and a final SLA has been distributed. Libraries are requested to return their signed SLAs by the end of October. Maintaining secure access to the ILS is an ongoing topic of conversation between WLS and Equinox, the ILS host. Both WLS and Equinox continue to introduce and improve security measures to protect the system accounts. With that in mind, libraries that do not use WLS IT services (other than the ILS) have been reminded to follow-up with their service providers to make sure that the required security standards are in place.

### Aspen Discovery

The individual library staff training for the Aspen Discovery configurations (the “look” of the ILS) has been ongoing for several weeks. Many libraries have launched their library specific instance of Aspen Discovery that allows a library to personalize the ILS experience for their community. WLS staff continues to work with all the libraries to increase awareness of the Aspen Discovery related services and features and to address questions and concerns as they occur. The traditional Evergreen Online Catalog (which has been enhanced by the Aspen Discovery instances for each library) was scheduled to be retired and taken offline at the end of August, but the deadline has been extended until the end of September 2023 to make sure all libraries are live on their Aspen Discovery instances.

### Public Innovation and Engagement (PIE) | Outreach Highlights - September 2023



#### SENIOR LAW DAY COLLABORATIVE

WLS has been working with Full Deck Design to redesign our seniorlawday.info website, which officially went live on September 7th! The new website prominently showcases upcoming events, valuable learning resources, and an interactive "Ask Us" feature, all to further the Collaborative's goal of providing residents with free, accessible answers to their questions related to elder law, financial

planning, and care planning.

One of the key features on the learning page is the resource filter, allowing users to easily sort through webinars, topics, languages (English and Spanish), and more. Additionally, visitors can access reports on specific elder law topics, written with the knowledge and expertise of Collaborative members.

The extensive 250+ page Elder Law Q&A has undergone a redesign to make it more user-friendly, now available in easily digestible booklets. These booklets cover a wide range of

essential topics, including Taxes, Future Care Planning, Health Care Planning, SSI/SSDI, Medicaid Planning, and much more!



**Upcoming:** The in-person annual Senior Law Day event is taking place at Hartsdale Ridge Road Park on September 28! Collaborative efforts between Westchester's Department of Senior Programs and Services and private sector legal and financial advisors, offers a valuable and cost-free experience that comprehensively addresses elder law, financial planning, and geriatric care management.

The 2023 Senior Law Day event will feature presentations from attorneys and other professionals on topics such as aging independently, Westchester courts, social security, and much more. Attendees can also benefit from free personalized one-on-one consultations with attorneys, financial planners, and care managers, along with access to a wealth of free information and resources provided by Westchester Government and nonprofit agencies.

## OUTREACH EVENTS

- August 9th & 15th - WLS was invited to table at the Mt Kisco Interfaith Food Pantry twice more to spread awareness of library services and to hand out temporary library cards. Around 400 families were reached across the two events, the majority being Spanish speakers with young children at home, making the food pantry an excellent location to promote our online resources for early literacy and school support.
- August 14th - In order to promote the September Senior Law Day event and explain WLS' involvement in the collaborative, Krishna Brodigan appeared on local radio station WVOX as a guest speaker for the Medicare with Mark hour. Tom Geoffino, director of the New Rochelle Public Library, has also invited WLS to join him for his September 18th library radio hour to discuss library outreach.
- August 15th - The WLS team continued their circuit of member library visits with a trip to the Somers Public Library. While touring the library we discussed strategies for reaching Spanish speaking families, supporting homeschooling families, and placing the library at the center of a recent community movement to address mental health in new mothers. All three of these points showed us how the Somers library has prioritized community engagement as a core element of all their staff's work responsibilities – and how the WLS Outreach team can attempt to support that work.
- September 9 - Family Restoration Project One Reentry Symposium at Yonkers Riverfront Public Library. WLS tabled at this event with an audience of around 75 people. This event was created to strengthen strategies and collaborations in our community to bring systemic change to the reentry process for sustainable success.



## PARTNERSHIP

- Over the summer, our Reconnect with Tech program expanded its reach, successfully hosting two additional cohorts at the Riverfront branch of the Yonkers Public Library and the Westchester Library System office. These cohorts collectively welcomed 18 registered students, with an impressive achievement of 12 students successfully completing the program. Each graduate was awarded new Chromebooks and Wi-Fi Hotspots equipped with a one-year prepaid subscription.

The program's positive reputation led to most of these students joining through peer referrals, underscoring the program's effectiveness and impact on the justice-involved community. Furthermore, we continued to collaborate with the Department of Correction and with esteemed organizations like Family Services of Westchester, Family Restoration Project, The Freedom Center, and the VOA Grasslands Shelter to extend the program's reach to an even wider audience.

- Through book donations provided by Larchmont Public Library and Scarsdale Public Library, WLS was able to hand off 70 boxes of books to DSS and WDC. The books were then distributed to various locations including adult shelters, family shelters, Westchester County Jail, and DSS office waiting rooms, providing families in difficult situations with the relief of a gifted book from their libraries!



## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR LIBRARY STAFF:

- [Coming 9/27](#) - The WLS outreach team will be holding a presentation for library staff and trustees who are curious about our process for designing and distributing informational materials such as our Job Search Toolkit, High School Equivalency Guide, and our many brochures.