



Coastal Plain Regional Library System

Serving Ben Hill, Berrien, Cook, Irwin, Tift, and Turner Counties

Personnel Policy

Approved by the
Coastal Plain Regional Library Board of Trustees
On October 27, 2022

Covering employees at the following affiliates:

Carrie Dorsey Perry Memorial Library

315 West Marion Avenue
Nashville, GA 31639

Cook County Library

213 East Second Street
Adel, GA 31620

Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library

123 N. Main Street
Fitzgerald, GA 31750

Irwin County Library

310 South Beech Street
Ocilla, GA 31774

Tifton-Tift County Public Library

245 Love Avenue
Tifton, GA 31794

Victoria Evans Memorial Library

605 North Street
Ashburn, GA 31714

And the:

Coastal Plain Regional Library Headquarters

2014 Chestnut Avenue
Tifton, GA 31794

Empowering Libraries that Build Communities and Enrich Lives

Our Shared Mission:

We strive to enrich lives by connecting patrons of all ages with valuable resources, innovative technology, and quality information.

Our Core Values:

- ✓ Quality Customer Service
- ✓ Lifelong Literacy and Learning
- ✓ Equal Access to Technology
- ✓ Strong Community Connections
- ✓ Historic Preservation

Foundations of Service

1. *Provide service with a heart:* We strive to provide quality customer service with all the special touches that our patrons expect.
2. *Work as a team:* We value each person's contributions and work together to provide high quality service to our communities.
3. *Maintain a strong support system:* We recognize and respect affiliated groups (including local funding agencies, Friends of the Library, Library Foundations, civic groups, and other agencies) because their support makes it possible for our libraries to survive and thrive.

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Welcome

Welcome to employment with the Coastal Plain Regional Library System (CPRLS). We hope that you are excited to join our team in providing quality services that enrich the lives of our patrons and enhance the communities in which we serve. Every employee plays a key role in the success of our libraries, whether your job involves working directly with patrons or behind the scenes. When we all perform our jobs to the best of our abilities, with enthusiasm and positive attitudes, we create the type of atmosphere our patrons desire and generate supporters for years to come. Meeting and exceeding the following standards will not only benefit you and your career, but also the Library as a whole.

- ❖ **All staff will respect the rights of our patrons.** Privacy and confidentiality of all information related to our patrons and their use of the Library is foundational to public library service. To ensure a welcoming experience for all, please refrain from expressing any social, political, or religious views to patrons and other staff in the course of your work.
- ❖ **All staff will act with honesty and integrity.** As representatives of our libraries, our choices and actions have consequences beyond us as individuals. Make decisions based on sound judgment and high ethical standards. Expect accountability for all you do on the Library's behalf.
- ❖ **All staff will treat coworkers with respect and dignity.** Each team member brings strengths to our team and plays an important role in our libraries' successes. Show others the same respect you would like to receive. Respect shared staff spaces, such as break rooms, by only engaging in friendly exchanges of ideas and minimizing discussion of topics that lead to division or tension. Seek to cultivate growth in each other, as successful teams do.
- ❖ **All staff will actively seek opportunities for professional development.** Learning happens in libraries. Make an effort to learn something new or further develop an existing skill set. Be deliberate about following changes with policies and procedures. Don't wait to be told - ask and seek answers.

Introduction

The Personnel Policy (“Policy”) is designed to acquaint you with CPRLS (“the Library”) and to give you a ready reference to answer many of your questions regarding employment with the Library. As an overview of personnel policies, it communicates what an employee can expect of the Library and what is expected of the employee.

This Policy supersedes all prior handbooks or policies and may be changed or amended from time to time as necessary. Although the Library intends the benefits, policies, and regulations outlined within will generally remain in effect, the Library retains the right at any time to amend, curtail, or to otherwise revise the benefits, policies, and regulations stated in the Policy. Such action will be at the discretion of the Regional Library Board of Trustees.

This Policy does not create an employment contract or other contractual rights. Employees of the Library are hired at-will which means employment is voluntarily entered into and employees are free to resign at-will at any time, with or without cause. Similarly, as an at-will employer, employment may be terminated at-will at any time, with or without cause, so long as there is no violation of applicable federal and state law.

This personnel policy is for employees of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System and applies to all who work in any facility of CPRLS, including the Headquarters library and each of the six branch libraries.

Anti-Harassment/Anti-Discrimination Statement

The Coastal Plain Regional Library System is committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. Each individual has the right to work in a professional atmosphere that promotes equal employment opportunities and prohibits unlawful practices, including harassment, and discrimination. Therefore, CPRLS expects that all relationships among persons in the library will be business-like and free of explicit bias, prejudice, and harassment.

CPRLS has developed this policy to ensure that all its employees can work in an environment free from harassment, discrimination, and retaliation. Any employee who has questions or concerns about these policies should talk with the Branch Manager and/or the Library Director.

Section A: Employment Practices and Legal Compliance

A-1 Purpose, Governance, and Administration of Personnel Policy

Purpose

This Personnel Policy provides general information about the Library employment policies, procedures, expectations, and benefits and is intended to serve as a source of information relative to employment with the Library. The information in this Policy cannot anticipate every situation and answer every question regarding employment. The Library Director shall make interpretive decisions of situations not specifically covered by the provisions of this Policy. In all cases, current federal, state, and local laws will apply, even if not specifically stated.

All employees must sign the **Acknowledgement of Receipt of CPRLS Personnel Policy**. All employees must read the Personnel Policy upon hire and/or upon revision. Employees should retain a copy of the Policy and refer to it as needed throughout employment. Employees with questions concerning a policy, practice, benefit, or other aspect of employment should contact their direct supervisor, Branch Manager, or Library Director, in that order.

Governance

The Coastal Plain Regional Library System Board of Trustees is the governing authority for the entire CPRL System, including all branch libraries, and it is responsible for approving policies. This Policy may be amended in whole or in part from time to time at the discretion of the CPRLS Library Board of Trustees, particularly to maintain legal compliance, operational effectiveness, and desired workplace conditions. The Board reserves the right to revise, supplement, or rescind any employment policies, practices, programs, or benefits at any time for any reason.

The Personnel Policy is administered by and under the direction of the Library Director, who is responsible for supervising library operations and implementing Board policies. In general, Branch Managers are responsible for administering this Policy within their respective branches. The Library Director, Assistant Director, and Chief Financial Officer are available to provide guidance in the administration of policies.

The Coastal Plain Regional Library System is the employer of record for all employees, including the six branch locations and the Headquarters location. Each employee is responsible for cooperating with the employment policies and practices described in the Policy. Employees are also responsible for complying with branch-specific practices, which at no time may take precedence over the Policy.

A-2 Legal Compliance

At-Will Nature of Employment

All employees of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System are at-will employees. Employment with the Library is entered into on a voluntary basis. All employees are employed for an indefinite time period. Either the Library or the employee is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time without notice, for any lawful reason.

Equal Employment Opportunity

The Library is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of the Library to provide equal employment opportunities to qualified persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, or genetic information. All decisions regarding hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, demotion, termination, or any other term or condition of employment will be based upon the qualifications and performance of the employee or prospective employee.

Immigration Law Compliance

The Library is committed to full compliance with federal and state immigration laws and will only hire individuals with the legal right to work in the United States. All employees will be processed through the E-Verify system that compares information from an employee's Form I-9, Employment Eligibility Verification, to data from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration records to confirm employment eligibility.

Smoke-Free Workplace

In compliance with the Georgia Smoke-Free Air Act of 2005 (and local ordinance and policy), all Library facilities and vehicles are designated as smoke-free and tobacco-free areas. In addition, neither smoking, vaping (use of e-cigarettes) nor tobacco use is permitted within 50 feet of any entrance or exit. This policy applies to both employees and visitors at all CPRLS facilities.

Workplace Safety

Every reasonable effort will be made to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace, safe equipment and proper materials, and to establish and insist upon safe methods and practices at all times. It is the basic responsibility of every employee to make safety a part of their daily concern. Employees are obligated to observe all guidelines governing safety and appropriate conduct to properly use the safety equipment provided, following common-sense safety practices. All workplace injuries and accidents must be reported immediately to the supervisor, Branch Manager, and/or Library Director.

In emergencies, CALL 911! If in doubt, CALL!

In non-emergencies, if medical attention by a physician is needed, the employee must use one of the physicians specifically listed on the Workers' Compensation Notice posted at each facility. Failure to report an injury or failure to receive treatment from a physician on the posted panel may jeopardize payment of medical bills or other benefits under workers' compensation insurance.

Motor Vehicles

Any vehicle owned or leased by the Library may be used by authorized drivers and for official library business only and should not be used for personal business. While traveling in library vehicles, whether between CPRLS facilities or for meeting/conference/etc., employees may visit food establishments if the travel crosses over the employee's meal times and the business is within reasonable distance of the necessary path of travel. Drivers must have a valid driver's license issued by the State of Georgia. Drivers are expected to obey all federal, state, and local laws and practice safe driving by avoiding use of mobile devices except through approved hands-free technology. See the CPRLS Motor Vehicle Use Policy for details on how to become an authorized driver and how to request use of a Library vehicle.

Section B: Employee Behavior Expectations

B-1 Ethics and Professionalism

Code of Conduct for Library Employees

Library employees are in a unique category – not only are they employed by the Library and have an obligation to Library management, but more importantly, they also serve and represent the citizens of the community and have an obligation to the public. Library employees are highly visible to the community and must adhere to high ethical standards in their work activities and conduct. Every citizen has the right as an individual to take part in public debate or to engage in social and political activity, unless restricted by law or regulation. However, since personal views and activities may be perceived as representative of the institution, proper precaution must be taken to distinguish between private actions and those authorized in the name of the institution.

Employees of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System have a special responsibility to:

- Serve all patrons equally according to their needs;
- Make library resources and services known and easily accessible to all current and potential patrons;
- Maintain an objective and open attitude of understanding, courtesy, and concern for the needs of library patrons;
- Protect patron confidentiality;
- Learn and execute library policies and to express in a positive manner any concern or objection with policies, philosophies, or programs of the library;
- Respect the abilities and knowledge of other staff and to treat others with respect;
- Share knowledge and expertise with others;
- Avoid personal financial gain at the expense of the institution;
- Complete assignments and fulfill job responsibilities so that fellow staff need not assume added responsibilities except in emergencies;
- Acknowledge the importance of the work done by all employees in all departments and all locations and to work cooperatively with fellow employees.

All employees must sign and abide by the PINES' Code of Ethics, which can be found in the appendices of this Policy.

Personal Appearance

Employees are expected to represent the Library well, and come to work in attire that addresses their safety, allows for the physical requirements of their duties, and conforms to generally accepted standards for a place of business. In choosing appropriate attire, employees should consider the following:

- Shoes should be clean, in good condition, and allow for the safe performance of job duties. Open-toed and backless shoes are acceptable as long as job duties permit.
- Profanity, drugs, alcohol, or vulgar images are not to be represented on clothing of any kind while on duty.
- Coverage of body:
 - o Leggings are permitted with a top that extends at least to mid-thigh all the way around.
 - o Skirts and dresses must extend at least to mid-thigh.
 - o Low cut tops, exposed midriff, and attire that could reasonably be considered revealing are not appropriate for work.
 - o Shorts may be worn with a library or reading themed t-shirt and only when appropriate for the day's job duties. Shorts must extend to at least mid-thigh.
- Jeans are allowable if they are without holes and stains.
- T-shirts are allowable if appropriate for the day's job duties and if they are plain or do not contain images or slogans that can be considered offensive. Employees are encouraged to wear t-shirts that promote reading, literacy, and/or libraries.
- Hair, nails, and facial hair must be kept clean and neat.
- Tattoos and piercings should be covered if displaying profanity or offensive images, and should not be a hindrance to the work expected.

Special consideration will be given in certain situations, such as problems with the facility's heating and cooling or jobs that are messy or that require more physical exertion. The Branch Manager will make the determination regarding these standards should questions arise.

Civic, Professional, and Political Activities

Library employees may and are encouraged to engage in civic, professional, and political activities outside of working hours. Such activities may not interfere with the performance of their library duties and may not create a real or apparent conflict of interest. The Internal Revenue Code regarding tax-exempt agencies prohibits employees of public agencies from actively campaigning for any candidates for public office while at the library.

Outside Employment or Business Activity

Outside employment or business activity is allowed as long as it does not interfere with the employee's library work. Note that engaging in non-library activities on library time is prohibited, as is the use of confidential information learned directly or indirectly through employment with the library. Staff time is a library resource and should be used only for library purposes.

Confidential Information

Library employees are expected to comply with all laws that govern protection of information and follow proper procedures for lawful disclosure of information. No employee may use, provide, or disclose any confidential information acquired through their employment with the Library for private gain or for the private gain of any other persons or groups.

Library patrons are legally entitled to privacy with respect to information requested on their library card applications, to information they seek, and to materials they use or borrow. These matters must not be discussed with other library patrons and should not become the subject of idle conversation among staff members. Any person who inquires about a patron's use of library resources or about information contained on library card applications should be referred to the Branch Manager or Library Director. This information will not be provided except by appropriate court order.

Personal information about staff members, such as home address, telephone numbers, children's names, work schedules, etc., should never be given out except in extraordinary circumstances. Refer all inquiries to the Branch Manager or Regional administrative staff (Library Director, Assistant Director, CFO).

Media Communications and Social Media

Library employees are free to exercise statutory rights regarding contact with political representatives or the media. While it is the employee's right to express personal opinions to the media or others, that right does not allow employees to speak as representatives of the Library or violate patron or staff confidentiality laws and regulations. In addition, unless conducting officially sanctioned library business, employees may not use position titles associated with their employment in a way that suggests that they are acting as representatives of the Library (including any CPRLS facility). Representatives of the Library approved to speak on the Library's behalf are restricted to the Library Director, Assistant Director, CFO, Branch Managers (when the topic is branch-specific), or another spokesman duly appointed by the Library Director and/or Library Board (both local and regional).

Social media posts, comments, or other responses by Library employees are covered by the same rights as referenced above. However, all library patrons and staff members should have their privacy rights respected and protected and should not be the topics of discussion on social media, even on personal pages. Social media can be a powerful tool for reaching communities but appropriate caution should be exercised to assure that effective and accurate information is presented and to ensure security, responsible speech, and privacy protection.

Workplace Relationships – Family and Romantic

The Library seeks to avoid any suggestion of favoritism, discrimination, or conflict of interest in making decisions to hire or promote staff. Relatives or immediate family may be employed concurrently with the following exception: Relatives may not be concurrently employed if either individual holds a role in which they may have a direct effect on the other individual's progress, performance, promotion, or training.

A romantic relationship between a supervisor and a subordinate employee is considered a conflict of interest and is prohibited, as it may lead to claims of favoritism or bias in work assignments, evaluations, or discipline and may ultimately result in claims of sexual harassment. Should a romantic relationship between a supervisor and subordinate develop, it is the responsibility of the supervisor to promptly disclose the existence of the relationship to the Branch Manager and/or Library Director. The subordinate may make the disclosure as well, but the burden of doing so shall be upon the supervisor.

Workplace Violence

Workplace violence is any conduct that is severe, offensive, or intimidating enough to make individuals concerned for their personal safety or the safety of family, friends, or property.

Acts of violence and/or threats of violence, whether expressed or implied, will not be tolerated within the Coastal Plain Regional Library System. All reports of incidents or perceived incidents of workplace violence will be taken seriously and addressed appropriately. Incidents should be reported to the Branch Manager as soon as possible. An incident report, found in the appendix of this Policy, should be completed and a copy sent to the Library Director.

Any employee found to have engaged in workplace violence or threats of violence will be subject to immediate and appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

B-2 Drug-Free Workplace

Policy and Scope

In accordance with the Drug Free Workplace Act of 1988, the Coastal Plain Regional Library System prohibits an employee's consumption, possession, sale, distribution, or presence in the body of illegal drugs or alcoholic beverages while on/in CPRLS property (including all facilities and vehicles) and/or on Library work time. This policy applies to all CPRLS employees, volunteers, interns, and any other individuals performing services on the Library's behalf, whether paid or unpaid. The policy applies to all off-site meal breaks or rest breaks when an employee is scheduled to return to work. Vendors and contractors are also governed by this policy as they are on or in use of CPRLS property or facilities. As a condition of employment, all employees must sign a copy of the Drug Free Workplace Policy, thus agreeing to abide by the established terms.

Violations and Consequences

Failure to comply with any part of this policy will result in serious adverse personnel actions, up to and including termination. Violations include:

- Manufacturing, dispensing, using, consuming, possessing, distributing, purchasing, selling, or otherwise transferring illegal drug(s) or controlled substance(s) while on the job, while on CPRLS property (including all facilities), while in operation of a CPRLS vehicle, or while in operation of any other equipment or vehicle in performance of CPRLS business
- Abuse and/or inappropriate use of legally obtained drugs while on the job, while on CPRLS property (including all facilities), while in operation of a CPRLS vehicle, or while in operation of any other equipment or vehicle in performance of CPRLS business
- Refusing to consent to or take a drug and/or alcohol test pursuant to this policy or failure to appear at the designated collection site to take a drug and/or alcohol test when so directed
- A confirmed positive test for drugs and/or alcohol
- A conviction for violation of any law prohibiting the use, abuse, consumption, possession, manufacture, sale and/or purchase of illegal drug(s) and/or controlled substance(s).

Use or consumption of illegal drugs or alcohol outside the workplace that impairs the employee's ability to perform their work duties will be considered sufficient grounds for disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Testing

Employees will be subject to immediate testing (within 8 hours of a request to be tested), at the Library's expense, when there is reasonable suspicion that the employee has used or misused drugs and/or alcohol in violation of this policy. Reasonable suspicion is defined as a belief based on objective facts sufficient to lead a reasonable person to conclude that a particular employee has used, consumed, is impaired by, or is under the influence of illegal drugs, controlled substances, and/or alcohol. These objective facts must be based on logical inferences and observable phenomena. An employee who is required to take a reasonable suspicion test may be immediately suspended without pay pending the results of the test.

Drug and alcohol testing must be performed within eight hours and at the Library's expense when an employee, while in operation of a Library vehicle or any other vehicle or equipment while in performance of Library business, is involved in an accident that results in:

- (1) A fatality;
- (2) A citation issued to the employee;
- (3) An injured person requiring immediate medical treatment;
- (4) Significant damage to Library or any other property.

Any employee who tests positive for drugs or alcohol shall immediately be relieved from duty and placed on suspension without pay pending disciplinary action. If the positive test is explained or negated by a medical official and/or subsequent confirming testing, the employee shall be reinstated with back pay and the suspension will be expunged from the employee's personnel file.

Disclosure of Convictions

If an employee is convicted of a breach or violation of a criminal statute, regardless of whether the alleged violation occurred at the workplace or elsewhere, the employee must notify the Branch Manager and Library Director in writing of each conviction within 5 calendar days of the conviction. Within 30 days of notification, the Branch Manager and/Library Director shall:

- Take appropriate personnel action against said employee, up to and including suspension or termination; or
- Require employee to participate satisfactorily in a drug abuse assistance program approved for such purposes by local, state, or federal health, law enforcement, or other appropriate agency.

Treatment

Employees who have a problem with drug and/or alcohol use are urged to seek help before the problem adversely affects their health, relationships, or work performance or before it results in violation of this policy.

Section C: Employee Privileges and Responsibilities**C-1 Staff Borrowing**

Employees are encouraged to use the library. Active employees, assigned a “staff” status, will not be charged overdue fees. All library materials removed from the public collection areas of the library must be checked out through PINES. Although staff library cards are fine-free, employees should strive to abide by due dates since keeping materials longer than the standard circulation period prevents equal access to materials by other library patrons. This privilege is limited to the exemption of fines only. Staff members are not exempt from other rules, like renewal limits, paying for lost or damaged items, holds fulfillment, and item check-out limits.

Abuse of this privilege, either through inappropriate use of access to library materials or manipulation of the library’s automated system for personal benefit, will result in disciplinary action.

C-2 Use of Photocopies, Printouts, and Faxes

Employees may use copiers, printers, and fax machines without charge for limited personal use with the Branch Manager’s approval. Extensive copying, printing, or faxing will be subject to charges.

C-3 Use of Mobile Devices

Employees should limit the use of personal mobile devices while staffing public services desks or in public areas of the Library. Each Branch Manager will be responsible for setting rules for staff and enforcing those rules equitably. For a variety of reasons, some employees, particularly those in administrative positions, use mobile devices for library-related business. These employees will use discretion when taking calls or answering texts and will not use this method of communication while staffing a public service desk.

C-4 General Housekeeping Duties

All employees should take personal responsibility to keep the library neat and orderly, especially the public service areas and shared staff spaces. A clean and tidy service area, building, and grounds reflect positively on the image of the library for patrons and funding agencies.

Staff break rooms or rest areas are provided as a convenience to employees and volunteers. All employees are expected to wash their own dishes and utensils, dispose of unused food, and leave the area clean for the next employee. Shared storage spaces like cabinets and refrigerators should be cleaned regularly.

Organized workspaces promote productivity and efficiency and demonstrate respect for coworkers. Shared workspaces should be free from obstructions that could lead to workplace injury, and be organized and arranged to promote the best use of the space. Yearly clean-out of shared spaces is recommended. Employees with individual workspaces should take care to keep their area free from obstructions that could lead to workplace injuries, arranged to facilitate productivity, and organized to allow for others to find necessary items, should an emergency arise.

C-5 Voting

Employees are encouraged to vote in all federal, state, and local elections. As staffing permits, employees may be permitted to adjust their schedule to come in one hour late or leave one hour early if necessary in order to vote. Pre-approval must be requested from the Branch Manager.

C-6 Gifts and Gratuities

Monetary gifts and honoraria received for performance of library-related duties should be viewed as a goodwill gesture and must be given to the Library and not the employee performing the service (i.e. speaker at meetings, e.g.). When an employee is receiving compensation for regular work duty, the acceptance of any monetary gift would be in violation of compensation already provided for in the salary schedule.

Employees requested to speak at job-related meetings or workshops are encouraged to do so. If an employee wishes to retain an honorarium for such speaking engagements, the employee must take leave or otherwise not be scheduled to work (vacation, holiday, or off day).

Section D: Recruitment and Hiring**D-1 Equal Opportunity Employment**

CPRLS is an equal opportunity employer. It is the policy of CPRLS to provide equal employment opportunities to qualified persons without regard to race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 or older), disability, or genetic information. All decisions regarding hiring, placement, promotion, transfer, demotion, termination, or any other term or condition of employment will be based upon the qualifications and performance of the employee or prospective employee.

D-2 Recruitment, Applications, and InterviewsRecruitment

CPRLS is committed to developing a diverse workforce in all facilities. As professional and non-professional positions become vacant, the Library will seek to attract the best qualified candidates available.

Job Postings

In general, notices of job openings will be posted in a designated location in all library locations, including online via the CPRLS website. Exceptions to this policy could include approved departmental reorganization, lateral transfers, upgrade or elimination of a position. Ideally, job posting should remain up for at least two weeks. Job postings for professional or administrative positions should remain up for at least 30 days.

Employment Applications

Employment applications are standard across each location. Applications will be accepted at any time and will be kept on file for a minimum of three months. Application files will be searched for candidates meeting job requirements.

Interviews

A minimum of three candidates will be interviewed for each available position, provided there are three qualified candidates. All candidates interviewed will be notified of the results of the search.

D-3 Hiring and Training

Hiring Decisions

The CPRLS Board of Trustees is responsible for employing a Library Director in accordance with the laws of the State of Georgia and the regulations of the Georgia Public Library Service of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia.

The Library Director is responsible for hiring staff to fill all professional positions and employees working in the Regional Library Headquarters location.

The Library Director, with approval of the local Boards of Trustees, is responsible for employing a Branch Manager who meets the minimum qualifications established by each Board. These qualifications should take into account the Branch Manager Standards document as approved by the Regional Library Board of Trustees.

Each Branch Manager is responsible for hiring all locally-paid employees. Each Branch Manager must follow the processes outlined in this Policy and abide by all federal, state, and local employment laws.

All new hires and rehires must complete a CPRLS New Employee Packet before they begin work. The completed packet must be submitted to the Regional Business Office within one business day of hiring to allow for timely reporting to appropriate outside agencies.

Training

All new employees will receive training in the areas covered below along with specialized instructions based on their specific job responsibilities. Training should be conducted in a manner that allows for consistency with each new employee and incorporates regular review of the employee's performance to ensure new skills are being retained and exercised appropriately. Basic training for all employees will include:

- Awareness of all Library policies and procedures, both region-wide and branch-specific, and employee rights, responsibilities, and expectations;
- Clear understanding and use of customer service skills that promote an open and welcoming environment for all;
- Basic knowledge of the CPRLS structure, the PINES consortium, and resource sharing among libraries;
- Entry level use of the Library's automated circulation system including checking items in and out;
- Familiarity with all areas of the library, including location of all emergency exits, fire extinguishers, etc., and what to do in case of an emergency;
- Instruction on all appropriate equipment;
- Understanding of the chain of command and how to report issues with patrons or other staff.

Section E: Job Descriptions and Classifications/Definitions

E-1 Job Descriptions

The hiring authority (Library Board, Library Director, or Branch Manager) shall provide a job description to each employee. These job descriptions are intended to indicate general kinds of duties, responsibilities, and job requirements normally associated with the position. They are not intended to be exhaustive. Employees may be assigned other duties not included in the description, at the discretion of the hiring authority. Job descriptions should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. The job descriptions are not a contract of employment and do not alter the at-will employment relationship.

E-2 Classifications/Definitions

Exempt Employee: An employee in a position that is exempt from the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Job titles do not determine exempt status. To be classified as exempt, an employee's specific job duties and salary must meet all the requirements of the Department of Labor's regulations. Exempt employees are not required to be paid overtime compensation and are expected to work whatever hours are necessary to meet the responsibilities assigned to the position. For the health and well-being of all employees, exempt employees who work more than 40 hours in a week may be allowed compensatory time.

Full-time employee: Those who work 40 hours per week, are employed on a continuing or permanent basis, and who earn benefits.

Non-exempt employee: An employee in a position that is fully covered by overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act. Non-exempt employees shall earn compensatory time at a rate of one and one half hours for each overtime hour worked (any time over 40 hours per workweek). A workweek is defined as Sunday through the following Saturday. All overtime should be approved by the Library Director or Branch Manager before it is worked except in emergency situations. Misuse of overtime will be addressed by the Branch Manager or Library Director.

Part-time, limited benefit-earning employee: Those who work between 20-29 hours per week on a regular basis and are eligible for participation in the Teachers Retirement System of Georgia.

Part-time, non-benefit-earning employee: Those who work fewer than 20 hours per week on a regular basis and are not eligible for benefits.

Section F: Employee Benefits**F-1 Health Insurance**

Full-time employees may participate in the State Health Benefit Plan. Rates are available for individual and family coverage. Participating employees authorize the library to withhold from their salary the proper amount due for the coverage selected. Other details and instructions will be provided upon the employee's acceptance of an eligible position.

F-2 COBRA

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) provides for continued health benefit coverage for terminating qualifying employees, generally up to 18 months. Notification about eligibility under COBRA will be made by the State Health Benefit Plan.

F-3 Other Benefits

The Library participates in the Flexible Benefits Plan offered by the State of Georgia. This plan allows full-time employees to choose additional insurance coverage for dental, legal, disability, life insurance, and other coverage options. It also provides for payment with pre-tax dollars of qualified childcare costs and qualified medical reimbursement costs. Other details and instructions will be provided upon the employee's acceptance of an eligible position.

The Library may choose to participate in other benefit programs depending on availability, need, and cost-effectiveness. Details for these programs, such as the Employee Assistance Program, will be provided at time of hire or program onset.

F-4 Retirement Plan

All employees who work 20 or more hours on a regular basis are required to belong to the Teachers Retirement System (TRS) of Georgia, unless certain opt-out conditions are met. Contributions to TRS are deducted from members' paychecks at a rate determined by TRS. The library makes additional contributions on the employee's behalf. Other details and instructions will be provided upon an employee's required enrollment in this program.

F-5 Social Security

Library employees participate in the Social Security program. The individual (through payroll withholding) and the Library share the contribution to this program. The amount of the contribution and the benefits received are established by the United States Congress.

F-6 Worker’s Compensation

Employees of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System are covered by Worker’s Compensation medical coverage when performing normal functions of their jobs. Any employee who is injured on the job whose injury results from willful intent, reckless behavior, being under the influence of alcohol or illegal controlled substances, or deviation from the normal work assignments, may jeopardize coverage under Workers’ Compensation and may receive no benefit.

All injuries **must** be reported immediately to the Branch Manager and/or Library Director. Any employee who does not report an injury in the proper manner while on the job may jeopardize coverage under Workers’ Compensation, may receive no benefit, and will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Personnel Policy.

F-7 Unemployment Compensation

Library employees are covered under the Georgia Employment Security Law commonly known as Unemployment Compensation. The Library System’s CFO can provide more information.

F-8 Paid Leave

All paid leave must be taken in increments of 15 minutes (.25 hours).

Annual Leave

Annual leave is leave earned by full-time employees. This leave may be used with no stated purpose, at any time that is convenient to the Branch Manager/Library Director. Written notice of intent to use annual leave should be submitted prior to leave being taken, ideally at least 2 weeks prior to time off. Exceptions may be made in cases of emergency and at the discretion of the Branch Manager/Library Director. Leave is earned at the end of the month. Annual leave may not be used until it is earned. Annual leave does not count as hours worked for the purpose of determining overtime.

Accrual Rate: Leave is earned at a rate of:

- Year 1 - 5 = 12 days per year or 8 hours per month
- Year 6 - 14 = 15 days per year or 10 hours per month
- Year 15 - 19 = 18 days per year or 12 hours per month
- Year 20+ = 24 days per year or 16 hours per month

Employees may carry over a maximum amount of annual leave per year equal to the amount earned each year. Upon retirement or other separation from duty in good standing, unused annual leave will be compensated up to 80 hours.

A previous employee who is rehired will begin accruing annual leave with a zero balance and restart at Year 1.

Personal Leave

Personal leave is leave earned by full-time employees after the completion of one month of service. Personal leave is accrued at a rate of 24 hours per year and may be used only after it is earned. It may be used at any time for any reason with the approval of the Branch Manager or Library Director. Personal leave may not accrue from year to year and is not compensable upon termination, retirement, or separation from duty.

Sick Leave

Sick leave is leave earned by full-time employees. Sick leave is earned at a rate of 15 days per year or 10 hours per month. Sick leave may not be used until it is earned at the end of each month.

Sick leave may be used for:

- Personal or immediate family illness or injury
- Personal or immediate family medical/mental health/vision/dental care appointments
- Absences necessitated by exposure to contagious disease
- Absences due to illness, injury, or death in the employee's immediate family requiring the employee's presence

For the purposes of this policy, an employee's immediate family is defined to include the employee's spouse/significant other, child, parent, sibling, grandchild, grandparent of employee or spouse/significant other, mother/father-in-law, daughter/son-in-law, or any dependent residing in the employee's household.

Under the following circumstances, a doctor's certificate may be required by the Branch Manager, Library Director, or Board of Trustees in order to substantiate a request for sick leave or to validate ability to return to work/remain on the job:

- Any period of absence (due to illness) of 3 or more consecutive working days;
- If there is reason to think a health issue may interfere with work;
- The occurrence of frequent or habitual absences from duty, provided the employee has been notified or warned by the Branch Manager, Library Director, or Board of Trustees that a certificate will be required.

There is no limit on the amount of sick leave an employee may accrue. Normally, an employee may take no more than twelve weeks of leave in a twelve-month period. Exceptions must be approved by the Library Director, in consultation with the CFO and the Branch Manager. Unused sick leave may be used for retirement service credit but is not otherwise compensable upon termination, retirement, or separation from duty.

If an absence because of illness extends beyond the sick leave accrued to an employee, such additional time will be charged to accrued annual leave and personal leave. If accrued paid leave is exhausted, the employee may be granted leave without pay. The Library Director, with the advice of the Branch Manager, has sole authority to grant additional leave not qualified under FMLA.

Holidays

The following holidays are observed by all facilities of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System:

New Year's Day	Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day
Presidents Day	Memorial Day
Independence Day (July 4th)	Labor Day
Veterans Day	Thanksgiving Day, Friday
Christmas Eve	Christmas Day and day after
New Year's Eve	

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, it will be observed on the preceding Friday. If a holiday falls on a Sunday, it will be observed on the following Monday. In addition, libraries with Saturday hours will close on the Saturday after any Friday holiday. For these holidays, full-time employees receive their normal pay. If a holiday falls on the normal day off of a full-time employee, then another day shall be taken within one month of the holiday date.

Civic Duty Leave

Military Leave - Employees who are members of a reserve component of the United States Armed Forces will be allowed leave of absence for required training or duty without loss of pay for a period not exceeding one month in a calendar year. This type leave shall not be charged against the employee's other leave time and partial pay may be paid to the employee provided his/her military pay for said period is less than his/her regular salary. The difference in the pay shall be paid by the library.

Jury Duty - Leave with pay shall be granted to all employees for the purpose of serving on any jury or when subpoenaed. This type of leave shall not be charged against the employee's other leave time. Since employees continue to receive normal pay from the library, all jury duty pay should be turned over to the library. Any employee who wishes to retain jury duty pay must take annual or personal leave or otherwise not be scheduled to work during this time.

Birthday Leave

Full time employees are entitled to one day of paid leave per year in honor of their birthday. The time off must be scheduled during the calendar month of that employee's birthday. It is the employee's responsibility to schedule that time off with the Branch Manager/Library Director by submitting a leave slip requesting the time off.

Bereavement Leave

All employees may be granted up to one week (based on that employee's regular weekly hours) of paid leave following the death of a member of the employee's immediate family (as defined under Sick Leave section).

F-9 Unpaid Leave

Family and Medical Leave Act

In accordance with the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (amended in 2009), any person employed by the library 12 months or more and who has worked at least 1250 hours during the 12-month period prior to the beginning of leave, is eligible for Family and Medical Leave. The employee may take up to 12 weeks of leave during any 12-month period because of the birth or adoption of a child by the employee, the placement of a foster child with the employee, the serious illness of a child, spouse, or parent of an employee to care for that person, or due to the employee's serious illness. The 12-month period is measured forward from the date the leave begins.

Paid leave will run concurrently with and be counted toward the employee's total period of FMLA leave. Once paid leave is exhausted, any remaining time of the FMLA period will be unpaid. The Library will notify the employee if the circumstances qualify the employee for leave under FMLA.

Military Family Leave Entitlements

Eligible employees with a spouse, son, daughter, or parent on active duty or called to active duty in the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation may use their 12-week leave entitlement to address certain qualifying exigencies. Qualifying exigencies may include attending certain military events, arranging for alternative childcare, addressing certain financial and legal arrangements, attending certain counseling sessions, and attending post-deployment reintegration briefings.

FMLA also includes a special leave entitlement that permits eligible employees to take up to 26 weeks of leave to care for a covered service member during a single 12-month period. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who has a serious injury or illness that incurred in the line of duty on active duty that may render the service member medically unfit to perform his or her duties for which the service member is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy; or is in outpatient status; or is on the temporary disability retired list.

A request for FMLA leave stating the dates of leave requested must be submitted in writing to the employee's Branch Manager, Library Director, or Board of Trustees and approved by the Library Director. In the case that such leave is foreseeable, as for the expected birth or adoption of a child, the employee shall make his or her request 30 days in advance of the expected date of commencement of the leave. Employees on FMLA leave are required to report to the Branch Manager, Library Director, or Board of Trustees regularly during the leave period on the employee's status, intention to return to work, and on any changes in the medical condition. The employee shall be reinstated to the previous or an equivalent position, with the continuance of all regular benefits, upon return.

The Library Director may request written certification of the medical condition of the employee or of the employee's child, spouse, or parent, including the date on which the condition began, the probable duration of the condition, a statement that the employee is needed to care for the child, spouse, or parent, and an estimate of the amount of time that the employee will need. The Library Director may request that the employee obtain, at the library's expense, the opinion of a second health-care provider when certifying the need for a leave of absence. If a second opinion differs from the first, the Library Director may request, at the library's expense, a third opinion which shall be the final opinion and binding on the library and the employee.

FMLA leave may be taken intermittently or on a reduced work schedule basis. If FMLA leave is taken intermittently or on a reduced schedule basis, the library may require the employee to transfer temporarily to an available alternative position with an equivalent pay rate and benefits to better accommodate recurring periods of leave due to foreseeable medical treatment.

The Library will maintain the employee's coverage under a group health plan during the period of FMLA leave under the same terms and conditions as though the employee were actively working. During the leave, the employee will be required to continue to make all premium payments that otherwise would have been made if actively employed. Where feasible, the library will advise the employee concerning the necessary arrangement for such payments prior to the commencement of the leave.

Consistent with the Library's practice, before returning to work following medical leave due to the employee's serious health condition, the employee will be required to present a fitness-for-duty certification from a health care provider, indicating that the employee is medically able to resume work and to perform the essential functions of the job.

Other Leave without Pay

Employees who have exhausted all paid leave may request leave without pay. Requests will be granted by the Library Director, in consultation with the Branch Manager, on a case-by-case basis.

Section G: Wage Administration**G-1 Employee Records**

The CFO/Business Office of CPRLS is responsible for maintaining all employment records for all employees. All information contained in these files is strictly confidential.

Employees are responsible for promptly notifying their Branch Manager, in writing, of any changes in their personal information. Branch Managers should forward the new information to the Regional CFO/Business Office as soon as possible.

The CFO/Business Office is responsible for responding to any inquiries regarding employment records, employment verification or employment/credit reference on present or previous employees. As a matter of policy, any response to requests for reference must be limited to factual information that can be substantiated by CPRLS records.

Within the Library, only specific staff have access to employee records. Branch Managers and supervisors have limited access to position and performance related information for employees under their supervision. Employees have access to their own personnel files. Any employee wishing to review their file should contact the CFO/Business Office to schedule an appointment.

G-2 Pay ProceduresDirect Deposit

Wage and salary payments are made once per month by direct deposit only and are scheduled to be deposited on the last business day of each month. Changes to banking account information must be submitted before the end of the pay period in order to be processed for that month's pay.

Pay Period

The pay period for hourly employees will be set by the CFO and adequate notice will be given of any change. Salaried employees are paid by the month.

Rate of Pay

The hiring authority (Library Boards, Library Director, Branch Managers) sets the rate of pay for each employee based on several factors, including responsibilities of the job, experience, special skills, and the availability of funds. Salaries for certified librarians filling state-reimbursed positions will be set within the range prescribed in the state funding formula, established by the Georgia Public Library Service.

Deductions

Deductions from an employee's paycheck shall be made in accordance with applicable law and as authorized by the employee. Mandatory deductions such as state and federal income taxes, Medicare, and Social Security are withheld from pay every pay period. Contributions to Teachers Retirement System of Georgia are deducted from eligible employees. In addition, eligible employees may authorize deductions for elective programs including State Health Benefits and Flexible Benefit Plans. Only the CFO can approve additional elective benefit providers.

Court ordered deductions, such as wage garnishments or child support payments, will be deducted in accordance with the appropriate court order. The CFO may recommend termination for an employee whose earnings are being separately garnished for two or more debts that are not related to child support.

Work Week

The official work week is Sunday through the following Saturday.

Employee Schedules

Schedules may vary depending on the demands of the position and the desires of the local or Regional Board. If an employee desires to change schedules for personal reasons, arrangements should be made with the Branch Manager/Library Director. This should be considered a privilege not to be abused and only to be used for special occasions. Hiring Authorities (Boards, Library Director, Branch Managers) are cautioned to make clear the expected work schedule to all potential employees. Employees should be aware that work schedules cannot necessarily accommodate other employment, school schedules, or other recurring demands.

A standard work day for full-time employees is eight hours and a standard workweek is 40 hours. All efforts should be made to adjust the weekly schedule should an employee need to stay late or leave early on any given day so that the total number of hours worked during the week remains at 40.

Overtime and Compensatory Time

Non-exempt employees shall earn compensatory time, at a rate of one and one half hours for each overtime hour worked (any time over 40 hours per workweek). Compensatory time should be used within the same pay period but no later than the following pay period. Exceptions require approval from the Branch Manager and a member of the Regional Administrative Team. Overtime for non-exempt employees should be approved by the Branch Manager in advance except in emergency situations. Non-exempt Branch Manager's overtime should be approved by the Library Director except in emergency situations.

Exempt employees shall earn compensatory time, at an hour for hour rate, for any time worked over 40 hours in a workweek. This time must be taken within the same pay period earned unless approved by the Library Director. For the health and well-being of the employee, exempt employees are encouraged to structure their work day such that the assigned tasks can be completed within the allotted 40 hours. While occasional projects and special tasks require extra time to complete, frequently working more than 40 hours per week is discouraged for all employees.

Should a full-time employee find that they cannot accomplish their assigned tasks in the allotted workweek, a conference should be scheduled with the Branch Manager or Library Director to discuss appropriate measures.

Time Sheets

CPRLS currently uses an online time clock to track time worked by all employees. Employees are required to report accurately their time worked. Worked time is defined as the time actually spent on the job performing assigned duties. Misuse or manipulation of the time clock by employees will be considered an act of fraud and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Employees are expected to clock in at their assigned location or a location approved through the CPRLS Telecommuting Policy. Exceptions to this rule must be pre-approved by the Library Director.

Employees should review their time clock entries on a weekly basis and immediately submit any corrections or adjustments through the process prescribed by the Branch Manager. Before signing their timesheet each month, employees should thoroughly review entries for accuracy and contact the Branch Manager immediately if errors are found.

Branch Managers are responsible for ensuring that time sheets are accurate upon submission for payment. In the event that an inaccuracy is identified or a correction is needed on a timesheet that has already been submitted, either the Branch Manager or the employee must immediately notify the CFO or the Library Director. Be aware that payroll is typically processed within one business day of the end of each pay period meaning that adjustments are not always possible for that month's pay.

CPRLS takes all reasonable steps to ensure that employees are paid promptly on the scheduled payday and that employees receive the correct amount of pay in each paycheck. Any employee who believes that a mistake has occurred in a time sheet or paycheck, improper deductions have been made from pay, or a paycheck does not accurately reflect the hours worked should immediately contact the Branch Manager, CFO, or Library Director.

Working off the clock is strictly prohibited for all employees at all CPRLS locations as it violates state and federal labor laws and creates liability for the Library. Violation of this rule will result in disciplinary action for both the employee and any supervisor/Branch Manager with knowledge of the violation.

Breaks and Meal Periods

Periodic rest breaks contribute to the employee's welfare and boost the Library's productivity. Employees working four or more consecutive hours are authorized to take one fifteen-minute rest break. Breaks are not cumulative, may not be lumped together, cannot be carried over to another day, may not be added to a meal period, and may not be used to make up for tardiness or used for early departures. Every effort will be made to allow each employee the authorized rest break each shift. However, rest breaks are contingent upon workload and coverage and may not always be provided. Branch Managers should make concerted efforts to shift coverage to accommodate rest breaks whenever possible and ensure the equitable access to this privilege by all employees. Employees should not clock out for these rest periods.

Employees working more than six consecutive hours are authorized to take one unpaid meal period. There are typically 30-60 minutes. This period is considered the employee's own time and should be recorded on the time clock. Since the employee is off the clock, no library-related work should be performed nor should the employee be expected to be on-call for any public service desk. If the employee is considered to be on-call, meaning they have a reasonable expectation to be called back to work, the meal period shall be considered paid time and the employee should not clock out.

G-3 Attendance Issues

Expectations

The Library depends on all employees to be present and on time every scheduled workday to perform their assigned duties. Employees are expected to arrive to work on time, to promptly take and return from breaks, and to leave work at the scheduled time.

Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as an employee reporting for work five or more minutes after the scheduled time to start work or return from break. Employee tardiness is considered unprofessional and inconsiderate to coworkers. One employee's tardiness can intrude on another employee's ability to leave a public service desk and pass off other responsibilities as expected. A pattern of excessive tardiness is unacceptable and will result in appropriate disciplinary action.

Absence

An absence is defined as any time missed during the scheduled workday. This can include absence for an entire workday or an early departure at the end of the workday. All efforts should be made to report an anticipated absence, such as for a medical appointment, in a timely manner before the expected date of absence. CPRLS recognizes that there are some instances when absences are unavoidable. Unexpected absences will be considered acceptable if it is reported promptly and the reason is appropriate.

Each Branch Manager will establish a procedure for reporting absences that should include:

- A method for notification before or after hours
- Clear expectations on reporting requirements (i.e. reason, time frame, etc.)
- Guidelines on making up lost time, if applicable.

Patterns of frequent or excessive absences are unacceptable and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Any employee who fails to report to work without notification for a period of three or more consecutive scheduled shifts will be considered to have resigned unless this absence is protected by law.

Section H: Other Employment Issues

H-1 Staff Development

Training and Continuing Education

The Library believes that employee participation in continuing education and professional organizations will benefit each individual professionally as well as benefiting the Library. Employees are encouraged to seek and participate in job-related training opportunities and in activities of professional organizations as library duties and funding permits. Employee participation on statewide committees, such as specialized committees formed by GPLS, are of particular benefit to the Library as it provides a chance to influence decisions that directly impact our libraries and the services provided.

Employees interested in attending a specific conference or workshop, or in joining a state-wide committee should discuss the topic with the Branch Manager and/or Library Director. All attendees or committee members should be prepared to report on the conference, workshop, or committee meeting. If the library pays the registration fee for a conference, workshop, or meeting, employees are required to attend the full event.

Maintenance of Certifications

Certified Librarians holding state-reimbursed positions are required to maintain records of their continuing education. Each librarian is personally responsible for following the rules of the State Board for the Certification of Librarians in terms of educational requirements and for maintenance of records required to maintain certification. This requirement also applies to allied professionals holding certifications required by the job description or as a term of employment.

H-2 Travel Reimbursement

All travel reimbursements will be in accordance with the State of Georgia State Accounting Office Travel Regulations.

H-3 Personal Items and Privacy

CPRLS cannot be responsible for the safety, loss, or damage of personal belongings brought to work by an employee. Any personal items that may present a safety hazard in the workplace or that may be considered offensive, profane, hostile, sexually aggressive, or demeaning of an individual or class of individuals are not permitted, even in personal workspaces.

Employees should keep in mind that all Library equipment, property, and facilities are subject to inspection by the Library Director, Assistant Director, or CFO, in consultation of the Branch Manager, upon receipt of reliable information about misconduct or workplace problems. This includes but is not limited to desks, workstations, file cabinets, lockers, computers and computer-stored information, email, voicemail, business records, vehicles, and any other equipment owned or provided by the Library.

H-4 Emergency Closings

The CPRLS Emergency Guide offers guidance for specific situations and presents plans for communication, employee and patron safety, and facility security in times of emergency or crisis. This Policy will only address the impact emergency closings have on library employees.

Decision-making

Each branch has autonomy in deciding when and for what reasons to close, as long as those reasons are based on objective criteria. Branch Managers are urged to consult members of the Regional Administrative Team and utilize the CPRLS Emergency Guide during the decision-making process. Ultimately, the Branch Managers, with the approval of the local Board Chairs or at least two other members of the Board, hold the authority to close their building.

Communication

Each branch shall outline a plan to communicate emergency closing information to employees, the library board members, and library patrons. This plan should include a calling/contact tree to ensure that all employees are individually contacted with pertinent information about the closing and planned re-opening times.

Essential Staff Reporting

No employee shall travel to a library facility if county emergency management services have deemed roads unsafe for travel. Traveling under such conditions puts employee's safety at risk and creates unnecessary liability for the Library. If road conditions are safe, at least one essential employee for each location should report to the facility to assess conditions and take necessary steps to secure the building and its content. Each facility should have at least two designated essential employees.

Compensation and Reporting

In most circumstances, all employees will be compensated for hours they were scheduled to work during the period of closure. Employees who were previously scheduled to take paid or unpaid leave during the closure time will not be affected by the closure and the absence will be charged as originally planned. In the event of long-term closure, defined as more than five consecutive days, and should conditions allow, the Library reserves the right to implement the CPRLS Work-From-Home Policy so that employees can continue to be compensated.

Section I: Performance

I-1 Performance Evaluations

In accordance with Application for State Aid to Public Libraries, all employees holding state-reimbursed positions, in whole or in part, will be evaluated annually by the Library Director. The Regional Library Board of Trustees will evaluate the Library Director. Branch Managers should complete a written evaluation of their employees on an annual basis. Pay increases, when not specified as cost of living or for increased job responsibilities, shall be based on merit as determined through the evaluation process. Each Branch Manager/Library Director will use a standardized evaluation tool and ratings matrix to ensure fairness, equitability, and consistency.

Purpose

The purpose of the employee performance evaluation is primarily to inform employees of how well they are meeting the expectations and standards set for their position. The evaluation provides an opportunity to discuss the employee's job tasks, performance, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for growth, and to set individual goals that align with the Library's overall mission and vision.

Corrective Action Plan

When an employee's performance is below satisfactory level, the employee will be placed on a probation status and given a written corrective action plan. The plan will detail the evaluator's concerns and include suggestions for improvement as well as a reasonable timeframe for changes to be made. The employee's performance will be monitored closely during this period, with regular communications between the employee and the evaluator. Failure to bring performance to a satisfactory level within the designated timeframe may result in further adverse personnel actions, up to and including termination.

I-2 Disciplinary Actions

All Library employees are expected to follow the Code of Conduct for Library Employees found in Section B-1 of this Policy. Employees should also remain focused on the Library's Shared Mission, Core Values, and Foundations of Service in order to best ensure the success of the Library and the services provided to our communities. Successful, productive employees will always endeavor to make decisions based on these stated principles as well as the employee's own sound logic and reasoning.

Prohibited Conduct

Certain actions and behaviors are considered unacceptable in the workplace. In general, conduct that interferes with the operations of CPRLS facilities, brings discredit to the Library or is offensive to supervisors, co-workers, or the public is not tolerated. While it is not possible to list all of the actions considered unacceptable, the following are examples of conduct that is not permitted and will result in disciplinary action for the employee, up to and including immediate termination:

- Sexual harassment or discrimination against an employee or applicant because of race, religion, sex (including pregnancy, gender identity, and sexual orientation), national origin, age (40 and older), disability, or genetic information, and any reprisal action against an employee reporting such discrimination.
- Theft, abuse, misappropriation, or misuse of Library property, monies, or vehicles, property of employees, patrons, or others doing business with the Library.
- Unauthorized use of, or access to, Library computer systems.
- Falsifications or destruction of official records or documents; or willfully giving false statements to supervisors, officials, or the public, including falsification of employment applications, timekeeping records, personnel records, or expense reports.
- Careless, negligent, or inappropriate handling of Library funds or financial records; failure to follow laws or procedures governing the reporting or use of funds.
- Violation of Library policies regarding ethics, conflicts of interest, acceptance of gifts or gratuities, use of official position for personal benefit and/or profit.
- Any use, threatening, or attempt at use of personal or political influence to secure employment benefits, including but not limited to promotion, change of pay rate, leave of absence, or character of work.
- Conviction of a felony or crime involving moral turpitude.
- Failure to do work at an acceptable level of competence as determined by the Library Director or Branch Manager; wasted time, inefficiency, sleeping while at work, and/or loitering during working hours.
- Violating the Library's policy against workplace violence.
- Engaging in obscene, offensive, disorderly, or violent conduct.
- Insubordination or uncooperative attitude, including but not limited to, disrespect to a supervisor, co-worker, or the public and failure to follow the lawful orders or direct instructions of the supervisor, whether Branch Manager, Library Director, or Board of Trustees.
- Excessive absenteeism or tardiness.
- Failure to disclose criminal convictions and arrests subject to the Library's Drug-Free Workplace Policy.
- Violating any Library policies, any provisions of this Policy, or any branch-specific rules and procedures.
- Violating traffic regulations, reckless driving, or improper operation of a library-owned vehicle.
- Knowingly exposing the Library to liability.

Progressive Discipline Steps

Employees who fail to fulfill the duties and responsibilities of their positions will be subject to disciplinary action. While generally the following progressive discipline steps are used, discipline may be initiated and administered at any one of the steps, including suspension or dismissal, depending on the seriousness or nature of the cause for disciplinary action.

Verbal Reprimand: A verbal reprimand is an oral notice of a policy violation, mistake, inefficiency, misconduct, poor performance, or other factor that may adversely influence an employee's ability or effectiveness in carrying out duties and responsibilities. The supervisor is expected to keep a written record of this conversation. In most instances, three verbal reprimands within a three-month period will be grounds for a written reprimand.

Written Reprimand: A written reprimand is a written notice of a policy violation, mistake, inefficiency, misconduct, poor performance, or other factor that may adversely influence an employee's ability or effectiveness in carrying out duties and responsibilities. It is typically utilized for repeated offenses or those of a serious nature. The written reprimand shall contain the specific time(s), date(s), place(s) of the offense(s), a statement of corrective action(s) to be taken by the employee, and a timeframe for completing the corrective action(s). The supervisor is expected to keep records of reprimands for a 12-month period from the date of the reprimand. In most instances, three written reprimands within a three-month period will be grounds for probation or suspension without pay.

Probation: An employee may be placed on probation for a designated time period when there is a serious problem with performance. During that time, the employee is expected to make significant improvement. The employee will be given a corrective action plan as outlined in section I-1 of this Policy. Copies of the plan will be kept in the employee's personnel file. Failure to make the necessary improvement in the specified timeframe may result in a suspension without pay. In most instances, more than one probation assignment in a two year period will be grounds for suspension without pay or termination.

Suspension without Pay: The supervisor, with the approval of the Library Director, Assistant Director, or CFO, may suspend an employee without pay for a set period of time. A written statement specifically stating the reason(s), effective date, and duration of the suspension shall be furnished to the employee. A suspended employee may not utilize paid leave benefits so as to be compensated during the period of suspension, nor may the employee be compensated for holidays or instances of library closure that might occur during the suspension. A copy of the statement shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. In most instances, more than one suspension without pay will be grounds for dismissal.

Dismissal: The supervisor, with advice of the Library Director, Assistant Director, or CFO, may dismiss an individual from employment with the Library after all other disciplinary steps have been exhausted or the offense rises to the level to warrant such immediate action. Every effort will be made to give the employee written notice of the dismissal, including a Georgia Separation Notice, as required by the Georgia Department of Labor.

I-3 Problem Resolution

The Library is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for its employees. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, complaint, suggestion, or question receives a timely response from library management. Employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect and are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism. If employees disagree with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, they can express their concern through the problem resolution procedure which is outlined below. If a situation occurs where employees believe that a condition of employment, a decision, or an evaluation is unjust or inequitable, they are encouraged to make use of the following steps. The employee may discontinue the procedure at any step.

1. Employee presents problem to immediate supervisor. If supervisor is unavailable or employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should present the problem to the Branch Manager. Should the employee directly report to the Branch Manager and the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should present the problem to the Library Director. Should the employee report directly to the Library Director and the employee believes it would be inappropriate to contact that person, the employee should present the problem to the Assistant Director or CFO for advice on reporting the matter to the Chair of the Regional Library Board of Trustees.
2. Supervisor must respond to the problem in a timely manner and document the discussion. If the problem is unresolved through the supervisor, the employee presents the problem in writing to the Branch Manager within ten library working days following the meeting with the supervisor. If the employee reports directly to the Branch Manager, the problem should be submitted in writing to the Library Director.
3. The Branch Manager or Library Director will make a decision as soon as possible and will forward a response in writing to the employee and supervisor. Branch Managers have full authority over personnel matters in their respective facilities. However, CPRLS is the employer of record, giving the Library Director, Assistant Director, and/or CFO final authority, particularly in matters related to possible violations of employment law or in situations that may increase liability for the Library System.
4. Should the employee not find satisfaction in the decision made in the step above, they have the option of appealing this decision to the Personnel Committee of the local or regional Library Board of Trustees. The committee will make a recommendation for action to the respective Library Board, whose decision is final.

Acknowledgement of Receipt of CPRLS Personnel Policy

Approved by CPRLS Regional Board on October 27, 2022

Please initial each line and complete information below.

_____ I acknowledge that I have received a copy of the Coastal Plain Regional Library System (“CPRLS”) Personnel Policy (“Policy”). I understand that it is my responsibility to read and comply with policies contained in the Policy as well as any revision made to it. I also understand that if I need additional information, or if there is anything that I do not understand in the Policy, I should contact my immediate supervisor, my Branch Manager, or the Library Director, in that order.

_____ I understand that this is an at-will employment agreement, which means employees enter into employment voluntarily and are free to resign at any time for any reason or no reason. Similarly, CPRLS is free to terminate its relationship with any employee at any time for any lawful reason or no reason. Nothing in CPRLS policies, actions, or this document shall be construed to create a contract of employment nor alter the at-will nature of the employee’s status with CPRLS.

_____ I understand that this Policy reflects policies, practices, and procedures in effect on the date of publication and that it supersedes any prior policies, handbooks, work rules, benefits, and practices of CPRLS. I further understand that the rules, policies, benefits, and practices referred to in the Policy are continually evaluated and may be modified, reduced, or discontinued at any time by the Regional Board, in its judgment and discretion, with or without notice. I acknowledge that the Policy may be updated throughout the year, with those changes being posted in the common area of my library branch, and that it is my responsibility to be aware of and to adhere to the changes in policy as they occur.

Employee Name (printed): _____

Branch Location (circle one): A B C F L R T

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Georgia Library Public Information Network for Electronic Services

The PINES' Code of Ethics

Organization: Georgia PINES

Date: November 10, 1999

Resources: *Georgia Code 21-5-1; Georgia Canons of Ethics; ALA Statement on Professional Ethics 1975, 1988, 1995*

I acknowledge that I have an obligation to the Georgia PINES Project:

- I shall not violate the privacy and confidentiality of information entrusted to me or to which I may gain access, including a patron's private information or reading records. A patron's personal information, history, or records will not be provided to anyone without legal authorization. Further, I agree to take appropriate action in regard to any illegal or unethical practices that come to my attention.
- I shall not use knowledge of a confidential nature to further my personal interests or for personal gain.
- I have an obligation to the PINES Project to use equipment and software only for the purposes intended.
- I shall keep my personal skills and knowledge up-to-date and ensure that proper expertise is available to the public as needed.
- I will share my knowledge by participating on PINES Committees; I will recommend policies and procedures to improve service delivery in accordance with the participation agreement.
- I shall accept full responsibility for the work I perform.
- I shall cooperate with other PINES members, treating them with honesty and respect.
- I will avoid conflict of interest and ensure that the appropriate PINES management is aware of any potential conflicts.
- I will not exploit the weakness of a computer system for personal gain or personal satisfaction.

Signed _____

Library System _____

Date _____