



RAPIDES PARISH
LIBRARY

EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Revised October 25, 2021

Mission Statement

Promoting literacy, guiding discovery, changing lives--for all.

Statement of Identity and Core Values

The Rapides Parish Library is a hub for resources to improve the financial, educational, and recreational lives of the community. Our core values are the promotion of literacy in all its forms, joyful exploration, and equity of service to all we reach.

Adopted by the Rapides Parish Library Board 1/12/2009

I. Contents

YOUR EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK	6
EMPLOYMENT AT WILL	7
HUMAN RESOURCES	7
APPLICATION PROCESS	7
PREVIOUS EMPLOYMENT	7
RELEASE OF INFORMATION	7
ACCESS BY EMPLOYEES TO PERSONNEL RECORDS	8
UPDATES TO PERSONNEL RECORDS	8
MAINTENANCE OF PERSONNEL RECORDS.....	8
EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND CHECKS.....	8
CRIMINAL BACKGROUND CHECK	9
MOTOR VEHICLE RECORDS CHECK & VEHICLE SAFETY	9
IMMIGRATION AND NATURALIZATION.....	9
INTERNAL APPLICANTS	9
HIRING PROCESS.....	10
LETTER OF EMPLOYMENT	10
INTRODUCTORY	10
EMPLOYEE CLASSIFICATION	11
EMPLOYEE CATEGORIES.....	12
EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES.....	12
EMPLOYMENT OF MINORS	13
REHIRE POLICY	13
RE-INSTATEMENT RIGHTS OF MILITARY PERSONNEL	13
CHILD SUPPORT REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.....	13
RELIGIOUS ACCOMMODATION POLICY	13
ATTENDANCE POLICY.....	14
WORK WEEK.....	15
WORKPLACE BEHAVIOR.....	15
PERSONAL APPEARANCE, HYGIENE AND DRESS STANDARDS	16
VISITORS IN THE WORKPLACE.....	16
WORKPLACE VIOLENCE.....	16



OFFICE ENVIRONMENT	18
TECHNOLOGY USAGE	19
CELLULAR PHONES AND MOBILE HANDHELD DEVICES	23
RPL CELLULAR PHONES AND HANDHELD DEVICES	23
VOICEMAIL AND EMAIL	24
DRUG & ALCOHOL POLICY	25
OFF DUTY WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION	27
PUNCTUALITY	28
NO SHOW, NO CALL	28
MILITARY LEAVE	28
SICK LEAVE	28
FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE ACT (FMLA)	29
ELIGIBILITY	29
QUALIFIED LEAVE REASONS	29
DEFINITIONS	30
NOTICE AND SCHEDULING REQUIREMENTS	31
CERTIFICATION BY HEALTH CARE PROVIDER	32
LENGTH OF LEAVE	32
LEAVE	33
RETURN FROM LEAVE	33
VACATION LEAVE	33
HOLIDAYS	34
BEREAVEMENT LEAVE	35
JURY DUTY AND SUBPOENAED WITNESS	35
DONATION OF VACATION LEAVE	36
EMPLOYEE BREAK PERIODS	37
LACTATION POLICY	38
PAYDAY	39
PAYROLL INFORMATION	40
PAY INCREASES	40
MEDICAL AND DENTAL INSURANCE	40
HEALTH BENEFITS FOR RETIREES	41
BENEFIT CONTINUATION	41
ADDITIONAL BENEFITS	42
EMPLOYEE DEVELOPMENT	42



EMPLOYEE TRAINING AND MEETINGS	42
LOCAL PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS AND CONFERENCES	42
CONTINUED TRAINING AND EDUCATION.....	43
YEARS OF SERVICE RECOGNITION	44
PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS.....	44
COMPENSATION POLICY	44
PURPOSE.....	44
DEFINITIONS	45
JOB CLASSIFICATION/EVALUATION	45
PAY GRADES.....	46
STARTING PAY GRADES	46
PROMOTION: PAY GRADE.....	46
REDUCTION: PAY GRADES.....	47
TRANSFER	47
INTERIM APPOINTMENTS.....	47
ANNUAL INCREASES	47
COMPENSATION PLAN MAINTENANCE.....	47
STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR AND DISCIPLINE	48
CORRECTIVE DISCIPLINE.....	50
RESIGNATION AND TERMINATIONS.....	51
RESIGNATION	51
INVOLUNTARY TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT.....	51
REDUCTION IN WORKFORCE.....	51
PERMANENT LAYOFF	52
TEMPORARY LAYOFF	52
TERMINATION APPEAL PROCEDURE	52
PROBLEM RESOLUTION PROCEDURE	52
CONFLICT OF INTEREST	53
WHISTLEBLOWER PROTECTION ACT POLICY	55
EEO & HARASSMENT/DISCRIMINATION POLICY	56
HARASSMENT AND RETALIATION PREVENTION POLICY.....	62
ZERO TOLERANCE.....	62
PROMPT REPORTING IS REQUIRED.....	63
NO PUNISHMENT FOR REPORTING.....	63
DEFINITION OF HARASSMENT/RETALIATION	63
DESCRIPTION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT	63
COMPLAINT PROCESS	64



CONFIDENTIALITY: 64
INVESTIGATIVE PROCESS – CORRECTIVE ACTION: 65
AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT POLICY 65



II. Welcome

Welcome to the Rapides Parish Library. We have been serving the residents and visitors of the CENLA area since 1942 and we hope you will enjoy your association with our organization.

Our most important resource is our friendly, competent, reliable and dedicated group of employees. We are pleased to welcome you to the staff.

Your Employee Handbook

This employee handbook has been developed to provide you with important information about your employment at the Rapides Parish Library. The handbook covers a wide range of information designed to educate each employee about relevant policies, procedures, and benefits. The contents will assist the orientation of new employees and act as an ongoing guide for all employees.

The policies, procedures, and benefits are subject to be changed or modified at any time. Replacement or supplemental memoranda and revised handbooks will be distributed to employees when substantial changes are made.

III. Nature of Employment

Employment at Will

This Employee Handbook is not a contract, expressed or implied, guaranteeing employment for any specific duration. Although we hope that your employment relationship with RPL will be long term, either you or the library may terminate this relationship at any time, for any reason, with or without cause or notice. Please understand that no supervisor, manager, or representative of the library other than the Library Director has the authority to enter into any agreement with you for employment for any specified period or to make any promises or commitments contrary to the foregoing. Further, any employment agreement entered into by the Library Director shall not be enforceable unless it is in writing.

Human Resources

RPL has a Human Resources Department, which is responsible for personnel administration. Questions regarding your employment and this Employee Handbook should be addressed to the Human Resources Manager.

Application Process

All candidates for employment must fully complete, date and sign the standard employment application form. The form should be completed in detail, including a complete work history. RPL may investigate any portion of the requested information and may deny or later terminate the employment of anyone giving false, misleading or incomplete information. All applications for employment with RPL must be signed by the applicant.

Completed applications will be made part of the personnel file of those applicants accepted for employment. Applications from internal or external applicants not selected for available openings shall be maintained in an active file in the Payroll Specialist Department until the end of the calendar year in which the application is received.

Previous Employment

RPL, at its discretion, will request information from the prospective employee's previous employers relative to their work record in connection with their application for employment. Additionally, RPL may conduct a pre-employment credit check and a background check on all applicants who are offered and accept employment.

Release of Information

The information contained in an employee's records is treated as confidential. Inquiries or requests for personnel information including, but not limited to, employment verification, credit checks, references, home loan applications, etc. are to be referred to the Human Resources Department.

RPL's standard policy is that only employment dates and current title will be verified. Additional information about the employee, such as the employee's salary or job history will not be released without the employee's written or documented authorization.

Access by Employees to Personnel Records

An employee may request to review his/her personnel record. This request must be made in writing to the Human Resources Manager who will coordinate the review of the employee's personnel record with a member of RPL's Human Resources Department. A request to review the file must be made at least 72 hours in advance of the review.

A member of the Human Resources Department must be present during the entire time which the employee reviews his or her personnel file. Personnel files may not leave the Human Resources Department and may not be copied without prior permission of the Human Resources Manager. Copying, defacing or markings made by the employee on original documents in the possession of the Human Resources Department may result in disciplinary action under RPL's disciplinary procedures. Employees are permitted to take notes on the information they view in their personnel file.

Updates to Personnel Records

Employees must report changes in name, marital status, and number of dependents, beneficiary, telephone number, and address to the Human Resources Department in writing. It is very important that personnel records are kept current to provide employees with correct pay and benefits, as well as to contact the appropriate person in case of an emergency.

Maintenance of Personnel Records

Employee files are maintained by the Human Resources Department. Personnel records are considered confidential, with the exception of records available for review by the Public Records Act. Managers and supervisors other than the Human Resources Manager may only have access to personnel information based on business-related reasons. A manager or supervisor considering the rehire of a former employee or the transfer of a current employee may be granted access to information in the file relative to the hiring or transfer process.

Personnel files may not be removed from or taken outside the Human Resources Department.

Representatives of government or law enforcement agencies, in the course of their business, may be allowed access to file information. The decision will be made at the discretion of the Library Director in response to the request, a legal subpoena, or court order.

Educational Background Checks

RPL routinely conducts background checks to certify appropriate credentials for certain employees upon hire once a conditional offer of employment has been extended by the hiring manager. Employees will be requested to provide the appropriate release, in compliance with Federal and state law, for RPL to obtain educational records from an employee's educational institution(s) attended. Educational information obtained from the employee's previously attended educational

institution(s) will be kept confidential and maintained in the employee's personnel file by the Human Resources Department. Information obtained from a background check may be shared by the Human Resources Department with the manager and/or supervisor conducting interviews, hiring or considering a transfer.

Criminal Background Check

RPL requires background checks for all employees once a conditional offer of employment has been extended by the hiring manager. Although a disqualification is possible, in accordance with Federal and state laws, a previous conviction does not automatically disqualify an applicant from consideration for employment with RPL. Depending on a variety of factors (i.e. nature of the conviction, length of time since illegal activity, or age of individual when illegal activity occurred); the applicant may still be eligible for employment with RPL.

If an employee and/or applicant with a conditional offer of employment, at time of application, attempts to withhold information or falsify information pertaining to previous convictions, the individual will be disqualified from further employment consideration in any position with RPL and/or may be terminated from employment due to falsification of an application.

Motor Vehicle Records Check & Vehicle Safety

Prospective employees expected to drive RPL vehicles must provide current and acceptable motor vehicle driving information. Employment and assignment will be conditional pending the receipt of a satisfactory report from the Louisiana Department of Motor Vehicles and an acceptable driving record. Any changes to an employee's driving record must be reported to the Human Resources Department immediately.

Employees who use RPL vehicles in the course of their duties are expected to observe the law, including seatbelt use. Employees are personally responsible for fines resulting from traffic violations, including moving and non-moving violations. Such fines or violations are grounds for discipline, up to and including termination. Only RPL employees are authorized to ride in or operate a RPL vehicle. Speaking on a cell phone or operating a handheld device (i.e. PDA, Blackberry, iPhone, etc.) while driving a RPL vehicle is prohibited and grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

Immigration and Naturalization

Federal law, through the Department of Homeland Security, requires that RPL and candidates for employment provide specific documents, as outlined in Section 1 of Form I-9, to establish the candidate's identity and employment eligibility within three (3) days of commencing employment, as well as complete Section 1 of Form I-9. Failure to provide the required documentation within 3 days of request and/or employment with RPL will result in termination of employment with RPL.

Internal Applicants

RPL employees are given priority consideration for open RPL employment positions, provided the employee's qualifications are equal to or exceed the qualifications of the most qualified outside

applicant. Seniority, attendance record, and disciplinary action may be taken into consideration when all other qualifications of competing employees and applicants are equal.

All employees will be notified of available internal positions via posting on the RPL website and branch bulletin boards. Interested qualified employees should notify their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department and provide an updated application if the employee's application on file is older than one year.

Hiring Process

The Library Director is hired by the Library Board of Directors. The Library Director hires, fires, evaluates and manages all staff members within the budget and policies set by the Board.

Before a decision to hire, the Human Resources Manager will conduct a criminal background check including the Louisiana Criminal History Record and a review of the Sex Offender Registry. If a candidate has been working in another state in the preceding 36 months, a criminal background check and Sex Offender Registry review will be run in that state as well. Hiring is at the discretion of the Library Director.

Letter of Employment

All Rapides Parish Library employees, full and part-time, shall receive a written letter of employment at the time of hiring stating the yearly salary or hourly wage and a description of the position and job responsibilities.

Introductory

During the first six months of employment, RPL and the new employee are given an opportunity to evaluate whether the employment relationship should continue. Before the end of the six-month period, their manager or the Human Resources Manager will notify the employee of their future employment status. After the expiration of the six month period and upon the manager's recommendation, the employee is presented to the Board of Control for ratification of employment. Neither the six-month introductory period nor the ratification will change an employee's "at-will" status. Employees are not eligible for certain benefits until the introductory period or extension of the introductory period is satisfied.

Should an employee transfer to another available position within RPL during the 6-month introductory period, the employee's date of transfer will begin anew the 6-month introductory period. Further, if an employee is absent from work for an authorized significant absence or period of time, the length of the absence will automatically extend the 6-month introductory period. RPL may extend the designated 6-month introductory period for up to an additional 6-month period should the introductory period not allow sufficient time to thoroughly evaluate the employee's performance, set goals, train or improve job skills and knowledge, and assess overall performance of the employee.

Upon satisfactory completion of the introductory period, an employee will be classified within the designated employment classification for which their job functions require.

Employee Classification

RPL policies apply to all categories of employees. Benefits and compensation are dependent on the status of employment. Part-time employees are eligible for certain benefits by specific reference only. Temporary employees are not eligible for benefits, unless mandated by law, and do not accumulate leave under RPL leave policies, unless mandated by law. “Eligible Employees” used in the following sections of this Handbook refer to “full-time employees” unless otherwise designated.

Your employment status at the Rapides Parish Library falls into one of the following classifications.

Employees will be advised as to the status of their position with the offer of employment. Employment status at RPL falls into one of the following categories:

Full-Time Employee

Employees hired full-time (30 hours per week or more) on a full workweek basis for a continuous and indefinite period of time are considered full-time employees for compensation and benefits purposes.

Part-Time Employee

Employees hired part-time work schedules that are less than a full-time employee (less than 30 hours) on a full workweek basis for a continuous and indefinite period of time are considered part-time employees for compensation and benefits purposes.

Temporary Employee

Employees hired to perform a job or to work on a project that has a defined or undefined duration. Employees in the temporary employee position include, but are not limited to, temporary replacement for full-time or part-time employees to cover vacation or other leave periods, temporary assistance such as during summer months or peak periods. Temporary employees cannot change from temporary status to any other employment status through informal means such as remaining employed for an extended period of time or through oral promises made to them by a manager or supervisor. The only manner that a temporary employee can be reclassified as part-time or full-time is through official written notice from RPL after completing an application for a full-time or part-time position and approval by the Human Resources Manager and Library Director.

Employee Categories

In accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act, there are two categories of employees — “exempt” (meaning, among other things, you are exempt from the overtime pay requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act) or “non-exempt” (meaning you are covered by the overtime requirements). Generally speaking, exempt employees are those whose jobs are primarily executive, administrative or professional in nature, as defined by federal regulations, and who are paid on a salary basis, again as defined by federal regulations.

A letter of employment will outline the exempt or non-exempt status of the position and include a list of benefits for which the position is eligible.

Non-Exempt Employees and Overtime

If you are non-exempt, you will be paid overtime, at the rate of one and one half times your regular hourly rate of pay, for any hours actually worked beyond 40 hours in a given work week. This includes non-exempt, part-time employees and means that part-time employees must work over 40 hours/week before they are eligible for overtime. Paid time off, including paid holidays, does not count as hours in the calculation of overtime hours. Non-exempt employees must obtain advance permission from the Director before working more than 40 hours in a work week.

Exempt Employees and Overtime

Exempt employees are responsible for working as many hours as necessary to get their jobs done. They often adjust their hours and work schedules in order to accommodate night meetings, travel necessary for the job, and otherwise long work days. If you are having difficulty accomplishing your responsibilities within a reasonable work week or believe you need to work excessive hours, please discuss this with your supervisor.

Employment of Relatives

An employee’s immediate family will be considered for employment on the basis of qualifications. However, an immediate family member may not be hired if:

1. A supervisor/subordinate relationship (direct or indirect) with a family member would be created;
2. An immediate family member is employed in the same department;
3. A conflict of interest is created; or
4. The potential conflict for creating an adverse impact on work performance exists.

This policy must also be considered when assigning, transferring, or promoting an employee. For the purpose of this policy, an immediate family member is a mother, father, husband, wife, alternative life-style partner, son, daughter, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, daughter-in-law, stepchild, stepsibling, stepparent, grandparent, grandchild, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece or any individual that lives in the same house, apartment or dwelling as the current employee.

Employees who marry or establish a relationship as defined above are subject to this rule. If one of the conditions outlined should occur, attempts will be made to find a suitable position within the Library to which one of the employees will be transferred. If accommodations of this nature are not feasible, the employees will be permitted to determine which of them will resign.

The Human Resources Manager may make additional accommodations under this policy, with the approval of the Library Director.

Employment of Minors

RPL fully complies with the Child Labor provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and applicable state and local laws governing the employment of minors. Should RPL employ a minor, its decision-making, scheduling, and employment of such employee will be done within the confines of all applicable Child Labor laws.

Rehire Policy

Former employees that are rehired within six months of resigning will have their previously unused sick leave reinstated, should any be remaining from their previous employment, and will have vacation and sick leave benefits calculated based on total tenure, after they have successfully completed the introductory period.

Re-instatement Rights of Military Personnel

Military personnel, including National Guard, Reserves and Coast Guard, reinstatement and reestablishment of benefits will be done in accordance with the Uniformed Soldiers Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act of 1994 and Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 and any other applicable Federal and state law.

Child Support Reporting Requirements

Federal and state law may require RPL to report basic information about employees, including name, address, Social Security numbers and pay rate information to appropriate authorities. This information may be used to enforce child support orders if the employee is determined to owe child support and RPL receives an order requiring the production of this information or to withhold money from an employee's paycheck to pay child support.

Religious Accommodation Policy

Rapides Parish Library respects the religious beliefs and practices of all employees and will make, upon request, an accommodation for such observances when a reasonable accommodation is available that does not create an undue hardship on the Library's operations.

An employee whose religious beliefs or practices conflict with his/her job, work schedule, or with the Library's policy or practice on dress and appearance, or with other aspects of employment and who seeks a religious accommodation must submit a written request for the accommodation to Human Resources. The written request will include the type of religious conflict that exists and the employee's suggested accommodation.

Human Resources will evaluate the request considering whether a work conflict exists due to a sincerely held religious belief or practice, and whether an accommodation is available which is reasonable and which would not create an undue hardship on the Library's operations. An accommodation may be a change in job, using paid leave or leave without pay, allowing an exception to the dress and appearance code which does not impact safety or uniform requirements, or for other aspects of employment. Depending on the type of conflict and suggested accommodation, Human Resources may confer with his/her manager.

Human Resources, the employee, and the department manager will meet to discuss the request and decision on an accommodation. If the employee accepts the proposed religious accommodation, the immediate supervisor will implement the decision. If the employee rejects the proposed accommodation, he/she may appeal following the Library's general grievance policy and procedure.

IV. General Policies

Attendance Policy

To maintain a safe and productive environment, RPL expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Employees should always report to work on time. Hourly employees must not clock in more than seven minutes before or after their scheduled starting time. Hourly employees should not stay more than seven minutes after their scheduled stop time without prior authorization from the Human Resources Manager or Library Director or their Assistant Director. The seven-minute-rule should not be a habit or viewed as a normal operating procedure for reporting to or leaving from work.

Absenteeism and tardiness are not acceptable. Poor attendance, excessive tardiness, or misuse of the seven-minute-rule is disruptive and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If an employee is going to be more than seven minutes late, or absent for the day, the employee must call his or her supervisor at the earliest knowledge of this tardiness or absence. If the supervisor cannot be reached the employee may call the Human Resources Department to report their tardiness or absence. Failure to notify RPL of an absence or tardiness in a timely manner will result in discipline up to and including termination.

Work Week

The workweek begins on Monday and ends on Sunday. Saturday and Sunday hours may be included.

Workplace Behavior

Resolving Issues

If an employee disagrees with RPL's established workplace standards, policies, or practices, the employee may express his or her concern through the proper problem resolution procedure discussed in this section. No one will be penalized, formally or informally, for voicing a legitimate concern in a reasonable, business-like manner, or for appropriately using this problem resolution procedure. RPL encourages its employees to discuss an employee's concerns in an open and direct manner with his or her supervisor.

If a situation occurs where an employee believes that a condition of employment or a decision affecting the employee is unjust or inequitable, the employee is encouraged to use the following steps. These steps are at the employee's discretion and may be discontinued at any time by the employee.

- Present the employee's concern to his or her immediate supervisor after the incident or concern occurs or presents itself.
- When possible, the employee's supervisor will respond to the concern, or investigate the matter and respond within a reasonable time frame.
- If the employee is not satisfied with his or her supervisor's response, the employee may request a meeting with the supervisor and Human Resources Department. Generally, this meeting should take place within 10 days of the employee's request. During this meeting, an open and frank discussion will be encouraged in discussing the nature of the employee's concern.

RPL's goal is to give the employee's concern a full and fair evaluation and to make every effort to resolve it. Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction. RPL believes that it is only through understanding and discussion of mutual concerns that RPL and its employees can develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious work environment.

Smoking Policy

In compliance with Louisiana's smoke-free workplace and clean air laws, RPL has instituted a smoke-free workplace. Additionally, RPL is a public facility, which is covered under Louisiana laws pertaining to smoke-free environments.

Smoking is prohibited in all "public areas" of the Library. "Public areas" include any indoor area of RPL's facilities, the entranceways to Library facilities, publicly accessed parking areas, and outdoor seating areas. Smoking may be permitted in an outdoor area designated by RPL at each specific facility that is not accessible by the general public.

Employees are permitted to smoke during designated break periods and lunch period only. No other “smoke breaks” are permitted while working. Smoking during a non-designated break period or lunch period, and/or smoking in a “smoke-free” area may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

RPL will not discriminate against any employee because of the decision to use tobacco products, however, RPL has an affirmative duty under Louisiana law to implement the smoke-free law and thereby protect the rights of its non-smoking employees and the general public from being exposed to second-hand smoke.

Personal Appearance, Hygiene and Dress Standards

Each employee shall maintain an acceptable level of professional personal appearance and hygiene appropriate to their position as an employee serving the public. The responsibility for selecting appropriate clothing rests with the employee. Employees are also asked to be “scent-free” to the extent possible in order to be sensitive to the needs of other employees and the public.

As representatives of RPL and Rapides Parish, all employees have the responsibility to dress and maintain appropriate personal hygiene and appearance in a manner appropriate to the work situation.

RPL has adopted a business attire policy for all employees. The minimum standard of dress shall be tasteful business casual clothing. Please follow sound judgment when selecting business attire.

Visitors in the Workplace

All employees are responsible for being aware of their surroundings and recognizing questionable individuals in their workplace. To provide for the safety and security of all employees, customers and the facilities at RPL, only authorized visitors and vendors are allowed in restricted areas. Restricting unauthorized visitors helps maintain safety standards, protects against theft, and ensures security of equipment.

All customers and visitors, including family members, should enter the Main Library and all Branches at the designated entrances. In restricted areas, authorized visitors will receive directions or be escorted to their destinations. Employees are responsible for the conduct and safety of their visitors.

If an unauthorized or questionable individual is observed in a restricted area on RPL’s premises, employees should immediately address the situation or notify a supervisor or someone in authority to handle the situation properly. Family members may visit on occasion as long as they do not interfere with Library operations and productivity. Socializing is to be conducted in a lounge area, when available.

Workplace Violence



Policy Statement

RPL has a policy of zero tolerance for violence. The purpose of this policy is to provide a safe workplace free from aggressive, threatening, or violent acts. RPL expressly prohibits any acts or threats of violence (verbal or physical) by any employee, former employee, or person affiliated or related to a current or former employee, against any other person on any RPL property, including other employees, customers, vendors or visitors.

If an employee engages in any acts of violence, including threats of violence, as described below, employment will be terminated immediately.

Acts or Threats of Violence Defined

For purposes of this policy, “violence” includes threats or threatening behavior or conduct against persons or property that is sufficiently severe, offensive or intimidating to alter the employment conditions at RPL and/or creates a hostile, abusive or intimidating work environment for one or more employees or customers. The following definitions are intended to provide further guidance:

- “Threat” includes a communicated intent to inflict physical or other harm on any person or property.
- “Threatening Behavior” is any behavior that is provoking and unsafe, which by its very nature could cause physical or other harm to any person or property. It may or may not include an actual physical attack.
- “Physical Attack” - Aggression resulting in a physical assault with or without the use of a weapon.

Specific Examples of Prohibited Conduct

Specific examples of conduct that may be considered “threats or acts of violence” prohibited under this policy include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Hitting or shoving an individual;
- Threatening to harm an individual or his or her family, friends, employees, customers or property;
- Intentional destruction or threat of destruction of property owned, operated or controlled by RPL;
- Making harassing or threatening telephone calls, letters, Email messages, or other forms of written or electronic communications;
- Harassing surveillance, also known as “stalking”, is the willful, malicious and repeated following of another person and creating a credible threat with intent to place the other person in reasonable fear of his or her safety; and,
- Unauthorized possession or inappropriate use of firearms, weapons, or any other dangerous devices on RPL property.

Responsibilities and Implementation

In keeping with the spirit and intent of this policy, and to ensure that RPL's objectives in this regard are attained, it is the responsibility of both the RPL and all employees to help prevent violence in the workplace. It is the commitment of RPL to:

- Take prompt and remedial action, up to and including termination, against any employee who engages in any of the conduct defined above.
- Take appropriate action in dealing with customers, former employees, vendors or visitors to RPL facilities who engage in such behaviors. Such action may include notifying the police or other law enforcement personnel and prosecuting violators of this policy to the maximum extent of the law.
- Prohibit employees, former employees, customers, vendors and visitors from bringing unauthorized firearms or other weapons onto RPL's premises.
- Establish appropriate security measures at the property to promote safety and security.

It is everyone's business to prevent workplace violence. Employees can help by reporting their observation of the types of conduct described in this policy, or any other behaviors that could indicate that a co-worker (or someone else on the property) is in trouble to a supervisor, Branch Manager, Library Director, Human Resources Manager or Assistant Library Director. Employees reports made pursuant to this policy will be held in confidence to the maximum extent possible. RPL does not tolerate any form of retaliation by anyone against any employee making such a report.

Office Environment

Rapides Parish Library strives to maintain professional, orderly, clean, and healthy work spaces for its employees and members of the public that visit us. All employees are required to maintain their individual workstations and offices in this way. In addition, everyone is responsible for contributing to the upkeep of communal work and meeting areas, bathrooms, and the break area.

V. Employee Ethics

RPL Credit Card Usage

Because of their job responsibilities, certain employees are assigned a credit card (or access to a credit account) that is to be used only for purchases for RPL. Employees with a credit card (or access to a credit account) will provide the Business Manager with the original receipt for each purchase made immediately after the charge has been made. The employee should keep a copy of each receipt for their records. If the employee loses or misplaces the receipt, the employee should contact the vendor and request a duplicate copy.

When charges have been made in connection with a trip involving the use of a Travel/Expense Reimbursement form, the receipt should be attached to the form and sent in at the conclusion of the trip.

Credit card purchases over \$1,000 are required to have a purchase order number assigned by the Business Manager. The employee is to contact the Business Manager before making the purchase.

Purchases made by an employee without providing a receipt to the Business Manager are not allowed.

Purchases made for items other than RPL purposes are not permitted. If an employee intentionally or otherwise uses the credit card for personal use, the following procedure will be used:

1. The Business Manager or his or her representative will notify the employee that a non-RPL charge has been posted to the account and will furnish the employee with a copy of the charge;
2. The employee is required to reimburse RPL within three (3) days of notification or before RPL makes payment to the credit account, whichever occurs first;
3. The Business Manager will notify the Human Resources Manager of the employee's improper use of RPL credit.

Should the employee be terminated or resign prior to reimbursement to RPL of personal charges on an RPL credit card (or account), the employee agrees that this amount will be deducted from his or her final compensation owed to the employee by RPL to the maximum extent permitted by law.

Failure to comply with this policy may terminate the employee's ability to maintain an RPL-issued credit card (or access to a credit account) and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

VI. Technology Usage Policy

Technology Usage

RPL provides computers and other technology to some of its employees, including portable computers, portable devices, servers, email systems, voicemail systems, local area networks, wireless networks, intranets, internets, printers, software, and removable storage media to assist in timely and efficient communications and work product ("RPL-technologies"). These electronic tools and other technologies are owned by RPL and are provided for business use only. All messages, documents and other information and data entered, created, received, reviewed, stored or communicated are the property of RPL. Employees who use or have access to RPL-provided technologies are responsible for using these technologies in compliance with this Section's policies. Abuse of usage of any RPL-technologies will result in disciplinary actions, up to and including termination, as well as, where conduct engaged in is illegal, the employee may be subject to prosecution under applicable federal, state, or local laws, or reporting by RPL to the appropriate

law enforcement authorities. External software must be loaded only by members of the Information Technology Department.

RPL-technologies are for business use only, except for limited personal usage delineated below. Employees should have no expectation of privacy in connection with use of RPL-technologies, including creation, transmission, receipt or storage of information via RPL-technologies or the Internet.

Employees should be aware that RPL may purge files on its computers any time with or without notice. RPL is not responsible for the loss of any files deleted, altered, or damages during its normal course of maintenance of RPL-technologies.

Employees are permitted to use RPL-technologies available to the public in its libraries after the employee's work hours. Employee's usage will be monitored and handled in accordance with RPL policies applicable to customer usage of RPL's publicly available computers and other technologies. Employees will continue to be held to the standards of this Handbook, as well as standards set forth for customer usage when using RPL publicly available computers and other technologies on non-work time.

Network drives for filing documents and storing information are identified. Accessing files on network drives, remote access drives or file transfer protocols (ftps) that are not related to the performance of an employee's job assignment is inappropriate behavior under this policy and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

No employee may duplicate any licensed software or related documentation for use either on RPL's property or elsewhere, unless RPL has been expressly authorized to do so by agreement with the licensor. Unauthorized duplication of software may subject users and/or RPL to both civil and criminal penalties under the United States Copyright Act.

Employees, unless authorized by their job assignment or the Systems Manager., may not load, download, execute or install any software programs, including Shareware, free software (including such programs as Windows Media Player, iTunes, WinAmp, and other programs) onto RPL-technologies. No employee may purchase software for RPL-technologies without the approval of the Library Director and Systems Manager unless their job assignment requires such purchases to be made for which only the Systems Manager's approval is required. Only designated employees are permitted to install, delete, alter, execute, download or load approved programs onto RPL-technologies.

RPL-technologies may not be used to violate any law, including, but not limited to, copyright laws. No discriminatory/harassing or otherwise offensive usage of RPL-technologies is permitted.

Solicitation and distribution of non-business related items is strictly prohibited on RPL-technologies.

Employees consent to RPL's right to monitor/search RPL-technologies used by or in the possession of any employee.

Internet Usage

Internet usage for non-business related functions is prohibited. RPL understands that minimum usage may occur from time-to-time, but, continued usage of the Internet for non-business related purposes will subject an employee to disciplinary actions, up to and including termination. Minimum usage does not include time consuming or inappropriate usage in violation of the anti-harassment policy or other policies contained in this handbook. Employee's work time is to be used for the purpose of completing job assignments and work related to RPL's business. Personal access and usage of the Internet is the equivalent of taking an unauthorized break. Continued misuse of the Internet, or personal usage is inappropriate and unacceptable.

Employees are strictly prohibited from copying, reproducing, downloading, uploading, displaying, receiving, or sending any materials that may be copyright protected. RPL does not condone the illegal duplication of software, music, publications, or other copyrighted materials and will not tolerate violations of the US Copyright Act. Employees violating this rule will be subject to discipline, up to and including termination, as well as criminal prosecution for such behaviors.

Employees are prohibited from posting, commenting, or participating in online chats, blogs, bulletin boards, or other online community environments unless these environments are business related.

Employees consent and understand that RPL has the right to remotely-monitor, record, review or use other technologies to investigate an employee's personal Internet usage.

Social Media Policy

Social Media has become a primary means of information distribution for the Rapides Parish Library, its patrons, and its employees. The purpose of this **LIBRARY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY** is to clearly define boundaries for publications through social media.

Definition of Social Media. Social Media is defined as any electronic communication service that allows users to create or join online communities to share, for example, ideas, messages, pictures, videos, and other content. This includes social and professional networking services. Examples of Social Media include Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube and LinkedIn.

Definition of Publications. Social Media platforms allow users to transmit communications through Publications commonly referred to as "posting" or "posts" which set forth, for example, hyperlinks, picture, text, video, or written communications that are shared via various Social Media networks.

The RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY addresses three (3) specific uses of social media:

1. Official publications of the Rapides Parish Library;
2. Publications by patrons of the Rapides Parish Library on social media sites hosted by the Rapides Parish Library; and

3. Publications made by employees of the Rapides Parish Library on social media in their individual exercise of free speech.

Official Publications of the Rapides Parish Library

Only persons authorized by the Director can publish information of any nature and kind on the Library's official website and other websites as well as social media platforms affiliated or associated with THE RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY. Likewise, only persons authorized by the Director can publish information of any nature and kind on any other social media site, which sets forth or could be construed to be an official communication of the RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY.

Publications by Patrons on Social Media Hosted by the Rapides Parish Library

All publications made by the public on the Rapides Parish Library's social media forums are the opinions or views of the patron and not the opinion or view of THE RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY. Just as patrons must follow rules in the Rapides Parish Library's physical branches, patrons must likewise follow the same rules when posting on library social media forums. The Rapides Parish Library reserves the right to remove users' posts wholly or in part if the Library deems the information to be any of the following:

- Advertisements
- Spam
- Obscenity
- Abusive, profane, threatening, hateful, pornographic, or violent
- Containing privileged or proprietary information
- Violating any local, state, or federal laws, including intellectual property laws, or violating any rule or policy of the Rapides Parish Library.

Repeated violations may result in a patron, group, or organization being blocked from commenting, posting, or otherwise interacting with the Rapides Parish Library's social media account(s).

Employee Social Media Publications

THE RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY respects each employee's freedom of speech and individual expression of views. However, no employee is permitted to publish anything that states, implies, or could reasonably be interpreted to imply that their publication is made in the employee's professional capacity and not in their personal capacity unrelated to THE RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY.

Library employees who choose to participate in social media should be clear in all publications that the information, opinions, or views expressed in their publications are personal to the individual posting and should not be attributed to THE RAPIDES PARISH LIBRARY. Only the Library Director, or an individual the

Library Director has delegated with the authority to speak on behalf of the Library, may provide official publications on social media.

Employee publication of damaging comments, unauthorized images of library patrons, activities, employees, facilities, programs, events, displays, or resources is strictly forbidden and is subject to disciplinary action including immediate termination of employment.

Section 6- Internet Usage: Approved by Library Board January 21, 2020.

Cellular Phones and Mobile Handheld Devices

Use of personal cellular phones, mobile handheld devices (such as Blackberries, iPhones, Sidekicks, PSP2, etc.) are prohibited during work hours. Personal cell phone and handheld usage should be conducted before and after work or during designated break periods or lunch periods. Usage of these devices includes, but is not limited to:

- Making and/or receiving telephone calls;
- Using the device as a two-way radio communicator;
- Using text-messaging, Short Message Service (SMS), or instant messaging services;
- Reviewing, receiving or sending Emails;
- Web-browsing, Internet usage or other media forms;
- Viewing videos or pictures;
- Making videos or taking pictures with the device;
- Playing games;
- Or accessing any other feature of the device.

Personal cell phone and handheld device usage during work time may be permitted during emergency situations.

RPL Cellular Phones and Handheld Devices

Certain employees, due to their job responsibilities, are assigned a cell phone and/or handheld device that is to be used in the course of carrying out the employee's assignments and job duties.

RPL's Business Manager will assign and furnish each cell phone and/or handheld device user with a copy of the detailed billing each month. The user should review the billing and notify the Business Manager of the following:

1. Approval of the business calls that are listed;
2. Notification of any charges that were not authorized by the user;
3. Notification of any charges that are personal calls made or received by the user.

Charges that occur as a result of personal calls or usage are to be reimbursed by the employee within three (3) RPL working days or before payment is due to the cell phone or providing company, whichever comes first.

Failure to reimburse RPL for personal calls or usage can make the employee subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Employees must return all RPL-provided cell phones and/or handheld devices on demand of RPL, or at the termination of the employee's employment. Failure to return an RPL-provided handheld device on demand or at the termination of the employee's employment will result in a deduction of the value of the cell phone or handheld device from the employee's next scheduled payment for compensation.

Inappropriate or offensive usage of an RPL-cell phone and/or handheld device, including inappropriate phone calls, text-messaging, photos, videos, Internet usage and/or Emails, is strictly prohibited. Such usage will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Voicemail and Email

RPL's voicemail and email systems, including messages delivered and sent on the systems, are the property of RPL. RPL maintains these systems to assist in the conduct of RPL business. These systems, including the equipment and data stored in the systems, are and remain at all times the property of RPL. All messages created, sent, received or stored in the systems are and remain the property of RPL. Limited, occasional or incidental use of the voicemail and email systems for personal, non-business purposes is understandable and unavoidable at times. However, employees should demonstrate a sense of responsibility. Personal usage should be limited to the maximum extent—multiple messages and/or emails during a single day is unacceptable for the most part. At no time should an RPL-assigned email address be used as an employee's primary email address, provided to non-RPL employees for non-business related matters (including using such for registration on external non-RPL websites), or used to conduct social, causal or other non-business related purposes. Continued usage of the systems for personal use beyond an acceptable usage rate determined by RPL Management or dissemination or use of an employee's email address for non-business purposes, may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

RPL has the right to inspect, examine, review, and monitor the use of its voicemail, Email, networks, and telephone systems and to retrieve and review any message composed, sent or received, with or without prior notice. Messages that are deleted or erased can be recreated, therefore, absolute privacy of messages cannot be ensured. Accordingly, employees should consider the use of face-to-face communications or the use of outside telephone lines when absolute confidentiality is required. While voicemail and email may accommodate the use of passwords for security, confidentiality cannot be guaranteed.

Messages may not contain content that may reasonably be considered offensive or disruptive to any employee or to RPL's business. Offensive or disruptive content may include, but is not limited to:

1. Messages of a personal nature;
2. Advertising or conducting personal business or personal enterprises or business related to an entity other than RPL;

3. Soliciting; or,
4. Vulgar, profane, insulting or sexual comments or images, racial slurs, gender-specific comments or any comments that would offend someone on the basis of his or her race, age, sex, sexual orientation, religious or political beliefs, military service, national origin, disability or other reasons.

Employees learning of any misuse or that are subjected to misuse of the voicemail or email system or in violation of this policy shall immediately notify the Human Resources Manager.

Employees may not attempt to read, “hack” into other systems or other people’s logins, or “crack” passwords, or breach computer or network measures, or monitor electronic files or communications of other employees, customers, or third parties, except by explicit written permission by the Human Resources Manager and Library Director. No voicemail, email or other electronic communications may be sent which attempts to hide the identity of the sender, or represent the sender as someone else. RPL employees who obtain electronic access to non-RPL materials must respect all copyrights and may not copy, retrieve, modify or forward copyrighted materials except as permitted by the copyright owner or law.

VII. Drug & Alcohol Policy

Drug & Alcohol Policy

It is the intent of RPL to provide a working environment free from the use of non-prescribed drugs and alcohol. Given the potential hazards to the safety of fellow employees and others and the potential exposure of liability caused by employees who use or abuse controlled substances or alcohol, RPL has adopted the following policy:

The following activities are prohibited on RPL property, during working hours, or in RPL vehicles:

- The sale, manufacture, distribution, purchase, transfer, use or possession of, or reporting to work or working while impaired by intoxicants, non-prescribed narcotics, hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana, or other illegal drugs or non-prescribed prescription drugs.
- The distribution, sale, purchase or use, or possession of equipment, products, and materials that are used, intended for use, or designed for use with intoxicants, illegal drugs, and non-prescribed drugs.
- Reporting to or being at work with a measurable quantity of intoxicants, non-prescribed narcotics, hallucinogenic drugs, marijuana, or other illegal drugs or non-prescribed prescription drugs in blood or urine.
- Reporting to or being at work with a measurable quantity of prescribed drugs where, in the opinion of RPL, such use prevents you from performing the duties of the employee’s job or poses a risk to the employee’s safety or the safety of other persons or property.

All job applicants, including applications to transfer or be promoted, to whom any offer of employment, transfer or promotion is made, must undergo pre-employment testing for the presence of illegal drugs as a condition of employment. If the test results are positive, the job offer

will be withdrawn. In the case of a transfer or promotion, positive test results may result in termination of employment with RPL.

Where not prohibited by law, employees may be requested to undergo a blood test, urinalysis, Breathalyzer test, or other diagnostic test under any of the following circumstances:

1. Where RPL has reason to believe you are impaired by intoxicants, non-prescribed drugs, or narcotics while on RPL property or during working hours, or that you have reported to work with a measurable quantity of intoxicants, non-prescribed drugs, or narcotics in blood or urine. The following circumstances could cause reasonable suspicion:
 - Observed substance abuse
 - Apparent physical state of impairment
 - Incoherent mental state
 - Abnormal conduct or erratic behavior
 - A report of substance abuse from a reliable and credible source
 - Arrest or conviction for a drug-related offense, or identification of an employee as the focus of a criminal investigation into illegal drug possession, use, or trafficking.
2. Where you are involved in an on-the-job accident
3. After any unusual event that RPL believes may indicate a violation of this policy.
4. Involvement in an accident while in the scope and course of employment while operating an RPL vehicle, or operating a private vehicle in the performance of library duties at the time of an accident.

Any employee may be tested for drug and alcohol on a random and periodic basis from the entire employee pool in accordance with state and federal laws.

Where RPL has reason to believe you are under the influence of intoxicants, non-prescribed drugs, or narcotics, or are in the possession of any intoxicant, non-prescribed drugs, narcotics, or equipment, products and materials which are used, intended for use, or designed for use with non-prescribed controlled substances, you may be required, as a condition of employment, to submit to a search by an RPL representative of your person and/or property, including but not limited to offices, desks, lockers, and storage areas.

An employee's refusal to submit immediately to a search of the employee's person or property or to a blood test, urinalysis, breathalyzer test, or other diagnostic test or a positive result on such test(s) indicating use of intoxicants, non-prescribed drugs, or narcotics may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Violation of the Drug and Alcohol Policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Where available evidence warrants, RPL may bring matters of illegal drug or alcohol use to the attention of appropriate law enforcement authorities.

Any employee who tests positive for the first time and any employee who comes forward without incident and voluntarily admits having an alcohol and/or drug abuse problem and agrees to seek treatment and/or counseling with a certified substance abuse rehabilitation program, and signs an agreement not to abuse drugs and/or alcohol in their continued employment with RPL will be

granted up to ninety days of leave of absence according to applicable federal and state laws and/or RPL policy regarding leaves of absence. Failure to successfully complete a certified substance abuse rehabilitation program can result in termination of employment.

The conviction of any employee under any criminal drug statute, or failure to notify RPL, through its Human Resources Manager, of any arrest and/or conviction under any criminal drug statute within five days after the arrest and/or conviction can be grounds for immediate termination of employment with RPL.

Any testing facility being used by RPL to conduct drug and alcohol screenings will be a facility that meets all of the legal requirements of the state of Louisiana and Federal laws for such testing and screening.

Compliance with this policy is a condition of employment and continued employment with RPL.

Illegal drugs include those controlled substances under federal or state law, which are not authorized for sale, possession, or use and legal drugs, which are obtained or distributed illegally.

The legal and proper use of controlled substances prescribed by a licensed physician is not prohibited provide it does not affect an employee's ability to perform the employee's work. If an employee is taking a prescription drug that may impair the employee's ability to perform the employee's job, the employee should notify his or her superior or Human Resources Manager regarding this prescription. If necessary and upon request, an employee shall furnish RPL with the physician's statement regarding the possible/probable side effects of this medication. Abuse of prescription drugs resulting in performance deviation will be treated as substance abuse.

Due to variations of situations and at times a necessity to at times accommodate individual situations, the provisions of this policy or of any related policies, practices or guidelines may not apply to every employee in every situation. RPL reserves the right to rescind, modify, or deviate from this policy, as it considers necessary in its sole discretion, with or without notice.

Off Duty Workplace Communication

Under the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt (hourly) employees must be paid for all hours worked, no matter where or when the hours are worked, as long as the employer is benefitting from the work performed. Each employee is budgeted for a certain number of hours per year, and managers are responsible for scheduling employees in keeping with the budget. Therefore, non-exempt employees are not permitted to work from home or outside of regular hours without advance approval from their supervisors. This includes reading or responding to work email, taking work home, making phone calls, or any other work-related tasks. Questions should be directed to your supervisor.

VIII. Attendance, Leave & Vacation Policies

Punctuality

To maintain a safe and productive environment, RPL expects employees to be reliable and punctual in reporting for scheduled work. Employees should always report to work on time. Hourly employees must not clock in more than seven minutes before or after their scheduled starting time. Hourly employees should not stay more than seven minutes after their scheduled stop time without prior authorization from the Human Resources Manager or Library Director or their Assistant Director. The seven-minute-rule should not be a habit or viewed as a normal operating procedure for reporting to or leaving from work.

Absenteeism and tardiness are not acceptable. Poor attendance, excessive tardiness, or misuse of the seven-minute-rule is disruptive and may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

If an employee is going to be more than seven minutes late, or absent for the day, the employee must call his or her supervisor at the earliest knowledge of this tardiness or absence. If the supervisor cannot be reached the employee may call the Human Resources Department to report their tardiness or absence. Failure to notify RPL of an absence or tardiness in a timely manner will result in discipline up to and including termination.

No Show, No Call

Employees who miss three consecutive days of work without providing notification of the employee's absence to RPL will be considered to have resigned their position with RPL.

Military Leave

Military personnel, including National Guard, Reserves and Coast Guard, are permitted leave in accordance with the Uniformed Soldiers Employment and Re-Employment Rights Act of 1994 and Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004 and any other applicable Federal and state law. Employees applying for military leave of absence are required to fill out RPL's "Leave of Absence Request" form, unless prohibited or impossible based on military security consistent with the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA).

Sick Leave

Employees accrue sick leave as follows:

- All regular full-time and part-time employees accrue sick leave from the date of hire at the rate of 120 hours per year prorated. During the introductory period, eligible employees do accrue sick leave.
- Employees may carry forward from the previous year any accrued and unused sick leave. In no event shall an employee hired after 12/31/2006 carry forward more than 640 hours or the total hours accrued as of 5/17/2016, whichever is greater.

Sick leave may be used in accordance with the following provisions:

- Sick leave may not be used prior to accrual.
- If sick leave is exhausted, any available vacation leave or other paid time off, including compensation time, will be used in its place.
- Sick leave may be used for an employee's personal illness, well-care and medical and dental appointments. Sick leave also may be used for illness and well-care of a member of an employee's immediate family. An immediate family member includes: spouse, child (biological, adopted, foster, stepchild, legal ward), a parent or a person "in loco parentis", sister, brother, grandchild, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, step-mother and step-father.
- The Director may use his or her discretion to grant leave in other cases.
- An employee who has a sick leave absence in excess of three consecutive work days must present medical documentation for the absence. This documentation should be submitted to their supervisor and Human Resource Administrator prior to returning to work.
- If the employee is absent unexpectedly due to personal or a family member's illness, the employee should notify his or her supervisor or the Human Resource Administrator as soon as reasonably possible.
- Prior permission for use of sick leave should be sought from an employee's supervisor or the Human Resources Administrator for a foreseen extended medical reason.
- Employees are not paid for unused sick leave upon termination of employment.

Should an employee not accrue enough sick leave, vacation time, or other paid time off, including compensation time, the employee may seek a leave of absence without pay under the Family and Medical Leave Act. See the following *Section 9:05 Family Medical Leave Act* for questions and policies governing this leave.

Section 8-Sick Leave: Approved by Library Board May 17, 2016.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) is a federal law which came into effect August 5, 1993. It requires employers to grant employees up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave for specified family and medical reasons within a specified period of 12 months. RPL will measure the "rolling" 12-month period as a backward rolling 12-month period measured from the date an employee begins leave under the policy.

Eligibility

To be eligible for FMLA benefits, an employee must have been employed for at least twelve (12) months and have worked for at least 1,250 hours during the 12-month period immediately preceding the start of the leave.

Qualified Leave Reasons

FMLA leave will be granted to eligible employees for the following reasons:

- a. The employee's serious health condition;
- b. The birth and care of the employee's child;
- c. Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care;
- d. Care of the employee's spouse, child, or parent with a serious health condition;
- e. Because of a "qualifying exigency" relating to the active-duty status or call to active-duty in the armed forces of a spouse, son, daughter, or parent of the employee, including those contingencies set forth in the applicable regulations, summarized as follows:
 - 1. short-notice deployment;
 - 2. military events and related activities;
 - 3. to arrange for childcare, or provide childcare on an urgent basis, or for school activities;
 - 4. to make financial or legal arrangements;
 - 5. to attend counseling;
 - 6. to spend time with the service member while on short-term leave;
 - 7. for post-deployment activities; and
 - 8. for other activities in accordance with the regulations.
- f. Because care is required for a family member or next of kin who is a member of the armed forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, or is otherwise in outpatient status on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness.

Leave for the birth and care, or placement and care of a child must conclude within 12 months of the birth or placement of the child. FMLA applies equally to male and female employees.

Definitions

- a. **Serious Health Condition** means an illness, injury, impairment, or physical or mental condition that involves either:
 - 1. inpatient care in a hospital, hospice or residential medical care facility, or
 - 2. continuing treatment by a health care provider.
- b. **Continuing treatment** means, in broad terms:
 - 1. A period of incapacity (i.e., inability to work, attend school or perform other regular daily activities due to the serious health condition, treatment thereof, or recovery there from) of more than three (3) consecutive calendar days (and any subsequent treatment or period of incapacity involving the same condition) involving treatment two or more times by a health care provider (within 30 days of the incapacity) or treatment by a health care provider on at least one occasion that results in a regimen of continuing treatment under the health care provider's supervision.
 - 2. Any period of incapacity due to pregnancy or prenatal care.

3. Any period of incapacity or treatment for such incapacity due to a chronic serious health condition that requires periodic visits for treatment by a health care provider; continues over an extended period of time; and may cause episodic rather than continuing incapacity (e.g., asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, etc.).
 4. A period of incapacity that is permanent or long-term due to a condition for which treatment may not be effective (e.g., Alzheimer's, severe stroke, terminal stages of a disease).
 5. Any period of absence to receive multiple treatments by a health care provider either for restorative surgery after an accident or injury or for a condition that would likely result in a period of incapacity of more than three consecutive calendar days in the absence of medical intervention or treatment (e.g., chemotherapy for cancer, physical therapy for severe arthritis, or dialysis for kidney disease).
- c. **Parent** means the biological parent of an employee or an individual who stands or stood in the place of a parent to an employee when the employee was a child.
 - d. **Child** means a biological, adopted, or foster child, a stepchild, a legal ward, or a child of a person standing in the place of a parent, who is under 18 years of age or 18 years of age or older and incapable of self-care because of a mental or physical disability.
 - e. **Health Care Provider** means a physician, dentist, podiatrist, clinical psychologist, or optometrist who is authorized to practice medicine or surgery in the state in which the individual practices his/her profession.
 - f. **Next of Kin** means nearest blood relative.
 - g. **Covered service member** means a member of the United States armed forces, National Guard, or Reserves.
 - h. **Serious Injury or Illness** means an injury or illness incurred by a covered service member in the line of duty on active duty that may render him or her unfit to perform the duties of his or her office, grade, rank, or rating.

Notice and Scheduling Requirements

Employees seeking FMLA leave should contact their supervisor and the Human Resource Administrator. The employee should provide at least 30 days prior written notice of the proposed leave. Where advance notice is not possible, such as in the event of a medical emergency, notice should be given as soon as practicable.

Employees using intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule must make a reasonable effort to avoid disrupting operations, including scheduling doctor's appointments outside of work hours. An employee using intermittent leave due to medical necessity should notify his/her supervisor as soon as he/she knows that he/she will be unable to work, but no later than the starting time of the staff member's work day. A staff member must notify his/her supervisor on each day of absence unless other arrangements have been made.

Failure to follow this policy may delay or postpone the commencement of the leave and/or result in disciplinary action. Please contact the Human Resource Administrator for the applicable forms.

Certification By Health Care Provider

If FMLA leave is based on a serious health condition, whether it involves the employee or a family member (parent, spouse or child), medical certification from a health care provider will be required. Failure to provide such certification may result in a delay of the employee's leave. The required certification must be provided within twenty (15) calendar days of the request. Please contact the Human Resource Administrator for available medical certification forms. Employees should be aware that under certain circumstances, recertification of a medical condition may be required. In addition, employees may be required to report on their intent to return to work. Whenever an employee learns of a change in the anticipated length of a FMLA leave, the employee must notify the Human Resource Administrator within two (2) business days of learning of such a change.

If a leave request is based on a qualifying exigency due to active duty service or a call to active duty service, the employee may be required to provide a copy of the active duty order or other appropriate documentation, as well as certification and documentation from the employee containing information supporting the qualifying exigency. When leave is taken to care for a covered service member, the employee may be required to provide certification from an authorized health care provider.

When returning to work from a leave taken because of the employee's own serious health condition, the employee will be required to provide a completed Request to Return from FMLA Leave from the treating physician prior to reporting back to the workplace.

Length of Leave

Eligible employees may be entitled to up to twelve (12) weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period (which period is measured backward from the date an employee uses any FMLA leave). Each time an employee takes FMLA leave, the remaining leave entitlement equals the balance of the 12 weeks that has not been used during the immediately preceding 12 months.

Where both spouses are employed, they are each entitled to 12 weeks of FMLA leave for the birth and care of their newborn child, or for the care and placement with them of a child for adoption or foster care.

An eligible employee who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member shall be entitled to a total of 26 workweeks of FMLA leave during a 12-month period to care for the service member. The leave in this paragraph shall only be available during a single 12-month period, though that leave entitlement shall be applied on a per-covered-service member, per-injury basis.

In certain circumstances, employees may take intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule. Intermittent leave or leave on a reduced schedule may be taken whenever medically necessary to care for a seriously ill family member or because of the employee's own serious health condition.

Leave

FMLA leave is to be taken after all leave has been exhausted. FMLA leave is unpaid. While on FMLA leave, the employee will be allowed to elect COBRA to continue their health and dental insurance coverage. During any unpaid FMLA leave, sick leave and paid time off will not accrue. For those persons returning from any unpaid FMLA leave, accrual of paid time off and sick leave will resume the first of the month which follows or coincides with the date the individual returns to active work.

Return From Leave

Normally, employees returning from medical leave will be reinstated to the same or an equivalent position, with equivalent pay, benefits and other terms and conditions of employment.

Employees returning from leave for a serious health condition must also provide supervisors with a certification from a health care provider documenting their fitness to return to work (Request to Return from FMLA). Employees who are unable to return to work at the end of the leave should notify their supervisor in writing at least two weeks in advance and must have the physician re-certify that the leave is medically necessary.

RPL will not discriminate against any employee seeking to qualify for leave or access leave under the FMLA, nor will RPL retaliate against any employee seeking to qualify for leave, return from leave or seek redress under FMLA.

An employee who fraudulently obtains an FMLA leave is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Section 8-Return from Leave: Approved by Library Board April 15, 2014.

Vacation Leave

Vacation leave is provided by RPL to all full-time and part-time employees. Vacation time varies according to job classification, length of employment and hours worked in a workweek. Vacation leave is based on a 40-hour workweek and will be prorated accordingly to the hours worked each week for non-exempt employees.

Employees must have accrued vacation leave in order to seek vacation leave. Vacation leave must be approved by the employee's immediate supervisor. When possible, vacation leave must be requested two weeks prior to the employee's desired date of leave should a Substitution Worker be required for the position. All other requests for vacation leave must be submitted at least two days prior to the desired date of leave.

Vacation leave is a vested benefit of RPL employees and therefore, upon termination of employment (based on resignation, involuntary termination or death) an employee or the employee's succession/estate will be paid at the employee's base hourly rate for each unused accrued vacation hour.

An employee may carry forward up to the maximum eligible amount of vacation leave that an employee earns each fiscal year at the end of the fiscal year, December 31. The Library Director

In addition to these observances, all full-time library staff will receive four floater days totaling 32 hours to observe personal and/or religious holidays not covered by closures. **Approved by Library Board August 17, 2021**

If you are regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week and a holiday falls on your regularly scheduled day of work, you will receive pro-rated holiday pay for that day, based on your regularly scheduled hours.

Full-time and part-time employees are also provided an additional four “floating” holidays per year which can be taken anytime during the year. Floating holidays not used by year end will be forfeited and cannot be carried forward. An employee must follow RPL’s policy for requesting vacation leave in order to use their floating holiday, including at least a two-day prior notice before taking the floating holiday. New employees must complete their introductory period to be eligible for their first floating holiday.

If you are regularly scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week, the floating holiday will be paid on a pro-rated basis based on your regularly scheduled hours. If an employee normally works more than the amount listed for the day he or she elects to take off from work, the employee must take vacation leave in order to be absent for the entire workday.

Bereavement Leave

In the event of a death in the family, RPL provides employees with paid bereavement leave, which is separate from vacation or any other leave. At the discretion of the employee’s supervisor and the Human Resources Manager, an employee may take up to three days of paid leave upon the death of a member of the immediate family or household, prorated based on the employee’s regularly scheduled hours. Immediate family includes: spouse, life partner, mother, father, wife, husband, child, brother, sister, grandchild, grandparent, father-in-law, mother-in-law, sister-in-law, and brother-in-law.

RPL realizes that certain extenuating circumstances may require additional time away from work. Should additional days be necessary and granted, it will be at the discretion of RPL to pay an employee’s prorated hours for those additional days. If an employee believes that additional time is necessary, please discuss this with the Human Resources Manager. RPL may request proof of the employee’s relationship in order to grant paid bereavement leave.

Jury Duty and Subpoenaed Witness

RPL encourages and supports employee participation when an employee is summoned to serve as a juror or subpoenaed as a witness. Employees must notify their immediate supervisor and the Human Resources Department upon receiving a jury summons or subpoena. Employees acting as a defendant, plaintiff or intervener in a lawsuit or other legal proceeding are not covered under this policy.

To help an employee participate in jury duty, RPL will pay the employee’s regular day’s pay for jury duty.

To qualify for this benefit, the employee must submit a copy of the jury summons before attending, and, upon return to work include written proof that the employee served as a jury member or was retained for jury duty.

While jury duty is an important civic duty, RPL may have to request the employee's release from duty in certain limited circumstances where there would be a major disruption of workflow due to the employee's absence.

Should an employee be called as a witness in a legal proceeding, RPL will permit the employee time off to attend the legal proceeding during the day in which the employee is needed as a witness. Employees will not be paid for their time away from the work to attend a legal proceeding as a witness. Employees may, but are not required by RPL, to use vacation time, sick leave or any other available paid time off the employee may have accrued. However, failure to provide the subpoena two weeks prior to the scheduled date and/or failure to provide a notice of attendance as a witness upon return to work will result in use of vacation or other accrued paid time off for the employee's absence to be a witness in the legal proceeding.

An employee must request a subpoena from the party requesting him or her to be a witness in the legal proceeding. The employee must present the subpoena to the Human Resources Department at least two weeks prior to the scheduled date he or she is required to act as a witness in the legal proceeding. Upon return to work, the employee must present a notice from the court, arbitrator, or tribunal of attendance at the legal proceeding.

An employee must return immediately to work upon completion of jury duty or being called as a witness.

Donation of Vacation Leave

An employee may donate Vacation Leave with pay to a bank or to another employee. Donation of leave shall be subject to the following conditions:

- Recipient:
 - The recipient must have been employed with the Library for a period of not less than six months.
 - Approval of donations must be contingent upon the recipient demonstrating a need of additional sick leave to the Appointing Authority.
 - The employee must be suffering from a serious health condition (as defined by the Family and Medical Leave Act), or who has a member of his or her immediate family suffering from a serious health condition (as defined by FMLA).
 - The recipient of the donated leave shall be required to exhaust all other leave that may be available in order to receive donated vacation leave.
 - Donated Vacation Leave will be converted to Sick Leave and added to the recipient's Sick Leave credit.
 - Upon approval, within five consecutive days from the receipt of the documentation requested, the Appointing Authority is responsible for providing all necessary leave adjustment forms to the Payroll Specialist with appropriate documentation.
- Bank:

- Employees may donate their Vacation Leave to a bank, to be given later to a recipient who meets the criteria above.
- Donor:
 - The donor must retain a minimum of 240 hours of combined annual and sick leave after the leave donation. However, if at the end of a calendar year an employee will lose accrued annual or floater leave, the retained minimum of combined annual and sick leave after a leave donation may be waived by the Director.
 - The donor relinquishes all future claims to the donated leave, regardless of the medical conditions of either the donor or the recipient.
 - The donation must be strictly voluntary, without coercion, implied or otherwise.
 - The donation must be certified as such in writing by the donor in advance of the actual transfer of leave from the donor to the bank or the recipient.
 - At the time of relinquishment, the donor must designate the donation either of a recipient or to the bank, and this designation may not be later changed.
 - ○ If a donor donates leave to a specific recipient, if the recipient does not need the leave, the donated leave reverts to the bank.

Section 8-Donation of Vacation Leave: Approved by Library Board April 15, 2014.

Revised by Library Board March 21, 2017.

IX. Timekeeping

Accurately recording time worked is the responsibility of every employee. All employees, except exempt employees, must use the timekeeping system. Federal and state laws require RPL to maintain accurate records of time worked in order to accurately calculate employee pay and benefits. Time worked is all the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties.

Supervisors must complete the time sheet summary and transmit it to the Human Resources Department for payment.

Altering, falsifying, tampering with time records, or recording another employee's time may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees are not allowed to leave RPL during work time to take care of personal business. Personal business must be conducted on the employee's own time before or after work or during the lunch break.

Employee Break Periods

Non-exempt employees working an eight (8) hour workday must take a minimum of a 30-minute lunch break, as well as two 15-minute breaks during the workday. Supervisors will advise employees when their break periods and lunch period will occur. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees take the lunch period and both breaks. Employees working less than an eight (8) hour workday will be allotted break and lunch periods by their supervisor proportionate to the amount of hours worked.

Lunch periods should not be taken at the employee's desk or workstation. Breaks and lunch periods cannot be combined, nor can they be taken prior to the commencing workday, or at the end of the workday. Breaks and lunch periods cannot be used to leave early or come in late.

Lactation Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide nursing mothers who are employees with a private place and reasonable break time to express breast milk for her nursing child for up to one year after the child's birth. This policy is in accordance with the U.S. Department of Labor Wage and Hour Division and the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) which amended Section 7 of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).

1. Request for Time Off to Express Milk

Nursing employees should provide reasonable notice to their supervisor of the intent to take lactation breaks. Supervisors should attempt to provide as much schedule flexibility and break time as is reasonably possible to accommodate the employee's needs. Employees must give notice of breaks to supervisors and are required to provide notice to their supervisor when time for expressing breast milk is no longer required.

2. Reasonable Break Times

- a. Any employee who is breastfeeding her child will be provided reasonable break times to express milk for her newborn up to one year after the child's birth. The number of breaks needed to express milk may depend on numerous factors such as the number of feedings and age of the child. A nursing mother will typically need two to three breaks during an eight hour period; however, more reasonable break times may be necessary.
- b. Lactation breaks may be taken during existing break periods as designated by the employee's department/location.

3. Lactation Locations

Lactation locations must be private, shielded from view, and not located in a restroom or common area. If an employee has a private office, it may be used for this purpose. If a dedicated lactation room is not accessible, supervisors should consider other options such as reserving a conference room as needed, adapting a clean and infrequently used small storage area, or converting an unused office or other room. If possible, the lactation location will contain a chair, electrical outlet, a small table or other flat surface, and a door with a lock. Employees may contact the Human Resources Department for a list of current lactation locations.

4. Storage of Breast Milk

RPL is not responsible for the integrity or security of breast milk stored in any refrigerator on RPL property. Nursing mothers may use RPL refrigerators or may bring personal coolers to store breast milk.

Employees must provide their own containers for storage of expressed milk. Employees should check with supervisors to determine if there is a refrigerator available near their work area where breast milk may be stored. If there is no refrigerator available, employees must provide their own means to store and keep the milk cool, such as a cooler bag.

X. Overtime and Compensation Time

Employees may occasionally work more than 40 hours a week. Time worked over 40 hours in one workweek is deemed overtime. Employees classified as non-exempt employees will receive overtime pay of one and one-half (1.5) times the employee's regular base rate of pay. Holidays, vacation and other days for which employees are paid but not actively at work are not considered "hours worked" for overtime calculations.

In lieu of overtime pay for hours worked in excess of 40 hours per workweek, RPL will grant compensation time ("comp time") to employees up to the limits permitted under the Fair Labor Standards Act, Section 7(o). As such, employees agree that as a condition of employment with RPL that acceptance of comp time is an agreeable alternative to overtime pay. As such, employees will receive one and one-half hours of compensation time for every hour worked in excess of 40 hours during a given workweek. The maximum amount of compensation time an employee is permitted to carry shall be 240 hours. Any hours worked over this limitation will be paid as overtime compensation.

Should an employee be terminated or resign from employment with RPL, compensatory time will be paid out to the employee at the employee's base rate of compensation at the time of the termination or resignation.

An employee that chooses to use compensatory time off must request the use of this time off consistent with RPL's vacation policy (i.e. reasonable notice must be given). Compensatory time off will not be counted as time worked for the purposes of calculating overtime during the workweek in which the compensatory time is used.

Exempt employees do not receive overtime compensation or compensatory time.

The Human Resources Manager, Library Director, or Assistant Directors must approve overtime prior to the employee working additional hours above 40 hours per workweek. Failure to receive prior approval will not eliminate RPL's legal requirements to pay overtime or provide comp time, but may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Payday

Employees are paid bi-weekly. Each paycheck will include earnings for all work performed through the current pay period.

When a regularly scheduled payday is on a weekend or holiday, employees will be paid on the day prior to the regularly scheduled payday.

Payroll Information

RPL pays all employees by directly depositing the employee's pay for the payroll period into the bank account of the employee's choosing. The employee must provide the Human Resources Department his or her pertinent bank account and routing information upon hire. It is imperative that an employee regularly update the Human Resources Department on any changes to his or her bank account in which RPL directly deposits his or her pay.

Pay Increases

RPL's pay chart and the granting of pay increases depend on the availability of funds. The conditions and standards for increases are recommended by the Director and Human Resources Manager, and approved by RPL's Board of Control. The Board of Control reserves the right to amend, change, or modify employee pay accordingly. Regulations governing pay increases and questions regarding pay increases can be obtained through the Human Resources Manager.

Pay increases are based on multiple factors, including an employee's annual job performance, attendance, and other legally permissible factors.

XI. Benefits

Medical and Dental Insurance

The RPL health insurance plan provides employees and their dependents access to medical and dental insurance benefits. Regular full-time employees who work 30 hours or more a week are eligible to participate in the health and dental insurance plan. Eligible employees may participate in the health insurance plan subject to all terms and conditions of the agreement between Rapides Parish Police Jury/RPL and the insurance carrier.

A change in employment classification that would result in the loss of eligibility to participate in the health and dental insurance plan may qualify an employee for benefits continuation under the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) and/or the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA).

Details of the health insurance plan are described in the Summary Plan Description (SPD) available from the Human Resources Manager. An SPD and information on cost of coverage will be provided in advance of enrollment to eligible employees.

Eligible employees, who are not eligible for new employee status, may apply for the health and dental insurance program and any of the other cafeteria-plans only during the open enrollment period for the appropriate program to be tax deferred. New employees have 30 days to apply for appropriate insurance benefit plans.

Health Benefits for Retirees

For those retirees who retired from RPL through the Parochial Retirement System on or after January 1, 1997 and before January 1, 2011, retiree health insurance benefits are as follows: Retirees with 30 or more years of service, and their eligible dependents will have their full health insurance premium paid by RPL. RPL will pay 75 percent of the premium for employees who retire with 25 to 29 years of service and their eligible dependents, and 50 percent of the premium for employees who retire with 20 to 24 years of service and their eligible dependents. This benefit is available to employees who enter the Deferred Retirement Option Plan (DROP) Program of the Parochial Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana however, if the employee continues to work beyond the 3-year maximum of the DROP period, the employee will be required to pay the employee portion of the insurance premium until the employee actually retires. Upon actual retirement, the library will reassume the cost of the health plan according to the payment schedule above. This benefit applies to employees who are enrolled in RPL's health plan for at least one year prior to the date of retirement. All other eligible employees who retire may elect to continue health insurance benefits in accordance with COBRA or HIPPA as applicable.

Effective January 1, 2011, employees who retire from RPL through the Parochial Employees' Retirement System of Louisiana after 20 or more years of service, and have been enrolled in RPL's health insurance program for at least one year prior to the date of retirement will have 50% of the insurance premium paid by RPL for the employee only. There is no employer contribution for dependents of retirees. The same provisions regarding DROP as explained above will also apply. All eligible employees who retire may elect to continue health insurance benefits in accordance with COBRA or HIPPA, as applicable.

The Board of Control reserves the right to amend, change or modify this benefit accordingly.

Benefit Continuation

The Federal Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) gives employees and their qualified beneficiaries the opportunity to continue health insurance coverage under RPL's health program when "qualifying event" would normally result in the loss of eligibility. Some common qualifying events are resignation; termination of employment (if other than for gross misconduct); death of an employee; a reduction in an employee's hours or an authorized leave of absence (LOA); an employee's divorce or legal separation; and a dependent child no longer meeting eligibility requirements.

Under COBRA, the employee or beneficiary pays the full cost of coverage at a predetermined group rate plus an administrative fee. RPL provides each eligible employee with a written notice describing rights granted under COBRA when the employee becomes eligible for coverage under RPL's health insurance program. The notice contains important information about the employee's rights and obligations.

Under federal law, if you lose your group coverage, you may be eligible for coverage through the Health Insurance Portability Accountability Act (HIPAA) and/or COBRA.

Additional Benefits

In addition to the benefits discussed in this Handbook, RPL makes available to its employees enrollment in RPL's 457 Plan (retirement saving plan), and provides, subject to insurance policy provisions, up to \$15,000 of life insurance to full-time employees who elect to participate in the Health Insurance Plan.

Section 11-Additional Benefits: Revised by the Library Board 3/21/2017.

XII. Workers' Compensation

RPL is enrolled in a *bona fide* workers' compensation insurance plan and provides employees with the benefits for job-related injuries accustom to workers' compensation protection as prescribed by the laws of the State of Louisiana.

XIII. Employee Development

Employee Development

The Human Resources Manager is also the Training Coordinator and will be responsible for the planning, managing and organizing of all employee training and continuing education.

Employee Training and Meetings

Attendance at employee meetings and mandated training are considered a part of an employee's regular work responsibility. If employee meetings or mandated training sessions are held outside an employee's regular working hours, compensation is awarded in accordance with RPL's pay procedures and FLSA requirements.

Reimbursement for individual mileage for those traveling from the following branches will be paid only if carpooling is not feasible: Boyce, Johnson, Glenmora, and Hineston. Employees from RPL's other branches will not be reimbursed for mileage.

Local Professional Meetings and Conferences

The value of attendance at professional meetings for broader guidance and education is recognized. When attendance at such meetings occurs during normal working hours, approval considerations include: nature of meeting, cost of meeting or conference, availability of travel and the effect of the employee's absence from his/her regular duties. Preferences are given to employees with committee or program responsibilities in an organization that directly relates to their library position and to exempt employees. The Human Resources Manager is the approval authority for such meetings and conferences.

Continued Training and Education

At the discretion of the Director, full-time employees may be allowed up to a maximum of five hours per week of leave with pay to attend a course offered by a college or university, provided the course of instruction is applicable to the employee's job. The employee must be enrolled as a student with the institution offering the course and must be taking the course for credit. The leave must be inclusive of the employee's total hours worked each week, not in addition to the hours worked each week. A supervisor may employ flextime scheduling if it is conducive to the department or branch. Employees shall reimburse the library for paid leave for attending continued training or educational courses if the employee drops the continued training or educational courses, received an incomplete or failing grade for the course. The employee must reimburse the library by paying a sum which equals the cost to the library of the paid leave. Additionally, an employee with sufficient vacation, comp or floater time may use this time as repayment.

Employees may also be allowed paid leave to attend continuing education workshops, short-courses, seminars, etc., offered by various institutions or associations. The library may also pay for this training at its discretion. The employee must obtain prior approval of the paid leave and payment for the training prior to attending the continuing education event. The applicability of the course to the employee's job, the availability of funds, and possible future benefit to the library will be the primary determining factors.

RPL may also request that an employee attend certain continuing educational opportunities. When this occurs, the library will bear all expense involved within the limits of RPL's continued training and education policy, travel policy, FLSA, and applicable laws.

Employees will be required to reimburse the library if they fail to attend scheduled continuing education classes, workshops, seminars or conferences that are paid by RPL. Exceptions for emergency circumstances such as illnesses will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Proof of attendance and/or satisfactory completion of the course of instruction will be furnished to the Human Resources Manager for inclusion in the employee's personnel record in all instances when the library pays for employee development and educational opportunities. To help in the possible furtherance of careers, employees are encouraged to include verification of all applicable training accomplishments in their personnel file.

Section 14: Continued Training and Education: Revised by the Library Board 3/21/2017.

XIV. Recognition

Employee recognition is an important part of team worth and pride. To foster a feeling of closeness among employees, RPL will continue to recognize employees in the Library's newsletter and any supervisor may submit written documentation of recognition to an employee's personnel file in letter or certificate format as long as the correspondence clearly defines the recognition and the

date of the action. Supervisors are also encouraged to develop their own department or branch recognition procedures.

The Library, according to the following conditions, will award tenure recognition benefits; however, no award will be in actual cash or other thing of monetary value (i.e., savings bond, refundable gift certificate).

Years of Service Recognition

- 3 Year Certificate of Appreciation and 3-year pin.
- 5 Year Certificate of Appreciation and 5-year pin.
- 10 Year Certificate of Appreciation and 10-year pin.
- 15 Year Certificate of Appreciation and 15-year pin.
- 20 Year Plaque and 20-year pin.
- 25 Year Plaque and 25-year pin.
- 30 Year Plaque and 30-year pin.

XV. Employment Practices

Performance Evaluations

Supervisors and employees are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Formal performance evaluations and scheduled reviews are conducted according to RPL's Performance Appraisal System (under separate cover) to provide both supervisors and employees the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weaknesses, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches to meeting goals.

Performance evaluations are scheduled approximately every 12 months, coinciding with the anniversary of the employee's date of hire, rehire, job classification change or transfer. A *Performance Review*, should be completed immediately when an employee transfers from one supervisor to another supervisor, thereby allowing the employee's new supervisor to establish new goals and objectives for the employee. Supervisors must complete the goals and objectives for new employees or transferees within 30 days and forward the original to the Human Resources Manager. As changes occur, the Human Resources Manager will distribute a listing of anniversary dates of all employees to supervisors.

Compensation Policy

Purpose

To restructure the current salary plan for the Rapides Parish Library (RPL) and to provide a fair and equitable compensation plan enabling the Library to attract talented professionals and retain valuable senior staff while remaining affordable within the Library's overall budget. The

Rapides Parish Library recognizes that pay is one of several factors involved in successful recruitment and retention. We strive to be a community resource hub of information, education, recreation, culture, and technology while providing our employees with a flexible work-life balance and rewarding all with comparable salaries and benefits. In addition to base compensation, RPL also considers the value of a pleasant and positive work environment, among other workplace attributes.

The current market value of the Library's job classifications is based on the skills, knowledge, and abilities required of a fully competent employee.

The Director and the Human Resources Manager reserves the right to make any changes to any part of this document due to business needs.

Definitions

Salary Grade: A grouping of positions with similar levels of internal worth or with similar market value.

Salary Range: A continuum of pay rates that set the upper and lower bounds of possible compensation for individuals whose positions fall within the corresponding salary band.

Minimum: The lower boundary of a salary range.

Midpoint: The median rate of pay within a salary range.

Maximum: The upper boundary of a salary range.

Hiring Guidelines: A series of pay rates within a salary range, which dictate local market-competitive compensation, based on the experience level of a job incumbent/candidate.

Market Rate - The "going rate" or fair market value for a standard performer in a specific job classification. Called market rate because employees at this rate typically are those that consistently meet standard job expectations.

Performance Ratings - Terms used to summarize overall performance and conduct during the rating period.

Standard Job Expectations - Performance expectations which are the same for most employees in a given job class. Among others, these relate to quality, quantity, timeliness, and work outputs, as well as attendance, customer service, and teamwork.

Performance Goals - Individual or group goals established for a particular rating period. Individual performance goals are typically used for supervisory, professional, and managerial employees who have completed probation.

Job Classification/Evaluation

The process used to collect the necessary data and develop the Classification and Compensation plan consisted of several steps:

1. Reviewing/Revising Job Descriptions
2. Job Evaluation – Using factors and weightings (See Pay Grades) that are important to the position
3. Salary Comparisons of local libraries the size of RPL - Summary results of the study are presented in Appendix B.

The job classifications are priced to market by using appropriate local, regional, and library-specific published survey data. The market data includes other library systems, local public jurisdictions, and not-for-profit organizations and addresses significant market differences due to geographic location. The system evaluates external equity: market pricing of benchmark jobs compared with similar Rapides Parish Library jobs, and internal equity: the relative worth of each job when comparing the required level of job competencies, formal training and experience, responsibility, and accountability of one job to another and arranging all jobs in a formal salary grade structure.

Job classifications are assigned to pay grades, and the minimum and maximum wage rates are based on job content and/or market value and/or internal equity not individual performance. The Library's compensation plan includes one salary chart (Chart A) with 7 pay grades for non-exempt personnel and three pay grades for exempt personnel.

Pay Grades

The salary schedule is composed of 10 pay grades (100-1000). The assignment of a position to one of these pay grades are based upon a job analysis and comparison to all other positions in the library. Factors considered include education, experience; customer relations; communication; teamwork; decision-making(impact); supervisory requirements; the extent of supervision; job complexity; responsibility for errors; physical demands, and work environment.

The Rapides Parish Library recognizes that there may be situations that arise which contribute to employees reaching the top of a pay range. In those instances, employees will continue to receive annual raises as long as budgetary constraints permits.

Starting Pay Grades

All persons employed in positions contained in the position classification plan shall be employed at the minimum salary for the classification based upon verifiable experience and education. However, on the recommendation of the Director and the Human Resources Manager, exceptionally well-qualified applicants may be employed above the minimum.

Promotion: Pay Grade

When an employee who meets all established requirements is promoted to a higher salary grade, the employee's salary shall normally be increased to the minimum level for the new pay range, or the level which would provide at least the equivalent of a five (5) percent increase.

To be considered for a promotion, the following criteria's must be met:

1. Must be in current position for one (1) year.
2. Must be free of any disciplinary actions or attendance issues.

If the Library warrants an exception of the criteria, it will be approved by the Director and the Human Resources Manager.

Reduction: Pay Grades

When an employee is transferred to a position in a lower salary grade for which the employee is qualified, the salary shall be set at the level in the lower pay range which provides the smallest (usually 10 percent) or no decrease in pay, provided the action is taken for reasons other than discipline. If the action is for disciplinary purposes, the salary shall be set at an appropriate level in the lower pay range that is less than the existing salary.

Transfer

An employee who is transferred from a position in one class to a position in another class where the new position is assigned to the same salary grade as the old position shall continue to receive the same salary unless there is a change in FLSA status from Non-exempt to Exempt.

Interim Appointments

Employees receiving interim appointments or special assignments to positions in a higher salary grade may be granted a salary increase (up to 15%). The salary increase will not affect anniversary dates and will be rescinded upon the expiration of the interim appointment or special assignments.

Annual Increases

All employees who are eligible for annual increases will receive a 3% raise across the board on their anniversary date as long as budget constraints permit.

Compensation Plan Maintenance

The Director and Human Resources Manager are responsible for the administration and maintenance of the Salary Schedule. The Compensation Plan will be reviewed every five years unless economic conditions change. The Director and Human Resources Manager shall assign new positions to the appropriate pay grade, approve any changes of position classification, and determine the appropriate intervals for review of all positions.

Approved by Library Board November 19, 2019.

Standards of Behavior and Discipline

RPL wants to ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment for all of its employees. To do so, RPL expects its employees to follow certain workplace standards that are intended to protect the interests and the safety of all employees and RPL. As an employee of RPL, it is imperative to observe the highest standards of conduct at all times. RPL trusts that its employees will act responsibly in conducting themselves while at the workplace and elsewhere. RPL expects certain standards of behavior, including but not limited to:

- Reporting to work on time, as scheduled;
- Notifying supervisors of an absence from work or inability to report to work on time;
- Learning the employee's job to the best of the employee's ability, and performing it accurately and efficiently;
- Following and respecting management's instructions concerning a job or related matter;
- Speaking to the appropriate person when an employee has an idea, suggestion, problem, or complaint;
- Providing RPL customers and contractors with the highest level of customer service;
- Taking charge of the employee's own career growth and development by discussing and setting appropriate goals with the employee's supervisor;
- Complying with RPL's policies and upholding RPL's standard of workplace behavior and the policies of this Handbook;
- Refraining from behavior or conduct deemed offensive or undesirable or that could be subject to disciplinary action.

It is not possible to list all the forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable in the workplace, but the following list shows examples of infractions that may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

- Falsification of any RPL document or record;
- Failure to follow the rules of this Handbook;
- Failing to promptly notify the employee's supervisor when the employee will be late or absent from work;
- Leaving work during working hours without authorization from the employee's supervisor;
- Failing to immediately report to the employee's supervisor when the employee is injured or has witnessed an injury occurring in the workplace;
- Causing unsanitary or disorderly housekeeping conditions;
- Possession of, or use of firearms, knives, or other weapons while on RPL property or while driving RPL vehicles;
- Refusing or failing to fully carry out instructions or work assignments given by the employee's supervisor;
- Failing to perform work assignments efficiently and effectively;
- Failing to immediately report errors to the employee's supervisor;
- Operating equipment or computer systems that the employee has not been authorized or trained to use;
- Operating equipment without the proper safety equipment/apparel;

- Removing or applying any property, record or document of RPL to the employee's own uses or that of another employee;
- Interfering with, or causing others to interfere with office productivity;
- Sleeping, loitering, wasting time, or being away from the employee's workplace unnecessarily;
- Smoking in prohibited areas and at times not recognized by this Handbook;
- Distributing literature, printed materials, or posting notices or signs in the workplace during work time;
- Gambling or being present where gambling is in progress, possessing gambling devices or equipment while in the workplace;
- Reporting for work in a condition that appears inappropriate or that causes others to doubt the employee's readiness for work;
- Possessing or consuming any intoxicant or illegal substance or using a prescription medication in a non-prescribed manner while in the workplace or while operating an RPL vehicle;
- Fighting or attempting to cause bodily injury to others;
- Using abusive or threatening verbal or body language towards anyone;
- Negligence, abuse, or deliberate destruction of RPL property, or property of others while it is in the workplace;
- Improper or inappropriate use of RPL's computer system, library facilities or other property in control of RPL;
- Failing to adhere to the rules governing traffic, speed, and parking while driving a RPL vehicle;
- Being arrested and/or convicted of a misdemeanor or felony crime;
- Failing to abide by laws and regulations governing the behavior of employees of the State of Louisiana, Rapides Parish, or RPL, or causing another to fail to abide by such laws and regulations;
- Causing or assisting in actions that will cause a monetary or non-monetary loss to RPL, including theft;
- Failing to present for inspection any property, parcel, or container that is in the workplace when requested to do so by a supervisor or manager for a reasonable cause. This includes purses, pockets, desk drawers, backpacks, etc.

Disciplinary action will be taken after RPL has considered the nature of the offense, the work history of the individual involved, and the facts concerning the offense. Discipline is discretionary and will be handled fairly and appropriately by RPL management.

Conduct that interferes with business, brings discredit to RPL, or is offensive to customers or co-workers, will not be tolerated and is grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Additional workplace standards and guidelines are discussed in other parts of this Handbook and a violation of those standards and policies can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment as well.

Corrective Discipline

1. Discipline is administered in graduated steps, which increase in severity as follows:

- *Oral/Verbal Warning* - The supervisor shall issue an oral/verbal warning to put the employee on notice that his/her performance or conduct is substandard and advise the employee of the expected levels of conduct. A written record of the oral/verbal warning shall be made. Continued substandard conduct or performance may warrant a higher degree of discipline.
- *Written Warning (3)* - In the case of a more serious offense or where an employee's performance or conduct has not improved as a result of one or more oral/verbal warning, the supervisor shall issue a written warning. This written record puts the employee on notice that his/her performance or conduct is unacceptable, and documents the specific acts or omissions upon which the discipline is based as well as the expected corrective action. Continued substandard conduct or performance may warrant a higher degree of discipline.
- *Suspension* - May be used when the employee has not responded to counseling, oral or written warnings or commits a more serious rule violation that warrants suspension for a first offense. An employee may be suspended without pay for up to 30 calendar days.
- *Suspension Pending Investigation* - Examples of situations where the employee may need to be removed from the work place before an investigation can be conducted may include sexual harassment, disorderly conduct, or other situations where the employee presents a potential threat to other employees.
 - i. A suspension, pending an investigation, is imposed with the understanding that a final decision relative to the appropriate disciplinary action will be made after the investigation.
 - ii. If there is no cause for disciplinary action, the employee will receive pay for the regular earnings lost during the suspension.
- *Demotion* - The Director may demote an employee to a vacant position; however, no employee shall be demoted to a position for which he/she does not possess the minimum qualifications. An assignment in a lower grade, carries with it compensation within that grade of service. The employee shall be given timely written notice of the demotion and the reasons for the action. Continued substandard conduct or performance may warrant a higher degree of discipline.

- *Termination* - If all previous steps of the disciplinary process have been unsuccessful, the employee may be terminated from employment. Certain violations may warrant immediate termination.

Resignation and Terminations

RPL requests that exempt employees provide four weeks' notice prior to the resignation of their position. Non-exempt employees are requested to provide at least two weeks' notice prior to resignation. Failure to provide such notice may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees who resign their employment with RPL must fill out an Exit Form and participate in an Exit Interview with the Human Resources Manager or a designated representative of the Human Resources Manager.

The Library Director, Assistant Directors or Human Resources Manager must approve involuntary terminations of an employee. The Assistant Directors and Human Resources Manager must have approval from the Library Director. All involuntary terminations must be reported to RPL's Board of Control at their next regular meeting.

Resignation

Since employment is based on mutual agreement, either an employee or the Library Director on behalf of the Board of Directors has the right to terminate employment. We respectfully request two weeks' advance written notice of an employee's decision to terminate employment. Quitting without notice is disruptive to the proper service of our patrons and may result in an unfavorable reference.

An employee who resigns will be paid all wages earned, including unused vacation time. Unused paid leave days will not be compensated. Health, dental, life or other insurance benefits may be prorated and compensated to the date of resignation or coverage may remain in force for an additional period of time at the employee's expense, subject to any regulations that might apply.

Involuntary Termination of Employment

An employee who is involuntarily terminated will be paid all wages earned, including unused Vacation time. Unused Paid Sick Leave, including Earned Time Off days will not be compensated. Health, dental, life or other insurance benefits may be prorated and compensated to the date of termination or coverage may remain in force for an additional period of time at the employee's expense, subject to any regulations that apply.

Employees who are involuntarily terminated normally do not receive notice or pay in lieu of notice

Reduction in Workforce

There may be times when the library determines it necessary to make cutbacks or reductions in staff. If this situation occurs, management may consider any and all factors that it deems

relevant, including and without limitation: the needs of the organization as a whole; the skills, qualifications, and/or performance histories of individual employees; anticipated changes in the business or revenue; seniority; budgetary constraints; or any restrictions or guidelines imposed by law. Decisions will not be based upon an employee's gender (including pregnancy or related medical condition), age, race, color, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, marital status, covered veteran status, or any other protected status.

Permanent Layoff

Employees who are affected by a permanent reduction in force (layoff) will be notified at least two weeks in advance. Generally, employees will work this notice period; if for any reason the organization decides that the employee does not need to work all or part of the two-week notice period, the employee will still be paid for regularly scheduled hours.

In the event that a position is eliminated, employment will be terminated and accrued, unused paid time off will be paid out.

Temporary Layoff

In the event of a temporary layoff or furlough, employees will be provided with as much advance notice as possible, but depending on the circumstances, the temporary layoff may be effective immediately. Because the intent is to recall the employee, accrued, unused paid time off will not be paid out, and instead, the time will be retained to be used in the future. If the employee does not ultimately return to work for any reason, the accrued paid time off will be paid out in accordance with applicable policies. Health insurance benefits will be maintained with the same cost sharing arrangement for the month of furlough, and the following month; this will be revisited if the furlough continues beyond this point.

Termination Appeal Procedure

An employee whose employment is involuntarily terminated may appeal the decision by following the Problem Resolution procedure below.

Problem Resolution Procedure

An employee who feels unfairly treated regarding a workplace rule or policy, or unfairly treated by a fellow employee or RPL board member, may submit a written complaint to the Library Director, or, if the Library Director is the subject of the complaint, the letter may be submitted to the President of the Board of Directors for their immediate attention. If the complaint addresses the actions of a person, the subject of the complaint will promptly be advised of the complaint and be given the opportunity to respond orally or in writing.

A record of the complaint filed and any discussion will be kept in the employee's personnel file. Once the complaint is received by the Library Director or Board President, s/he must determine

whether or not the complaint has merit and take appropriate steps to remedy the situation in a timely manner.

Conflict of Interest

Purpose of Policy

To establish guidelines to guard against conflicts of interest and to assure an employee's ability to render full service to RPL.

Statements of Policy

Employees should avoid situations that might cause their interests to conflict with the RPL or might compromise RPL's integrity and reputation. A conflict, or the appearance of one, occurs when the employee or an immediate family member uses the employee's position at RPL for personal benefit through an investment, association, or business relationship that interferes with the employee's ability to exercise independent judgment on behalf of RPL. An example would be having a financial interest in, or moonlighting with, any company that is a customer or supplier of RPL or in any way could be subject to any proposal or permit arising from the employee's official duties.

Employees are strongly discouraged from accepting meals with salespeople, vendors, suppliers, or any other type of solicitor. Exceptions may be approved by the Library Director or Human Resources Manager. Also, before accepting any type of gift or promotional item from an outside entity, the employee should consult with the Human Resources Department.

Outside Employment and Conflicts of Interest

Employees shall not, directly or indirectly, engage in any outside employment or financial interest which may conflict with the best interests of RPL or interfere with the employee's ability to perform the assigned RPL job, such as:

1. Outside employment prevents the employee from being available for work beyond normal working hours;
2. Outside employment is conducted during the employee's library work hours;
3. Outside employment utilizing RPL telephones, computers, supplies, or any other resources, facilities or equipment for such outside employment; or
4. Outside employment with a firm which has contracts with or does business with the RPL, Rapides Parish or the State.

General Discussion of Policy

Employees have an obligation to conduct business within the guidelines that prohibit actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest. Should questions about a potential or existing conflict arise, employees must seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable

standards of operation in accordance with federal and state law with the Human Resources Department.

Business dealings with outside interests should not result in gains from those interests. Gains refers to bribes, product bonuses, special fringe benefits, unusual price breaks, non-monetary benefits, free services, free gifts, favors, and other windfalls designed to ultimately benefit either the employer, employee or both. Promotional plans that could be interpreted as an unusual gain may not be accepted by an employee.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when an employee is in a position of influence, power, or decision making that may result in a personal gain for that employee or for a relative as a result of RPL's business dealings. For the purpose of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the employee is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

The appearance of conflict of interest with outside interests is to be avoided as much as the conflict of interest itself. If employees have any influence regarding transactions involving purchases, contracts, or leases, it is necessary that they disclose this fact to the Director of RPL, as soon as possible, to avoid the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest.

Any employee that believes a conflict of interest, or an appearance of such exists, whether or not it is the employee's conflict or another employee's conflict or has further questions or needs more information on conflicts of interest should meet and discuss such with the Library Director or Human Resources Manager.

Penalty For Policy Violation

Failure to comply with the provisions of this policy will be grounds for disciplinary action. Any employee who is found to be in violation of this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. A determination of the level of disciplinary action will be made on a case-by-case basis.

Loss Prevention

One of the most important goals of RPL is to protect the assets of RPL. Loss prevention means controlling expenses through waste, theft, carelessness and administrative errors. By working together losses can be controlled by the following guidelines:

- a. *Help others to be honest by setting a good example.*
- b. *Pay closer attention to detail by following appropriate operational procedures and controls.*
- c. *Always use Library supplies and property conservatively and with respect.*
- d. *Do not use Library materials for personal use and do not remove or attempt to remove Library materials or property without proper authorization.*
- e. *Report any theft or dishonest practice to the Library Director or Human Resources Manager.*

Working together as a team through proper work practices and paying careful attention to what and how we do our jobs will make RPL a more efficient and cost effective library.

Taping and Eavesdropping on Conversations

RPL encourages open communications among its employees and between its employees and management. To facilitate such open communications, and to prevent a chilling effect that may occur if employees are permitted to tape or secretly record or surreptitiously listen in on any conversation or communication, and to ensure compliance with applicable federal, state and local wiretapping, eavesdropping, and privacy laws, RPL has instituted the following policy:

Without the prior written authorization of RPL's Library Director or Human Resources Manager, no employee may openly or secretly tap or otherwise surreptitiously record or videotape any conversation, communication, activity, or event which in any way involves RPL, employees or customers, or any other individual with whom RPL is doing business or intending to do business in any capacity. This policy also applies to conversations and communications with any third parties unrelated to RPL, including, but not limited to, outside legal counsel, auditors, and government officials.

"Taping" or "Recording" under this policy includes the taping or recording of any conversation or communication, regardless of whether the conversation or communication is taking place in person, over the telephone, or via any other communications device or equipment, and regardless of the method used to tape record (i.e. as with a tape recorder, video recorder, mechanical recording, digital recording, or wiretapping equipment) and regardless of where the conversation or communication takes place.

No employee may eavesdrop on the conversations or communications of other employees or non-employees in accordance with the same standards set forth above.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Where the conduct engaged in is illegal, violators may also be subject to prosecution under applicable federal, state and local laws.

At times, RPL may institute call monitoring of its telephone system available to the public. This procedure is used to ensure proper customer relations and is not subject to this policy. Should RPL institute a call monitoring system for customer service reasons, both the employees and customers will be provided notice that such system is being used. Detailed approval, in writing, of when the system will be used and for what purposes must be received from the Library Director before any monitoring system may be implemented.

Whistleblower Protection Act Policy

The Rapides Parish Library encourages its employees to report improper activities in the workplace and will protect employees from retaliation for making any such report in good faith. In addition, employees can refuse to participate in an activity that would result in a violation of state or federal statutes, or a violation or noncompliance with a state or federal rule or regulation. If any employee of the library believes that the library or another employee, acting on behalf of

the library, has violated any state or federal law, rule or regulation, or violates any fiduciary responsibility, s/ he should report it in writing to the Library Director without delay.

EEO & Harassment/Discrimination Policy

Equal Employment Opportunity Policy

In order to provide equal employment and advancement opportunities to all individuals, employment decisions at RPL are based on merit, qualifications, and abilities. RPL does not discriminate in employment opportunities or practice on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual orientation, military status, veteran status or any other characteristic protected by Federal, state, or local law. This policy governs all aspects of employment, including selection, job assignment, compensation, discipline, termination, and access to benefits and training.

The Library Director, administrators, managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing equal employment practices within each department. The Human Resources Department is responsible for RPL's overall compliance, and shall maintain personnel records in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

Employees with questions or concerns about equal employment opportunity in the workplace should bring these questions or concerns to the attention of their immediate supervisor or the Human Resources Manager.

The Rapides Parish Library is an equal opportunity employer and its management intends to fulfill, to the letter of the law, all provisions under federal, state, and local employment regulations which prohibit discrimination with respect to employment. Accordingly, we will not discriminate in hiring, promotion, compensation, discharge or any other term or condition of employment due to gender (including pregnancy or related medical condition), age, race, color, ancestry, disability, sexual orientation, religion, national origin, marital status, genetic information, or covered veteran status. We will not discriminate against anyone who has filed a worker's compensation claim, nor an employee who has brought to management's attention an irregularity or violation of regulation under the Whistleblowers' Protection Act (see separate section on Whistleblowers'). We will not permit, condone, or tolerate unlawful discrimination against employees in any manner whatsoever, and all employees and supervisors are obligated to support the concept of equal employment opportunity at the library.

Employees who believe they have been subject to unlawful discrimination of any kind should bring the matter to the attention of the Library Director. Any complaints will be investigated promptly and corrective action taken as deemed appropriate, while restricting information to those who have a need to know. Further, management will ensure that there is no coercion, harassment, retaliation, or intimidation directed toward any employee who has registered a complaint of unlawful discrimination or who has been involved in the investigation or hearing of a complaint.

The Rapides Parish Library will consider for employment only those individuals who are legally eligible for employment in the State of LA. Prior to the start of employment all applicants must

provide proof of citizenship or eligibility for employment certification in accordance with state and federal regulations.

Harassment, Discrimination, Retaliation Policy, and Bullying Policy

RPL is firmly committed to the ideal of a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. All employees have the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal opportunity and prohibits discriminatory practices, harassment and retaliation. At RPL, discrimination, harassment, and unlawful retaliation, whether verbal, physical or environmental, are unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

RPL prohibits conduct and comments that are inappropriate in the workplace even if not directly addressed by state, federal or local law. Employees, at all levels in RPL, have the responsibility to support and contribute to a respectful work environment which includes; avoiding any participation in unacceptable behavior, implied or explicit, that violates this policy. All employees should act in a way that will be seen as respectful and responsible from the perspective of the people with whom they interact. Unlawful discrimination, harassment or retaliation occurring in the workplace or in connection with work in violation of this policy will not be tolerated.

INDIVIDUALS COVERED BY THIS POLICY

This Policy covers all employees, including full-time, part-time, hourly, temporary, salaried, contract employees, supervisors, directors, managers, board members, volunteer workers and support staff.

RPL will not tolerate, condone or allow discrimination, harassment or retaliation. Neither will RPL tolerate, condone or allow discrimination, harassment or retaliation by outside customers, vendors, independent contractors, or other non-employees who conduct business with or visit RPL's libraries and facilities. RPL encourages all employees to report all incidents of discrimination, harassment or retaliation, regardless of who the offender may be or of the offender's relationship to RPL.

Workplace bullying is unacceptable and will not be permitted under any circumstances. Bullying may take many forms including persistent, malicious, unwelcome, hostile, severe and pervasive mistreatment that harms, intimidates, offends, degrades, humiliates or sabotages the performance of an employee, whether verbal, physical, written or otherwise. Workplace bullying often involves an abuse or misuse of power.

The following discussions of what can constitute discrimination; sexual harassment and unlawful harassment are simply guidelines. Be mindful that they are illustrative not exhaustive examples.

Harassment, Discrimination, Retaliation Policy, and Bullying Policy: Approved by the Library Board June 19, 2018

Discrimination

Discrimination generally involves treating one employee or applicant differently from another in connection with terms or conditions of employment such as hiring, placement, promotion, termination, layoff, recall, transfer, leave of absence, compensation and training because of that person's gender, color, race, age, national origin, pregnancy, ancestry, marital status, veteran status, military status, disability, handicap, religion, creed, sexual orientation, citizenship status or other legally protected status. It also could involve a failure to make a reasonable accommodation in certain circumstances.

Sexual Harassment

For purposes of this policy, sexual harassment includes unwelcome or unwanted advances, requests for sexual favors and any other verbal, visual or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to or rejection of this conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting hiring, evaluation, retention, promotion or other aspects of employment; or
- This conduct reasonably could be expected to and does interfere with an individual's work environment, employment or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Examples of situations that may be sexual harassment include, but are not limited to:

- Unwanted sexual advances; or
- Demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment or continued employment;
- Threats and demands to submit to sexual requests in order to obtain or retain any employment benefit;
- Verbal conduct such as derogatory comments; slurs, insults or verbal abuse of a sexual nature;
- Comments which the recipient indicates are unwelcome, such as sexual invitations; sexual jokes; propositions; and comments or gestures, which are suggestive and/or obscene;
- Unwanted graphic, verbal commentary about an individual's body, sexual prowess or sexual deficiencies;
- Battery, touching, pinching, assault, coerced sexual acts, blocking of normal movements, or unwanted flirtations, advances, leering, or whistling;
- Visual conduct such as sexually explicit, derogatory or offensively printed or
- Visual material such as posters, photographs, cartoons, drawings, Emails, notes, gestures or other displays in the workplace of sexually suggestive or offensive objects or pictures;
- Unwanted conduct or comments consistently targeted at only one gender, even if the content is not sexual; or
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report sexual harassment.

Other Unlawful Harassment

Includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual that is based on gender, color, race, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, handicap, marital status, veteran status, pregnancy, religion, creed, sexual orientation, citizenship status or other legally protected status, and either affects terms or conditions of employment, unreasonably interferes with work performance, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

As an illustration, some examples of conduct that may be regarded as unlawful harassment based on a hostile or offensive work environment include:

- Using derogatory or inflammatory language including jokes that make fun of or belittle an individual because of inherent personal characteristics such as ethnicity, sex, gender, race, age, sexual orientation, religion, or disability;
- Epithets, slurs, negative stereotyping, disparaging remarks or intimidating acts based on any of the protected categories listed above;
- Telling or forwarding jokes directed to someone’s protected status, such as racial or ethnic jokes, regardless of whether “everyone tells them back and forth”;
- Posting, forwarding, showing or displaying in any manner cartoons that make fun of any group, religious belief, sex, or individual because of his or her protected status;
- Forwarding offensive Emails, printing them out or displaying them in any manner; or
- Utilizing RPL communication tools and resources such as the internet, Email or voice mail to retrieve, view, display or pass along messages or material that could be considered inappropriate, offensive and/or unprofessional. Written or electronic communications or other graphic materials that are of a sexual nature or present a person’s personal characteristics, such as race or ethnicity, in a hostile or offensive manner are inappropriate and are prohibited under the policy.
- Retaliation for reporting or threatening to report harassment.

Area Covered

This behavior is unacceptable in the workplace itself and in other work-related settings such as business trips, outside work or appearances and business-related social events. In evaluating behavior, the standard to be applied is that of a reasonable person. This policy is designed to protect all employees from discrimination, harassment or retaliation in any way associated with the workplace or work environment.

Disseminating The Policy

RPL will announce and disseminate this policy to all employees and post it in each RPL location. All supervisors and managers are responsible for knowing the substance of the policy and for implementing it. All employees must also be aware of the contents and substance of the policy. The Human Resources Manager is available to answer all questions about the policy or its implementation.

Reporting Procedure/Prevention

All employees are strongly encouraged and managers and supervisors are required to immediately report any discrimination, harassment or retaliation to the Human Resources Manager or Library Director. For any complaint or report that involves a Branch other than the Main Library, the complaint or report can also be made to the Branch manager.

Employees, including managers and supervisors, should not assume RPL is aware of concerns or issues or concerns or issues brought to your attention by another employee. In order to allow RPL to prevent and correct harassing, discriminatory or retaliatory conduct, it is essential that all employees use this reporting procedure and that RPL receive information of every instance of such conduct in a timely manner. Accordingly, every employee should understand that under no circumstances should anyone believe that he or she cannot or should not report any discrimination, harassment or retaliation.

Do not allow an inappropriate or unlawful situation to continue by not reporting it, regardless of who is creating the situation. You should not ignore inappropriate behavior or assume someone else will deal with it. No person in RPL is exempt from this policy.

If the person(s) to whom you would normally report discrimination, harassment or retaliation, or who is charged with investigating discrimination, harassment or retaliation is the actor(s), report such behavior to the Library Director, Business Manager, Assistant Library Director or Human Resources Manager or a member of management for RPL.

Timeframe For Reporting

RPL encourages you to report complaints promptly so that RPL may respond promptly and take appropriate action. This policy not only aids the complainant, but also helps RPL maintain an environment free from discrimination and harassment.

Employees should also be aware of the time limits imposed by local, state and national government agencies for filing complaints of harassment, discrimination or retaliation; those time limits are posted on the official notices which are displayed on bulletin boards in each library location.

Investigating The Complaint or Report

RPL will promptly, thoroughly and objectively investigate complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment or retaliation and will take prompt remedial and/or disciplinary action as is appropriate under the circumstances. All employees are expected to cooperate with RPL's efforts to investigate such complaints. All complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment or retaliation will be kept confidential except to the extent disclosure may be necessary for the purpose of investigation or remedial action.

Confidentiality

Except as set forth below, RPL will not reveal the names of participants, the facts of an investigation, or any written information regarding an investigation to anyone not involved in the investigation, and will reveal to those involved only the information necessary in order to investigate thoroughly and effectively, and to take the necessary and appropriate disciplinary/remedial actions.

RPL may not be able to keep written or other records of the complaint and investigation confidential if someone sues RPL or its employees, or solicits action by a government agency, based on alleged discrimination, harassment or retaliation. Records may be discoverable to the extent that no applicable privilege protects them.

The Investigation

Each situation warrants the specific investigation needed.

RPL's Human Resources Manager will complete the investigation of a complaint and the Library Director along with RPL's management team will determine the appropriate actions and communicate them through the best-suited person to the complainant and alleged actor as quickly as possible.

Any employee who violates this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. In fact, RPL may discipline an employee for any inappropriate conduct discovered in investigating complaints or reports made under this policy, regardless of whether the conduct amounts to a violation of law or even a violation of this policy. Action also will be taken against all other violators as deemed necessary or as regulated by law.

Action

RPL will impose upon any individual found to have engaged in misconduct constituting discrimination, harassment or retaliation appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Actions may include: education or training, referral to counseling, withholding of a promotion, reassignment, change in status, suspension without pay, financial penalties or termination.

RPL's ability to discipline an outside actor (e.g. customer, supplier, or deliverer) may be limited by the degree of control, if any, that it has over that person or the entity they work for or represent. However, any employee who has been subjected to discrimination, harassment or retaliation should file a complaint and be assured that some action will be taken if it is determined to have occurred. Such action may include instruction, if appropriate, ceasing business with a service provider, prohibiting membership to the Library, reporting the alleged actor to her or his employer, reporting a public official to an appropriate agency, or any other appropriate action. Any action that may be taken against such third party is independent of action that other entities may impose.

Maintaining A Written Record of the Complaint or Report

RPL will keep a written record of each complaint or report and how it was investigated and handled. RPL will maintain written records on a confidential basis.

No Retaliation

RPL will not tolerate and prohibits retaliation against anyone who makes a complaint of or reports discrimination, harassment or retaliation or participates in the investigation of such a complaint or report.

Retaliation is a serious violation of this policy: report it immediately. Any person found to have retaliated against another for reporting discrimination, harassment or retaliation is subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Formal Legal Proceedings

The procedures above apply to internal complaints or reports of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. Different procedures may apply if a formal administrative charge or civil lawsuit is filed by a governmental agency. If you receive such a charge, claim, complaint or suit, deliver it to the Human Resources Manager or Library Director immediately.

RPL strictly prohibits retaliation against any person who files a formal charge or complaint of discrimination, harassment or retaliation. Any such retaliation will subject that person to discipline up to and including termination.

Conclusion

RPL has developed this policy to ensure that all employees can work in an environment free from discrimination, harassment or retaliation. When it comes to treating others with respect, all employees are expected to play a lead role. Each person must assume personal responsibility to maintain respect in the workplace. RPL will strive to ensure that all are aware of the policy, and that RPL will investigate and resolve appropriately any complaint or report RPL receives.

Harassment and Retaliation Prevention Policy

Zero Tolerance

No harassment or retaliation tolerated. The library will not tolerate harassment based on sex (with or without sexual conduct), sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, or disability. The library also will not tolerate retaliation for speaking out against discrimination, participating in the complaint investigation process or for good faith reporting to the library or a public body a violation of a law or rule or a condition or practice that would put at risk the health or safety of any employee or other individual. This policy applies to supervisors, co-workers, vendors and other non-employees. The library fully supports this policy and management is committed to the prevention of any form of harassment.

Prompt reporting is required

All employees must promptly report any harassing behavior or retaliation before it becomes severe or interferes with their work. The library will make every effort to stop any harassment before it amounts to a violation of law. It can only do so if it is promptly reported.

No punishment for reporting

The library will not tolerate adverse treatment of an employee because they reported harassment, provided information relating to such a complaint or in good faith reported to the library or a public body a violation of a law or rule or a condition or practice that would put at risk the health or safety of any employee or other individual.

Definition of Harassment/Retaliation

Unwelcome comments, jokes, acts, and other verbal or physical conduct related to sex, sexual orientation, race, color, religion, national origin, age, disability, or protected activity (speaking out against discrimination, participating in the complaint investigation process or good faith reporting to the library or a public body a violation of law or rule or a condition or practice that would put at risk the health or safety of any employee or other individual) is harassment when:

- a. Submission to such conduct is made, either explicitly or implicitly, a term or condition of an individual's employment;
- b. Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual;
- c. Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; or
- d. The challenged action would discourage a reasonable employee from making or supporting a charge of discrimination or engaging in protected activity.

Employment decisions (tangible employment action) linked with harassment or retaliation could include:

- a. hiring and firing;
- b. promotion and failure to promote;
- c. demotion;
- d. reassignment;
- e. a decision causing a significant change in benefits;
- f. compensation decisions; and
- g. an unappealing work assignment.

None of these actions, linked with harassment or retaliation, will be tolerated.

Description of Sexual Harassment

The following are some examples of sexual harassment. Such behavior is not permitted.

- A. Physical assaults of a sexual nature such as:
 - (1) rape, sexual battery, molestation, or attempts to commit these assaults; and
 - (2) intentional physical contact, such as touching, pinching, patting, grabbing, brushing against another employee's body, or poking another employee's body.
- B. Unwanted sexual advances, propositions, or other sexual comments, such as:
 - (1) sexually-oriented gestures, noises, remarks, jokes, or comments about a person's appearance, sexuality, sexual experience, or sexual orientation directed at or made in the presence of any employee who indicates or has indicated that such conduct in their presence is unwelcome;
 - (2) preferential treatment or promise of preferential treatment to an employee for submitting to sexual conduct, including soliciting or attempting to solicit any employee to engage in sexual activity for gain or reward; and
 - (3) subjecting, or threatening to subject, an employee to unwelcome sexual attention or conduct or intentionally making performance of the employee's job more difficult because of that employee's sex, sexual experience, or sexual orientation.
- C. Sexual or discriminatory displays or publications anywhere in the workplace by employees, such as:
 - (1) displaying pictures, posters, calendars, graffiti, objects, promotional materials, reading materials, or other materials that are sexually suggestive, sexually demeaning, or pornographic, or bringing into the work environment or possessing any such material to read, display, or view at work; and
 - (2) displaying signs or other materials purporting to segregate an employee by sex in any area of the workplace (other than restrooms and similar semi-private lockers/changing rooms).

Complaint Process

Any individual who believes he or she has been the subject of any form of harassment should immediately report the incident or act to one or more of the following individuals:

- (1) Library Director
- (2) Assistant Director
- (3) Personnel Committee Chair

Reports can be verbal or written. Employees are not required to report to anyone harassing or retaliating against them. The library will promptly investigate any and all complaints. All supervisors have been trained to and are required to immediately report complaints of harassment to one of the individuals listed above.

Confidentiality:

The library will protect the confidentiality of harassment and retaliation allegations as much as possible. All information provided will be kept confidential and maintained in a separate

confidential file. It will be discussed only with those who have a need to know in order to investigate or resolve the complaint.

Investigative Process – Corrective Action:

The library will promptly conduct a thorough and impartial investigation into any alleged harassment or retaliation. Steps which the library may take will be designed to stop the harassment or retaliation, correct its effects, and ensure that it does not happen again. Any remedial measures will not punish anyone who has come forward with a legitimate complaint of harassment or retaliation. Corrective action may include warning, training and monitoring, transfer or reassignment, suspension, or discharge of involved coworkers. The focus is upon prevention, not punishment. Any employee who reports harassment or retaliation will be informed of the general results of the investigation and corrective action taken.

Employees must report harassment. The purpose of this Policy is to encourage employees to report any harassment. Employees should not assume that the library is aware of any harassment which may be encountered. It is each employee's responsibility to bring any complaints and concerns to the library's attention.

Americans with Disabilities Act Policy

The library is firmly committed to comply with all applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act. It is our policy not to discriminate against any qualified applicant or employee with regard to any terms or conditions of employment because of such individual's disability or perceived disability so long as the individual can perform the essential functions of the job, with or without reasonable accommodation. Consistent with nondiscrimination, the library will provide reasonable accommodation to a qualified individual with a disability, as defined by ADA, who has made us aware of their disability, provided that such accommodation does not constitute an undue hardship to the library.

XVI. Employee Handbook Revision History

- (1) October 2021
- (2) Approved by the Board March 15, 2022