

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

2026 EDITION

Dear Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Employee:

Your appointment to your position as a Buffalo & Erie County Public Library employee carries with it certain duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges. This **Employee Handbook** is designed to inform you of many of the personnel policies and procedures that apply to all Library employees. I urge you to read this handbook thoroughly. It is designed to help you to be more successful in your job.

This handbook is provided to summarize briefly what you may expect from your employment with the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library and some of the things your work unit will expect of you. It is also meant to answer some of the more common questions asked by both newer and more established employees working in Buffalo & Erie County Public Library locations.

Welcome to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. We wish you a rewarding and fulfilling employment with the library!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dorinda Darden', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

Dorinda Darden, Interim Director

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INTRODUCTION

This 2026 edition of the Buffalo & Erie County Employee Handbook supersedes any previous handbooks issued to Library employees. The policies, procedures, and rules described in this handbook are subject to change, modification, or suspension. New policies, procedures, and rules will be disseminated to the holders of this handbook as applicable. Many of the conditions and procedures that cover Library employment are specifically authorized or required by law, statute, or collective bargaining agreement. Examples include, but are not limited to, the New York State Civil Service Law; New York State Public Officers Law; New York State General Municipal Law; County Law; the Erie County Charter; the Erie County Administrative Code; the “Rules for the Classified Civil Service of the County of Erie...,” and all other state and federal laws that apply to all employment, both public and private. Published periodically by the Erie County Personnel Department, the “Rules for the Classified Civil Service of the County of Erie...” have the force and effect of law, and are available on the Human Resources page of the intranet.

Laws, statutes, and work rules change over a period of time. For these reasons, this handbook is meant only to supplement these other sources. Anything contained herein that might be in conflict with any law, statute, or labor agreement will be void. In case of a conflict, the applicable legal source will take precedence. This handbook does not grant any employee, whether “at will” or union, with any rights other than those provided by New York State or Federal laws.

This handbook is not intended to be comprehensive or to address all Buffalo & Erie County Public Library policies or all the possible applications of, or exceptions to, the policies, procedures, and rules described herein. Employees should also consult the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Personnel Policies and Procedures (available on the intranet) or their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package (if applicable). If at any time you have a question regarding a topic contained in this handbook, you may contact a representative from Human Resources. Not all policies contained herein may apply System-wide. Contracting library employees should speak to their supervisor to determine what policies their employer has adopted.

BUFFALO & ERIE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY

In 1953, the Buffalo Public Library, the Grosvenor Library, and the Erie County Public Library merged by New York State special legislation to create one federated organization: the Buffalo and Erie County Public Library. In 1992, the Library asserted its independence from Erie County under New York State Law in a court case that secured administrative and financial authority previously held by officials of Erie County government.

As of January 2026, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has 37 libraries as well as bookmobile services operating throughout Erie County. These libraries are operated by 23 independent Boards of Trustees and 23 separate hiring authorities under the Civil Service Law.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System Board of Trustees oversees the Central Library, eight branches in the city of Buffalo, and the Library on Wheels and Library2Go. It consists of 15 members who serve five-year terms on a rotating schedule. The System Director serves as administrative, executive, and fiscal officer of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library under the supervision and jurisdiction of the System Board of Trustees.

There are an additional 22 Boards of Trustees which oversee the 29 contracting libraries (libraries outside of the city of Buffalo). They annually contract with the System for services, including circulation technology, programming, and materials, among others. Funding for such libraries comes from the System as well as the local municipality or membership association to cover operational costs as well as library building and capital needs.

For over 175 years, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library has provided excellent library programs and services that meet the ever-changing needs of Erie County's residents. The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is profoundly public, and as the people's cultural institution, we are committed to serving as an essential, inclusive, and transformative resource for everyone in our region.

Mission

Connecting our diverse community with library resources that enrich, enlighten and entertain.

Vision

The vision of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is to be deeply rooted

in the community: promoting partnerships; fostering the development of a literate and informed citizenry through free and equal access to cultural, intellectual, recreational, and informational resources; planning for the future; and making the most effective use of taxpayer funding.

Core Values

Core values represent an organization's highest priorities, deeply held beliefs, and fundamental driving forces. Core values define what an organization believes and how it resonates both internally and externally.

R.E.A.D. (*Respect, Excellence, Accessibility, Dependability*)

Respect

Practice civility and inclusion in our actions and attitudes; value, support and respect all customers and staff

Excellence

Strive for superior performance and to maximize user experience through collaboration, teamwork, training and enthusiasm

Accessibility

Ensure availability and ease of access to library services for all people

Dependability

Provide library services in a consistent, reliable, trustworthy and responsible manner

Principles

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will:

1. Provide open, equal and free access to information in accordance with the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights."
2. Deliver timely, confidential, and customer-oriented service to meet the informational, recreational, and educational needs of the community.
3. Promote lifelong learning by encouraging all children and adults in their enjoyment of reading and discovery.
4. Contribute to the region's economic vitality by assisting individuals, businesses, and government as they pursue better jobs and economic growth.
5. Create and maintain an environment that attracts, develops, and encourages a diverse and skilled staff.
6. Listen to the entire community in pursuit of the Library's Mission.
7. Manage resources effectively and be accountable to its funding sources.

8. Pursue the private and public funding necessary to fulfill the Library's Mission.

UNION MEMBERSHIP

In accordance with the Public Employees Fair Employment Act (Taylor Law), union membership is not a requisite for employment. The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will neither encourage nor discourage membership in any union or with any certified employee representative.

Further, we quote a standard "PLEDGE AGAINST DISCRIMINATION AND COERCION" from a current bargaining agreement: "The employer agrees not to interfere with the rights of employees to become members of the Union, and there shall be no discrimination, interference, restraint, or coercion by the employer or any employer representative against any employee because of Union membership or because of any employee activity in an official capacity on behalf of the Union."

Currently four bargaining units exist within the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System: American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, Local 1095, Council 66, AFL-CIO (AFSCME); Clerical and Maintenance Union of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library - Contracting Libraries, NYSUT-AFT (CMU); Civil Service Employees Association, Inc., Local 1000 A.F.S.C.M.E, AFL-CIO, Erie Unit of Local 815 (CSEA); and Librarians Association of the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library.

Employees should contact the respective union representative for information on joining the union. Human Resources will advise an employee of which bargaining unit their current position is assigned to.

In accordance with all bargaining agreements, union dues will be deducted from the pay of each employee who signs a membership dues check off authorization form. All amounts so deducted will be forwarded to the appropriate bargaining agents, together with a list of the names of the persons from whose pay deductions have been made and the deductions from each.

MANAGEMENT RIGHTS

Except as expressly limited by provisions of bargaining agreements and benefits packages, all of the authority, rights, and responsibilities of the

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library are retained by it, including, but not limited to, the right to determine the mission, purpose, objectives, and policies; to determine facilities, methods, means, and number of personnel for the conduct of Library programs; and to administer the recruitment, hiring, appraisal, training, retention, promotion, assignment, or transfer of employees pursuant to law.

CENTRALIZED HUMAN RESOURCES

Starting in May 2001, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library implemented Centralized Human Resources (CHR) to manage its human resources more efficiently and cost effectively. Under CHR, each year the 22 contracting library Boards of Trustees enter into a contract with the Library System to manage their human resources. CHR offers cost-saving benefits, reduces liability, affords library directors additional time to focus on service, and facilitates consistent System-wide policies and procedures. Accordingly, the human resources for all libraries within the System are currently managed by the Human Resources Department at the Central Library.

PERSONNEL FILES

Under Centralized Human Resources, there shall be only one official personnel file for each employee. This official file will be maintained by Human Resources. It will contain written materials pertinent to the employee's work status and employment, including disciplinary records. These employee files are considered confidential and access to them is restricted. The contents of an employee's personnel file are governed by New York State and Federal Laws, as well as any collective bargaining agreements if the employee is a member of a union.

IDENTIFICATION CARDS

Any employee of the Central Library or Buffalo Branches who is issued an official Library identification card (ID card) must report to work wearing their ID card and must wear it at all times in a visible manner throughout their work day. The ID card serves as both a means of employee identification and access for the employee to enter designated work areas using the Access Control system. A Library ID card is required for entering the Central Library and applicable Buffalo Branch libraries before or after normal hours of operation, for selected designated door access, and at all times from the Oak Street employee entrance at the Central Library.

It is the employee's responsibility to seek replacement for any card that is lost, stolen, or mutilated. Employees must notify Human Resources immediately upon loss of card and request a replacement. Employees will be charged for the cost of a new ID card. A replacement fee will be charged to the employee's library card account.

ID cards must be returned to Human Resources when an employee is separated from employment for any reason.

PROBATIONARY TERMS

Every appointment to a permanent position in the Competitive, Non-Competitive and Labor Class is subject to satisfactory completion of a probationary period of not less than eight nor more than 26 weeks. Time served under provisional appointment counts toward completion of probation under that specific title; time in a temporary status does not.

A probationer's services may be terminated anytime between the 8th and 26th week after one week's written notice to the probationer. Upon request, a probationer being terminated shall be granted an interview with the director/department head or specified designee.

Competitive Class probationary employees who are not retained in their positions upon completion of their probationary periods may petition the Commissioner of Personnel to reinstate their names to the eligible lists for their titles. Such requests must be in writing and will be considered upon their individual merits.

Employees should refer to their collective bargaining agreements for additional information.

PART-TIME EMPLOYMENT

A "part-time" employee shall be defined as an employee who works less than 20 hours per work week. Unless otherwise negotiated through the process of collective bargaining, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will strictly adhere to said definition of "part-time" and not cause any part-time employee to work more than 19 hours in any given work week.

REMOVAL AND OTHER DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The orderly and efficient operation of Library business and services requires that all employees observe certain minimum standards of behavior and performance. The rules listed below are to ensure proper conduct by all employees so that employees' health, safety, and property are protected and the delivery of necessary services is not interrupted. Unsatisfactory work performance or violation of the rules will result in disciplinary action.

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library endorses the policy of progressive discipline for represented employees. Normal steps in this process are oral warning, written warning, suspension from duty, and finally discharge. The policy of progressive discipline does not necessarily apply for more serious violations or offenses, where immediate discharge or suspension, in line with due process, may be required.

Rules:

General work rules that apply are listed below and are arranged in three groups, by type or seriousness of violation. The list is not all-inclusive. Every possible situation for which discipline may result cannot be set forth in a list. The following acts are prohibited:

GROUP A

(Violations may result in immediate discharge)

1. Fighting, provoking a fight, or disorderly conduct of any kind, specifically including, but not limited to, striking a member of the public or coworker.
2. Drinking, possessing alcoholic beverages or narcotic substances (other than medical prescriptions) on Library premises, or reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
3. Immoral conduct or indecency of any kind.
4. Violation of any criminal law or the commission of an offense which involves moral turpitude.
5. Threatening, intimidating, or coercing any fellow employee or member of the public in any manner, including violations of the Library's Workplace Violence Policy.
6. Willful or deliberate violation of safety rules and practices which could endanger you, a coworker, or any member of the public.
7. Insubordination or failure to follow the reasonable direction or order of a supervisor. **NOTE:** Even if you have reservations concerning a specific order or direction, carry it out as directed, unless doing so would create a definite health hazard to another or would result in an illegal action. If,

after having carried out the order/direction, you still seriously question its appropriateness, file a grievance concerning the action and have the matter settled through appropriate channels.

8. Deliberate restriction or interference with the work performed by your department or work unit or that performed by another person.
9. Destruction or theft of property, tools, or equipment belonging either to the Library or to any other employee or person.
10. Falsification of or making any material change to any Library or County record, letter, or document submitted to the Library or County.
11. Falsification of any time record, including swiping an identification card, punching a time card, or signing or making an entry on any sign in/sign out time sheet for anyone other than yourself.
12. Failure to report to work without authorization for extension after expiration of an approved sick leave or other leave of absence.
13. Unauthorized use and/or removal of Library property, records, or any other materials from Library premises.
14. Unauthorized possession of firearms, explosives, or other weapons, either on employee's person or on Library premises.
15. Sale of drugs or intoxicants on Library premises.
16. Soliciting or accepting any financial or non-financial reward in return for special consideration in the purchase or providing of goods or services or the awarding of any contract.
17. Gambling on Library premises.
18. Leaving an essential work post premises during working hours without notifying your supervisor and receiving specific authorization to do so.
19. Engaging in acts of discrimination or retaliation in violation of the Library's Equal Employment Opportunity & Anti-Harassment Policy or Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy or otherwise engaging in acts that violate the Library's harassment policies.
20. Engaging in acts of bullying in violation of the Library's Bullying Policy.
21. Engaging in acts in violation of the Library's Workplace Violence Policy.
22. Failure to report to work for a period of time without following procedures for reporting sick, requesting leave, etc.
23. Misrepresentation or false information reported on a job application or application for benefits, including, but not limited to, health insurance.

GROUP B

(Violations that may result in suspension. Gravity of a single violation or repeated violations of either a single rule or combination of rules may also result in discharge.)

1. Horseplay of any kind; this action can result in serious injury.
2. Abuse of tools or equipment belonging either to the Library, Erie County,

or another employee.

3. Leaving the *work premises* during working hours without permission of the supervisor.
4. Leaving the *work area* during working hours without permission of the supervisor.
5. The circulation of malicious or slanderous rumors, documents, or remarks concerning any employee, the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library, its services, or bargaining agents.
6. Posting of any material on Library bulletin boards without Library permission. Additionally, altering, defacing, or removing authorized notices appearing on Library bulletin boards.
7. Personal use of Library materials, tools, or equipment without proper permission.
8. Performing personal business during working hours.
9. An unreasonable number of absences, repeated failure to report absences, or any unauthorized absence.
10. Sleeping during working hours.
11. Repeated unauthorized extension of rest breaks or lunch periods.
12. Repeated and excessive tardiness.
13. Neglect of job duties or responsibilities.
14. Transporting, picking up, or delivering unauthorized passengers, or any other unauthorized use of Library vehicles for personal business.
15. Negligence, carelessness, or willful acts which result in damage to Library property or to the property of another employee or member of the public.
16. Incompetence or inability to perform assigned work.
17. Discourteous treatment of the public or coworkers, or any other conduct that does not warrant public trust.
18. Failure to follow job instructions, directions, or Library or departmental policies and procedures.
19. Using abusive, profane, or threatening language to a supervisor or a fellow employee or otherwise threatening, intimidating, or coercing any other employee or member of the public.
20. The unauthorized use of any login, password, or access code to gain access to a computer, voicemail, or other Library information system.
21. Using the Library's email system or accessing the internet during working hours for non-Library business, other than incidental use.
22. Excessive personal phone use during working hours.

GROUP C

(Violation may result in written reprimand or repeated violations may result in other disciplinary action, such as suspension or even discharge.)

1. Leaving work area early, prior to wash-up or quitting time.
2. Failure to use safety equipment which is provided.
3. Failure to report any personal injury to the supervisor.
4. Repeated failure to sign in or out on sign- in/sign-out sheets, or to swipe identification card in card reader.
5. Failure to maintain reasonable productivity and workmanship.
6. Misuse of Library time such as loitering in halls, rest rooms, or cafeterias, interfering with other employees' work routines, engaging in prolonged conversations that are not work related, etc.

NOTE: Employees should refer to their collective bargaining agreement for more specific guidelines regarding discipline.

RESIGNATIONS

All resignations shall be in writing. If no effective date is specified in a resignation, it shall take effect upon delivery to or filing in the office of the appointing authority. If an effective date is specified in a resignation, it shall take effect on the date specified. Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, when charges of incompetency or misconduct have been or are about to be filed against an employee, the appointing authority may elect to disregard a resignation filed by the employee and to prosecute those charges; and, in the event that the employee is found guilty of those charges and dismissed from service, the termination will be recorded as a dismissal rather than a resignation.

A resignation may not be withdrawn, canceled, or amended after it is delivered to the appointing authority without the consent of the appointing authority.

ATTENDANCE & RECORDING ATTENDANCE

Employees must accurately record their attendance at work by completing their designated electronic timesheet daily. Employees must record their time when arriving to work at the beginning of the workday, when leaving for and returning from meal periods, and when leaving work at the end of the workday.

Full-time and regular part-time employees must request use of accrued leave using the Employee Leave Request form (PO-19) and attach completed form(s) to the printed version of their electronic timesheet. For leaves of

absence for other reasons, the appropriate form must be submitted to Human Resources.

Abuses of time and attendance rules are grounds for disciplinary action, and any falsification of time records, including the recording of time for someone other than oneself, will be considered a Group A violation and grounds for disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Any day that an employee must be absent from their scheduled shift they must report the impending absence to their director/department head or specified designee prior to the start of the scheduled shift. The specific amount of advance notice required is governed by the respective bargaining agreements/benefits packages, where applicable. Employees not covered by a collective bargaining agreement must report absence no less than 30 minutes prior to the start of their shift.

WORK SCHEDULES

Hours of work for all Library employees must comply with federal and state wage and hour laws. For unionized employees, collective bargaining agreements may set additional rules pertaining to hours of work.

Within these parameters, it is the responsibility of each director/department head either personally or through specified designee(s) to formally establish the specific working hours for each of the work unit's employees, and to set up and maintain adequate controls to assure that such working hours are regularly observed and that they meet the work unit's requirements.

It is important for employees to recognize that the libraries are open varying hours to meet the needs of patrons. Accordingly, a "traditional" (for example, Monday to Friday, 9 am to 5 pm) schedule may not be appropriate for many positions. Schedules should be reflective of the open hours of the library and/or work unit where the employee is assigned.

Employees should refer to their collective bargaining agreement where applicable for more detailed information regarding hours of work.

BREAK AND LUNCH PERIODS

All employees who work a minimum of four hours per day shall be entitled to

one 15 minute paid break period. Employees who work eight hours per day shall be entitled to a 15 minute paid break during the first half of the work day and a second 15 minute paid break during the second half of the work day.

At minimum, employees scheduled to work more than six continuous hours in a single shift must be provided with a minimum of one half hour unpaid lunch period. Employees covered by collective bargaining agreements or benefits packages may be entitled to enhanced lunch period benefits and should refer to the specific provisions of their contract where applicable.

TARDINESS POLICY

All employees are required to be at their work stations at their designated start times. Failure to do so is considered tardiness, as is early leave or late return from lunch or break periods and departure from the work station prior to the designated quitting time.

1. Daily time and attendance records must be maintained accurately for each employee for actual hours worked and for actual lunch breaks.
2. Time and attendance is part of an employee's performance evaluation.
3. A "dockage" from salary does not excuse tardiness. Chronic and excessive tardiness is grounds for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

EMERGENCY CLOSINGS

In the event the Library System Director (or specified designee) declares the closing of certain libraries' operations and/or services due to any uncontrollable emergency, employees who have reported to work may leave work unless they have been designated as essential. Resulting time off from work shall be treated as set forth in the collective bargaining agreement or benefits package for the employees so affected. Employees should refer to their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package for specific guidelines.

PAY DAYS

The Library pays its employees bi-weekly. Pay days are on Friday. If that day is a holiday, the pay day is the preceding work day.

SALARY PLAN

An employee's salary, including future increases, is determined based on which job group their title is allocated and which union (if applicable) they are represented by.

The salary ranges for each job group and the overall salary plan are administered by the Erie County Personnel Department. Modifications to the plans, as applied to employees covered by union contracts, are negotiated with the collective bargaining agents. Salary plans for employees not covered by union contracts are determined by the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library Board of Trustees.

DIRECT DEPOSIT

The Library offers a direct deposit program for all employees. The program allows employees to directly deposit their paycheck into any ABA participating bank or credit union in the United States (maximum of five banks). The direct deposit form can be found on the intranet.

FLEXIBLE BENEFITS

Employees may participate in a Flexible Benefits Program for miscellaneous qualified medical, dependent care, adoption, parking, and transit expenses by using pretax dollars to cover these expenses, within parameters set by Internal Revenue Code. Enrollment forms are distributed to all employees in November of each year.

SICK LEAVE

Full-time and regular part-time employees may accrue unused sick leave up to the maximum allowed in their collective bargaining agreements or benefits package. Accrued unused sick leave provides very valuable "insurance" against unexpected loss of earnings during illness or injury.

In cases of absence due to personal illness or injury for more than five consecutive days, unless otherwise stated in employee's collective bargaining agreement, employees must provide a statement from their attending physician showing incapacity and inability to perform their duties. Following such illness or injury, employees must present a statement from their physician demonstrating ability to return to work prior to their return.

Every use of sick leave requires a written application for approval of use of leave (PO-19), which must be approved by the employee's supervisor. Anticipated sick leave should be requested and approved in advance. Unanticipated sick leave should be approved promptly upon return to work.

Sick leave shall not be granted in less than the minimum unit designated by the employee's bargaining agreement or benefits package.

REPORTING SICK ABSENCE

Each day that absence is necessary under sick leave provisions and established practices, employees must report to their director/department head (or the specified designee) at least 30 minutes before the start of the employee's shift, except where otherwise stated in the employee's collective bargaining agreement/benefits package. The daily call-in report should include, insofar as possible, the general nature of the illness or injury (or in the case of illness in immediate family, the relationship and nature of illness) and the anticipated return date.

It is essential that the call-in be made directly to the director/department head or specified designee(s); call-in reports of absence to any other employee shall not be deemed proper notice. Information regarding employee illnesses and injuries is confidential and will only be shared with others who have a legitimate need to know. In cases of serious injury or accident, it is acceptable for a family member to report on behalf of the employee.

Daily call-in is required each and every day, except:

1. When illness is of anticipated short duration not exceeding five days, employees must state, at time of initial call-in, the anticipated duration of absence. If they fail to do so, they are expected either to report to work the following workday or call in on a daily basis. Employees shall call in the day before their previously reported anticipated return date and report their present status.
2. When absence is the result of accident or serious illness and at the time of call-in there is no indication of duration of absence, it is expected that the employee or member of family will report more definite information secured from the attending physician regarding the apparent nature of illness or injury and anticipated return date within three days after the initial call-in.

3. When absence is the result of accident or serious illness and the attending physician indicates that an employee cannot return to work until a specified time, the employee is expected to return to duty on the date indicated.
4. When an employee calls in and reports that the attending physician has informed them that they will be unable to work indefinitely due to extended illness, the employee is expected to report a return to duty date as soon as one is determined.

When required, employees shall promptly submit to Human Resources a certificate from their attending physician indicating the nature of illness and anticipated return date, if known. In the event of any change in condition or change in anticipated return date from that previously reported, a new certificate from the attending physician shall be submitted.

Employees are required to submit such physician certification forms, other documentation, and any other reasonably requested information relating to or supporting the use of sick leave as may be requested by Human Resources.

ABUSE OF SICK LEAVE

Abuse of sick leave privileges shall be grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination. When an employee's absences are such that the Library has reasonable grounds to believe that an abuse of sick leave may exist, the employee will be notified in writing of such suspected abuse; thereafter the employee may be required, regardless of the duration of the absence, to submit a satisfactory physician's certificate or affidavit indicating the specific nature of the illness/injury and its duration to Human Resources.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT OF 1993

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment Standards Administration administers and enforces FMLA for all private, state, and local government employees and some federal employees. The law contains provisions relating to employer coverage; employee eligibility for the benefits of the law; entitlement to leave, maintenance of health benefits during leave and job restoration after leave; notice and certification of the need for FMLA leave; and protections for employees who request or take FMLA leave.

Entitlement to Leave

FMLA requires covered employers to provide up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave during a 12-month period to eligible employees for the following reasons:

1. For incapacity due to pregnancy, prenatal medical care, or childbirth;
2. To care for the employee's child after birth, or for placement for adoption or foster care;
3. To care for the employee's spouse, minor son or daughter, or parent who has a serious health condition;
4. For a serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the employee's job; or
5. For a qualifying exigency arising from active military duty or call to active duty of an eligible employee's spouse, parent, or child.

A "serious health condition" is an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either an overnight stay in a medical care facility or continuing treatment by a health care provider, for a condition that either prevents the employee from performing the functions of the employee's job or prevents the qualified family member from participating in school or other daily activities.

Eligibility

To be eligible for FMLA benefits, an employee must have:

1. Worked for Library at least 12 months; and
2. Worked at least 1250 regular hours in the previous 12 months.

The complete FMLA Policy can be found on the intranet or in Human Resources. Should any employee wish to exercise their rights under the FMLA, they should consult the intranet and/or contact HR. HR will inform the employee of their eligibility and provide them with the necessary paperwork, which is also available on the intranet under Forms, Policies and Procedures.

PREGNANCY/CHILDBIRTH LEAVE

A full-time or regular part-time employee who is unable to perform the duties of their position due to pregnancy or childbirth will be granted leave for the period of pregnancy disability. Employees should consult their collective bargaining agreement/benefits package regarding entitlement to additional leave.

A few general rules apply to the use of pregnancy/childbirth leave for all Library employees:

1. The period of pregnancy disability begins the date the employee's physician states that they may no longer work, and ends six weeks after date of delivery. In the case of caesarean section, the period of disability ends eight weeks after delivery date.
2. During the 7th month of pregnancy, the employee should notify Human Resources in writing that they are pregnant, what the estimated due date is, and how long they plan to be out.
3. If an employee qualifies for the Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), forms will be mailed to the employee to have their physician complete and return to Human Resources. The employee should also complete Request for Leave (PO-19) forms and submit to their supervisor for the anticipated time of leave.
4. Leave under FMLA shall run concurrent with leave under this section, and accruals must be used during the FMLA time period in accordance with the FMLA Policy.
5. If sick leave and other accrued leave are exhausted before the period of pregnancy disability ends, the employee will be granted a Leave Without Pay. The duration of the disability and estimated date of delivery must be substantiated by a statement from the employee's physician.
6. The employee's health insurance is paid according to the provisions of their collective bargaining agreement and FMLA, where applicable.

VACATIONS

Vacations are earned and may be taken by full-time and regular part-time employees according to the schedules and rules negotiated with each bargaining unit or set forth in benefits packages for non-bargaining staff.

A few general rules apply to the use of vacation time for all Library employees:

1. Vacation can be taken only in the minimum units provided in the collective bargaining agreements or benefits packages.
2. Vacation accruals are credited bi-weekly, as they are earned.
3. Vacation accruals must be earned before they can be taken.
4. The scheduling of vacations must be approved by the director/department head or specified designee in advance, and such approval is subject to the work requirements of the department or work unit.
5. While sincere efforts are made to try to schedule vacation times desired

by the employee, staffing requirements of the work unit must take precedence.

PERSONAL LEAVE

Full-time and regular part-time employees of the Library may be eligible for personal leave after one year of continuous service. Entitlement to personal leave may vary depending on an employee's status and bargaining unit. Employees should refer to their respective collective bargaining agreement or benefits package where applicable.

A few general rules apply to the accrual and use of personal leave for all Library employees:

1. An employee becomes eligible for personal leave on their anniversary date after one year of continuous service.
2. Employees shall be eligible each succeeding year of employment providing they are on a compensable salary and wage basis for at least six months of cumulative service in the preceding anniversary year and otherwise meet all eligibility requirements.
3. Personal leave is not cumulative from year to year. Unused personal leave credit shall be added to the employee's accumulated sick leave bank at the end of the employee's anniversary year. This addition does not extend the permissible accumulation of sick leave beyond the maximum permitted under the respective bargaining agreements/benefits packages.
4. Personal leave can be taken only in the minimum units provided in the collective bargaining agreements or benefits packages.
5. In order to ensure adequate work coverage, requests for personal leave must be submitted to the director/department head or supervisor by an employee on the proper form at least five working days in advance when the requested time is four days or more, and three working days in advance when the request is for three days or less. In cases of emergency, the normal five or three days' notice may be waived by the director/department head.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

Full-time and regular part-time employees who are on active pay status and experience a death in their immediate family or of another relative who is a member of the employee's household may be entitled to paid bereavement leave. Employees who experience the loss of a qualified relative will not be

required to report to work for any work shift for which they would otherwise be regularly scheduled during the period of bereavement leave established by their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package. The employee will receive straight time pay for any such regularly scheduled shifts not worked during this period. Employees should consult their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package for additional information.

LEAVE FOR JURY DUTY/ WORK-RELATED COURT ATTENDANCE

Leave of absence will be granted to employees who are called for jury duty or must attend court for work-related reasons. Pay during jury duty is provided to the extent set forth in the respective collective bargaining agreements or applicable law. Employees must present proof of the need for jury service or court attendance and proof that they were actually in attendance on the days claimed. Employees should refer to their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package for details.

Part-time employees shall be eligible for compensation as set by the court; as of 2026, jurors may receive up to \$40 per day for each of the first three days of jury service in the New York State Unified Court System for a maximum of \$120 in total. To be eligible for this daily payment, the employee must have been unable to report to work for a scheduled shift due to jury service. If the employee was not scheduled to work that day, the employee is not eligible for payment from the Library.

MILITARY LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Employees entering active military duty are entitled to leaves of absence from their positions while engaged in, going to, and returning from military duty. The right to this leave is provided for in the Military Law and is not at the discretion of the appointing officer.

Employees who are ordered to active duty in the National Guard or any reserve force are entitled to remain on active pay status for a total of 30 calendar days or 22 work days (whichever is greater) in any calendar year.

A copy of the employee's Military Orders will be required to receive benefit.

CANCER SCREENING

All employees are entitled to paid leave from work to undertake screening examinations for cancer. Such leave shall be up to four hours for cancer screening on an annual, calendar year basis. This paid, excused leave shall not be charged against any other leave time to which an employee may otherwise be entitled. Employees must complete a Cancer Screening form and attach documentation to demonstrate attendance for screening.

LEAVES WITHOUT PAY FOR OTHER REASONS

Requests for leave without pay for reasons other than those discussed above shall be approved only under exceptional circumstances. Such requests must be submitted to Human Resources upon recommendation of the director/department head, and, if applicable, approved by the Erie County Commissioner of Personnel. Employees should contact HR and/or consult their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AND ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is committed to maintaining an environment free of discrimination and unlawful harassment.

It is the policy of the Library to provide Equal Employment Opportunity in every aspect of employment to all applicants and employees without regard to gender, race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, age, disability, familial status, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, genetic predisposition, arrest or conviction status, domestic violence victim status, known relationship or association with member of a protected class, or any other basis protected by federal, state or local law.

The Library will take affirmative action as called for by all applicable federal, state, and local laws and executive orders to ensure that underrepresented groups are introduced into the workforce and provided promotional opportunities. Employment decisions will be made without regard to unlawful considerations.

The Library will not tolerate unlawful harassment of its employees by any supervisor, coworker, volunteer, patron, or any other person with whom

employees may come into contact during work. Similarly, the Library will not tolerate its employees engaging in unlawful harassment of co-workers or of non-employees with whom they come into contact during work, including but not limited to job applicants, vendors, contractors, patrons, and volunteers.

The Library prohibits all forms of unlawful harassment. Generally, unlawful harassment includes any unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, written, physical or visual, that is based upon a person's gender, race, color, national origin, ancestry, religion, creed, age, disability, familial status, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, military status, genetic predisposition, arrest or conviction status, domestic violence victim status, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local law. Such conduct is unlawful and prohibited whenever it:

1. Subjects an individual to inferior terms, conditions, or privileges of employment,
2. Unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance, or
3. Creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive working environment.

The full policy can be found on the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library website at: www.buffalolib.org/becpl-system/policies.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT PREVENTION POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is committed to maintaining an environment free from sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is a form of workplace discrimination and it is against the law. The Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy is one component of the Library's commitment to a discrimination-free environment. Everyone has a legal right to a workplace free from sexual harassment. All employees working in Library locations are required to work in a manner that prevents sexual harassment and are urged to report sexual harassment by filing a complaint internally with the Library. Complaints may also be filed with a government agency or in court under federal, state, or local antidiscrimination laws.

The full policy can be found on the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library website at: www.buffalolib.org/becpl-system/policies.

REASONABLE ACCOMODATIONS

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is committed to ensuring equal

employment opportunity and equal access to services, programs, and activities for all persons, including those with disabilities. It is the Library's policy to provide reasonable accommodations to a qualified person with a disability to enable such person to perform the essential functions of the position for which they are applying or in which they are employed.

Reasonable accommodations will be made on a case-by-case basis. Libraries and departments are expected to have the flexibility and capacity to provide reasonable accommodations when needs arise.

Qualified individuals with documented disabilities are eligible to request reasonable accommodations. A qualified individual is a person who satisfies the minimum requirements of the position such individual holds or desires, and who can perform the essential functions of the position with or without reasonable accommodation.

Request for Accommodation

The responsibility for initiating a request for accommodation lies with the individual with a disability. Every individual making a request for reasonable accommodation must provide sufficient documentation to support their request. Submitted documentation must be from an appropriate, qualified professional. In accordance with federal and state regulations, the Library will treat disability-related information in a confidential manner.

The complete Reasonable Accommodation Policy and Procedure can be found on the intranet. Should any employee wish to exercise their rights under the ADA, please consult the intranet and/or contact Human Resources. HR will inform the employee of their eligibility, assist them in gaining a greater understanding of the law, and provide the necessary paperwork.

BULLYING POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library will not tolerate bullying behavior in any instance. Employees found in violation of this policy may be disciplined, up to and including termination.

The Library defines bullying as repeated inappropriate behavior, either direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical, or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others at the place of work and/or in the course of employment.

Bullying may be intentional or unintentional. However, it must be noted that when an allegation of bullying is made, the intention of the alleged bully is irrelevant, and will not be given consideration when determining the appropriate level of discipline. As in sexual harassment, it is the effect of the behavior on the individual that is important. The Library considers the following types of behavior examples of bullying:

1. **Verbal bullying:** slandering; ridiculing or maligning a person or their family; persistent name calling that is hurtful, insulting, or humiliating; using a person as butt of jokes; abusive and offensive remarks.
2. **Physical bullying:** pushing; shoving; kicking; poking; tripping; assault or threat of physical assault; damage to a person's work area or property.
3. **Gesture bullying:** nonverbal threatening gestures; glances that can convey threatening messages.
4. **Exclusion:** socially or physically excluding or disregarding a person in work-related activities.

The complete Bullying Policy can be found on the intranet. Should any employee wish to file a complaint under the Bullying Policy, they should consult the intranet, speak with their supervisor, or contact Human Resources.

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for its employees and the customers whom it serves. The complete Workplace Violence Policy and Incident Report Form can be found on the intranet or in Human Resources. Should any employee wish to file a complaint under the Workplace Violence Policy, they should speak with their supervisor or contact Human Resources.

SAFETY AND HEALTH

The Library's goal is to provide a place to work that is as free from hazards as possible.

Occupational accidents and illnesses can cause suffering and financial loss to both the employee and employer alike. Therefore, it is important for each employee to conduct themselves in a safe manner, to abide by the established work rules and standard practices, and to call to the attention of supervision either unsafe conditions or unsafe behavior by individuals. If an employee

does not understand procedures, instructions, or the rules, they should seek clarification from their supervisor.

Under “Right to Know,” employers must inform their employees about the health effects of toxic substances found at their work sites. An appropriate notice advising employees of their right to information about these toxic substances and the name of a Library contact person must be conspicuously posted. Toxic materials information is available through the Maintenance Department.

Safety Committee

The Safety Committee is composed of employees and management representatives and meets regularly to discuss safety and security issues. All employees have the opportunity to make recommendations and seek information from the committee.

Employee Responsibilities

Accident prevention requires teamwork, cooperation, and commitment from everyone. This includes employees, supervisors, and directors/department heads equally. The Library is committed to the use of proper protective clothing and equipment. Required protective clothing and equipment shall be properly used and cared for by all employees. Failure to properly care for and use these items will result in disciplinary action. Safety and health practices must and will take precedence over expediency or short cuts.

It is management’s responsibility to properly instruct employees and to ensure that they know how to perform their duties in an acceptable manner. Employees are encouraged to request instruction in those tasks or in the operation of equipment with which they are not familiar. Employees should inform their supervisor immediately if they detect or even suspect an imminent danger. This term is defined by Federal regulations “as a condition where there is reasonable certainty that a danger exists that can be expected to cause death or serious physical harm immediately or before the danger can be eliminated through normal enforcement or corrective measures.” Less critical conditions should also be routinely reported.

All employees should know their exact duties in case of an accident, fire, or other catastrophe. Awareness of emergency phone numbers, evacuation procedures, and knowing how to seek emergency help is the responsibility of every employee. It is the employee’s responsibility to keep their own work

areas clean and free of known hazards, which plays an important role in accident prevention.

Emergency procedures for the Central Library and Buffalo Branch Libraries can be found on the intranet. Contracting library employees should speak to their supervisor for specific procedures at their location.

ON THE JOB INJURY

Accidents happen. While most work related injuries are infrequent and minor, the potential for more serious injury certainly exists. The proper course of action for an injury during working hours depends on its type and severity. For any injury, the first step is always to get medical attention/treatment as quickly as possible. As soon as possible thereafter, the supervisor should be contacted (circumstances permitting). The Employee Injury Report should be completed by the employee and the supervisor and immediately sent to Human Resources. Names and contact information of witnesses should be collected. Human Resources will file the necessary paperwork with FCS Administrators, our insurance carrier, who will coordinate necessary reporting to the New York State Workers' Compensation Board.

FOOTWEAR

It is important to recognize the need to promote preventative measures that will protect employees from injuring their feet in the workplace. For safety reasons, employees who regularly transport materials should wear closed toe shoes or have closed toe shoes available at their workstation to use when transporting materials, using book trucks, etc.

SMOKING POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is committing to ensuring that the public has the right to transact library business in a smoke-free environment and that employees have the right to work in a smoke-free environment. This policy is based on New York State Health Law Section 1399-O, Erie County Local Law 5 of the year 1996, and the Rules of Conduct applicable to each library location.

Employees are prohibited from vaping, smoking, or otherwise using tobacco

or marijuana products inside of the library or within 100 feet of any entrances, exits, or outdoor areas of library property.

DRUG FREE WORKPLACE

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library is committed to providing a drug-free, healthy, and safe workplace. Employees shall not report to work under the influence of alcohol or intoxicating substances, nor shall use of said substances be allowed during their scheduled shift, including break times. The unlawful manufacture, distribution, disposition, possession, or use of a controlled substance is prohibited while at any Buffalo & Erie County Public Library facility and while conducting Library related activities off-site. Any employee engaging in such conduct shall be discharged in accordance with applicable employee bargaining agreements.

The Library is supportive of employee wellness efforts, including LMHF-sponsored smoking cessation programs. The Employee Assistance Program also offers substance abuse counseling and referral to rehabilitation programs. More information can be found on the intranet.

POLITICAL ACTIVITY

There is often confusion about the political restrictions on public employees. The laws which limit political activity are a Federal Law known as the Hatch Act and certain provisions of the New York Labor Law. The Hatch Act applies to local government employees whose activities are largely funded by the federal government or to employees who work in connection with a federally funded activity. Many of the earlier restrictions provided by the Hatch Act have been removed. The following remain: covered employees may not be candidates for any elective office in a partisan election and also may not use official authority for the purpose of interfering with or affecting the result of an election.

Employees whose employment is covered by the Hatch Act must resign their positions if they decide to become a candidate for elective office. Further information regarding the Hatch Act can be found at www.osc.gov/hatchact.htm.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

In addition to the actual wages or salary earned, there are other substantial benefits available to employees dependent upon eligibility. These important benefits include: health and dental insurance, membership in the New York State Retirement System, paid sick leave, holidays, vacation, bereavement pay, personal leave, time off to take Civil Service exams, and leaves of absence without pay for certain specified reasons, along with Unemployment Insurance and Social Security payments which are made on each employee's behalf by the Library. Employees should refer to their respective collective bargaining agreement or benefits package for questions concerning entitlement to any specific benefits.

HEALTH & DENTAL INSURANCE

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library provides all full-time and regular part-time employees with access to health insurance benefits. The Library also offers dental insurance coverage to full-time and regular part-time employees. Complete information for each of the plans is available from Human Resources or the Labor Management Health Fund (LMHF) at www.lmhf.net.

During annual open enrollment, any eligible employee may choose to enroll in or transfer to one of the optional standard plans. Applications for option transfer may be made only during the designated open enrollment period. Any change in the type of coverage will become effective on the first day of January immediately following the close of the open enrollment period.

NOTE: Health Insurance coverage is not automatic upon starting employment, nor does coverage resume automatically when previously covered employees have allowed their coverage to lapse while on unpaid leave of absence or on lay-off status. It is necessary for the employee to complete a new application for coverage in each of these instances in order to establish any coverage at all. Prompt completion of the application forms is the employee's responsibility.

Changes affecting coverage include marital status (marriage or divorce), birth or adoption of a child, change of address, death of a spouse or family member, employee or spouse attaining age 65 and becoming eligible for enrollment in the Medicare programs, or a dependent reaching an insurer's cut-off age. Any of these changes may affect either eligibility for coverage or

the type of coverage needed. We encourage employees to make inquiry and/or to record changes in status promptly to ensure adequate coverage for themselves and their family. Falsification of insurance records is cause for disciplinary action up to and including termination.

For continuation of coverage during a period of leave without pay, employees should review the Health Insurance section of their collective bargaining agreement/benefits package or contact Human Resources.

When Erie County Personnel approves an application for Leave of Absence Without Pay, the employee is advised of the duration of the approved leave. If the total leave of absence extends beyond the period of paid coverage, a letter is sent to the employee advising them of the need to begin making premium payments in order to continue their health insurance coverage and informing them of the amount of premium charged to the employee.

Should a permanent employee die, for whom the Library was providing family health insurance coverage, the employee's health insurance shall be continued for the employee's survivors during the month the death occurs and for two calendar months thereafter.

NOTE: Erie County Personnel administers the health and dental insurance for Buffalo & Erie County Public Library employees.

WAIVERS OF BENEFITS

Full-time and regular part-time employees eligible for medical and dental insurance may waive coverage and receive a cash payment in lieu of these benefits. To waive coverage an employee must complete appropriate waiver forms, which can be obtained from and submitted to Human Resources.

Any person whose waiver of benefits is received by Human Resources on or before the 10th day of any month will start eligibility for cash payment the first day of the following month. If received after the 10th of any month, eligibility for cash payment will start the first day of the second month after the waiver is received.

Once approved, a waiver remains in effect indefinitely until it is withdrawn in writing, until the employee leaves Library service, or during a period of leave without pay. Employees should consult their collective bargaining agreement or benefits package for specific details.

These payments are treated as ordinary income and subject to withholdings for FICA and federal and state income tax. Such payments are not considered part of salary or wages by the New York State Retirement System. Therefore, no contributions are made to the Retirement System for these payments, either by the employer or by the individual employee.

RETIREMENT BENEFITS

All Library employees have the right to join the New York State & Local Retirement System. Full-time and regular part-time employees are required to join. The Retirement System provides for service retirement and also for benefits in the event of death or disability. Membership in the Retirement System is not automatic upon being employed. The employee must complete an application, which is available in Human Resources.

There are six separate classes of the Retirement System membership, depending on enrollment date. Tier 6 is the current tier, covering members entering the system on or after April 1, 2012.

There are variations in the retirement plan for each tier with respect to employee contributions, benefits, minimum retirement age, and so forth. Tier 6 contribution rates vary from 3-6% based on the employee's yearly gross salary, and Tier 6 members must contribute for all their years of service.

A Tier 6 member must be in the Retirement System for five years to become vested. Being vested means an employee is entitled to receive benefits at retirement age even though they may have left government employment covered by the Retirement System before that time.

Retirement System members are encouraged to sign up for Retirement Online to access current account information and perform a variety of self-service actions, including updating beneficiaries, generating form letters, viewing annual statements, and estimating pension benefits: web.osc.state.ny.us/retire/sign-in.php.

The Retirement System is complicated, and employees should consult with the New York State and Local Retirement System for information pertaining to benefit payment options. The Retirement System views all matters concerning an individual's retirement status as personal matters between the employee and the Retirement System. They will not release any

retirement information to anyone other than the employee or persons legally authorized to act for the employee. Therefore, employees who have questions about their retirement status should address their questions directly to the New York State and Local Retirement System. Contact information can be found at: www.osc.ny.gov/retirement/contact-us.

A field representative of the Retirement System is located at the Ellicott Square Building, 295 Main St. Visitors who wish to meet with a representative must schedule an appointment. The toll free number is 1-866-805-0990.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Library has contracted with a private firm to provide free, confidential assistance to employees and members of their household who are experiencing personal problems. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides comprehensive counseling and/or referral services to Library employees who seek assistance with anger management, communication, drug or alcohol abuse, grief and loss, legal and financial issues, mental health, relationship and family issues, and more. All employee requests for assistance are handled in a sensitive and confidential manner; information concerning employee use of EAP will not be given to anyone outside EAP without the employee's written permission.

Employees experiencing personal problems that are affecting their work or personal relationships with family, friends, and/or co-workers are encouraged to contact the EAP directly. Contact information can be found on the intranet under Human Resources.

COMPUTERS, COMMUNICATIONS & RELATED TECHNOLOGY POLICY

Employees are expected to use computing, networking, and information resources in a responsible and ethical manner. Open access to these resources is a privilege subject to acceptable use and the restrictions contained in the Computers, Communications, & Related Technology Policy. Any employee found to have violated one or more of these policies may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. The complete Computers, Communications, & Related Technology Policy can be found on the intranet.

TELEPHONES

Business phones are necessary for the conduct of public business. Employees should limit their calls to the conduct of library business. Personal calls into or out of the library or between departments are prohibited.

Emergencies such as illness or death of a family member, etc., may require receiving immediate telephone notification. Such emergency situations are not considered personal calls under this rule.

Employees should leave their cellphones in their locker, silenced, or turned off during work hours. Personal cellphones may be used during break and lunch periods. Such use must not disrupt the work area. Abuse of business phones or personal cellphones may result in disciplinary action.

TRAVEL EXPENSES

Employees may be required to travel to meetings, conferences, and other work related events outside their normal place of business. Staff members are encouraged to participate in local, state, and national library conferences, training, committees, etc. which will enhance their work skills and knowledge and benefit both the individual and Library. Policies and procedures have been established to provide all staff members the opportunity to engage in such activities and to compensate employees where employee attendance is requested and/or required by the Library within the budget for professional development and travel expenses. Employees should refer to the Professional Development, Library Business, and Travel chapter of the Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual (Chapter 10).

All travel expense and mileage requests must be made on the proper forms and in a timely fashion. The complete policies and all forms can be found on the intranet.

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