

PERSONNEL POLICIES & REGULATIONS

It is the responsibility of the Regional Board to employ a Director who adheres to policy. It is the responsibility of each affiliated board to employ a Library Manager who adheres to policy. It is the responsibility of the Director or Affiliated Library Manager to hire or dismiss, assign, train, schedule and direct personnel.

It is the goal of the NEGRLS Board of Trustees to offer library employees pleasant working conditions, opportunities for training and advancement, and salaries commensurate to training, experience, and responsibilities. In return, each public service staff member should recognize that her/his first duty is service to the public that is prompt, efficient, impartial, and friendly. It is every employee's job to create an atmosphere which is welcoming, helpful and pleasant.

NEGRLS complies fully with the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) which federally regulates the number of hours an employee can be reasonably expected to work. The library acknowledges the provisions of this law which mandate overtime compensation for time worked in excess of 40 hours per week by non-exempt personnel. The library further acknowledges the exemption of state-certified, state paid employees as well as certain other staff members who meet the current FLSA thresholds and tests from these regulations.

NEGRLS complies fully with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and all applicable state and federal employment laws.

In matters regarding federal, state, or other applicable laws, no affiliate library board may modify regional policy. Policy sections where local variations are allowed are noted in each such section.

It is the responsibility of the Regional Services Office to disseminate the following general personnel policies to Regional Services employees, Regional Board Trustees, and Affiliated Library Managers. It is the responsibility of the Affiliated Library Managers to disseminate the following policies and procedures to the Affiliated Library Employees and Board Members.

GENERAL PERSONNEL POLICY

APPOINTMENT - Regional appointments are made by the Director under the authority of the Regional Board. Appointment is made to positions in the respective affiliated libraries by the affiliated library manager or Director under the delegated authority of the affiliated library board. Notice of appointment is made by letter and states the position to which the person is appointed. Terms of salary and a copy of the personnel policy are attached. Acceptance of the appointment is made in writing and carries with it an obligation to abide by the terms specified in the letter and in policy.

While the employee will begin accruing leave immediately upon employment, no earned leave may be taken during the first six months of employment.

The salary for state-paid and state-certified public librarians shall be based on the level of certification and years of experience as mandated by the State of Georgia. The salary for locally paid and other non-certified personnel of the Regional Services Office shall be decided by the Director within the limitations of the budget approved annually by the

Regional Board of Trustees. The pay rate for locally paid personnel at affiliated libraries shall be decided by the Library Manager within the limitations of the budget approved annually by the appropriate Board of Trustees and the Regional Board.

No person seeking employment will be discriminated against because of race, sex, age, marital status, physical disability, political affiliation, or religion.

EVALUATIONS – All fully appointed employees will be evaluated annually by the supervisor to identify areas of strength and weakness. The Director will be evaluated by the Regional Board. Affiliate Managers will be evaluated by the local library board and/or Director. Evaluations will be kept on file in accordance with state requirements.

PROMOTIONS AND TRANSFERS – NEGRLS will select the most qualified applicant for any position. All certified positions will be advertised and an open search will be conducted. Other open positions may be advertised in the local legal organ. Promotions and transfers within the existing staff may be considered. Such promotions and transfers shall be based on satisfactory performance evaluations and the ability of the employee to perform the required work; length of service is not a determining factor.

RESIGNATIONS – Resignations are to be submitted, in writing, to the Director for Regional positions or the Affiliated Library Manager for affiliated library positions. One month's notice is required. Failure to give the required advance, written notice may result in the employee's accumulated vacation time being paid to the employee to fill out the unrequested portion of the required month. This section may be modified as necessary for affiliate operations.

PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE – Each staff member must remember that he/she represents the library. Friendly, prompt, and efficient service is mandatory of all library employees. Patience, poise, tact, and self-control are essential in all contacts with patrons and colleagues. Staff members must keep in mind that they are working in a publicly supported capacity.

PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES – All staff members are expected to present themselves in a friendly, businesslike manner. All staff members are expected to present a businesslike appearance in both dress and manner during scheduled hours. Neatness and cleanliness are essential, and all extremes should be avoided. Using tobacco, chewing gum, and eating while on duty in the public area are prohibited. This section may be modified as necessary for affiliate operations.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT – Loyalty to the library, to its administration, and to colleagues is a basic requirement of all employees. Constructive criticism should be made through proper channels and never to persons outside the library.

PERSONAL TELEPHONE USE – Personal calls on library phones should be kept brief and to a minimum.

HOURS OF SERVICE – The Fair Labor Standards Act requires that a standard work week be defined. The Regional Services Office and affiliate Library standard work week will run from Saturday through Friday. This may be modified as necessary for affiliate operations. Persons in positions covered by the FLSA may work up to 40 hours per

week, to be determined by the Director (Regional positions) or Library Manager (affiliate positions) within the limitations of the budget.

Schedules are assigned by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager, or by a person designated by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager, taking into consideration the needs of the library first, and, when possible, the personal preference of the employee. No staff member covered by the FLSA will be scheduled to work over 40 hours during the library's standard work week. Professional and other staff members who meet the current FLSA thresholds and tests for exemption may work more than 40 hours per week if their duties require additional effort on occasion.

Changes in individual employee's schedules normally shall be approved ahead of time by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager, or a person designated by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager, upon written request by the employee. Circumstances may alter individual situations. It shall be the Director's and Affiliated Library Manager's responsibility to schedule for a continuous program of service, and his/her privilege to grant exceptions when possible.

In determining the hours of service, the needs of the community are given first consideration, within budgetary limitations, and hours are so determined by these factors. Hours of service for all staff members are set by the Director for Regional Services personnel or the Affiliated Library Manager for public service personnel, and may be changed, if necessary, in order to provide adequate public and regional services, subject to budgetary constraints.

Work under forty (40) hours per week will be made up during periods designated by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager or charged against the employee's accrued leave.

DISCIPLINARY ACTION – If an employee fails to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of her/his position, she/he will be subject to oral reprimand, written reprimand, or dismissal. All steps will be documented. The following causes relating to failure in the performance of duties or to personal conduct are representative of, but not limited to, those considered to be adequate grounds for dismissal. An employee may be placed on probationary status following an oral and a written reprimand.

A. Causes which, if repeated, may be grounds for dismissal:

- Failure to fulfill work hour obligations and assignments.
- Discourteous treatment of the public or other employees.
- Inefficiency, negligence, or incompetence in the performance of duties.
- Misuse of library supplies, equipment, or funds.
- Refusal to accept a reasonable and proper assignment from a supervisor.
- Engaging in incompatible activity that would adversely affect job performance.
- Commission of a misdemeanor.

B. Causes which would result in immediate dismissal:

- Gross misconduct
- Commission of a felony.
- Publication of legally protected information from official records.
- Falsified job information to secure position.
- Willful damage or destruction of property while on the job.
- Willful acts that would endanger the lives and property of others.

- Possession of firearms or lethal weapons on the job.
- Reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs, or partaking of such on the job.
- Purposeful production or spreading of any malicious software, virus, or Trojan horse program.

REDUCTION IN FORCE (RIF) – The Board must manage resources within the limitations of its funding. Consequently, it shall be the prerogative of the Board to abolish job positions, to reduce salaries of non-certified personnel, and/or to reduce the number of employees when seeking to cope effectively with program changes, financial exigency, or any reasonable reorganization plan to achieve a more efficient system. When the Director (for regional positions) or affiliate manager (for affiliate library positions) determines that the application of the reduction in force policy is necessary, he/she will prepare an RIF plan for Board presentation. Factors to be considered in devising the RIF plan shall include the professional expertise, effectiveness, overall job performance, and importance to the continuation of required services of individual employees. Only where demonstrated competence and expertise are equal among employees shall other factors such as level of certification and length of service be considered in order to make recommendations for the termination of an employee's positions.

Employees who are laid off because of reduction in force shall be given at least one month's notice. If they are re-employed by the library within a two-year period, sick leave credits will be reinstated. Every assistance possible will be given the employee in finding a suitable position elsewhere, and an explanatory statement is given for use in seeking a new position.

DISMISSALS – Dismissals may be made by the Director or by the Affiliated Library Manager for general incompetence and for proper cause, as outlined above. If the work of a staff member is evaluated to be unsatisfactory, that staff member shall be so advised, and a reasonable effort will be made to assist the staff member in improving his/her performance. If within reasonable time, the staff member fails to meet the required standards, he/she will be warned. If improvement does not take place, the employee will be terminated. A Regional Services employee may request a hearing before the Regional Board with the Director. An Affiliated Library employee may request a hearing before the appropriate county Library Board with the Affiliated Library. Dismissal on any grounds must be documented thoroughly.

APPEAL – A Regional Services employee who feels that a decision involving demotion, dismissal, or reduction in force was unjust may appeal the decision by filing a written appeal with the Chairman of the Regional Board of Trustees within 15 days. An Affiliated Library employee who feels that a decision involving demotion, dismissal, or reduction in force was unjust may appeal the decision by filing a written appeal with the Chairman of the Affiliated Library Board within 15 days. The written appeal must contain the reason why the employee feels the decision was unjust. The Chairman will immediately appoint a review board of five trustees to consider the appeal. The review board will convene within 15 days of appointment to hear all evidence from the appellant and the Director or Library Manager. Within 15 days of the hearing, the review board will render a written decision based on the evidence presented. Upon receiving the decision of the review board, the appellant may request, in writing, to the Chairman of the Regional Board (for regional positions) or the Chairman of the Affiliated Library Board (for affiliated library positions), that the decision be considered by the entire

board at the next regularly scheduled meeting. Should the Chairman receive such a request, the reconsideration of the review will be included on the agenda for the next regularly scheduled meeting. All decisions of the Board of Trustees involved shall be final.

HOLIDAYS – The libraries shall be closed on the following days: January 1, Martin Luther King Day, National Memorial Day, July 4, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and the following day, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day (December 24 and 25). When an approved holiday occurs on Saturday, the library shall be closed on Friday and Saturday. When an approved holiday occurs on Sunday, the library shall be closed on Saturday and Monday. The holiday schedule may be modified at the discretion of each county board, but not to exceed 11 days per year nor to be less than 8 days per year. The Regional Services Office must be notified of all modifications. Full Time Library staff members will receive full pay for the above holidays. Part time staff members will receive no pay for holidays unless explicitly allowed in affiliate library policy.

PERSONAL LEAVE – Four days of personal leave will be granted to all full time Regional Services employees each year. A personal leave policy may be adopted by county boards as necessary for the operation of the affiliated libraries. Any such policy and revisions to it will be filed with the NEGRLS offices.

SICK LEAVE – Sick leave of twenty (20) working days per calendar year is allowed all full time Regional staff members. Sick leave is allowed for illness of the staff member and immediate family or for appointments with a physician or dentist, or for exposure to a contagious disease which might jeopardize the health of others. Employees requiring sick leave must notify the Regional Services Office at the start of each working day they are absent. For sick leave of five or more working days, the employee may be required to present a statement from a physician upon return to work.

Sick leave may be accumulated to a maximum of 30 working days. No compensation other than the available Georgia Teacher Retirement System sick leave credit is given for unused sick leave if employment is ended for any reason. Employees who are on a leave of absence without pay do not earn sick leave credits.

A sick leave policy may be adopted by county boards as necessary for the operation of its affiliated libraries. Any such policy and revisions to it will be filed with the NEGRLS offices.

FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE – To qualify for Family and Medical leave, an employee must have worked for the library for at least 12 months and have worked at least 1,250 hours over the previous 12 months. Covered employees may be granted up to a total of 12 workweeks of unpaid leave for one or more of the following reasons:

- Birth or care of the newborn child of the employee:
- Placement with the employee of a child for adoption or foster care:
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent in this case) with a serious health condition:
- To take medical leave when the employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

VACATION LEAVE – Full time certified Regional employees earn vacation leave of 15 working days per year. All other full time Regional staff members earn vacation leave of 10 working days per. After five (5) years employment, one additional day will

be granted for each two years of service, up to a maximum of 5 additional days with no more than twenty (20) days per year for certified personnel, and no more than fifteen (15) working days per year for all other full-time personnel. Part time staff members will earn no vacation leave.

Non-certified Regional full time employees who resign or retire will remain on the payroll until they have been compensated for accrued vacation time up to 20 days. An employee who is dismissed for reasons other than termination without prejudice is not entitled to payment for any accrued vacation time.

Certified Regional employees who resign or retire will remain on the payroll until they have been compensated for accrued vacation time up to 20 days or until they voluntarily begin retirement or employment with another library system (this constitutes an agreement on the part of the employee to waive any right to payment for vacation leave left as of the starting date of retirement or the new position).

In no case will any employee receive compensation of any kind for unused vacation leave in excess of 20 days.

A vacation or annual leave policy may be developed by county boards as necessary for the operation of the affiliated libraries. Any such policy and revisions to it will be filed with the NEGRLS offices.

FUNERAL LEAVE – Leave with pay is granted in case of the death of a member of a Regional employee's immediate family. For purposes of definition, immediate family includes spouse, father, father-in-law, mother, mother-in-law, sons, sons-in-law, daughters, daughters-in-law, brothers, brothers-in-law, sisters, sisters-in-law, grandparents and grandparents-in-law.

Length of time is left to the discretion of the Director, but is not to exceed three (3) days. The Director may, at his/her discretion, authorize funeral leave because of the death of a person closely attached to the employee.

It is intended that the Library's employees only use the time required, not that each employee will automatically receive three (3) full days.

A funeral leave policy may be developed by county boards as necessary for the operation of its affiliated libraries. Any such policy and revisions to it will be filed with the NEGRLS offices.

EXTENDED LEAVE WITHOUT PAY – Should an employee exhaust all earned sick and personal leave and require additional time off, vacation leave will then be used. Should all earned vacation and sick leave be exhausted, requests for extended leave without pay will be considered by the appropriate board on an individual basis. This policy may be amended as necessary by affiliated library boards. Any variation must be filed with the regional services office. During a period of leave without pay, an employee does not earn sick or vacation leave.

SPECIAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Special leave without pay for library-oriented education will be decided on merits by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager in consultation with the appropriate board. The request should be submitted to the Director or the Affiliated Library Manager. The request will then be submitted with

recommendations by the Director or Affiliated Library Manager to the appropriate board.

CIVIL LEAVE – All full-time personnel will be allowed leave, with pay, for jury duty; this leave will not be charged to any earned leave for that employee. Compensation for jury duty will be turned over to NEGRLS.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES – All staff members are encouraged to belong to and participate in the activities of library professional associations. Within budgetary and staffing limitations, staff members may receive professional leave time and reimbursement for all or part of the expenses to attend meetings of library professional organizations. If more than one staff member wishes to attend, and funding is limited, priority will be determined as follows:

- Staff members who will attend functions or meetings which show direct benefit to the Library System will be given priority over those who would attend for general enrichment only.
- Staff members who did not attend the same meeting the previous year will be given priority over the staff member who did.
- Staff members who are members of a working committee or who hold organizational office will be given priority.

Salaried employees who meet the current FLSA thresholds and tests are exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act and may be reasonably expected to attend professional functions at times which are not normally worked. In these cases, compensatory leave time will be granted.

POLITICAL PARTICIPATION/ELECTIVE & APPOINTED OFFICE

As an institution, the Northeast Georgia Regional Library System does not endorse, support, or take positions for or against any political candidate for office, and no employee or library support group may speak or act in the name of NEGRLS or any of its affiliates in a political campaign.

Political and Legislative Activities:

Political activity while on duty is not allowed. Employees cannot perform political functions on work time, on Library premises, or while officially representing the Library. Such functions include, but may not be limited to, actively or passively soliciting contributions, assessments, or services; publicly endorsing any candidate for any elective office; wearing political buttons; selling tickets to political fundraising events; and collecting, soliciting, receiving, handling, disbursing, or accounting for political contributions.

A Library employee shall not in a public manner endorse any candidate for public office in the name of the Library or in any official capacity representing the Northeast Georgia Regional Library System or any of its affiliates. A public endorsement is defined as making a public campaign speech or statements to the news media endorsing a candidate.

Library funds, facilities, or services may not be used for any support, participation, or intervention in a political campaign. Use of the available multi-purpose rooms for meetings of political parties is allowed as long as the meetings are free and open to all, and such meetings are allowed by local board policy.

Political activity should not be confused with legislative activity. In the context of policy, political activity relates to elections, not governing. Political activity includes anything one might do to help elect a candidate to office. Legislative activity relates to the activities of current government rather than to an election. It is directed at influencing legislators to act on an issue of importance to libraries.

Election or Appointment to a Funding Agency or Group

No Library employee shall hold an elective government office in or be appointed to an agency or other group which affects or directly controls the ongoing appropriated funding of the Library System or any of its affiliates. If a Library employee finds that she/he wishes to hold such an elective office or appointed position, the employee shall resign before assuming the duties of that office or position

Employee Participation in Politics

With the above exceptions, Library employees have a right to participate or not, as they see fit, in the political process so long as there is no conflict and no appearance of conflict in the opinion of management with the discharge of their regular duties.

Employees are free to engage in whatever civic and/or political activity they choose so long as their involvement does not infringe on Library time and is not conducted on Library premises, and does not have an adverse impact on funding or support of the Library. Some of the activities employees may engage in on this basis are as follows:

Employees may

- Run for and serve in public and other agencies/groups unrelated to library funding;
- Register and vote as they choose;
- Assist in voter registration drives;
- Express opinions about candidates and issues;
- Contribute money to political organizations;
- Attend political fundraising functions;
- Attend and be active at political rallies and meetings;
- Join and be an active member of a political party or club;
- Hold office in political clubs or parties;
- Sign nominating petitions;
- Campaign for or against referendum questions, constitutional amendments, municipal ordinances, etc;
- Campaign for or against candidates in elections;
- Make political speeches for candidates;
- Distribute campaign literature.

This list is provided to answer most questions that may come up as to what is allowed and does not pretend to be complete.

A basic rule of thumb is that generally employees may not engage in political activity while on duty, while on the Library premises, or while representing the Library and that they may engage in political activity when not on duty, not on Library premises, and not representing the Library.

Auxiliary Support Groups

Any resolution or other political statement by a volunteer organization that is not publicly funded, such as a Friends of the Library group, should clearly indicate that it speaks only

for that group and does not state a Library position.

EMPLOYMENT OF RELATIVES, BOARD MEMBERS, AND FUNDING
AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS

In the employment and assignment of personnel within the NEGRLS, family members may not be employed in the same facility or under the same supervisor. No employee shall supervise or be supervised by her/his immediate family member.

The System Services Office will not employ:

- Any relative of the Director or a Library Board member
- Any member of the Regional Board or an affiliate board
- Any member or relative of the board of control for any governmental agency supporting any library in the system on an ongoing basis

Affiliated libraries will not employ:

- Any relative of the Manager, the Director, or a Library Board member
- Any member of the Regional Board or the affiliate library's board
- Any member or relative of the board of control for any governmental agency supporting the affiliated library on an ongoing basis

For purposes of this policy, family shall be defined as including spouse, parent, brother, sister, child, grandchild, great grandchild, grandparent, great grandparent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, brother-in-law, sister in-law, nephew, niece, aunt, uncle, or a relative or common-law spouse living in the residence of the employee. These relationships include those established either by half-blood or by adoption.

This policy shall not apply to any employees employed and assigned prior to the date of implementation.

MISCELLANEOUS – Rest periods, lunch hours, and work schedules will be decided by the Affiliate Manager for Affiliated Libraries or by the Director for the System Services Office.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

NEGRLS complies with all Federal, State, and local laws and regulations including the Fair Labor Standards Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and Public Law 95-256 (Amendments to the Age Discrimination Act of 1967).

All Library employees are covered by Social Security. Each employee shall have the employee's tax or contribution for FICA deducted from her/his salary each month. Each participating library contributes the designated amount to the employee's account. The amount of the contributions and the benefits received are established by the Congress of the United States.

State Teacher Retirement Program and Social Security participation are mandatory for all eligible employees. Regular deductions are taken from the employee's salary with participating libraries making a contribution for each of their employees. The rates are set by the Georgia State Legislature. An employee may elect to retire in accordance with the provisions of the Teacher's Retirement System of Georgia.

The option to participate in a group medical insurance plan is made available to all employees deemed eligible by the State Community Health System. For eligible employees, coverage may be obtained for both the individual and the individual's dependents in accordance with state procedures. The employee is responsible for the monthly fee, with each participating Library making the employer's required contribution. All employees are covered by The Workmen's Compensation Act, and each Affiliated Library will insure that it has appropriate insurance.