

## Frequently Asked Questions

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***This is a working document. Please keep in mind that new guidelines and best practices are being released all of the time. As we learn more, and more questions are asked, answers will be updated.***

### HOURS

You've said we will be paid for actual hours worked as of July 1. But then you also said that we may not be doing curbside checkout by July 1 - and that library operating hours and staff schedules may be much shorter. What are my options? I need my full paycheck to support my family.

*We currently anticipate bringing some staff back into the building the first week of June, and beginning curbside checkout on June 22nd. For safety reasons, the library is limiting the number of people in the building, and the length of each shift worked in the building. The situation is fluid. We are continually monitoring the situation, and best practices for working in our current environment.*

*Every employee's situation is different. Many staff will continue to work their hours either fully, or partially, remotely. Some staff may qualify for paid time-off through the Emergency Family Medical Leave Act. Contact your supervisor and/or Tony in HR to discuss the options.*

Can we look into having our virtual reference hours reflect the schedule of the library before the closure?

*This is under consideration and is currently being discussed.*

Will virtual reference be extended to coincide with curbside hours? What about weekends?

*This is under consideration and is currently being discussed.*

Will we have more access to library software at home so we can do more work from home?

*Please let your supervisor know what software you need.*

You said to keep our hours at home to approximately half the time? Should I have worked more? Was this used in determining paying staff for hours worked? Should we work to get our hours up to our budgeted hours now?

*When we initially closed on March 13th, we were not prepared to remotely operate at 100%. The pandemic has caused disruptions in all of our lives, and the library recognized that most staff was not able to work their typical schedule.*

*It has taken the Library some time to figure out what our new normal was going to look like. We believe that we will be operating as a hybrid library, operating successfully online, and provide limited access to the physical collection, for the next several months. In order to fully launch the hybrid library, we need as many staff as possible to return to working their full schedules.*

*We understand that COVID-19 has caused significant challenges that everyone has been forced to manage. As the state enters the Recovery Phase of the Restore Illinois plan, it is hoped that those challenges have become more manageable for everyone. If a staff member anticipates that they may still have difficulty working their full schedule come July, they should contact their supervisor or Tony in HR to explore the options they have available to them.*

What factors are driving the policy change to pay employees for their actual hours of work vs their scheduled hours of work when they are unable to work their scheduled hours due to reduced hours in the library?

*This is no longer an emergency situation. A hybrid library model where many of our services are offered online, and access to the physical building is limited, is our new normal. Paying employees for the hours worked is in keeping with the library's Employment policy.*

*While the initial plan is to offer public curbside pickup for a limited number of hours; it will take more staff than previously. Implementing curbside checkout is very staff intensive. We anticipate that there will be a need for staff to work a similar number of hours as before the pandemic. There will be staff in the building six or seven days a week from morning to evening in order to implement this service safely. Staff will also be allowed to continue to work remotely.*

What quantifiable factors will need to be reached in order to end the pay model that begins on July 12, 2020?

*The pay model that begins on July 12, 2020 - is the model that most of us agreed to when we began working for VAPLD - being paid for the hours actually worked.*

*Because we have significantly increased our online offerings, and the number of staff who are now working remotely, we do have to reevaluate expectations for fairly*

*compensating staff when the building is closed due to an emergency, but staff are able to keep the online library fully open.*

At what board meeting was paying staff for the number of hours instituted? A subcommittee?

*The Board has not recently taken any formal action on this matter. The Personnel Committee is meeting on June 1st to review and discuss the Personnel Proposal for FY2021 on June 1st, and it is anticipated that the Proposal will be approved at the June 15th Board meeting.*

*Paying employees for the hours they work is in keeping with the library's existing employment policy. Under the Restore Illinois Plan, during Phase 3 the Governor's "Stay at Home " order has been lifted; restrictions are loosened, more businesses are opening. This is no longer considered an emergency situation.*

At what phase of a reopened building does the paying staff for hours worked end? How long is this in effect? The whole fiscal year?

*Paying employees for the hours they work is in keeping with the library's existing Employment policy. A hybrid library model where many of our services are offered online, and access to the physical building is limited, is the new normal. If there is an emergency situation which requires the buildings to close, we would revisit how we implement compensation.*

Aren't we sitting on several million dollars of surplus? How is this being used?

*The library does have \$4.6 million in a Special Reserve Fund. This is not surplus, it is a restricted fund that, by law, can only be used for capital projects. The Board intended for these funds to be used to pay for repairs and the planned renovations to the building. In the past, the Special Reserve Fund has been used to pay for our roof, chiller, carpeting, renovations on the Annex, etc...*

Is the drive-through option that was mentioned going to be paid for at the expense of employee positions?

*No. Employee expenses are covered from the General Fund. The drive-thru option would be a capital project and covered by the Special Reserve Fund. We are not allowed to use the Special Reserve Fund to pay for operational expenses such as personnel expenses.*

How are hours going to be tracked between office and remote work- ADP, Google spreadsheets?

*Likely ADP, we are working through the logistics.*

Will we be given written descriptions of these policies and of acceptable work options?

*Yes. The Personnel Committee is meeting June 1st to discuss several employee policies, as well as the personnel budget for FY2021. We will be asking the Board to approve the policies at their June 15th meeting. Once approved by the Board, they will be distributed to staff.*

Can you give us a clearer idea about schedules? Will we sign up for shifts? Will we have the option to choose how much in-library time we work, or will that be assigned to us?

*Your supervisor will provide you with more information about your work schedule. The time you are in the building will be assigned to you. We are coordinating between departments how many staff and which staff will be in the building at any one time. We are trying to create teams so that we have the same staff working together on each shift.*

Will we still be required to clock in when we work in the building?

*Yes.*

Who will be working exclusively from home?

*Many positions may continue to work remotely full-time. The initial goal is to limit the number of people in the buildings to allow for as much social distancing as possible.*

In your best estimation when does it look like we will be starting to work the 3-4 hours a day in the library?

*The situation is fluid. At this time we anticipate having facilities staff returning to work the first week in June. Some Collections Services may begin returning to the building on June 8, Circulation Staff, and Senior and Homebound Services staff may begin returning to the building on June 15th.*

Do you think we will still be working partially from home in the winter?

*Yes. One upside of all of this is that it has proven that staff at all levels can be productive working from home. I think this is likely a permanent option for some positions.*

## **CHILDCARE**

If the library starts doing curbside or other in-office work before schools or childcare restart, what am I supposed to do with my small child while I work? What are my options?

*Please talk to your supervisor and/or Tony in HR. We may be able to adjust your work schedule. You likely qualify for EFMLA, which provides paid leave.*

## **BENEFITS**

You've said no one will lose their benefits. But then you also sent an email outlining the minimum hours we need to work to keep our benefits. If the combination of in-person and remote work I am offered does not meet that minimum, what are my options?

*There are no mandatory reductions in hours. If you wish to continue working your standard scheduled hours but do not have enough work to fill your hours, please see your supervisor to find out about additional projects that might be available to you.*

*We do not have control over the requirements set by our benefit partners. If you wish to work fewer hours, but fear you may fall below a minimum threshold set by one of our benefit partners, you may use paid time off to make up the difference. You may also qualify for paid time off through EFMLA. Please contact Tony in HR to discuss the options available to you.*

While IMRF says reduced hours do not affect participation for how long is that policy in effect? What if the State is fully "open" but our Library is not?

*Contact IMRF directly for a definitive answer. It is our understanding that under the [Restore Illinois Plan](#), Illinois will not be fully opened until Phase 5 - when a vaccine or highly effective treatment is widely available. At that time, the library would be able to offer in-house programs and services similar to what was offered before the pandemic.*

Will we be ineligible for our health and dental insurance if we do not work a minimum number of hours per week?

*WIN, our insurance provider, established the rule that employees must average 30 hours per week to participate in their program. We believe that is an average over the course of a calendar year. You may also use paid time off to make up the difference to equal the 30 hours per week average. Please contact Tony in HR for more information.*

## **FURLOUGHES**

You mentioned that no one would be laid off or furloughed. But then you also mentioned that some people make more after being furloughed than they do while they are on payroll. How can I find out if that situation could apply to me? Is there such a thing as a voluntary furlough?

*Unemployment does not pay the employee's full salary, and ends after 26 weeks.*

*Currently, because of the extraordinary situation, there is extra funding for those individuals who have been laid off because of COVID-19. It is my understanding that those additional benefits will cease once the stay at home order is lifted by the Governor.*

*There is no voluntary furlough. We are a work at will employer, employees may resign their position at any time. If an employee resigns, they are not eligible for unemployment. If returning to work is challenging, please reach out to Tony in HR to see what options may be available.*

Is my job being kept at the expense of expected cutbacks in other departments, such as circulation staff not returning because it isn't safe?

*No cutbacks are anticipated for the next fiscal year. The Finance Committee has proposed a budget that funds the personnel lines at a similar level as the current fiscal year. According to the Return to Work survey, the vast majority of our staff is planning on returning to work at the library.*

If the library is forced to close again due to a second wave of COVID or another stay at home order, will we be paid at 100% of our scheduled hours or the hours that we actually work?

*We will do our best to be fair to both the staff and to our tax payers. It will depend on the situation at that time. Staff are better prepared to work remotely, but may not be able to work. If that is the situation, we will pay staff for their scheduled hours.*

## **WORKPLACE SAFETY**

When the library begins to allow patrons to enter the building, will they be required to wear face masks? If they do not wear the masks, what steps should we take?

*If there is an Executive Order requiring people to wear a mask, patrons will be required to wear a mask in the library, as well as at any other establishment in Illinois that they frequent. We will have signage up, and remind people that a face mask is required. If they don't follow the rule they will be asked to leave.*

You mentioned the workplace being cleaned in between shifts. Are our workspaces included; bathroom? Who will be doing the cleaning? Will facilities be putting themselves at risk?

*Staff will have limited access to the buildings both in time and workspaces. Facilities staff will be cleaning the buildings in all areas used by staff. Facilities staff will be wearing the appropriate PPE and following proper cleaning and disinfecting procedures. Night cleaning services will also resume.*

Have you considered having us work fewer, but longer shifts? Isn't it safe to work longer shifts (9-3?) instead of 3.5 hours? If I'm working multiple short shifts, that's more days that I'm bringing germs in and out of the library and more importantly in and out of my home, on my purse, clothes, etc. This would require less cleaning and reduce travel. Possibly less transmission.

*Shorter shifts are being implemented because of health and safety concerns. A longer shift means more people sharing a restroom. And a break where you eat means taking off a mask.*

Will the logging system that is implemented account for the flexible schedules that many people find more productive when remotely working and that accommodate other responsibilities people are currently balancing? (Ex. Not working a straight 9-5 but several periods of work throughout the day that add up to required hours)

*Yes. Home lives and what constituted a normal schedule has been altered during the COVID-19 pandemic. There will be scenarios unique to each individual employee that supervisors will try to work with to make sure your budgeted hours are met.*

Have you investigated air filters for the building with UV filters, such as those used in hospitals?

*Air purifiers were purchased for staff areas where they can be used effectively. The HVAC systems are being retro-fitted to sanitize the library's air, which may include HEPA filters, UV sanitizing equipment, and or bipolar ionization equipment.*

Will all staff be required to wear masks when in the building to reduce spreading germs? Can staff wear their own masks or will they be required to wear the ones provided by the library?

*Staff will be required to wear gloves and masks. Staff may wear their own masks, but the library will provide the necessary PPE.*

Will the gloves be available in multiple sizes?

*Multiple sizes were purchased based on availability.*

There has been lots of talk about sanitizing surfaces in the library between shifts. Since the virus is mainly spread through the air, what is being done to improve ventilation in the buildings?

*Air purifiers were purchased for staff areas where the units can be used effectively. We are also limiting the number of people working at any one time in the building, and anyone entering the building will be required to wear a mask.*

Will the library be installing plexiglass dividers between the staff and patrons at the services desks and between the Adult computers?

*Plexiglass dividers were purchased for service desks and some staff areas. Additional plexiglass will be purchased if needed.*

What if a staff member is exposed COVID-19 or test positive? What procedures are in place?

*The library has a policy on how we will handle this and other COVID-19 type situations. The Personnel Committee will be reviewing our temporary Coronavirus COVID-19 Policy Manual and making recommendations for the board to approve in the June Board Meeting. Once approved we will provide it to all staff.*