



Illinois Heartland Library System

TO: IHLS Board of Directors
FROM: Leslie Bednar
DATE: November 20, 2025
RE: 2026 Employee Handbook Policy Updates

Each year, we propose updates to the Employee Handbook. The updates allow us to operate in a legal manner with respect to human resources and formalize current organizational practices. The attached proposal was reviewed by the Personnel Committee and with legal counsel.

The Personnel Committee recommends these proposals to the full board. IHLS Administration recommends acceptance of these proposed changes to the Employee Handbook. All other changes are for ease of interpretation or grammatical:

- Workplace Transparency Act Compliance (p.8): IHLS is not legally required to include this section; however, we want our staff to know we are an accountable organization in all ways.
- No Retaliation (p. 14): This legislation was updated January 1, 2025.
- Artificial Intelligence in Employment Practices (p. 14): Update to the Illinois Rights Act, effective January 1, 2026.
- Performance Evaluations (p. 23): Reflects our current practice.
- Compensation Plan Guidelines (p. 28): Reflects changes to the Illinois Equal Pay Act, effective January 1, 2026.
- Camera Monitoring and Use of Employee Likeness (p. 34): Included to address issues of biometric and visual identification concerns.
- Work Breaks (p.37): Clarifies state law.
- Family Neonatal Intensive Care Leave (p. 39): Reflects the Illinois Family Neonatal Intensive Care Leave Act, effective January 1, 2026.
- Health, Vision, and Dental Insurance (p. 56): Reflects current practice.
- Staff Library Cards (p. 58): Reflects benefits available to member library staff.
- Employees Working With or Near Automated Material Handling System (p. 67): Related to the newly installed equipment at each hub location.
- Use of Employer-Issued Equipment for Documentation (p. 76): Reflects changes to the Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act, effective January 1, 2026.
- Drug Free Workplace (p. 83): Updates our practices.

IMAGINING TOMORROW ~ DELIVERING POSSIBILITIES TODAY!

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and please let me know if you have any questions.

F



2026 Employee

HANDBOOK



Carbondale



Champaign



Edwardsville

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Overview and Employment Relationship

Welcome Letter

Dear IHLS team members,

Welcome to Illinois Heartland Library System. We are so glad you have joined us. Our organization celebrated its ten-year anniversary in 2021, and we are committed to the support of our 520+ member libraries in central and southern Illinois. As a team, we value innovation, leadership, engagement, integrity, respect, collaboration, and communication.

Our mission here at Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS)

To support member libraries of all types in providing quality library services. IHLS facilitates access to shared resources, advocates for libraries, promotes innovation, and develops community partnerships.

Our commitment

The provision of dependable and innovative services to facilitate resource sharing among our members is possible because of all members of our staff team. We have the same approach when it comes to serving each other as colleagues.

Our organizational structure

IHLS is charged through Illinois statutes and rules to support the resource-sharing activities of our member libraries. You may wish to think of resource sharing as interlibrary loan, which is a big part of sharing our resources. To best meet that charge, we are organized into several staff departments. Here is a short description of each:

Administration

This team supports staff and members. Marketing and communication staff share information and resources with members to help them better serve their library patrons, including data about IHLS-provided programming. Administrative staff support the relationship and communication between IHLS board and IHLS staff.

CMC (Cataloging Maintenance Center) Grant

The CMC works on behalf of the Illinois State Library to provide training, database cleanup, and original cataloging for libraries statewide.

Finance

Our accounting team provides accurate financial data to guide IHLS managers and board members in making the best use of public funds.

HR (Human Resources)

Our HR team supports all of us as we serve the mission of IHLS. They recruit, train, and counsel our staff throughout their relationship with the organization.

IT (Information Technology)

The IT team supports our internal staff in their daily interactions and use of technology. They also support SHARE member libraries using various types of technology to help their patrons.

Membership

As part of our support of resource sharing with our members, the membership team engages directly with all IHLS member libraries. They provide consulting services, develop staff member training opportunities, and represent the Illinois State Library in gathering data regarding our members.

OCLC Grant

OCLC operates a worldwide database of library holdings that aids in finding materials in user libraries. IHLS works on behalf of the Illinois State Library to manage the invoicing and payments of OCLC user libraries within the state.

Trustee Training Grant

This online learning portal provides Illinois Public Library trustees with the knowledge, requirements, and resources they need to be influential library leaders. This grant is funded by the Illinois State Library.

Operations/Delivery

Our operations staff directly engage with members in the daily delivery and pickup of library materials that are routed from one library to another. Our sorting team ensures that all materials are sorted and directed to the proper library locations.

SHARE (Sharing Heartland's Available Resources Equally)

The SHARE staff actively supports over 339 member libraries who share the use of an integrated library system (ILS). The platform allows library patrons to place holds on materials from a large group of member libraries.

This staff handbook was created to provide a roadmap to your relationship with IHLS as an employee. The goal is to provide a single resource that can answer many of your initial questions regarding benefits, policies, and procedures. Please become familiar with the contents and feel welcome to approach your supervisor and our human resources staff with any questions. We are only as good as our support of each other.

Welcome to the IHLS Team!

Sincerely,



Leslie Bednar, Executive Director

Purpose of Handbook

The purpose of this Employee Handbook is to provide guidance and assistance to employees in the performance of their responsibilities at Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) and to provide a mutual understanding of the employee/employer relationship.

The contents of the handbook do not constitute an express or an implied employment contract between IHLS and any of its employees. Also, it is not a guarantee of any fixed terms and conditions of employment. IHLS is an at-will employer; therefore, continued employment of all employees is subject to the general discretion of the Executive Director with respect to all aspects of employment and benefits. As an at-will employee, both you and IHLS have the right to end the employment relationship at any time either with or without cause and with or without advance notice.

The Employee Handbook will be reviewed with new employees, after which they will be required to sign a statement indicating that they have read and understood the information contained therein.

Employee Handbook Review and Exceptions

The Employee Handbook is approved by the Board of Directors and will be reviewed annually. This handbook is for all employees of the Illinois Heartland Library System.

As circumstances change, IHLS reserves the right to revise, interpret, or discontinue specific policies and/or procedures. Any such changes to the handbook must be in writing and approved by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors.

Organization and Administration of System

1. Governance

Legal responsibility for IHLS is vested in a Board of Directors consisting of 15 elected members. The board determines policy, approves the Strategic Plan along with the application for System Area and Per Capita Grant, and hires the Executive Director.

2. Financial Support

IHLS is supported by annual grants administered by the Illinois State Library and fees for services. The System Area and Per Capita Grant is based on population and geographic area served. Additional grants provide funding for special projects.

3. Administration

The Executive Director of IHLS is responsible for the administration of the System. Duties include establishing and administering procedures related to the implementation of the board's policies, hiring, and terminating employees subject to the approval of the board.

In the short-term absence of the Executive Director, the administrative direction of IHLS shall be delegated to a system staff person appointed by the Executive Director. In the event of an extended absence, a staff member will be appointed by the Executive Director with the approval of the Board of Directors.

Governing Principles of Employment

Equal Employment Opportunity and Workplace Accommodations

In addition to its policies against discrimination and harassment in the workplace, IHLS believes that every person is entitled to and will receive equal opportunities in connection with employment at IHLS. From consideration for employment to interviewing, employment, and changes in employment status, IHLS will act without regard to an individual's actual or perceived sex, race [\(to include hair texture and protective styles like braids, loc, and twists\)](#), religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital, familial, veteran status, citizenship status, age, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, sexual orientation (including gender identity), military or veteran status, order of protection status, [arrest record](#), [family responsibilities](#), [work authorization status](#), or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws.

If an applicant needs an accommodation due to a disability even during the pre-employment stage, such as during the interview process, IHLS will provide such reasonable accommodations to ensure that the applicant has a fair opportunity in the pre-employment/interview process. In addition, in connection with providing employees with feedback about their work, making employee placement decisions, or any other decisions related to employment, IHLS embraces and will fully comply with its commitment to provide everyone with equal opportunities in employment.

IHLS also engages in the interactive process with employees who have disabilities and will provide such employees with a reasonable accommodation when necessary due to the employee's disability, as that term is defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act and/or applicable State law. The interactive process is a discussion or series of discussions between Human Resources, management, and an employee with a disability to determine if a reasonable accommodation is necessary for the employee to be able to perform the essential functions of the employee's position. If an employee has a disability and believes that they need a workplace accommodation to better perform their duties, the employee should contact Human Resources. Human Resources will discuss the matter with whatever level of supervision is appropriate and will engage in the interactive process with the employee and provide reasonable accommodations when appropriate.

The same guidelines apply to employees who need accommodations due to pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, or childbirth. An employee who needs an accommodation for such reasons should notify Human Resources. Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not limited to:

- More frequent or longer bathroom breaks
- Breaks for increased water intake
- Breaks for periodic rest
- Private non-bathroom space for expressing breast milk and breastfeeding
- Seating accommodations
- Assistance with menial labor
- Light duty
- Temporary transfer to a less strenuous or non-hazardous position
- Acquisition or modification of equipment
- Job restructuring
- Assignment to a vacant position
- Leave time

IHLS reserves the right to require the employee to provide medical certification, consisting of the medical justification for the requested [accommodation](#)~~certification~~, a description of the reasonable accommodation that is medically advisable, and the duration of the accommodation. No employee will be required to accept an accommodation if not medically advisable.

IHLS also complies with the Federal Pump Act. IHLS provides reasonable break periods for an employee who needs to express breast milk for an infant child (for up to one (1) year after the child's birth), unless granting such breaks would unduly disrupt IHLS's operations. The room/area IHLS will provide to an employee who needs to express breast milk under this policy will be a room/area that is shielded from view and is not a restroom. [In accordance with the Illinois Nursing Mothers in the Workplace Act, an employee will be paid for the reasonable break periods taken for the purpose of expressing breastmilk](#) [\(More information about this state law is on page XX\).](#)

Should an applicant or employee at any time believe that IHLS or any of its managers or supervisors have failed to demonstrate IHLS' commitment to equal employment opportunity, the applicant or employee should notify Human Resource personnel so the matter can be reviewed, and appropriate action can be taken based upon consideration of all the relevant facts and circumstances.

Workplace Transparency Act Compliance

[In keeping with the Illinois Workplace Transparency Act \(effective January 1, 2026\), IHLS ensures that all employment, severance, and settlement agreements comply with state law. Agreements will:](#)

- [• Be written in clear language and allow employees adequate time for review.](#)
- [• Not restrict employees from making truthful statements about discrimination, harassment, or other unlawful workplace practices.](#)
- [• Respect employees' rights to engage in concerted activity, including collective discussions about workplace conditions.](#)

- Provide protections consistent with state law, with remedies available if these rights are violated.

IHLS is committed to transparency and accountability in all workplace practices.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy

IHLS is committed to maintaining a workplace that is free of all forms of unlawful discrimination under both the Illinois Human Rights Act and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended (Title VII). In keeping with this commitment, IHLS will not tolerate discrimination against or harassment of any of our employees, whether that discrimination or harassment is committed by anyone in the course of an employee's performance of work, including, but not limited to, any supervisor, co-worker, vendor, customer, contractor, or visitor of or to IHLS. Violations of this policy by any employee will result in disciplinary action, up to and including immediate discharge.

Prohibited Discrimination

Discrimination consists of employment actions taken against an individual based on an employee's actual or perceived sex, race, religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital, familial, veteran status, citizenship status, age, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, sexual orientation (including gender identity), military or veteran status, order of protection status, work authorization status, family responsibilities, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. IHLS is dedicated to the fulfillment of this policy in regard to all aspects of the employment relationship, including, but not limited to recruiting, hiring, placement, transfer, training, promotion, rates of pay and other compensation, and all other terms, conditions, and privileges of employment. IHLS will conduct a prompt, thorough investigation of all allegations of discrimination or any violation of its Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy in as confidential a manner as possible to take appropriate corrective action, if and where warranted. IHLS prohibits retaliation against any employee who provides information about, complaints, or assists in the investigation of any complaint of discrimination or violation of its Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

IHLS complies with the CROWN Act law, codifying protections for Illinoisans discriminated against due to hairstyles historically associated with specific racial groups. The act, which stands for Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair, categorizes traits such as hair texture or protective styling such as braids, locks, and twists as race-based and, therefore, discrimination [and harassment](#) on the basis of such hair textures/hairstyles is prohibited.

We are all responsible for upholding the IHLS Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, and any claimed violations of that policy should be brought to the attention of anyone in management you feel comfortable reporting this to and/or Human Resource personnel.

Policy Against Workplace Harassment

IHLS has a strict policy against all types of workplace harassment, including sexual harassment and other forms of unlawful workplace harassment based upon an individual's actual or

perceived sex, race [\(to include hair texture and protective styles like braids, locs, and twists\)](#), religion, color, national origin, ancestry, physical or mental disability, marital, familial, veteran status, citizenship status, age, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, sexual orientation (including gender identity), order of protection status, [arrest record](#), work authorization status, family responsibilities, or any other status protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws. All forms of harassment of or by employees, vendors, visitors, customers, and clients are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

Harassment may include, but is not limited to:

- Offensive or derogatory jokes, comments, slurs, or like written, photographic materials.
- Threatening, intimidating, or unwelcome touching of another person.
- Racial epithets, slurs, negative stereotypes, or intimidating acts that are based on a person's protected status.

Written or graphic material that shows hostility toward a person because of their protected status.

Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is defined under the Illinois Human Rights Act as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature and constitutes sexual harassment when: (1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment; (2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual; or (3) such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment. The Illinois Human Rights Act defines harassment as unwelcome conduct on the basis of a person's actual or perceived sex, race [\(to include hair texture and protective styles like braids, locs, and twists\)](#), color, religion, national origin, ancestry, marital status, familial, or veteran status, citizenship status, age, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, sexual orientation (including gender identity), order of protection status, [arrest record](#), [family responsibilities](#), ~~or~~ [unfavorable discharge from the military](#), [or other legally protected characteristic](#), that has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with the individual's work performance, or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

While it is not possible to identify each and every act that constitutes or may constitute sexual harassment, some examples of sexual harassment are provided below: (a) unwelcome requests for sexual favors; (b) lewd or derogatory comments or jokes; (c) comments regarding sexual behavior or the body of another employee; (d) sexual innuendo and other vocal activity such as catcalls or whistles; (e) obscene letters, notes, invitations, photographs, cartoons, articles, or other written or pictorial materials of a sexual nature; (f) continuing to express sexual interest after being informed that interest is unwelcome; (g) retaliating against an employee for refusing a sexual advance or reporting an incident of possible sexual harassment to IHLS or any government agency; (h) offering or providing favors or employment benefits such as promotions,

favorable evaluations, favorable assigned duties or shifts, etc., in exchange for sexual favors; and (i) any unwanted physical touching or assaults, or blocking or impeding movements. Even if two or more individuals are engaging in consensual conduct such as that described above, such conduct could constitute harassment of and/or discrimination against another individual who witnesses or overhears the conduct or statements.

Other Workplace Harassment

Other workplace harassment is verbal or physical conduct that insults or shows hostility or aversion towards an individual because of the individual's actual or perceived sex, race [\(to include hair texture and protective styles like braids, locs, and twists\)](#), religion, color, national origin, physical or mental disability, marital, familial, veteran status, citizenship status, ancestry, age, pregnancy, pregnancy-related conditions, sexual orientation (including gender identity), order of protection status, work authorization status, family responsibilities, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local laws, and that: (1) contributes to or has the effect of creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment; (2) unreasonably interferes with an individual's work performance; or (3) otherwise adversely affects an individual's employment opportunities. Again, while it is not possible to list all the circumstances that constitute other forms of workplace harassment, the following are some examples of conduct that may constitute prohibited workplace harassment: (a) the use of disparaging or abusive words or phrases, slurs, negative stereotyping, or threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts that relate to the above-protected categories; (b) written or graphic material that insults, stereotypes, or shows aversion or hostility towards an individual or group because of one of the above-protected categories and that is placed on walls, bulletin boards, email, voicemail, or elsewhere on IHLS premises or circulated in the workplace; and (c) the display of symbols, slogans, or items that are associated with hate or intolerance towards any protected group.

IHLS will not tolerate any form of unlawful discrimination or harassment! Any employee who feels that they have witnessed or been subject to any form of discrimination or harassment by a co-worker, customer, or anyone else while performing work for IHLS [or while on IHLS premises](#) should **immediately** notify management. If you prefer, take your complaint to the Human Resources Department. In any case, if you are not satisfied with how your complaint has been handled, you may go to the Executive Director to have the issue/concern resolved.

Outside Resolution

The purpose of this policy is to establish prompt, thorough, and effective procedures for responding to every complaint and incident so that problems can be identified and remedied internally. However, an individual also has the right to contact outside agencies to report discrimination or harassment and have an investigation completed by such agencies. Employees may contact the Illinois Department of Human Rights if the employee desires to file a charge or call the Illinois Sexual Harassment and Discrimination Helpline at 1-877-236-7703.

Contact Information

The Illinois Department of Human Rights website is <https://www2.illinois.gov/dhr> and the email is IDHR.Intake@illinois.gov.

Contact Information for Illinois IDHR and EEOC Offices:

- Illinois Department of Human Rights (IDHR)
 - Chicago: 312-814-6200 or 800-662-3942; TTY: 866-740-3953
 - Springfield: 217-785-5100; TTY: 866-740-3953
 - ~~Marion: 618-993-7463; TTY: 866-740-3953~~
- Illinois Human Rights Commission (IHRC)
 - Chicago: 312-814-6269; TTY: 312-814-4760
 - Springfield: 217-785-4350; TTY: 217-557-1500
- United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)
 - Chicago: 800-669-4000; TTY: 800-869-8001

Retaliation

IHLS prohibits retaliation against any employee who provides information about, complains, or assists in the investigation of any complaint of harassment or discrimination. If you have made a report of harassment or participated in a harassment investigation and believe you have been retaliated against in any way, notify Human Resources immediately so that appropriate action can be taken.

IHLS will promptly and thoroughly investigate any claim and take prompt, appropriate, remedial action based upon all the relevant circumstances. Discipline for violation of this policy may include, but is not limited to, reprimand, suspension, demotion, transfer, and/or discharge. If IHLS determines that harassment or discrimination occurred, corrective action will be taken to effectively end the harassment. As necessary, IHLS may monitor any incident of harassment or discrimination to ensure the inappropriate behavior has stopped. In all cases, IHLS will follow up as necessary to ensure that there is no retaliation for making a complaint or cooperating with an investigation. Retaliation against any employee for making a good faith complaint or report of discrimination or harassment and/or participating in an investigation will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

IHLS will provide all employees with annual training on sexual harassment and prevention each calendar year.

Respect for Diversity

IHLS values the diversity of our employees, our library members, and our vendors and recognizes that a culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion is beneficial to everyone connected to IHLS.

Our employees are the most valuable asset of IHLS, and their various differences, life experiences, knowledge, inventiveness, innovation, self-expression, unique capabilities, and

other talents are key pieces to making IHLS successful and making everyone with whom IHLS interacts feel welcome. We embrace and encourage employees' differences in age, race, disability, ethnicity, family or marital status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, national origin, religion, and other characteristics that make everyone unique.

IHLS will not tolerate harassment of any kind directed at any individual associated with IHLS. Employees who do not show respect for the diversity of any IHLS employee, library member, vendor, or anyone else doing business with IHLS will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. IHLS will attempt to ensure that there is diversity at all levels of the organization.

- Employees will recognize and respect each other's differences.
- Employees will at all times engage in respectful communications with others.
- IHLS will provide a work environment that supports diversity.
- Employees will seek and nurture different perspectives.

Employees at all levels should not tolerate behaviors in the workplace that are inconsistent with IHLS' commitment to workplace diversity, building a diverse workforce, and providing equal opportunities to all regardless of age, race, disability, ethnicity, family, or marital status, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, language, national origin, religion, and any other characteristics protected by applicable law.

Whistleblower Policy

IHLS requires its directors, employees, and volunteers to observe high standards of business and personal ethics in their conduct in connection with the performance of their job duties and responsibilities. As employees and representatives of IHLS, everyone must at all times be completely honest in all dealings with IHLS and demonstrate the highest level of integrity in fulfilling job responsibilities. Compliance with all federal, state, and local laws is essential.

The purpose of this policy is to: (a) encourage and enable individuals to raise concerns regarding suspected illegal or unethical conduct or practices or violations of IHLS policies on a confidential and, if desired, anonymous basis, (b) protect employees from retaliation for raising such concerns, and (c) establish procedures for IHLS to receive and investigate reported concerns and address and correct inappropriate conduct and/or actions.

Reporting Responsibility

Each employee has the responsibility to report in good faith any concerns about actual or perceived violations of IHLS policies or any federal, state, or local law, or regulation governing IHLS. Appropriate concerns to report under this policy include but are not limited to audit or accounting issues, financial improprieties, ethical violations, fraud, theft, embezzlement, bribery or kickbacks, misuse of IHLS property or assets, undisclosed conflicts of interest, dishonesty, harassment or discrimination, or any other conduct that is unlawful.

Whistleblower protection covered under this policy includes: (a) an employee disclosing or threatening to disclose to a public body conducting an investigation, or in a court, an administrative hearing, or any other proceeding initiated by a public body, information related to an activity, policy, or practice of IHLS where the employee has a good faith belief that the activity, policy or practice (i) violates a federal or state law, rule, or regulation, or (ii) poses a substantial and specific danger to employees, public health, or safety; (b) an employee disclosing or threatening to disclose to a government or law enforcement agency information related to any activity, policy, or practice of IHLS, where the employee has a good faith belief that such activity, policy, or practice of IHLS (i) violates a federal or state law, rule, or regulation, or (ii) poses a substantial or specific danger to employees, public health, or safety; (c) an employee disclosing or threatening to disclose to any supervisor, principal officer, or board member, information related to an activity, policy, or practice of IHLS where the employee has a good faith belief that the activity, policy or practice (i) violates a federal or state law, rule, or regulation, or (ii) poses a substantial and specific danger to employees, public health, or safety; (d) an employee's refusal to participate in any activity if the employee has a good faith belief that such participation would result in a violation of a state or federal law, rule or regulation; and (e) an employee disclosing or attempting to disclose public corruption or wrongdoing.

A whistleblower also includes an employee of IHLS who reports an activity related to IHLS (internally to supervision or externally to any government agency or authority) that they consider to be illegal or dishonest. The whistleblower is not responsible for investigating the activity or for determining fault or corrective measures; appropriate management officials (or government agencies, if applicable) are charged with these responsibilities.

An example of an illegal or dishonest activity is a violation of federal, state, or local laws or financial wrongdoing. If an employee has knowledge of or a concern about illegal or dishonest fraudulent activity, the employee is to contact Human Resources. If the employee is not comfortable reporting the issue to Human Resources, the employee may contact the Executive Director instead.

Acting in Good Faith

Anyone reporting a concern under this policy must act in good faith and have reasonable grounds to believe that the information disclosed indicates a violation of law, regulations, and/or ethical standards or policies of IHLS. Any unfounded allegation that proves to have been made maliciously, recklessly, or knowingly false will be viewed as a serious offense and will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

No Retaliation

No employee who engages in any activity protected by this policy shall be subject to [threatened or actual](#) adverse employment consequences [or non-employment adverse action that would dissuade an employee from disclosing such](#) ~~because~~[information because](#) of such activity. This protection extends to employees who report in good faith, even if the allegations are, after an investigation, not substantiated. [Prohibited retaliation also includes taking or threatening to take action that would interfere with an employee's ability to obtain future employment or contacting](#)

[or threatening to contact immigration authorities regarding an individual's citizenship or immigration status.](#)

Any IHLS representative who retaliates against an employee who has made a good faith report as described herein or who has participated in an investigation relating to such a report will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Any employee who believes that they (or another employee) have been subjected to harassment, retaliation, or adverse employment consequences as a result of making a good faith report or participating in an investigation must contact Human Resources.

Confidentiality

IHLS encourages an employee who reports concerns covered by this policy to identify themselves in order to facilitate the investigation. However, such concerns may be submitted on a confidential and/or anonymous basis. IHLS will take reasonable steps to protect the identity of the individual and shall keep reports made under this policy as confidential as possible, consistent with the need to conduct an adequate investigation and applicable law.

All reports of illegal and dishonest activities or retaliation should be promptly submitted to Human Resources for investigating and coordinating corrective action. In the event the employee is not comfortable reporting such issues to Human Resources, the employee may instead contact the Executive Director. If the employee is not comfortable reporting such issues to either Human Resources or the Executive Director, reports of illegal or dishonest activities, violations of any federal, state, or local law or regulation, or any incident of retaliation should be promptly submitted to the President of the IHLS Board of Directors.

Onboarding and Employment Classifications

Position Descriptions

The Executive Director reviews all position descriptions and has the final authority for salary matters within the parameters established by the board-approved pay grade assignments.

As needed, position descriptions will be reviewed and updated to ensure that the duties listed are a current list of the essential functions being performed within the scope of the job.

All employees are required to have a signed job description in their employee file. The job description is an essential tool in communicating the expectations and requirements of the position.

Recruitment

IHLS encourages all qualified individuals to apply for vacant positions. While it is the desire to fill vacant positions from within, it may sometimes be necessary to recruit locally, regionally, or nationally.

If current staff are interested in applying for a new position, they must first meet the position qualifications, submit a new employment application, and include an updated resume for consideration. Falsification of information or omissions of material facts on a cover letter, application, or resume will result in disqualification for employment or, if discovered later, will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge from employment. Applications will be retained as prescribed by law.

Positions will be filled with the best-qualified people. The selection process will be competitive. Determinants for identifying the best-qualified person may include, but not be limited to, education, technical or professional training, levels of expertise (skills, knowledge, and abilities), interviews, background and reference checks, and a job-based physical and pre-employment drug screening.

All drug screening is conducted in conformance with applicable federal and state law.

~~Reference and~~ Background Checks

IHLS must have a signed consent form authorizing IHLS to release any information from the individual's personnel records to the specifically named organization. To be acceptable, this consent form must indicate the general and specific types of information that can be released and release IHLS from all potential liability related to the authorized disclosure.

Artificial Intelligence in Employment Practices

IHLS is committed to ethical and lawful use of artificial intelligence (AI) technologies in all employment-related activities. In keeping with the Illinois Human Rights Act HB 3773 amendment, effective January 1, 2026, IHLS will:

- Notify applicants and employees if AI tools are used in any employment-related decisions, including recruitment, hiring, promotion, performance evaluation, renewal if employment, selection for training, or disciplinary actions, tenure, or any other terms, privileges, or conditions of employment.-
- Ensure that any AI-generated recommendations or decisions are reviewed for potential bias or discriminatory impact.
- Prohibit the use of AI tools that result in discriminatory outcomes based on race, gender, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local lawprotected class.
- Provide training to managers and HR personnel on the responsible use of AI in employment contexts.

- Review and update this policy annually to ensure continued compliance with state and federal laws.

IHLS does not currently use generative AI chatbots to make employment decisions. If such use is introduced, affected individuals will be notified in writing.

Reference Check Requests

All requests for reference checks shall be referred to the Human Resources department to ensure uniformity and consistency. HR staff may consult with person(s) more familiar with the employee's work history.

IHLS will provide the following minimum information in response to a reference inquiry:

- Verification that the individual worked for IHLS as a full or part-time employee and the period during which the individual was employed.
- Verification of the position or positions held by the individual during their tenure of employment.
- Salary information may be released only for the purposes of loan applications and only with the employee's specific written consent to release salary information to the specific requestor.

Third-Party Involvement

IHLS reserves the right to use an IHLS representative or third-party agency to conduct background checks. IHLS will notify applicants before conducting any reference checks. [IHLS complies with both federal law \(the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act\) and state law \(the Illinois Human Rights Act\) in the conduct of background checks.](#)

Government Requests for Information

The only exception to the above procedures applies to information requests received by IHLS from federal, state, or local authorities, including officials and authorized representatives of the courts, as well as law enforcement, and other government agencies. IHLS normally honors all such requests and provides the information sought in the form requested by the agency or official.

When IHLS is requested to provide information about an employee or former employee in response to a subpoena, it normally informs or attempts to inform the individual about the disclosure. However, IHLS reserves the right to refrain from informing individuals of government information requests related to an ongoing investigation of criminal activity.

Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)

Personnel information will be released in accordance with IHLS' obligations under applicable law; for example, IHLS will respond as required by law to a proper request made under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

~~Reference and Background Check~~

~~IHLS reserves the right to use an IHLS representative or third-party agency to conduct background checks. IHLS will notify applicants before conducting any reference checks.~~

Consumer Reporting Agency

For positions involving security responsibilities or significant financial accountability, IHLS reserves the right to request a consumer reporting agency to prepare an investigative consumer report on the applicant. Along with credit and employment history, such a report typically includes information about an individual's character, reputation, and mode of living obtained through personal interviews with an applicant's neighbors, acquaintances, associates, and friends. IHLS must obtain an applicant's consent before requesting such a report. All federal and state credit reporting laws will be followed during the background check process.

Inaccurate or Fraudulent Information

IHLS will eliminate from further consideration for employment any applicant who provides false, misleading, or willfully deceptive information on their job application, resume, or any other pre-employment documents, or during an interview. Employees hired after providing false information, which is discovered after employment begins, are subject to discipline up to and including discharge.

Offers of Employment

All offer letters must be in writing from the Human Resources Director. It should be understood that such offer letters do not constitute a contract for employment. Offer letters may be contingent upon a job-based physical, successful drug screen, background check, and Executive Director and board approval. Background checks may include a criminal check, proof of a valid social security number and driver's license, verification of educational credentials, and a safe driving record. Background checks, a job-based physical exam and pre-employment drug screens will be at the expense of IHLS. No person will be denied employment by reason of a physical or mental handicap which, with reasonable accommodations, does not prevent the performance of essential functions of the position to be filled. The employee may begin the onboarding process and the recommendation for hire will be included in the next board meeting packet.

Employment Classifications

Upon hire, each employee will be classified as a (1) exempt or nonexempt employee, (2) full-time or part-time employee, and (3) regular or temporary employee. IHLS assigns positions, determines wages, and compensates employees for overtime in accordance with applicable state and local laws and the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Please note that certain wages, salary, employee benefits (if applicable), and time-off provisions may differ depending on how you are classified. If you are unsure of which job classification your position fits into, please ask your manager or the Human Resources representative.

Please note that nothing stated herein alters the employment-at-will status of each employment classification.

Exempt and Nonexempt Employees

Each employee is designated as either nonexempt or exempt from overtime pay requirements in federal and state wage and hour laws. Nonexempt employees are entitled to overtime pay under the specific provisions of federal and state laws. Exempt employees are excluded from specific provisions of federal and state wage and hour laws; specifically, exempt employees normally receive a set weekly salary and are not eligible for overtime pay, regardless of the number of hours worked in any workweek. Your status can be found in your job description under the FLSA classification noted on your job description.

Exempt

Certain professional, executive, and administrative personnel are considered exempt from overtime and are paid a specified minimum salary as defined in the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) for all hours worked. These employees may be expected to work beyond their normal work hours when necessary to accomplish the work of the organization. All employees must accurately record all time worked, including time worked over their normal schedule, on the payroll timekeeping system at the time it actually occurs.

Nonexempt

All other employees are nonexempt and qualify for overtime pay under the FLSA. All overtime work by a nonexempt employee must be approved in advance by an employee's supervisor. Nonexempt employees who work overtime without receiving approval in advance from the employee's supervisor will receive overtime pay for the overtime hours worked. However, repeatedly working overtime without authorization will result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. All employees must accurately record all time worked, including time worked over their normal schedule, on the payroll timekeeping system at the time it actually occurs.

Overtime pay is calculated at one and one-half (1½) times the employee's regular rate of pay for all hours over 40 hours in one workweek. Overtime is computed based on a nonexempt employee's total hours worked in a workweek. Hours that are paid for but not worked, *e.g.*, holidays, PLAW leave, sick leave, floating holidays, building closure, paid family leave, and vacation days, do not count as hours worked for overtime purposes.

Full-time Employee

An employee who is hired to work on a regular basis for an indefinite period of time and is generally scheduled to work at least 40 hours per week/80 hours per pay period is considered a full-time employee. Generally, these employees are eligible for the full-time benefits package and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

Part-time Employee

An employee who is hired to work on a regular basis for an indefinite period of time and is generally scheduled to work less than 40 hours per week/less than 80 hours per pay period is considered a part-time employee. Part-time employees are eligible for some of the benefits offered by IHLS and are subject to the terms, conditions, and limitations of each benefits program.

Temporary Employee

From time to time, IHLS may hire employees for a specific period of time or for the completion of a specific project. An employee hired under these conditions will be considered a temporary employee. The job assignment, work schedule, and duration of the position will be determined on an individual basis. Temporary employees who average 30 or more hours per week may be eligible for benefits depending on the duration of employment.

Professional Classifications

Here at IHLS, we have professional classifications designated for the types of positions that are held within the organization.

- **Library professional** – salaries and wages paid to employees of IHLS whose position descriptions ordinarily require an MLS, MLIS, or above.
- **Other professional** – salaries or wages paid to employees of IHLS whose position descriptions ordinarily require a bachelor's degree or above, excluding library professional.
- **Support services** – salaries or wages paid to employees of IHLS whose positions are not classified as library professional or other professionals.

Employment of Relatives and Family Members

Objective

IHLS is committed to a policy of employment and advancement based on qualifications and merit and does not discriminate in favor of or in opposition to the employment of family members. However, at the same time, IHLS recognizes the potential for favoritism or the appearance of favoritism when one employee is related to another, especially when there is a direct reporting relationship between the two employees. IHLS strongly believes in a work environment where employees maintain clear boundaries between business relationships and familial relationships.

Scope

Due to the potential for perceived or actual conflicts, such as favoritism or personal conflicts from outside the work environment, which can be carried into the daily working relationship, IHLS will hire a family member (as defined below) of persons currently employed only if: a) the candidate for employment will not be working directly for or supervising a relative, and b) the candidate for employment will not occupy a position in the same line of authority in which employees can

initiate or participate in decisions involving a direct benefit to the relative. Such decisions include hiring, retention, transfer, promotion, wages, leave requests, benefits, or any other aspect of employment.

This policy applies to all current employees and candidates for employment.

Definitions

"Family member" is defined as one of the following: spouse or significant other, parent/stepparent, child/stepchild, grandparent, grandchild, brother/brother-in-law, sister/sister-in-law, uncle, aunt, nephew, niece, first cousin, in-laws (father, mother, son, daughter).

Procedure

To ensure compliance with this policy, our employment application requests all applicants to inform IHLS if they know or are related to any current employee. This is addressed so that we may be aware of relationships that would impact the work environment for all staff and the substance of this policy.

The hiring supervisor is responsible for ensuring policy compliance. Department directors are responsible for monitoring changes in employee reporting relationships [after initial hire](#) to ensure compliance with this policy. Employees are responsible for immediately reporting any changes [in familial relationships that may impact application of this policy](#) to their supervisor and to Human Resources.

If any employee, after employment or change in employment, enters into one of the above relationships, the employees involved must notify Human Resources immediately of the relationship status so that Human Resources can take appropriate action to protect all employees and IHLS. Depending upon all the relevant circumstances, IHLS will take appropriate action to ensure this policy is not violated. Such action may include, but is not limited to, reassignment of one or both of the involved employees or other action so that there is a change in the reporting relationship. The involved employees will have input into the change in position, and while the involved employees' desires will be taken into consideration, the final decision as to how a change in position(s) will occur, so as to avoid a situation where this policy is violated, will lie in the sole discretion of the Executive Director.

It is possible, in exceptional circumstances, that IHLS may permit two family members (as that term is defined herein) to remain in a reporting relationship. However, any exception to this policy must have the written consent of the Executive Director.

Performance Expectations and Evaluations

Open-Door Policy

IHLS 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 of any employee can be presented to and addressed by management.

IHLS strives to ensure fair and honest treatment of all employees. Supervisors, managers, and employees are expected to treat each other with mutual respect. Employees are encouraged to offer positive and constructive criticism.

The purpose of this policy is to assist employees in resolving any work-related concerns they may have in a timely, fair, and equitable manner.

If an employee disagrees with established rules of conduct, policies, or practices, or with an action or failure to act by the employee's supervisor, the employee should first meet with their supervisor to discuss the problem, issue, or concern. If the employee is dissatisfied with the decision or outcome of this meeting OR if the employee does not feel comfortable speaking with their direct supervisor about the issue (such as when the supervisor is the source of the concern), the employee may then go to the Executive Director. The issue should be brought to the Executive Director's attention either within 10 business days of the event causing the concern or within 10 business days after the employee's meeting with their supervisor (if the employee chose to meet with their supervisor first). The issue/concern should be presented to the Executive Director in writing and contain as many specific details as possible.

The Executive Director and the employee (and anyone else the Executive Director deems to be necessary/appropriate to join the meeting) will meet within a reasonable time after the employee requests assistance from the Executive Director with the purpose of the meeting being to resolve the employee's concern on terms that both the employee and the organization can agree upon. Based on the circumstances, additional meetings may be necessary with either the employee with the concern or others. The Executive Director will issue a written response within a reasonable time after completion of the Executive Director's review of the situation.

In the event the employee remains dissatisfied with the resolution of the Executive Director, the employee may file a written appeal from the Executive Director's decision with the President of the Board of Directors. This written appeal must be received by the President of the Board of Directors no later than 10 business days after the employee receives the Executive Director's decision. The IHLS Board of Directors' Personnel Committee Chairperson will review the situation and may discuss and/or meet with both the employee who voiced the concern and anyone else deemed necessary (including, but not limited to, the Executive Director and other employees) in order to determine if the matter can be resolved to the satisfaction of both the employee and the organization. The IHLS Board shall thereafter issue a final and binding decision on the matter which shall be provided to the employee in writing.

Not every problem can be resolved to everyone's total satisfaction, but only through understanding and discussion of mutual problems can employees and management develop confidence in each other. This confidence is important to the operation of an efficient and harmonious work environment.

Introductory Period

All new employees and current employees promoted to a higher job classification will have an introductory period of 90 calendar days. During this period, the employee is mentored, trained, and evaluated to help them achieve effective job performance. A 90-day performance evaluation will be completed to determine if the employee should continue in the position. The results will be reviewed by the supervisor, the manager, the Human Resources representative, and the Executive Director.

The Executive Director may take the following actions at any time during the introductory period when it is determined that an employee will not be successful in their new position with IHLS:

- Have the employee's introductory period extended for a period of time up to an additionalanother three (3) months;
- Have the employee demoted, returned to a prior position, or transferred to another position (if the employee was promoted); or
- Discharge the employee with no further re-employment rights.

Completion of the introductory period does not confer any additional employment rights. Both during and after the introductory period, employment with IHLS is on an at-will basis.

Performance Evaluations

Quarterly Semiannual evaluations will be given twice a year to each employee by their supervisor and reviewed by Human Resources. However, effective staff development is dependent upon continuous feedback on performance between supervisors and employees. Periodic performance reviews also provide an opportunity for employees to provide input for improvement of System services.

A copy of all performance reviews is retained as part of the permanent personnel record for each employee. Current reviews may be used for several factors including, but not limited to, merit increases, promotions, corrective counseling, employee motivation, and for the retention or dismissal of an employee. Previous reviews may also be used to identify performance trends.

Discipline

Every effort will be made to conduct disciplinary matters in a professional and constructive manner. Discipline may include constructive counseling, additional training, establishment of a probationary period, demotion, suspension, or termination. All disciplinary actions require a disciplinary action form which is permanently placed in the employee's personnel file. The

employee, supervisor, manager, and the Human Resources representative are required to sign the disciplinary notice. Actions of suspension or discharge must be made with the Executive Director's approval and in the presence of the Human Resources representative.

Any unexcused absences from duty will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. An employee who is absent for two consecutive workdays without notifying their supervisor will be considered to have abandoned their position and the employee's file will reflect that the employee has voluntarily resigned.

General Provisions of the Discipline Policy

As part of a healthy supervisor-employee interaction, one of the roles of the supervisor is to provide the employee with adequate and timely information about job expectations and regular feedback on job performance. The purpose of the procedure is to improve employee performance and encourage modification of specific workplace behavior. The objective is not to punish employees, but to alert them to the need for improvement. Unless the performance or behavior is severe, employees are given an opportunity to improve. Most areas of improvement can be corrected quickly and informally.

In instances where improvement does not occur, the supervisor may initiate formal corrective action. The process for doing so is called progressive discipline, which generally uses increasingly severe steps or measures when an employee's performance or workplace behavior fails to improve after being given a reasonable opportunity to do so.

There are four formal levels of discipline—verbal warning, written warning, final warning, and involuntary termination of employment. These actions may be taken sequentially depending on the number of factors including, but not limited to, the severity or persistence of the deficiency and/or any prior corrective action(s) taken against the employee. Employees may appeal the corrective action(s) taken against them with the Human Resources representative and the Executive Director in accordance with the Open-Door Policy of this handbook.

Outlined below are the steps of Illinois Heartland Library System's corrective action procedure. IHLS reserves the right to combine or skip steps depending on the facts of the situation and the nature of the offense. The level of disciplinary involvement may also vary. Some of the factors that will be considered are whether the issues continue despite coaching, counseling, or training, the employee's work record, and the impact the conduct and performance issues have on the organization.

Procedure

Step 1: Counseling and Verbal Warning

This step creates an opportunity for the immediate supervisor to schedule a meeting with an employee to bring attention to the existing performance, conduct, or attendance issue. The supervisor should discuss with the employee the nature of the problem or the violation of IHLS policies and procedures. The supervisor is expected to clearly describe expectations and steps the employee must take to improve performance or resolve the problem.

Step 2: Written Warning

Although IHLS hopes that the employee will promptly correct any performance, conduct, or attendance issues that were identified in Step 1, IHLS realizes that this may not always occur. The Written Warning involves more formal documentation of the performance, conduct, or attendance issues and consequences.

During Step 2, the immediate supervisor and the Human Resources representative will meet with the employee to review any additional incidents or information about the performance, conduct, or attendance issues, as well as any prior relevant corrective action. The supervisor will outline the consequences for the employee of their continued failure to meet performance, conduct, or attendance expectations.

Step 3: Final Warning—Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)

If the verbal and written warnings fail to bring about the required improvement in performance, conduct, or attendance, a final warning may be issued.

During Step 3, the immediate supervisor and Human Resources representative will meet with the employee to review the incidents or information about the performance, conduct, or attendance issue. The supervisor will specify the reason(s) for the action, the improvements required, and a fixed timeframe in which the employee must correct the deficiencies. The supervisor will outline consequences for the employee of their continued failure to meet performance, conduct, or attendance expectations.

During the timeframe outlined in the Performance Improvement Plan (PIP), the supervisor monitors the employee's performance to determine what progress has been made and whether the period specified for improvement remains appropriate. An employee who has an active PIP is ineligible to apply for or be considered for internal transfers or promotions, does not receive a performance assessment, and is not considered for an annual pay increase until at least 30 calendar days after fulfilling the conditions and terms of the final warning.

At the end of the final warning period or at an earlier date, if warranted, the supervisor reviews with Human Resources the employee's progress toward meeting the terms and conditions of the PIP. If satisfied that the deficiencies have been corrected, the supervisor notifies, in writing, the employee and Human Resources.

Step 4: Involuntary Termination

The last and most major step in the progressive discipline procedure is termination of employment. Generally, Illinois Heartland Library System will try to exercise the progressive nature of this policy by first providing a verbal warning, a written warning, and then a final warning before proceeding to termination of employment. However, IHLS reserves the right to combine and skip steps depending on the circumstances of each situation and the nature of the offense. Furthermore, employees may be terminated without prior notice or disciplinary action.

Employees will have the opportunity to present information that may challenge information management has used to issue discipline. The purpose of this process is to provide insight into

extenuating circumstances that may have contributed to the team member's performance or conduct issues while allowing for an equitable solution.

If the employee does not present this information during any of the step meetings, they will have 10 business days after the meeting to present such information to their supervisor.

Termination of Employment

Separation from employment with IHLS may be the result of several circumstances which include retirement, resignation, or termination. An employee separating service from IHLS must return all IHLS property by the last day of employment.

Separating full-time employees will receive a final check on the next regular payday, which will include pay for all accrued but unused vacation calculated at the employee's current rate. All employee benefits, except those benefits that are available to employees under state or federal law at the employee's own expense, will be terminated based on the terms of each insurance policy.

Layoff usually occurs because of circumstances such as a general reduction in the workforce, reorganization, or the termination of an activity or program that results in a reduction in the workforce needed.

If a reduction in workforce becomes necessary, consideration will be given to the needs of IHLS and its members, the quality of each employee's current and past performance, and the seniority of employees holding positions with IHLS.

Discharge Based on Rule/Policy Violation(s) or Performance

Discharge refers to the termination of an employee based on misconduct such as rule or policy violations or unsatisfactory performance. Generally, an employee will be provided with notice through counseling and/or written documentation when the employee's job performance is not meeting expectations and prior to discharge. Generally, an employee will also receive notice through the issuance of counseling or disciplinary action if the employee is violating IHLS rules or policies. However, in some cases, discharge will occur after a single violation of rules or policies with no prior advance notice, depending upon the severity of the infraction. Generally, a recommendation for discharge must be reviewed by the Human Resources representative and approved by the Executive Director and may also be subject to board approval. There may be times when employee safety and business operations are at risk, and the need for an immediate decision is necessary. In this case, the Executive Director will make the necessary decision for immediate termination and inform the Board President of the decision. The staff report for the immediate dismissal will be given to the board at the next regularly scheduled board meeting.

Resignation

Resignations must be submitted by an employee to their immediate supervisor in writing. All resignation letters must have the employee's signature. Professional staff members are

requested to give at least four weeks' notice of their intent to resign. All other employees are requested to give at least two weeks' notice. It is the employee's responsibility to make arrangements with the Human Resources office concerning their benefits and final payment for accrued benefits and wages.

Employees who are absent from work for two consecutive ~~days~~workdays without providing proper notice may be considered to have voluntarily resigned from employment with IHLS.

Professional Development Opportunities

In-Service Training

Periodically, time may be set aside for staff development. All employees may be required to attend. Pre-determined topics that are of interest will be presented. The topics may be recommended by staff; however, the Executive Director must approve topics and all arrangements.

Specific Course or Training Opportunities

IHLS is willing to arrange leaves of absence, adjustments of time, or special assignments in order that employees may take advantage of opportunities for special study, as long as this does not materially lessen the efficiency of the individual or place undue strain upon other employees such that there is a negative impact on IHLS. Upon approval of the Executive Director, IHLS will pay the cost (*if the budget allows for this cost*) of such course or training when the primary purpose of the training is to increase the knowledge or skills of the employee in relation to the position they now hold. If the employee drops out of the course or does not receive a C or better in a graded course, the employee will be required to reimburse IHLS.

Professional Affiliations

Staff members are urged to become members of relevant professional organizations and to participate in the work of such organizations to the extent possible without compromising their duties and responsibilities at IHLS. With the approval of the Executive Director, a reasonable amount of time and secretarial help, if available, is allowed for such activities. Working within the confines of the IHLS budget, time with pay, expenses, and basic dues may be allowed for staff members to attend library conferences and other professional meetings. This includes pay for the cost of basic memberships for professional staff in the American Library Association (ALA), the Illinois Library Association (ILA), or other relevant professional organizations.

Payroll Information

Compensation Philosophy and Policy

Our employees are our most valuable asset. Our overall compensation philosophy is to maintain a fair and equitable market-based compensation program that rewards performance and recognizes contributions made by all employees within the organization. While remaining fluid and flexible to meet changing economic and market conditions, we strive to pay market rates as is financially practical, taking into account individual performance and contributions.

Primary Objectives of the Compensation Program

- Recruit, attract, retain, and engage skilled, productive and dedicated employees.
- Motivate and reward employees to perform their jobs in ways that contribute to the overall success of the organization.
- Establish and maintain competitive pay ranges that ensure positions are valued appropriately in relation to one another within the organization and are aligned with market rates offered by the competitive labor market.

Compensation Plan Guidelines

In order to achieve the primary objectives of the organization's compensation program, determining and identifying base pay compensation levels consists of the following key elements:

- Having formal, current job descriptions which indicate essential job functions (including supervisory responsibilities, if applicable), and requisite knowledge/education, skill, and ability requirements.
- Regularly conducting compensation benchmarking against the external market.
- Providing pay increases that are commensurate with the market, individual performance, and organization performance.
- Ensuring transparency in compensation practices in accordance with Illinois law. In keeping with the Illinois Equal Pay Act amendment effective January 1, 2026, IHLS includes the pay scale and benefits information in all job postings for positions located in Illinois or available remotely to Illinois residents.
- Providing internal transparency for promotional opportunities. Before filling a position, IHLS will disclose the pay range to current employees who may be eligible for promotion.
- Announcing, posting, or otherwise making known all opportunities for promotion to all current employees no later than fourteen (14) calendar days after the job is posted externally.
- Maintaining records of job descriptions and wage histories for each position for a period of five (5) years, as required by law.
- Upholding employee rights to discuss compensation. IHLS will not retaliate against

employees who inquire about, disclose, or discuss wages or benefits.

Job Descriptions

Each position in the organization has a corresponding job description. This description specifies the position's duties and responsibilities and details the tasks, processes, functions, and qualifications for the job. Job descriptions are reviewed periodically for accuracy and updated as necessary.

Market Benchmarking

The organization uses an outside third party to objectively benchmark our job descriptions against current, valid, and reliable compensation survey data. As a result, the organization has a competitive compensation structure that consists of pay grades and pay ranges for all positions. Pay grades and pay ranges are reviewed and updated when necessary. Increases are given at the beginning of the following pay period when they fall outside of the organizational-wide benchmarking.

Pay Ranges

Every position within the organization has a pay range. Each range has a designated minimum, midpoint, and maximum pay rate. The amount paid to any individual employee is determined by the pay range for the position. It is the goal of IHLS to have all employees paid within their respective pay range. An appropriate pay rate will be determined for each employee based on the individual's relevant experience with respect to their current position, expertise, performance, and tenure. This process upholds the organization's philosophy that all employees contribute to the success of the organization and individual contributions will be acknowledged accordingly. Final base pay determination will be approved by the Executive/Management Team in coordination with Department Managers/Supervisors.

Pay Adjustments

Pay adjustments must be approved in advance by the Executive Director and may occur for the following reasons: All pay changes will be communicated to the employee in writing prior to the effective date of the change.

Annual Review and Pay Increases

Employees are eligible for an annual pay increase at the beginning of each fiscal year, provided they begin employment by June 30th of the previous fiscal year. The amount of base pay increase for an employee is dependent upon the board-approved increase where the employee's pay falls relative to their pay range, and the parameters of the approved operating budget.

If an employee's pay is at (or beyond) the maximum of the pay range, further pay increases will not be issued until the employee's pay rate is back within range.

If an employee obtains a certification or degree requirement based upon the current job description, they will be reevaluated within their pay grade to ensure that they are properly placed in the range taking into consideration the new certification or degree. Increases are given at the beginning of the following pay period after the certification and/or degree is obtained.

Market Adjustment Increases

Adjustments in an employee's pay may occur separately from the annual review process to maintain internal equity. Pay adjustments may also occur when there is an unexpected market fluctuation for a particular position and the incumbent's current pay is below market.

Promotional Increases

A promotion is a reassignment from a position with a lower pay grade to another position with a higher pay grade. In most cases, a base pay increase will accompany a promotion, but it is not required unless the employee's pay is below the minimum of the new position's range.

Reassignment to a Position with a Lower Pay Range

On rare occasions, employees may move to a job of significantly decreased responsibility and a lower pay grade, either voluntarily or at the request of management. In some cases, a pay decrease may be initiated at the time of the job change but is not required unless the employee's pay is above the maximum of the new position's range.

Lateral Transfer

A lateral transfer is defined as a move from one position to another within the same pay grade. Lateral transfers typically involve no change in base pay.

Salary Range

The compensation structure of IHLS consists of pay grades for each class of position. Positions at IHLS are classified based on:

- Type, complexity, and difficulty of duties.
- Authority and responsibility involved.
- Qualifications required, including education, technical training, skills, experience, as well as personal qualities.

Periodically (~~generally every 3-5 years~~ ~~at least every three years~~) the compensation structure will be reviewed based on the salaries of comparable library positions, internal equity, and pay for similar work elsewhere. In order to maintain pay equity, we will use a third-party vendor to recommend the pay grades.

Annually, the Executive Director and the board will review the pay grade assignments to determine whether the ranges should be adjusted.

Timecard Submission and Approval Policy

Purpose: To ensure accurate and timely processing of payroll by establishing guidelines for the submission and approval of employee timecards.

Scope: This policy applies to all employees and their respective supervisors.

Timecard Submission

- **Frequency:** Timecards must be submitted bi-weekly by the end of the designated pay period. It is good practice to make sure your time is updated daily to ensure accurate hours worked.
- **Method:** Timecards will be submitted electronically in Paylocity. Employees are required to approve their timecards except in the case of emergency situations. Once you approve your timecard, it will be automatically sent to your supervisor for their approval.
- **Accuracy/Missed Punches:** Employees are responsible for ensuring that their timecards accurately reflect the hours worked, including any overtime or time off.

Supervisor Approval

- **Review and Approval:** Supervisors must promptly review their employees' timecards for accuracy and completeness.
- **Timeliness:** Timecard approvals must be completed by noon on Monday following the close of the pay period.
- **Corrections:** If errors are found, supervisors must notify the employee and make the necessary corrections before approving the timecard.
- **Time-Off Approvals:** All time-off approvals must be approved or disapproved within 2 business days of being requested or before timecards are due, whichever is first. Vacation approvals should be approved or disapproved as soon as possible.

**** Note that, for time off covered by the Paid Leave for All Workers Act (PLAW), employees do not need to request time off in advance if the need for leave is not foreseeable; in these cases, the employee must provide as much notice as is practicable.**

Exceptions and Adjustments

- **Exceptions:** In exceptional cases, such as extended absences or unexpected schedule changes, employees must obtain prior approval from their supervisor.
- **Adjustments:** Any adjustments to timecards must be documented and approved by the supervisor.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

- **Delays in Pay:** Failure to submit timecards or obtain necessary approvals may result in delays in payroll processing.
- **Disciplinary Action:** Repeated violations of this policy may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Additional Considerations

- **Timekeeping Systems:** IHLS uses Paylocity as its timekeeping system. Details on how to use this system can be found in our organization's Intranet.
- **Overtime:** Overtime must be approved in advance by the supervisor outside of the departmental budget allotted hours. As set forth in the IHLS handbook, all employees will be properly paid for all time worked, regardless of whether the employee's supervisor has approved the overtime. However, employees are subject to disciplinary action for repeatedly working overtime without authorization.
- **Time Off:** The types of time off available (e.g., vacation, sick leave, and paid leave for all workers (PLAW) time) and the procedures for requesting and approving time off can also be found on the IHLS Intranet.

Pay Periods and Direct Deposit

Payday is bi-weekly on alternate Fridays and covers the two-week period previous to the week in which the paycheck is issued. Pay through direct deposit is preferred. Employees who do not have an account with a financial institution can elect to have their pay deposited to a pay card (fees apply), or an employee may request a physical check. Employees can assign up to four separate Automated Clearing House (ACH) deposits. Allow for a 14-day processing period on all new ACH set-ups and/or changes.

Pay Stubs

Pay stubs are itemized statements showing (1) hours worked; (2) rate of pay; (3) overtime pay; (4) overtime hours; (5) gross wages; (6) wage deductions; and (7) total wages and deductions for the applicable year. Pay stubs provided to employees include this information. IHLS will retain all such information for at least three (3) years after the date of payment. If a current or former employee requests a pay stub, IHLS will provide it within twenty-one (21) calendar days of the request; however, for any particular employee (or former employee), IHLS will comply with such request not more than twice in a 12-month period. Moreover, IHLS will supply the requested information only for current employees and those whose employment has ended not more than 12 months prior to the request.

If departing employees cannot access the IHLS payroll system after termination of employment, then, at the time of separation, IHLS will: (i) offer the departing employee a copy of his or her pay stubs for the one (1) year period prior to the employee's departure; (ii) extend this offer to the departing employee by the end of his or her final pay period; and (iii) record, in writing, the date on which IHLS made this offer to the departing employee and if and how the departing employee responded.

Overtime and Compensation

Occasionally, an employee may be asked to work overtime. State and federal laws covering overtime compensation for nonexempt employees will be followed. An employee working 40

hours in each workweek, Sunday through Saturday, cannot consider sick, vacation, holiday, paid family leave or PLAW leave when calculating the 40 hours necessary to receive overtime hours. Only the actual hours worked can be calculated for overtime.

Nonexempt employees who are required to work more than 40 hours in a workweek will be compensated at the rate of 1.5 times the hourly rate for each hour worked over 40 hours.

Payroll Deductions

It is the policy of IHLS not to take any improper pay deductions that would be in violation of the Fair Labor Standards Act, its regulations (specifically Section 541.602(a)), or relevant state law or local ordinance.

Employees who believe an improper deduction has been made from their pay should report such improper deduction immediately to their supervisor or Human Resources. The complaint will be promptly investigated, and the results of the investigation will be reported to the complaining employee. If the employee is unsatisfied with the findings of the investigation, the employee may appeal the decision to the Executive Director.

Any employee whose pay has had an improper deduction made shall be reimbursed for such improper deduction no later than the next pay period after the improper deduction is communicated to Human Resources or management.

Visual & Biometric Data Privacy

Biometric Policy

Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) is a public employer and, therefore, not covered by any requirement to provide its employees with the information in this policy. However, IHLS at all times desires to be as transparent as possible and to provide all information relevant to our employees' employment and work atmosphere to our employees, while IHLS previously used a fingerprint scan for employee timekeeping purposes, as of January 1, 2024, IHLS no longer collects or uses any biometric data for any reason.

Biometric identifier means retina or iris scan, fingerprint, voiceprint, or scan of hand or face geometry. While IHLS does record meetings at times using AI technology and in these cases will record the meetings, it does not maintain a voiceprint, fingerprint, or other biometric data on any employee. Effective August 2, 2024, Illinois has updated the definition of written release in its biometric data privacy law to include an electronic signature. Electronic signature is an electronic sound, symbol, or process attached or associated with a record that the employee adopts and uses with the intent to sign. The amendment makes it clear that employees can execute electronic signatures to allow the collection of their biometric data.

Camera Monitoring

IHLS utilizes video surveillance systems in workspaces for legitimate business purposes, including safety, security, and theft prevention. In keeping with Illinois law (720 ILCS 5/26-4), surveillance will not occur in areas where employees have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as restrooms or changing areas. Any audio recording is prohibited unless all parties provide consent, as Illinois is an all-party consent state. Employees are being notified by this written policy to ensure transparency and compliance with state and federal laws.

Use of Employee Likeness

IHLS may photograph, record, or otherwise capture employee likenesses -- which include image, voice, name, and performance — for use in promotional, training, or other lawful business purposes. Prior to any such use, employees will be asked to sign a media release form to indicate whether they consent or decline such use. Consent, if granted, authorizes IHLS to use the employee's likeness across various media formats without compensation and waives rights to privacy, royalties, or approval of final materials. Employees retain the right to revoke consent at any time by submitting a written notice to Human Resources.

Attendance at Work

Work Schedule

Full-time employees are scheduled to work a 40-hour workweek measured from Sunday through the following Saturday. For professional employees, it is understood that work will be performed as required by each position; but to the extent possible, the basic workweek will remain at 40 hours. Each employee must have a work schedule (including time for an unpaid lunch) approved by their supervisor, the Human Resources representative, and the Executive Director. Employees unable to report to work at the scheduled time must notify their immediate supervisor, the Human Resources representative, or the Executive Director as soon as possible. You are required to notify your supervisor via one of these methods listed below. *(Notify your supervisor of any absences at least one hour before the start of your shift)*

- Microsoft Teams chat
- Email
- Phone call
- Text

Please reach out to your supervisor to find out their preferred method of contact for your department. Professional and administrative staff, please indicate your absence on the calendar for your hub location to let others know that you are not available when possible.

Delivery employees will be required to have schedules to ensure that we are properly staffed to serve our members. Schedules will be signed off by the employee and the manager to ensure adequate coverage of shifts.

You should not be in an IHLS building if you are not performing the essential functions of your position. As soon as you are in an IHLS building, you must clock in to reflect actual hours worked per wage and hour laws.

Flex Hours

An employee may occasionally work flex hours during a week with the permission of their supervisor, but nonexempt employees may not work over their regularly scheduled workweek. Your immediate supervisor, the Human Resources representative, or the Executive Director must approve in advance of changes in regular work schedules and working-from-home schedules.

Please be respectful of your fellow colleagues. If your working hours are late in the evening or early in the morning, please do not send messages to co-workers until the core (daytime) hours. Daytime operating hours are from 7:00am-7:00pm.

Work Remote Policy

Historically, working remotely was created as a benefit for high-performing and long-tenured employees. The Illinois Heartland Library System's (IHLS) approach is to help employees balance work and home life situations. While some positions allow for remote work (also known as "working from a remote location"), others do not, i.e., driver or sorter. Certain classifications of employees, therefore, will be eligible to work from a remote location and some will not. If a position allows for remote work, it will be indicated on the job description. However, even for job classifications in which remote work is possible, not every employee within said job classification will be permitted to work from home or another work location within Illinois. For each eligible position, expectations and details will be established in the work remote agreement, which will be used to determine whether a specific individual will be allowed to work from a remote location. If an employee does not meet the requirements to work from a remote location, the employee will be required to work on-site. An employee required to work on-site, who is in a classification that is eligible for the remote work program, may have their eligibility reevaluated from time to time and may later be permitted to work from a remote location from within the state of Illinois.

Working remotely may also be an option for certain circumstances as ADA accommodation if working remotely is reasonable based on the employee's job duties. This will be decided on a case-by-case basis through a Human Resources representative. In addition, if an employee is on intermittent FMLA (and misses part of the day for medical appointments, treatments, or other FMLA-covered reasons), the employee may, in some cases, be permitted to work the other portion of the workday from an Illinois remote location.

Working from a remote location will only be authorized if the fulfillment of work responsibilities is not adversely affected. Employees are expected to maintain a regular residence within the State of Illinois to be eligible for remote work and must keep their supervisors and Human Resources notified of any changes to their remote contact information.

It is critical to note that IHLS does not require any employee to work remotely. Working from a remote location is, in all cases, purely voluntary, and it is the employee who makes the voluntary choice to work remotely, if eligible. Because all employees have access to an office with landlines and internet service, and because no employees are required to work from a remote location, IHLS will not reimburse employees for any incidental expenses that may be incurred due to the employee's voluntary decision to work away from the office. IHLS will reimburse travel-related expenses in accordance with IHLS policy.

All approved remote workers:

1. Earn the same rate of pay as scheduled for their current position.
2. Must be available by phone and email when ~~telecommuting~~working remotely.
3. IHLS will provide a laptop and the regular maintenance and upkeep of the laptop, but the employee is responsible for all office supplies and furnishings such as paper, pens, ink, desk, chair, file cabinet, printers, etc.
4. The employee is responsible for any and all telephone and internet charges incurred, initial, and/or on-going fees.
5. If an injury occurs while working remotely, it is the employee's responsibility to complete and submit an incident report to their immediate supervisor, the Human Resources representative, or the Executive Director within 24 hours.

Every employee who engages in working remotely does so on a purely voluntary basis, and therefore, such employees are responsible for the cost of items described in 3 and 4 above. Every employee who chooses to work remotely must maintain a safe and secure workplace, free of tripping hazards and other hazards, set up in a manner that will enable the employee to perform his or her regular job duties in a timely and efficient manner.

The work remote agreement will define the days of the week allotted for remote work, and the requirements of this benefit will be thoroughly laid out in the document. All employees working remotely must have a signed agreement on file.

Remote-Only Positions

There may be occasions where we have designated certain positions as remote-only positions. If you have a remote-only position, this will be outlined in your offer letter.

IHLS will comply with posting employment compliance posters for remote workers who are not regularly in an IHLS location as required by law. We will post the required posting on our IHLS intranet, email remote workers, and/or post compliance posters on our IHLS Website.

Lunch Period

A portion of the employees' own time will be allowed each day for lunch but shall be scheduled by the supervisors to ensure adequate coverage. An unpaid lunch can be up to one hour. With the approval of the immediate supervisor, the lunch period may be shortened to a minimum of 30 minutes to compensate for reporting to work late or leaving early. Lunch and meal breaks of 30 minutes or more are unpaid. Time gained from shortened lunch hours may not accumulate. Any employee working at least 7.5 continuous hours a day or more must take a lunch break within the first five hours of work.

Employees whose jobs require work away from IHLS facilities, such as drivers, are responsible for ensuring they take a meal break as required by this policy. Any employee who does not get a 30-minute meal break for a shift of 7.5 or more continuous hours must advise the employee's supervisor as soon as possible.

Work Breaks

In accordance with Illinois law, an employee is permitted to take a break of at least twenty (20) minutes in length for each 7.5 hours worked beginning no later than five (5) hours after the start of the employee's shift. Employees who work a shift of twelve (12) hours or longer will be provided with a second break of at least twenty (20) minutes. If any break period provided is thirty (30) minutes or longer, and the employee is relieved of all duties during the break, the break will be without pay. Employees are compensated for break period of less than thirty (30) minutes in length. ~~Employees are allowed one 15 minute paid break during each continuous 3.75 hour period worked.~~ The purpose of a work break is to provide a rest period enabling employees to perform their work more efficiently. Work breaks are not to be used at the beginning or end of the workday and are not cumulative. ~~These short breaks are paid breaks.~~

Work breaks may be scheduled by the supervisor to ensure adequate coverage.

Nursing Mother Breaks

In accordance with the Illinois Nursing Mothers in the Workplace Act, employees who need to express breast milk will be provided with a reasonable break time each time they have the need for up to one year following the birth of their child. These lactation breaks:

- Are separate from standard rest breaks.
- Will be compensated at the employee's regular rate of pay.
- Will not require the use of paid leave or result in any reduction in hours or compensation.
- May be taken as needed and coordinated with the supervisor to ensure coverage.
- Apply to both on-site and remote work employees. However, the law does not require an employee use this paid break time to leave the established work premises (on-site or remote) specifically for this break.

IHLS will provide a private, clean, and secure space at each hub for nursing purposes. Employees may contact a Human Resources representative regarding access.

Adverse Weather

In the event of extreme adverse weather, the Executive Director (or designee) will determine which IHLS locations will be open, closed, have a delayed start, or early closure. IHLS will post information about closings, delayed starts, or other departures from standard procedures during inclement weather on the IHLS website home page, and an alert will be sent out via the IHLS email and text messaging services to inform of weather delays, building closures, and route changes.

Each supervisor will be responsible for notifying each of their direct reports and will work with their team to determine the best form of notification for these types of occurrences. All employees should be notified before 6:30 a.m. if it is necessary to have a late opening. Staff will be notified of the official opening time by mid-morning. To sign up for the Text Alert system, send a text "IHLSSTAFF" to 84483. If you are unable to utilize the text alert system, you will need to make your supervisor aware so that they can notify you directly.

When IHLS (or a hub location) closes due to inclement weather, all employees scheduled to work will be paid for the number of hours they are scheduled to work that day. Employees should not report to work or be in an IHLS facility if IHLS is officially closed for business for the safety of all employees. The only exception would be if there is an emergency situation and an operations team member needs to access the building.

Inclement weather pay is not considered time worked for purposes of determining an employee's eligibility for overtime pay in the week in which a closure occurs due to inclement/adverse weather.

If an employee is not scheduled to work on an adverse weather day, the employee will not be eligible for inclement weather pay.

Building Closure

There may be times when our buildings are not safe for employees when construction or maintenance needs to be performed. Employees will be given appropriate notice in the event this occurs at the Hub location. This does not apply to remote-only positions, only employees who work at the physical address of the construction or maintenance. The Executive Director will decide if employees can work from home or not. In the event an employee cannot work from home, pay will be provided.

Employee Time-off From Work

Election Day and Early Voting

All eligible employees are urged to vote and are entitled to be absent from work for a period of two hours between the time of the opening and closing of the polls. Voting polls are open from 6:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on Election Day and open for early voting with varying hours. We encourage employees to take advantage of early voting; in this case, please discuss your schedule with your supervisor. This should provide sufficient time to vote. If more time is needed, such a request must be made to the employee's supervisor before the election day. The employee's supervisor will specify the hours the employee can be off.

Jury Duty

Time away from work is allowed for jury duty. Employees must submit a request for jury leave with a copy of the jury summons before the leave is taken. If an employee on jury duty is contacted and told not to report or is dismissed by noon, the employee is expected to report to work for the balance of the day. Pay for jury duty is limited to 10 days per fiscal year.

Since employees will receive pay as if they are working, any pay received for such service during paid working hours must be remitted to the System. Travel and other expense reimbursements or jury pay for non-working hours will be retained by the employee.

Family Neonatal Intensive Care (NICU) Leave

Effective January 1, 2026, employees are entitled to unpaid leave under the Family Neonatal Intensive Care Leave Act. This leave is available to employees during the period in which their child is receiving care in a neonatal intensive care unit.

Employees of IHLS may request NICU leave as follows:

- As IHLS is an employer with 51 or more employees, employees may take up to 20 days of unpaid leave.
- For FMLA eligible employees, NICU leave may be used **only** after FMLA time has been exhausted for employees who qualify for FMLA ~~run its course~~. NICU leave is meant to be in addition to and not concurrent with FMLA.
- Leave may be taken intermittently or continuously but must be used in blocks of at least two hours.
- Health benefits must continue during leave.
- Reinstatement to the same or a substantially equivalent ~~similar~~ position is required.
- An employee taking such leave may use available paid time off to cover the time missed from work, but the employee is not required to use such paid time.

Employees must notify their supervisor in advance and may be asked to provide documentation supporting the need for NICU leave. Upon return, employees will be reinstated to their previous or equivalent position without loss of benefits. IHLS prohibits retaliation against employees who exercise their rights under this law.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and National Defense Authorization Act

Eligible employees of IHLS may take unpaid, job-protected leave for specified family and medical reasons with continuation of group health insurance coverage under the same terms and conditions as if the employee had not taken leave. Eligible employees are entitled to up to 12 work weeks of leave in a 12-month period.

Twenty-six work weeks of leave during a single 12-month period is also available to care for a covered military service member with a serious injury or illness who is the spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin to the employee (military caregiver leave). To receive paid time off, employees may use earned but unused medical (including medical leave bank time) or vacation while on FMLA. Any remaining time off on FMLA after exhaustion of vacation or sick days is without pay. The employee may also use any available PLAW days while on leave.

Eligible employees may take up to 12 weeks per 12-month period for any one or more of the following reasons:

- The birth of a child and to care for such child or the placement of a child with the employee for adoption or foster care (leave for this reason must be taken within the 12-month period following the child's birth or placement with the employee); or
- To care for an immediate family member (spouse, child, or parent) of the employee if such immediate family member has a serious health condition.
- The employee's own serious health condition that makes the employee unable to perform the functions of their position; or
- The employee's spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty or called to active-duty status as a member of the Armed Forces, including the National Guard or Reserves in support of a contingency operation. An eligible employee who is a spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin of a covered service member with a serious injury or illness will be granted up to a total of 26 weeks of unpaid leave during a "single 12-month period" to care for the service member. A covered service member is a current member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list for a serious injury or illness. The "single 12-month period" of leave to care for a covered service member with a serious injury or illness begins on the first day the employee takes leave for this reason and ends 12 months later, regardless of the 12-month period established by IHLS for other types of FMLA leave. An eligible employee is limited to a combined total of 26 workweeks of leave for any FMLA-qualifying reason during the "single 12-month period."

Note that a mental health condition now falls under the definition of a “serious health condition” under FMLA when the condition requires either (1) inpatient care or (2) continuing treatment by a health care provider.

An eligible employee will be granted up to a total of 12 weeks of unpaid leave for qualifying exigencies arising out of the fact that the employee’s spouse, son, daughter, or parent is on active duty, or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty, in support of a contingency operation. Under the terms of the statute, qualifying exigency leave is available to a family member of a military member in the National Guard or Reserves. This section does not apply to family members of military members in the Armed Forces.

For all types of FMLA leave, the amount of leave available to an eligible employee at any given time is measured by looking backward over the immediately preceding 12 months. For example, if an employee has already taken six weeks of FMLA leave during the 12 months immediately preceding the date on which the employee needs FMLA leave, the employee would only have six weeks of FMLA leave available for the new FMLA leave. If both spouses work for IHLS, their total leave in any 12 consecutive months will be limited to an aggregate of 12 weeks if the leave is taken for either the birth or placement for adoption or foster care of a child or to care for a sick parent.

Leave taken for the employee or a covered family member's serious health condition may be taken consecutively, intermittently, or on a reduced work/leave schedule based on certified medical necessity. Employees needing intermittent leave or leave on a reduced leave schedule must attempt to schedule the leave so as not to disrupt the operations of IHLS. In such instances, the employee’s supervisor will follow applicable Federal and State laws in reviewing and approving such leave requests.

To receive compensation, an employee must simultaneously take earned sick leave, earned vacation, and/or any other earned time off for which pay is given. Any pay shall be within System guidelines. When an employee has used all accrued paid time off, any additional FMLA leave will be unpaid. Employees may use any available PLAW paid days.

An employee on an FMLA leave will receive the same benefits under the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) disability and death benefits as any other employee. To be eligible for IMRF disability benefits, the employee must have at least 12 months of continuous service credit. However, if the break in service is due to an FMLA leave, this rule will not apply.

As with other employees, an employee on unpaid leave will not earn IMRF pension service credits for the month(s) they were not being paid. Once the employee returns to work, they have the option of buying back any months of service that were lost.

If an employee is eligible for paid time off (such as sick leave or vacation pay), the employee must first exhaust paid time off during an FMLA leave before the leave continues, if applicable, on an unpaid basis. The total of the paid and unpaid time off will not exceed 12 weeks (or 26 weeks if the time off is to care for a covered Service member). Any pay shall be within System guidelines.

A request for FMLA leave should be submitted in writing to the Human Resources Office. In unexpected or unforeseeable situations, an employee should provide as much notice as is practicable, usually verbal notice within one or two business days of when the need for leave becomes known, followed by a written request. If an employee fails to give 30 calendar days' notice for foreseeable leave with no reasonable excuse for the delay, the leave will be denied until 30 calendar days after the employee provides notice.

For leaves taken because of the employee's or a covered family member's serious health condition, the employee must submit medical certification to the Human Resources Office within 15 calendar days after requested, or as soon as is reasonably possible. IHLS may require a second or third opinion (at its own expense), periodic reports on the employee's status and intent to return to work, and a fitness-for-duty report to return to work.

An employee granted leave under this policy will continue to be covered under IHLS' group insurance plans under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided to any other employee. Any required employee contributions will be made either through payroll deduction or by direct payment to IHLS. Employee contribution amounts are subject to any change in rates that occur while the employee is on leave. If an employee's contribution is more than 30 calendar days late, IHLS may terminate the employee's insurance coverage.

If an employee fails to return from unpaid FMLA leave for reasons other than (1) the continuation of a serious health condition of the employee or a covered family member or (2) circumstances beyond the employee's control (certification required within 30 calendar days of failure to return for either reason), IHLS may seek reimbursement from the employee for the portion of the premiums paid by IHLS on behalf of that employee (also known as the employer contribution) during the period of leave.

An employee is not entitled to seniority or benefit accrual during periods of leave (whether or not the leave falls under the FMLA) but will not lose anything accrued prior to such leave.

If the employee has followed the proper procedures and returns to work within 12 weeks following an FMLA leave, they will be reinstated to their former position or an equivalent position with equivalent pay, benefits, status, and authority. The employee's restoration rights are the same as they would have been had the employee not been on leave. Thus, if the employee's position would have been eliminated or the employee would have been terminated but for the leave, the employee would not have the right to be reinstated upon return from such leave.

If the employee fails to return within 12 weeks following FMLA leave, the employee will be reinstated to their same or similar position, only if available, in accordance with applicable laws. If the employee's same or similar position is not available, the employee may be terminated. However, if the reason an employee does not return to work after expiration of FMLA leave is due to the employee's new or continuing disability (as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act), IHLS will engage in the interactive process with the employee to determine if there is a reasonable accommodation that would enable the employee to perform the essential functions of the employee's position. A reasonable accommodation may include an additional limited

period of non-FMLA non-job-protected leave; however, employees should remember that a leave of absence of a long duration or an unknown period of time will not be considered a reasonable accommodation.

Victims of Domestic or Sexual Violence

Pursuant to the Illinois Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act (VESSA), all eligible employees are entitled to take up to 12 weeks of job-protected unpaid leave during any 12-month period for victims or "perceived" victims of domestic, sexual, or gender violence, or any other crime of violence. To be eligible for VESSA leave, employees must be employed by IHLS either a full- or part-time basis. If the reason for the leave is one of the reasons set forth in 1-5 below. A maximum of 2 weeks of leave is available if the reason for the leave is listed in 6-8 below.

Effective January 1, 2026, VESSA expands the definition of "family or household member" to include any person whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship, as determined by the employee. This includes individuals not previously covered under the law, such as chosen family or long-term companions, regardless of legal or biological ties.

VESSA leave shall be granted for any of the following reasons:

1. Seeking medical attention for or recovering from physical or psychological injuries caused by domestic or sexual violence, gender violence, or any other crime of violence to the employee or the employee's family or household member;
2. Obtaining services from a victim services organization for the employee or the employee's family or household member;
3. Obtaining psychological or other counseling for the employee or the employee's family or household member;
4. Participating in safety planning, including relocation, or taking other precautionary actions to help the employee or the employee's family or household member;
5. Seeking legal assistance or other remedies to secure the health and safety of the employee or the employee's family or household member, including preparing for or participating in any related civil or criminal legal proceeding;
6. Attending the funeral or alternative to a funeral or wake of a family or household member who is killed in a crime of violence;
7. Making arrangements necessitated by the death of a family or household member who is killed in a crime of violence; or
8. Grieving the death of a family or household member who is killed in a crime of violence.

~~"Family or household member" includes the employee's spouse or party to a civil union, parent, grandparent, child, grandchild, sibling, or any other person related by blood or by present or prior marriage or civil union, a person who shares a relationship through a child, or any other individual whose close association with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship as determined by the employee, and persons jointly residing in the same household.~~

Employees may also use VESSA leave consecutively, intermittently, or as part of a reduced workweek whenever it is necessary. An employee who is entitled to take paid or unpaid leave from employment may elect to substitute any period of such leave for an equivalent period of 12 workweeks of leave for any 12-month period. An employee cannot take unpaid leave that exceeds the unpaid leave time allowed under or is in addition to the unpaid leave time permitted by FMLA.

IHLS uses a “rolling” 12-month period measured forward from the date an employee uses any VESSA leave. An employee granted leave pursuant to this policy continues to be covered under IHLS’ group benefit plans under the same conditions as coverage would have been provided if they had been continuously employed during the leave period. Employees will be responsible for paying their portion of insurance premiums during periods of unpaid VESSA leave. An employee who utilizes VESSA leave will be restored to the same job or a job with equivalent status, pay, benefits, and other employment terms. However, the employee’s job protection rights are the same as if the employee had not been on VESSA leave. Thus, if the employee’s position would have been eliminated or the employee would have been terminated if not on VESSA leave, the employee does not have the right to be reinstated.

If an employee does not return to work at the end of the VESSA leave period for any unapproved reason, the employee shall reimburse IHLS for any insurance premiums paid by the Company on the employee’s behalf during the unpaid portion of the VESSA leave.

Employees must provide 48 hours’ advance notice of the need for leave if such notice is practicable. IHLS will not discharge or take other adverse action against an employee for taking an unscheduled leave if, within a reasonable time, the employee provides IHLS with a sworn statement certifying that the leave was for one of the reasons cited in the law. Taking VESSA leave may be denied if any of the above requirements are not met.

Employees are required to provide supporting documentation, such as police or medical records, when those documents become available, and must work with Human Resources to discuss appropriate documentation. (For Vessa rules on using company equipment for such documentation, see page XX) IHLS will keep confidential the fact that the employee sought leave under the law, the certification, and any supporting documents.

Family Military Leave

~~IHLS will provide up to 30 days of unpaid family military leave to an employee who is the spouse or parent of a person called to military service for more than 30 days during the time Federal or State deployment orders are in effect.~~

~~The employee must give at least 14 days’ notice of the intended date upon which the family military leave will commence if the leave consists of five consecutive working days or more. When possible, the employee will consult with IHLS to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of IHLS. Employees taking military family leave for less than five~~

~~consecutive days will give IHLS as much notice as is practicable. IHLS may require certification from the proper military authority to verify the employee's eligibility for the family military leave.~~

~~An employee cannot take Family Military Leave unless all accrued vacation and other paid time off (except for sick leave, PLAW leave, and disability) has been exhausted.~~

Military Leave

The Illinois Military Leave Act now governs all military-related leave policies, including the former Family Military Leave Act. This section reflects the military leave types available.

Military Leave for Family Members

For employees who have been employed for at least twelve (12) months and worked at least 1,250 hours in the 12 months immediately preceding the date on which leave will begin, IHLS will provide up to 30 days per deployment of unpaid family military leave to an employee who is the spouse, child, parent or grandparent of a person called to military service for more than 30 days during the time Federal or State deployment orders are in effect. However, if the employee uses FMLA qualifying exigency leave, the number of days provided to the employee under this Military Leave for Family Members policy because of the employee's spouse or child being called to active military service shall be reduced by the number of days of leave provided to the employee under the FMLA.

The employee must give at least 14 calendar days' notice of the intended date upon which the family military leave will commence if the leave consists of five consecutive working days or more. When possible, the employee will consult with IHLS to schedule the leave so as not to unduly disrupt the operations of IHLS. Employees taking military family leave for less than five consecutive working days will give IHLS as much notice as is practicable. IHLS may require certification from the proper military authority to verify the employee's eligibility for the Family Military Leave.

An employee cannot take Family Military Leave unless all accrued vacation and other paid time off (except for sick leave, PLAW leave, and disability) has been exhausted.

Military Leave for Employees

Any employee, who is a member of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or of any reserve component of the Illinois State Militia, shall be granted leave from their employment for any period actively spent in military service, including basic training, special or advanced training, annual training, and any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces. During such leaves, the employee's seniority and other benefits continue to accrue.

During leaves for annual training, an employee will continue to receive their regular compensation. During leaves for basic training, for up to 60 calendar days of special or advanced training, and for any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces if the

employee's compensation for military activities is less than their compensation as an employee, they shall receive their regular compensation as an employee minus the amount of their base pay for military activities.

Employees who are required to serve in the Armed Forces must give advance written or verbal notice for military duty, unless giving notice is impossible, unreasonable, or is precluded by military necessity.

Military Funeral Honors Detail

IHLS provides paid leave for employees participating in military funeral honors details.

Eligible employees may take up to 8 hours of paid leave per calendar month, with a maximum of 40 hours per calendar year, to serve on a military funeral honors detail [at the funeral of a veteran](#). This leave is paid at the employee's regular rate of pay and does not require exhaustion of vacation, personal, compensatory, sick, or disability leave.

To qualify, the employee must:

- Have worked for IHLS for at least 12 months
- Have completed 1,250 hours of service in the preceding 12 months
- Be trained to participate in funeral honors detail of a veteran and the employee himself or herself must be: (a) a retired or active member of the armed forces of the United States or a member of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States, including the Illinois National Guard, or (b) an authorized provider, or a registered member of a nonprofit or other similar organization that is an authorized provider, including a member of a veterans services organization. ~~Be a recognized authorized provider or a registered member of a nonprofit or veterans service organization that supports official military funeral honors teams~~

Employees must provide reasonable notice to IHLS before taking this leave, when practicable.

~~Any employee, who is a member of any reserve component of the United States Armed Forces or of any reserve component of the Illinois State Militia, shall be granted leave from their employment for any period actively spent in military service, including basic training, special or advanced training, annual training, and any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces. During such leaves, the employee's seniority and other benefits continue to accrue.~~

~~During leaves for annual training, an employee will continue to receive their regular compensation. During leaves for basic training, for up to 60 days of special or advanced training, and for any other training or duty required by the United States Armed Forces if the employee's compensation for military activities is less than their compensation as an employee, they shall receive their regular compensation as an employee minus the amount of their base pay for military activities.~~

~~Employees who are required to serve in the Armed Forces must give advance written or verbal notice for military duty, unless giving notice is impossible, unreasonable, or is precluded by military necessity.~~

Sick Leave

All full-time employees earn leave with pay at the rate of 12 days per fiscal year, accrued each pay period. Employees working 30-39 hours a week will be given sick leave on a prorated basis. This leave may be taken as soon as it is accrued; we request at least 2 weeks' advance notice unless the need for leave is not foreseeable. This leave is accumulated without a maximum, and it is not paid out to the employee upon termination.

If the employee has a fever, they should be 24 hours fever free without the use of fever-reducing medicine to return to work to avoid the spread of illness.

The leave may be used for personal illness, injury, or medical appointments or for occasions that require the employee to be the primary caregiver for a member of the immediate family or household who is ill or injured. "Immediate family" consists of parent/guardian, child, grandparent, grandchild, spouse, domestic partner, parent of spouse, brother, sister, and all parallel step and foster relationships. "Household" includes anyone maintaining a family relationship living in an employee's home or any situation in which the employee is serving in loco parentis (a person who has put themselves in the situation of a lawful parent by assuming the obligations incident to the parental relationship).

Retiring IMRF members may receive pension service credit for unused sick leave per the guidelines specified by IMRF. As of January 2024, an employee can carry over 240 days/1920 hours for service credit provided that the IMRF conditions are met, see www.imrf.org for more details.

Any employee who anticipates being absent for three workdays or more due to the employee's serious health condition or the serious health condition of the employee's parent, child, or spouse, is required to file under the Family Medical Leave Act. After three consecutive work-days of medical leave, a doctor's statement may be required to return to work. A doctor's statement may also be required to ensure that an employee is fit for duty or when an employee is suspected of abusing their medical leave privileges. The doctor's statement must include information on the nature of the illness/injury and the date the employee is fit to perform their duties and return to work.

Paid Family Leave

IHLS will provide up to six weeks of paid family leave to eligible employees following the birth of an employee's child, surrogacy, placement of a child in connection to adoption or foster care, for their own serious illness, or to care for a seriously ill family or other household member. This policy will run consecutively with any other benefit or leave time for which the employee requests and is eligible.

Eligibility

Full-time and part-time employees working 20 or more hours per week with one year of service are eligible for paid family leave.

Qualifying Criteria/Relationship

- Have given birth to a child.
- Utilized a surrogate to birth your child.
- Be a spouse or domestic partner of a person who has given birth to a child.
- Have adopted a child or been placed with a foster child (in either case, the child must be age 17 or younger).
- Be the child of a parent with a serious illness.
- Be the primary caregiver of a seriously ill family member or household member. "Family member" is defined as the employee's child (including stepchild or foster child), spouse, sibling, parent, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandchild, grandparent, stepparent, or domestic partner. Members of your household include those who live with you as their permanent residence.
- A serious illness is one that would meet the eligibility requirements of the FMLA, regardless of whether the IHLS employee would be otherwise qualified for FMLA or intends to request FMLA leave related to their or their family member's illness. IHLS may request verification from the employee's or their family member's treating physician as to the need for the leave.

Amount, Time Frame, and Duration of Paid Family Leave

Eligible employees will receive a maximum of six weeks of paid family leave per event or, in total, for more than one event in a 12-month [rolling](#) period. The fact that a multiple birth, adoption, or placement occurs (e.g., the birth of twins or adoption of siblings) does not increase the six-week total amount of paid family leave granted for that event. In the event that more than one birth, adoption, foster care placement, or parental or family illness event occurs within a 12-month time frame, the employee may submit a separate request for additional paid leave to the Executive Director for consideration. The Executive Director and/or designee will engage in an interactive process with the requesting employee.

- Paid family leave is compensated at 100 percent of the employee's regular, straight-time weekly.
- Pay is for all full-time employees and part-time employees working 20 or more hours per week with one year of service. Employees will be paid on a biweekly basis on regularly scheduled pay dates.
- Approved paid family leave may be taken at any time during the six-month period immediately following the birth, adoption, or placement of a child with the employee or at any time during the employee's or family member's serious illness. The leave may be taken intermittently (in separate blocks of time due to a single covered health condition) or on a reduced leave schedule (reducing the usual number of hours an employee works per workweek or workday) if necessary.

- Paid family leave does not carry over from year to year, and employees are not eligible for payment of unused paid family leave upon separation of employment.

Coordination with Other Policies

Paid family leave taken under this policy will run consecutively with all other employee leave entitlements, including FML (family and medical leave), vacation, and sick. Should the employee require additional leave after exhaustion of paid family leave, the employee must meet the requirements for use of those benefits at the time that they are requested.

IHLS will maintain all benefits for employees during the paid family leave period just as if they were taking any other paid time off, such as vacation, PLAW leave, or sick time.

Requests for Paid Family Leave

The employee will provide their supervisor and Human Resources with notice of the request for leave at least 30 calendar days prior to the proposed date of the leave (or if the leave was not foreseeable, as soon as possible). The employee must complete the necessary Human Resources forms (Paid Family Leave Request) and provide all documentation as required by the Human Resources department to substantiate the request.

School Visitation

Under the Illinois School Visitation Rights Act (820 ILCS 147/30), an employee must be granted a leave of up to a total of eight hours during any school year, and no more than four hours of which may be taken on any given day. School visitation is to be used to attend school conferences or classroom activities related to the employee's child if the conference or classroom activities cannot be scheduled during non-working hours. However, such leave must not unduly disrupt the operations of IHLS, and no leave may be taken by an employee unless the employee has exhausted all accrued vacation leave, and any other leave that may be granted to the employee except sick leave and disability leave. At least seven calendar days' advance notice must be given. In emergency situations, no more than a 24-hour notice shall be required. The employee must have been employed at least six months and have been employed at least half-time.

Bereavement Leave

Bereavement leave is allowed for all employees as follows: a maximum of five scheduled workdays is available for the funeral and bereavement of a spouse, domestic partner, son, daughter, parent, sibling, grandchild, grandparent, aunt, uncle, other relative residing in the employee's household, and all parallel step, foster, and in-law relationships. "Household" includes anyone maintaining a family relationship living in an employee's home or any situation in which the employee is serving in loco parentis (a person who has put themselves in the situation of a lawful parent by assuming the obligations incident to the parental relationship).

Employees will be required to supply an obituary of the deceased relative directly to Human Resources to ensure that the relationship falls under this policy.

Child Bereavement Leave Act (CBLA)/Family Bereavement Leave Act (FBLA)

Under the Child Bereavement Leave Act of Illinois (820 ILCS 154/), eligible employees of public and private employers with more than 50 employees are entitled to a maximum of two weeks (10 workdays) of unpaid bereavement time following the death of a child. Employees may be entitled to up to six weeks of bereavement time in the event of the death of more than one child during a twelve-month period.

The time may be used to attend the funeral or alternative to a funeral, make arrangements necessitated by the death, or to grieve the death of the child. The leave must be completed within 60 calendar days after the date the employee receives notice of the death of the child. Employers are entitled to 48 hours of notice before the leave unless it is not practicable. Employers may require documentation to verify the necessity of the leave.

An employee is eligible for leave after 1,250 hours of service with the employer during the prior 12-month period. Child bereavement leave may not be taken in addition to unpaid leave permitted under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) (29 U.S.C. 2601 et seq.) and may not exceed unpaid leave time allowed under that law (FMLA).

The Family Bereavement Leave Act (FBLA) is an amendment to the Child Bereavement Leave Act (CBLA) that expands leave time requirements to cover pregnancy loss, failed adoptions or surrogacy agreements, unsuccessful reproductive procedures, and other diagnoses or events negatively impacting pregnancy or fertility. IHLS will provide the same leave period as set forth in the Child Bereavement Leave Act for eligible employees in these situations. IHLS provides leave time after the loss of family members previously not covered by the CBLA, including spouses, domestic partners, siblings, grandparents, and stepparents. The same leave period described above will be granted in case of a death of such relatives of the employee.

Employees may take up to two weeks, or 10 working days, of unpaid leave time for any of the events covered by the FBLA to grieve, to attend a funeral, or to make arrangements necessitated by the death of the family member. In case of the death of two relatives within a twelve-month period, an eligible employee would be permitted up to a total of six (6) weeks of unpaid bereavement leave.

IHLS may require reasonable documentation to certify that an employee requesting FBLA leave experienced an event covered by the Act, but employees are not required to identify the specific event that qualifies them for the leave. Reasonable documentation includes death certificates, published obituaries, and documentation from an adoption or surrogacy organization.

Blood and Organ Donation Leave Policy

The Employee Blood and Organ Donation Leave Act amends the existing Employee Blood Donation Leave Act. This Jan. 1, 2024, amendment expands the reasons an employee may take leave and provides paid time off for blood or organ donors. While there are no changes for those wishing to donate blood, employees donating a kidney, liver, lung, pancreas, intestine, bone, or

skin may be eligible for up to 10 days of paid leave. We answer some of the most common questions associated with these changes below.

Which employers must grant leave under the Act?

All local government employees, board of election commissioners, and private employers with at least 51 employees must provide leave to any participating employee donating blood or an organ.

Which employees are entitled to this leave under the Act?

~~Both full-time and part-time employees are eligible who have worked for IHLS for at least six months may take leave to donate blood or an organ.~~

- Full-time employees must have worked for IHLS for at least six months.
- Part-time employees are also covered and will be compensated based on their average daily pay over the previous two months.

How much leave is required?

Blood Donation: Employees may use up to one hour of leave after every 56 consecutive days to donate blood.

Organ Donation: Employees donating an organ may use up to 10 days of leave in any 12-month period.

Is the leave paid?

Yes. The leave is paid at the employee's regular rate of pay. Part-time employees will be paid based on their average daily earnings over the prior two months and such employees will receive compensation based on the amount of daily average pay for each leave day used.

Does this leave run concurrently with the Family and Medical Leave Act?

This leave may run concurrently with the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA). However, the leave is not limited to FMLA-eligible employees. Additionally, employees who have exhausted their FMLA leave may be entitled to take additional leave under this law.

Does an employee need approval to take this leave?

Employees must get IHLS approval before taking leave. IHLS may require documentation before taking the proposed blood or organ donation leave.

Holidays

IHLS observes 11 paid holidays annually: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day and the following day, Christmas Eve Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Eve.

A holiday schedule is posted at the beginning of each fiscal year on the IHLS website and on our IHLS Intranet. Holidays falling on a Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday. Holidays falling on a Sunday will be observed the following Monday. The only exception to this rule is if we are already observing that day as a holiday. Please refer to the holiday schedule for exact dates which IHLS observes as a holiday.

The following conditions apply to IHLS Holiday pay policy:

- Employees who work 29 or fewer hours per week are not eligible for holiday pay.
- Employees who work 40 hours or more in a scheduled workweek will receive a paid holiday.
- Employees who work 30-39 hours per week will receive holiday pay at a prorated rate. The prorated rate will be determined based on your routinely scheduled workweek. *For example, if you work 32 hours a week, you will be paid 6.4 hours of Holiday Pay $[(32 \div 40) \times 8 = 6.4]$.*
- Holiday hours will be paid in 8-hour increments for full-time employees.
- Holiday pay will not be considered as time worked for the purpose of overtime calculations.
- In the event an employee works on a holiday, they will accrue holiday hours that they may choose another day off lieu of the scheduled holiday. Any holiday hours must be taken by the end of the fiscal year in which they are received, or they will be lost.
- All nonexempt employees that are required to work on a holiday will receive pay at time and a half.
- To accommodate employees of varying religions, employees may choose to work one of the above listed holidays and use that time to be absent during a religious holiday of their choice. This must be pre-approved by your supervisor. Any holiday hours must be taken by the end of the fiscal year in which they are received, or they will be lost.
- Holiday leave hours earned will not be paid out upon termination.
- Employees cannot be in any IHLS facility on a designated IHLS holiday for safety reasons unless approved by the employee's manager.
- Employees who are on an extended leave of absence or who are on an unpaid leave will not be paid holiday pay because they were not scheduled to work.

Vacations

Vacation time is provided for each employee who works 40 hours a week and offered to employees who regularly work 30-39 hours on a prorated basis. Vacation time is accrued per pay date and may be taken as it is accrued. Increases in vacation occur on the payday following each employee's anniversary date. No employee shall accrue more than 400 hours of vacation time.

Professional Staff earn 20 vacation days during the first through 15th year of service. Beginning in the 16th year of service, professional employees earn one additional vacation day for each additional year of service until a maximum of 25 vacation days is attained. Support Staff earn 10 vacation days for the first year of service. One additional day of vacation is earned for each year

of service until the employee reaches 20 vacation days (11 years of service). After 20 years of service and thereafter, support staff earn 25 vacation days.

Vacation leave may be used as it is accrued. We ask that you request this leave two weeks in advance using the timekeeping system to make sure that business needs are met. Employees are not allowed to accumulate more than the lesser of: (a) two times the employee's annual vacation entitlement, or (b) 400 hours. Any additional hours not taken by the end of the fiscal year will be lost. At the beginning of each fiscal year, any employee who has more vacation time will lose any vacation time that is over this limit.

Any exceptions to the policy must be approved (in writing) by the Human Resources representative or the Executive Director.

Professional Staff (40-hour workweek)

Years of Employment	Days Earned Per Year	Hours Earned Per Year	Hours Earned Per Pay Period
1 through 15	20.00	160.00	6.15
16	21.00	168.00	6.46
17	22.00	176.00	6.77
18	23.00	184.00	7.08
19	24.00	192.00	7.38
20 thereafter	25.00	200.00	7.69

Support Staff (40-hour workweek)

Years of Employment	Days Earned Per Year	Hours Earned Per Year	Hours Earned Per Pay Period
1	10.00	80.00	3.08
2	11.00	88.00	3.38
3	12.00	96.00	3.69
4	13.00	104.00	4.00
5	14.00	112.00	4.31

6	15.00	120.00	4.62
7	16.00	128.00	4.92
8	17.00	136.00	5.23
9	18.00	144.00	5.54
10	19.00	152.00	5.85
11 through 19	20.00	160.00	6.15
20 and thereafter	25.00	200.00	7.69

Paid Leave for All Workers (PLAW) Time Off Policy

Eligibility

PLAW leave is provided for all employees, both full-time and part-time. This policy was formerly known as our Personal Leave Policy. This leave was changed to ensure compliance with the Paid Leave for All Workers Act.

Full-Time Employees

Forty (40) hours each year of a full-time employee's PLAW leave is considered to meet IHLS' obligations to each employee under the Paid Leave for All Workers Act (PLAW Act). As such, an employee will not be required to provide documentation to confirm or verify the reason for the employee's absence for up to 40 hours each year. However, the employee must still request the time off as far in advance as possible. Under the PLAW Act, the employee may take full or partial days of PLAW Leave. However, the minimum increment of time that an employee can use PLAW Act leave is two (2) hours.

When will I get my lump sum PLAW hours?

You will receive your lump sum of 40 hours on Jan. 1 of each calendar year. You will see the balances available on your pay stub and within our payroll system.

Is there a waiting period before I can use my hours?

No. There is no waiting period before you can use your PLAW Leave.

Will my hours carry over to the next calendar year?

Days not used by the end of the calendar year will be lost.

Will my hours be paid out upon termination?

No. You will not receive a payout upon termination for any PLAW Leave hours as defined in the Paid Leave for All Workers Act.

Part-Time Employees

For compliance with the PLAW Act, each part-time employee accrues one (1) hour of PLAW leave for each forty (40) hours worked; the employee should provide as much advance notice as possible to the employee's supervisor. The employee will not be required to provide the reason for the employee's need for time off. The employee may take full or partial PLAW days under the PLAW Act. However, the minimum increment of time that an employee can use PLAW Act leave is two (2) hours.

When will I get my accrued PLAW hours?

You will receive (1) hour of leave accrued for every 40 hours of actual hours worked hours (*hours worked do not include holidays, vacation, or sick time*); accruals begin Jan. 1 of each year. A part-time employee can begin to take PLAW leave as it is accrued.

Is there a waiting period before I can use my hours?

No. There is no waiting period before you can use your PLAW Leave. You can take it as it is accrued. You will see the balances available on your pay stub and within our payroll system.

Will my hours carry over to the next calendar year?

For part-time employees, unused PLAW time will carry over into the next calendar year; however, the maximum number of paid PLAW Act leave hours that a part-time employee may take each calendar year is forty (40) hours.

Will my hours be paid out upon termination?

No. Employees will not be paid any accrued/ unused paid leave upon termination of employment.

Unpaid Leave

Unpaid leave is defined as a day that you are regularly scheduled to work and do not work, and you have no paid time off for the eligible leave (a day off without pay that you would have normally been scheduled to work). An Unpaid Leave of Absence may be granted at the discretion of the Executive Director. Unpaid leave will not exceed more than 90 calendar days and is not guaranteed. All decisions regarding this leave will be based on business operations.

Requests for unpaid leave must be submitted at least 30 calendar days in advance of the date the employee would like the leave to begin or, in emergency situations, with as much advance notice as is practicable, using IHLS' timekeeping system. (Normally, this should be within two business days of when the need for the leave becomes known to the employee.) *The employee must have used all accrued time off before requesting unpaid leave.* Documentation to substantiate the need for absence may be required. Continuation of group health insurance provisions, as outlined under FMLA, applies to unpaid leaves.

Reinstatement cannot be guaranteed to any employee requesting unpaid leave. However, IHLS will endeavor to place employees returning from leave in their former position or a position comparable in status and pay, subject to budgetary restrictions, IHLS' need to fill vacancies, and its ability to find qualified temporary replacements.

An employee on unpaid leave must submit a written notice of their intent to return to work. If this procedure is not followed or if an employee does not return to work as scheduled, they will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

Unless otherwise required by law (such as an employee on FMLA leave), employees who are on unpaid leave will be responsible for paying their portion of their medical benefit premiums and do not accrue other benefits.

All questions regarding unpaid leave of absence should be directed to the supervisor and/or the Human Resources representative.

Benefits

Health, Vision, and Dental Insurance

IHLS contributes a portion of the premium for group health insurance (such as medical, dental, and vision) for all employees who routinely work 40 hours per week. Employees who are regularly scheduled to work 30-39 hours per week will be offered health insurance at a prorated rate. Coverage begins on the first day of employment and becomes effective per the terms of such enrollment period and completion of required documentation. ~~Employees have the option to cover their eligible family dependents by paying the additional premiums themselves.~~ Employees may elect to cover eligible family dependents. IHLS may contribute toward dependent coverage if budgetary conditions allow; otherwise, employees are responsible for paying any additional premium costs associated with dependent coverage. A summary of the benefits covered can be obtained from the Human Resources office.

Each year, IHLS will evaluate health insurance options with the intent of providing the best possible health insurance within available financial resources.

Life Insurance

Term life insurance will be provided by IHLS to all employees. Each year, IHLS will evaluate life insurance options. If IHLS cannot pay the entire cost of the premiums for life insurance, employees will be asked to share in that cost.

Voluntary life insurance will be available for purchase for the employee, spouse, or child at the employee's cost. The benefits provider will determine the amount of insurance available for purchase.

Pension Plan (Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund or IMRF)

Employees who routinely work 1,000 or more hours per year are eligible to participate in the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) pension plan. If you are working in a position that qualifies for IMRF, you must contribute, as the IMRF is not an optional program. The Illinois

Pension Code determines how IMRF operates and administers IMRF benefit plans. Under the Illinois Pension Code, employees contribute 4.5% of their wages or salaries to the fund. Employers contribute at annual specified contribution rates as determined by the Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund. Plan descriptions of this program are available from Human Resources as part of our goal to be good stewards of public funds. The Illinois Heartland Library System (IHLS) has adopted a Pension Management Safeguards Policy, which is presented below:

IHLS will adhere to Illinois Municipal Retirement Fund (IMRF) guidelines and will not permit end-of-career payouts in a way to pad or “spike” pensions. For example, but not by way of limitation, IHLS shall not pay out accrued but unused vacation time prior to the actual date of employment termination and shall not increase an employee’s compensation or pay a retirement bonus timed to pad or “spike” an employee’s IMRF pension.

Notwithstanding any other policy or practice to the contrary, IHLS recognizes that compensation increases paid during the final years of employment with the purpose of increasing a participant’s pension beyond the limitations of section 7-116 of the Illinois Pension Code, as amended from time to time, are not compatible with good pension plan administration and may be one cause of pension plan underfunding. Therefore, all compensation increases authorized or granted to IHLS employees in their final years of employment as defined in the Pension Code will not exceed the limitations defined by that statute for the purpose of increasing a participant’s pension beyond the limitations of 7-116. This prohibition includes, but is not limited to, payment of accrued but unused vacation or other benefit time prior to an employee’s actual date of retirement or separation, payment of a bonus at retirement, as well as granting a wage increase which exceeds the statutory limitations when not the result of a promotion or transfer to a new position.

Before retirement and within 60 calendar days after, no pre-arrangement (even an informal one) can be made between a retiring member and an IMRF employer that the member will return to work.

To learn more about your benefits, please visit the member publications page on the IMRF website.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

An Employee Assistance Program will be available to all employees at the expense of IHLS. The EAP program is designed to assist employees in dealing with personal problems that might adversely impact their work performance, health, and well-being. EAP services generally include assessments, short-term counseling, and referral services for employees and their household members. Any information or issues shared by an employee with an EAP representative will be kept completely confidential unless the employee provides permission to share such information.

Each year, IHLS will evaluate its financial situation. If IHLS cannot pay the entire cost of an EAP program, employees will be asked to share in that cost. For more information and how to access the EAP program, please contact Human Resources.

Staff Library Cards

IHLS offers library cards to staff members as an employment benefit. Staff library cards are a responsibility and will be issued or renewed by request. IHLS expects staff to return items in a timely manner, follow all SHARE policies and procedures, and pay for any lost or damaged items. Failure to follow these guidelines may result in loss of privileges and/or disciplinary action. Employees should ensure that all library items should be returned before the end of employment. (Please refer to the SHARE Staff Accounts procedure on the HR intranet.)

Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA)

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) applies to IHLS. Under COBRA, an employee who has group health insurance coverage may elect to continue coverage after employment ends at the employee's own expense on the terms and conditions provided by COBRA. Any employee with questions about COBRA should review the summary plan description which will provide more detailed information.

Travel/Expense Reimbursement Policy

Employees or officers traveling on IHLS business will have reasonable authorized expenses paid as defined in the Local Government Travel Expense Control Act (50 ILCS 150). The travel must be pre-approved by the employee's supervisor and the Executive Director. Expenditure for travel cannot exceed the predetermined maximum without IHLS Board approval. IHLS will only approve travel expenses for employees or officers if the travel is necessary to complete official system business, for the education of employees or officers, or to obtain information for the betterment of the system in some capacity. Employees and officers are required to conduct their travel in the most cost-effective manner. Whenever possible and cost-effective, business travel arrangements will use governmental entity discount rates. Actual travel time to get to and from meetings and conferences may be recorded as work time.

The total maximum for any travel for IHLS purposes allowed is \$3,000.00 for any single event/trip. In the event of an emergency or extraordinary circumstance, reimbursement may be approved over the \$3,000 maximum reimbursement limit if approved by a majority of the IHLS Board at a properly noticed and regularly scheduled board meeting subject to a roll call vote.

There is no prohibition on a spouse and/or family member accompanying an employee on an official out-of-town trip that is eligible for reimbursement under this policy, provided that their presence does not detract from the performance of duty and all expenses attributable to the family member is paid by the employee.

Transportation

Travel by airplane, train, bus, or car between your home and your business destination will be reimbursed if it is not travel from home to or from your regular work location.

When an IHLS vehicle is not available, private vehicles may be used provided that verification of personal vehicle liability insurance and proof of a current, valid driver's license has been previously provided to the Human Resources Office. The maximum mileage reimbursement will be based on the prevailing current IRS rate.

An employee who finds it more convenient to drive his or her personal vehicle to conduct IHLS business instead of an available IHLS vehicle will be reimbursed for the cost of fuel only (based on the miles driven and the average cost of fuel). Based on information provided by the Federal Department of Transportation, the cost of fuel will be based on the information supplied for the metropolitan area nearest the destination and/or IHLS office where the employee works and the date of the travel. IHLS follows the [U.S. General Services Administration \(GSA\)](#) rates when IHLS vehicles are available. (To see the GSA's "Privately owned vehicle (POV) mileage reimbursement rates," click or visit [this website: www.gsa.gov/travel](#).) When traveling outside the IHLS service area, all travel shall be by the most economical mode of transportation available, considering travel time, cost, and work requirements. IHLS vehicles should be used, when possible, unless family members are accompanying the IHLS employee. When traveling to major metropolitan areas, public transportation should be considered as a less expensive mode.

IHLS requires minimum insurance when using a personal vehicle. Staff who drive personal vehicles must complete a Personal Vehicle Use Agreement and supply a copy of their auto insurance card.

When air travel is required, only coach fare will be paid by IHLS. Taxicab fares, tips, parking fees, bridge, road, and toll fees are also allowable expenses.

Food

Costs of meals for employees or officers for each day of travel for IHLS business will be reimbursed. Expenses are to be authorized and approved by the Executive Director. Costs for meals cannot exceed the maximum daily per diem rate established by the United States Internal Revenue Service. Per diem guidelines for food can be found at [www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120](#) by navigating to the year, the state, and the destination city or zip code.

Under normal circumstances, reimbursement will not be made for meals consumed in IHLS service areas during a regular working day. The following will be exceptions to this rule:

1. When a staff member attends an evening meeting in addition to a full working day.
2. When circumstances require that IHLS staff act as host to a visitor.
3. During overnight travel for a conference or work-related obligations.

4. Other meal reimbursement, as deemed necessary, will be evaluated by the Executive Director on a case-by-case basis and be administered in a manner consistent with established limits.

Hotel

Actual costs for hotel and motel accommodations, including taxes and reasonable tips, are limited to the minimum number of nights required to conduct IHLS business at the average single room rate of adequate hotel or motel accommodations nearest the destination. Employees are allowed to have single rooms without a roommate. Rates cannot exceed the maximum per diem rates determined by the United States Internal Revenue Service unless preapproved by the Executive Director. These rates can be obtained at

<http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/100120> by selecting the year, the state, and the destination city or the zip code. If an employee or officer's spouse or other family members share lodging, the employee or officer must pay any differences.

Special Expenses

IHLS will reimburse employees or officers for the actual cost of other reasonable and prudent travel expenses, such as:

1. Fares for taxis or other types of transportation between the airport, train, or bus station and the hotel, the hotel and the work location, or from one place of business to another.
2. Tips (limited to 20%) paid for services related to any allowable expense.
3. Other similar ordinary and necessary expenses related to business travel such as transportation to a meal when out of town and conducting IHLS business, printing materials for distribution at a meeting, or the purchase of incidental materials needed to make a presentation.
4. Conference and workshop registration fees.
5. Conference meal costs above the per diem meal limit, when it is clear that the excess meal cost was required.

IHLS will not reimburse employees for the cost of personal or entertainment expenses (unless special circumstances exist, and approval has been obtained from the Executive Director). Examples of personal and entertainment expenses include:

1. Transportation if the employee is provided with a ticket or is riding free as a result of a frequent traveler or similar program.
2. Alcoholic beverages.
3. Coat check.
4. Late checkout and room guarantee charges.
5. Valet parking service.

6. Shows, amusements, theaters, circuses, sporting events, or any other place of public or private entertainment or amusement, unless ancillary to the purpose of the program or event.
7. Repairs or towing of a private vehicle.
8. Parking tickets or other traffic tickets.
9. Charges associated with locksmith service.
10. Tips exceeding 20 percent.

In addition, should an employee believe that he or she has incurred business-related expenses that are not otherwise covered by this policy (such as additional costs incurred due to the employee's use of his or her personal cell phone or Internet service for work-related purposes), the employee may submit his or her cell phone bill or Internet service bill along with an explanation of what additional portion of said bill(s) are attributable to work-related activities. Reimbursement for additional cell phone charges and/or Internet charges attributable to work-related activities will be reimbursed when supporting documentation verifying such charges is presented.

Documentation

No expenses shall be reimbursed without a reimbursement request form completely filled out with receipts or estimates (with reservations and confirmation numbers) attached. In the event that travel expenses are prepaid, actual receipts must be turned in and attached to the reimbursement request form within 30 calendar days of the completion of travel. Any amount paid in excess of the actual receipts filed must be repaid to IHLS within 30 calendar days.

Any member of the governing board or any officer or employee that exceeds the maximum allowed for travel may only be approved by a roll call vote at an open meeting of the governing board. The reimbursement request form is the minimum documentation that must first be submitted in writing to the governing board.

Professionalism and IHLS Representation

Employee Respect and Behavior

Each employee is expected to perform their duties honestly, efficiently, and courteously, recognizing that disagreements and informed debates are valuable tools to use in making informed decisions. Diverse opinions are valued, and ideas and creativity are encouraged by staff at all levels.

To avoid gossip and misunderstandings, every attempt will be made to provide relevant job-related information to everyone at the same time, regardless of their position. Everyone will have opportunities to give input and receive feedback on ideas.

Other acts of civility include being respectful of others by lowering voices when talking in work areas and keeping cellular telephones on vibrate.

IHLS is committed to maintaining a work environment free from rudeness, violence, threats, intimidation, and other disruptive behavior. Violence, threats, coercion, harassment or intimidation of others, interference with an individual's legal rights of movement or expression, or disruptions to the workplace will not be tolerated and all reports of incidents will be taken seriously and will be dealt with appropriately.

Except as required by applicable State law and as set forth in the Workplace Violence Policy, firearms and other dangerous weapons or materials are not allowed on IHLS property or in any IHLS vehicle.

Every employee's cooperation is needed to maintain a safe working environment. Employees should not ignore violent, threatening, intimidating, or other disruptive behavior. Any employee experiencing or witnessing imminent danger or actual violence involving weapons or personal injury, should call 911 immediately and then notify a supervisor as soon as possible.

Any employee observing or experiencing other inappropriate behavior by anyone on IHLS premises, whether they are an IHLS employee or not, should report it immediately to a supervisor. Supervisors who receive such reports should immediately begin an investigation, take appropriate action, and notify the Human Resources Director or the Executive Director. Inappropriate behavior by the Executive Director should be reported to the Human Resources Director or the President of the Board.

Employees displaying inappropriate behavior may be referred to counseling and/or may be subject to disciplinary action. Anyone who commits other less serious violent acts may still be removed from the premises and may be subject to disciplinary action. Any employee who commits a serious violent act will be removed from the premises, be subject to immediate dismissal, and may be subject to criminal charges.

IHLS has zero tolerance for bullying, discrimination, violence, and sexual harassment behaviors.

Employee Conduct and Work Rules Policy

Objective

IHLS adopts this Employee Conduct and Work Rules Policy to ensure orderly operations and provide the best possible work environment. IHLS expects employees and others who are engaged to provide services, such as temporary personnel, consultants, and independent contractors, to follow these rules of conduct while on IHLS premises, attending IHLS functions or otherwise performing work-related activity.

In addition to maintaining and enforcing this policy to protect the interests and safety of all employees and the organization, IHLS complies with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations concerning employer/employee rights and obligations.

Procedures

IHLS is responsible for providing a safe and secure workplace and strives to ensure that all individuals associated with IHLS are treated in a respectful and fair manner. Though it is not possible to list all forms of behavior that are unacceptable in the workplace, the following are examples of behavior that would be considered infractions of IHLS rules of conduct. Such behavior may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. This list is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Theft or inappropriate removal or possession of IHLS property or the property of a fellow employee.
- Willful destruction of IHLS property or the property of a fellow employee.
- Working under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs (including marijuana).
- Possession, distribution, sale, transfer or use of alcohol or illegal drugs in the workplace, while on duty, or while operating employer-owned vehicles or equipment.
- Fighting or threatening violence in the workplace.
- Sexual or other unlawful harassment.
- Using excessively abusive, threatening, or obscene language.
- Sabotaging another's work.
- Making malicious, false, and harmful statements about others.
- Publicly disclosing another's private information.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Unauthorized disclosure of confidential information.
- Falsifying IHLS records or reports, including one's time records or the time records of another employee.

Nothing in this policy is intended to, nor should be construed to limit or interfere with employee rights as set forth under all applicable provisions of the Illinois Public Labor Relations Act, to the extent such rights exist.

Fraternization in the Workplace

The Illinois Heartland Library System has created this policy to nurture a working environment in which employees maintain clear boundaries between employee personal and business relationships so as to be most effective for conducting business. The Illinois Heartland Library System does not prohibit friendships or romantic relationships between employees but seeks to set forth clear guidelines as to how relationships should be conducted in the workplace.

Discouraging Workplace Personal Relationships

The Illinois Heartland Library System discourages, but does not forbid, fraternization between managers or supervisors and subordinate employees. Romantic or intimate relationships between managers or supervisors and subordinate employees create an unreasonable possibility

of favoritism, conflicts of interest, and claims of sexual harassment. Such relationships may also create serious problems in terms of objective management, accurate evaluations, and discipline.

Reporting Workplace Relationships

For these reasons, any employee who is involved in a romantic or intimate relationship, not necessarily limited to sexual relationships, with any other employee must report the relationship to Human Resources. Such information will be treated by IHLS as confidentially as possible, consistent with IHLS' legitimate business needs. Failure to report such relationships may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

IHLS Rights

Where such an intimate relationship exists, IHLS reserves the right to make such employment decisions as are necessary to ensure that the risks enumerated above regarding the relationship will not occur. Such steps include but are not limited to: transfer of one or both parties to the relationship; required resignation of one of the parties in the relationship (in such cases, the decision as to which employee will resign will be left to the two employees); or adjusting lines of reporting or communication.

Agreement

In cases where a consensual personal relationship exists, the parties will be required to sign an agreement acknowledging that the relationship exists and that it is consensual. The agreement will further instruct each party to immediately notify Human Resources should the relationship at any time become non-consensual so that IHLS can ensure that no violation of IHLS' No Harassment Policy has occurred and, if it has, IHLS can take prompt, appropriate remedial action to ensure the harassment stops. Moreover, in order to maintain the avoidance of favoritism in the workplace and to ensure that all employees of IHLS are comfortable in the work environment, employees who are involved in a personal romantic relationship are absolutely prohibited from engaging in displays of affection (such as kissing, hand-holding, or other similar personal contact) while on IHLS premises during working time.

Refusal of Employment Modifications

As detailed above, it may be necessary to modify reporting structures, transfer positions, or make other necessary adjustments to employment. Refusal of reasonable modification to an employee's position will be deemed a voluntary resignation.

Conduct During Non-Work Time

During non-working time, including lunch, breaks, and before or after work periods, employees may engage in appropriate personal conversations in non-work areas as long as such conversations and behavior do not violate IHLS' policy against workplace harassment and as long as the employees avoid displays of affection such as kissing, hugging, etc., at all times while on IHLS premises.

Off-Duty Conduct

Employee conduct outside of working hours and outside IHLS premises is generally regarded as private, as long as such conduct does not create problems within the workplace. An exception to this rule is romantic relationships between supervisors and subordinates or between employees, which must be reported as set forth above. In addition, IHLS strongly discourages off-duty fraternization to include attendance at happy hours or similar events involving supervisors/managers and non-supervisory employees.

Physical Contact

Employees are prohibited from engaging in physical contact that would be considered inappropriate by a reasonable person on IHLS property, in the presence of customers, or during any IHLS-related business.

Harassment

Employees should be mindful that the organization maintains a strict anti-harassment policy.

Employee Appeals

Any employee who believes that they have been adversely affected as a result of this policy, or who believes that this policy is not being adhered to, should speak with Human Resources.

Gifts, Loans, and Entertainment

IHLS employees are to deal with suppliers, contractors, members, and others on the sole basis of what is in IHLS' best interest, accomplishes the Mission of IHLS, and is in the best interest of its members. In compliance with the Illinois State Gift Ban Act (Illinois Public Act 93-617), employees may not accept any gifts, payments, loans, or excessive entertainment from any source or person doing or seeking to do business with IHLS except as outlined in the above-described State Statute. This ban applies to and includes the spouse and any immediate family member living with the employee.

An employee does not violate this section if the employee promptly takes reasonable action to return the prohibited gift to its source or gives the gift or an amount equal to its value to an appropriate charity that is exempt from income taxation under Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as now or hereafter amended, renumbered, or succeeded. Employees are not prohibited from accepting:

- Opportunities, benefits, and services that are available under the same conditions as for the general public.
- Anything for which the employee pays the market value.
- Educational materials and missions.
- Travel expenses for a meeting to discuss IHLS or State business.
- A gift from a relative, meaning those people related to the employee such as parents, children (including adopted, step or foster), uncle, aunt, first cousin, nephew, niece,

spouse, grandparents, grandchildren, in-laws, stepparents, half-brothers, or parents and grandparents of the employee's spouse or fiancée.

- Anything provided by an individual on the basis of a personal friendship unless the employee has reason to believe that, under the circumstances, the gift was provided because of the position or employment of the employee and not because of the personal friendship.
- Food or refreshments not exceeding \$75 per person in value on a single calendar day, provided that the food or refreshments are consumed on the premises from which they were purchased or prepared or catered for the purpose of this section.
- Food, refreshments, lodging, transportation, and other benefits resulting from the outside business or employment activities (or outside activities that are not connected to the duties of the employee) of the employee and the employee's spouse if the benefits have not been offered or enhanced because of the position or employment of the employee and are customarily provided to others in similar circumstances.
- Gifts from other IHLS employees or employees from other municipal, State, or Federal agencies and entities.
- Bequests, inheritances, and other transfers at death.
- Any item or items from any one prohibited source during any calendar year having a cumulative total value of less than \$100.

Political Activities

While IHLS encourages employees to be involved in their communities and to take advantage of their legal right to vote, IHLS employees cannot participate in prohibited political activities during working hours. Employees can be involved in political activities during vacation time. Also, IHLS employees cannot use IHLS facilities, equipment, or supplies in connection with any election or candidate for an elective or appointed public office. Political activities include:

- Preparing for, organizing, or participating in any political meeting, political rally, political demonstration, or other political event.
- Soliciting contributions, including but not limited to the purchase of, selling, distributing, or receiving payment for tickets for any political fundraiser, political meeting, or other political event.
- Soliciting, planning for the solicitation of, or preparing any document or report regarding anything of value intended as a campaign contribution.
- Planning, conducting, or participating in a public opinion poll in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.
- Surveying or gathering information from potential or actual voters in an election to determine probable vote outcome in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes or for or against any referendum question.
- Assisting at the polls on election day on behalf of any political organization or candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.

- Soliciting votes on behalf of a candidate for elective office or a political organization or for or against any referendum question or helping in an effort to get voters to the polls.
- Initiating for circulation, preparing, circulating, reviewing, or filing any petition on behalf of a candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Making contributions on behalf of any candidate for elective office in that capacity or in connection with a campaign for elective office.
- Preparing or reviewing responses to candidate questionnaires in connection with a campaign for elective office or on behalf of a political organization for political purposes.
- Distributing, preparing for distribution, or mailing campaign literature, campaign signs, or other campaign material on behalf of any candidate for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Campaigning for any elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Managing or working on a campaign for elective office or for or against any referendum question.
- Serving as a delegate, alternate, or proxy to a political party convention.
- Participating in any recount or challenge to the outcome of any election.

Personal Appearance/CROWN ACT

Individual personal appearance affects the perception of professionalism at IHLS. All employees must dress appropriately and maintain a high standard of personal hygiene. Consistent with other policies, clothing should not contain any advertisements for alcohol or cigarettes and should not have any offensive language or images.

General Workplace Attire

“Business casual” and modest dress is appropriate for employees in the workplace. Business casual attire means dressing professionally yet looking relaxed and neat. Even in a business casual work environment, clothing should be pressed and never wrinkled. Torn, dirty, or frayed clothing is unacceptable. The employee should always consider with whom they are meeting throughout the day. Their attire should always be more professional when meeting with member libraries and others. Exceptions (such as sweatpants, sweatshirts, shorts, and t-shirts) may be made for employees involved in special projects or on days designated by the Executive Director.

Courier Driver Attire

Because of the nature of work performed, delivery drivers wear uniforms that consist of an IHLS logo-uniform shirt, IHLS logo hat (optional), and black/blue, khaki, or denim pants. Although hard-toed shoes are preferred, tennis shoes or shoes made of canvas-type material are acceptable. During warm weather, delivery drivers may wear appropriate length shorts. All delivery drivers must have appropriate IHLS identification.

Employees Working ~~With~~ or Near the Automated Material Handling System (AMHS)

- Clothes. Clothing must be fitted and free of loose or dangling fabric that could become entangled in machinery.

- Shoes. Closed-toe, non-slip footwear is required; sandals, flip-flops, or open-heel shoes are prohibited.
- Hair. Long hair must be secured (e.g., tied back or covered) to prevent interference with equipment.
- Jewelry. Keep it minimal and secure. Dangling earrings, bracelets, or necklaces are not permitted.

Supervisors may provide additional guidance based on specific equipment or operational needs.

The Crown Act

The CROWN Act, which stands for Create a Respectful and Open Workplace for Natural Hair, categorizes traits such as hair texture or protective styling as race-based and therefore protected under bans against racial discrimination. This act offers protections for Illinoisans discriminated against due to hairstyles historically associated with specific racial groups. No employee of IHLS will be discriminated against on the basis of natural hair or hairstyles.

The Executive Director or a Human Resources representative must approve any exceptions to the parameters established in this policy.

Personnel Records

A file containing the employee's job application and related material, performance appraisals, and other materials applicable to the evaluation of performance and potential will be maintained electronically. Each employee's personnel file will be available for inspection in the Human Resources office. The records to be provided to employees include: (a) any personnel documents used to determine the employee's qualifications for benefits, (b) any employment related contracts or agreements, (c) any written employer policies or procedures, (d) any handbooks, as well as personnel documents which have been or are intended to be used in determining that employee's qualifications for employment, promotion, transfer, additional compensation, discharge or other disciplinary action. Contact your supervisor or the Human Resources office to make an appointment; an employee may view his/her personnel file up to two times per fiscal year. To protect the employee's privacy, any documents that relate to medical information (including an injury or disability) will be kept in a file separate from the rest of the personnel documents. Also, anything not directly related to the job, such as pre-employment references, grievances, outside agency complaints, affirmative action/EEO data, credit reports, or wage garnishments is kept in a separate file. The personnel file should be separate and easy to access if the file is requested for review. The record is available via email or paper copies and IHLS will mail the records (at the employee's expense), if requested.

All personnel records are treated as confidential. External release of individual personnel information, other than confirmation of employment, will not be made without written authorization of the employee.

Each employee is responsible for notifying the Human Resources Office or making the appropriate changes in the HRIS system reflecting any changes in address, telephone number, and/or family status (births, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.), as income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes.

Secondary Employment

Employees may choose to have a second job, do consulting work, or present workshops and seminars, as long as that job does not interfere with their IHLS responsibilities. A second job/secondary employment is defined as receiving compensation for work performed. All employees are held to the same performance standards and scheduling expectations regardless of whether they have other jobs. Employees of IHLS shall not engage in any business or transactions or have a financial or personal interest that is a conflict of interest or is incompatible with their responsibilities and duties as employees of IHLS.

Additionally, when such work occurs during a regular workday, employees must schedule and obtain prior approval for vacation leave, when accepting honorariums, fees, or other forms of compensation.

The following examples may be considered incompatible or an interference with IHLS:

- Causing unscheduled absences
- Resulting in the employee failing to perform effectively when on duty at IHLS
- Using sick leave
- Working for a vendor
- Bringing IHLS into public disrepute or legal jeopardy

Any employee who has or contemplates working for another organization in addition to working for IHLS should notify their supervisor and complete a Secondary Employment–Secondary Employment Determination of Conflict form. The form includes, but is not limited to, the name of the IHLS employee, the IHLS job title, the name of the prospective employer, the nature of the duties, the expected days and hours of work, and the type of employment relationship with the second employer.

Initial review and determination as to whether a conflict exists with IHLS, and the employee's secondary employment shall be made by the Executive Director. The IHLS Board of Directors must determine concurrence at its next regularly scheduled board meeting following the determination made by the Executive Director. Such concurrence must be determined by a vote of the board.

An employee who accepts secondary employment that is determined to be a conflict of interest or refuses to complete the Secondary Employment Determination of Conflict form may be subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge. If, at any time, it is determined that a conflict of interest exists, the employee may be asked to terminate the outside job.

IHLS allows immediate relatives of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, or any other employee to be considered for employment on the basis of their qualifications and successful participation in the formal hiring process. Related employees cannot work within the same department or have a supervisory and/or reporting relationship. This policy applies when assigning, transferring, or promoting a related employee.

For the purposes of this policy, immediate relatives include parents, spouses, siblings, children, civil union partners, or the in-law relationships of the aforementioned relatives, and stepchildren.

Personal Social Media and Online Communications

At IHLS, we understand that social media and other forms of online communication can be a fun and rewarding way to share your life and opinions with family, friends, and co-workers around the world. However, use of social media also presents certain risks and carries with it certain responsibilities, particularly if you are representing yourself as an employee of IHLS (such as by listing your current employer and position). To assist you in making responsible decisions about your use of social media, we have established these guidelines for the appropriate use of social media.

In the rapidly expanding world of electronic communication, *social media* can mean many things. For the purpose of this policy, *social media and online communication* includes all means of publicly communicating or posting information or content of any sort on the Internet, including to your own or someone else's blog, personal website, social networking or affinity website, web bulletin board, or chat room, whether or not associated or affiliated with IHLS, as well as any other form of electronic communication and social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, Instagram, Twitter, etc.). Carefully read these guidelines and other IHLS policies, such as its policies against discrimination and harassment, to ensure that your postings are consistent with these and other policies of IHLS.

Content Guidelines:

All IHLS policies apply to your activities online:

Ultimately, you are solely responsible for what you post online. Before creating online content, keep in mind that if your conduct adversely affects your job performance or that of colleagues, members, customers, suppliers, people who work on behalf of IHLS, or IHLS' legitimate business interests, it may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Know and follow the rules:

Carefully read these guidelines, the IHLS Diversity Policy, and the Discrimination & Harassment Prevention Policy, and ensure your postings are consistent with these policies. Inappropriate postings that may include discriminatory remarks, harassment, threats of violence, or any other inappropriate or unlawful conduct will not be tolerated and may subject you to disciplinary action up to and including termination.

Be respectful:

Always be fair and courteous to fellow associates, customers, members, vendors, and people who work on behalf of IHLS. Also, keep in mind that you are more likely to resolve work-related complaints by speaking directly with your co-workers or by utilizing our Open-Door Policy than by posting complaints to a social media or other online outlet. Nevertheless, if you decide to post complaints or criticism, avoid using statements, photographs, video, or audio that reasonably could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, or intimidating; that disparages customers, members, associates, or suppliers; or that might constitute harassment or bullying. Examples of such conduct might include offensive posts meant to intentionally harm someone's reputation or posts that could contribute to a hostile work environment on the basis of actual or perceived race, sex, disability, religion, or any other status protected by law or IHLS policy.

Be honest and accurate:

Make sure you are always honest and accurate when posting information or news, and if you make a mistake, correct it quickly. Be open about any previous posts you have altered. Remember that the Internet archives almost everything; therefore, even deleted postings can be searched. Never post any information or rumors that you know to be false about IHLS, fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, people working on behalf of IHLS, or competitors.

Post only appropriate and respectful content:

- Maintain the confidentiality of IHLS trade secrets and private or confidential information. Trade secrets may include information regarding the development of systems, processes, products, know-how, and technology. Do not post internal reports, policies, procedures, or other internal business-related confidential communications.
- Respect financial disclosure laws.
- Do not create a link from your blog, website, or other social networking site to an IHLS website without identifying yourself as an IHLS associate.
- Never represent yourself as a spokesperson for IHLS. If IHLS is a subject of the content you are creating, be clear and open about the fact that you are an associate and make it clear that your views do not represent those of IHLS, fellow associates, members, customers, suppliers, or people working on behalf of IHLS. If you publish a blog or post online related to the work you do or subjects associated with IHLS, make it clear that you are not speaking on behalf of IHLS. One way to do this is to include a disclaimer such as "The postings on this site are my own and do not necessarily reflect the views of IHLS."

Using social media at work

Refrain from using social media while on work time or on equipment IHLS provides unless it is work-related as authorized by your manager or consistent with the Use of Facilities and Equipment and Materials Policy. Do not use IHLS email addresses to register on social networks, blogs, or other online tools utilized for personal use.

Security

You should take care to maintain the security of your personal data on social media. You should refrain from posting personally identifying information, such as your home address, telephone numbers, birth dates, or credit/financial information on any social media sites. Personal data can be used by malicious actors to hack, infiltrate, disrupt, and otherwise threaten your safety and IHLS data. You must be vigilant against threats often launched through social media sites, including:

- “spear phishing,” which is the practice of publishing a link or document on a site that, when clicked or opened, launches an attack;
- “social engineering,” which relies on exploiting the human element of trust to collect information to be used against the target; and/or
- web applications, which are dynamic web pages that use scripting to provide additional functionality to a site and, when used maliciously, can compromise your account, and download unauthorized software onto a computer.

Monitoring

IHLS may monitor the Internet and IHLS equipment for employee compliance with this policy and to enforce other IHLS policies.

Retaliation is prohibited

IHLS prohibits taking negative action against any associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation. Any associate who retaliates against another associate for reporting a possible deviation from this policy or for cooperating in an investigation will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Media contacts

Associates should not speak to the media on IHLS’ behalf without contacting the Marketing/Communications Team. All media inquiries should be directed to them.

For more information

If you have questions or need further guidance, please contact your IHLS Human Resources representative.

Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) Chatbot Usage Policy

Purpose

With the increasing popularity of generative AI chatbots such as OpenAI’s ChatGPT and Google’s Gemini, it has become necessary to outline the proper use of such tools while working at IHLS. While we remain committed to adopting new technologies to aid our mission, when possible, we also understand the risks and limitations of generative AI chatbots and want to ensure

responsible use. Our goal is to protect employees, members, vendors, and the organization from harm.

Overview

While AI chatbots can be used to perform a variety of functions, this policy addresses only the use of a web-based interface to ask or “prompt” the chatbot in a conversational manner to find answers to questions, or to create or edit written content.

Some examples of what could be created using an AI chatbot include:

- Emails and letters.
- Blog posts, reports and other publications.
- Sales and advertising copy.
- Policies and job descriptions.
- Spreadsheet calculations.
- Foreign language translations.
- Coding development or debugging.
- Document or information sorting.
- Outlines or summaries of internal or external information.

There are, however, risks in using this technology, including uncertainty about who owns the AI-created content and security/privacy concerns with inputting proprietary IHLS information or sensitive information about an employee, member library, etc., when interacting with the chatbot. Additionally, the accuracy of the content created by these technologies cannot be relied upon, as the information may be outdated, misleading, or—in some cases—fabricated.

Eligibility

This policy applies to all employees of IHLS and to all work associated with IHLS that those employees perform, whether on or off organization premises.

Policy

Limited use of generative AI chatbots will be allowed while performing work for IHLS with the approval of your supervisor. IHLS employee email addresses, credentials, or phone numbers can be used to create an account with these technologies. No IHLS data of any kind may be submitted (copied, typed, etc.) into these platforms.

All AI-generated content must be reviewed for accuracy before relying on it for work purposes. If a reliable source cannot be found to verify factual information generated by the chatbot, that information cannot be used for work purposes.

Acceptable uses include:

- For general-knowledge questions meant to enhance your understanding on a work-related topic.

- To brainstorm ideas related to projects you are working on.
- To create formulas for Excel spreadsheets or similar programs.
- To develop or debug code, to be verified before deployment.
- To draft an email or letter.
- To summarize online research or to create outlines for content projects to assist in full coverage of a topic. Only content written by employees may be included in a final product.

Unacceptable uses include:

- Failing to properly cite an AI chatbot when used as a resource. (Please refer to the MARCOM Intranet on the IHLS *style guide on proper citations*.)

Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Training

All managers will be trained on the proper use of generative AI chatbots in the workplace, and this training will be posted on the IHLS Intranet.

All questions related to this training should be addressed with the IT Department using the Teams Ask IT Channel.

Ethical Use

Employees must use generative AI chatbots in accordance with all IHLS's conduct and anti-discrimination/anti-harassment policies. These technologies must not be used to create content that is inappropriate, discriminatory, or otherwise harmful to others or the organization. Such use will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. [For policy on AI use in hiring, see page XX](#)

Monitoring

IHLS's Computer Use Policy and relevant monitoring policies still apply when using generative AI chatbots with IHLS equipment. If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact *the IT Director*.

No Solicitation/ No Distribution

To maintain a proper business environment and prevent interference with work and inconvenience to others, employees may not distribute literature or printed materials of any kind, sell merchandise, solicit financial contributions, or solicit for any other cause during working time. Employees who are not on working time (e.g., those on lunch hour) may not solicit employees on working time for any cause or distribute any literature or printed material. Employees may leave literature and materials in the break/lunchroom for employees to access during nonworking time. Nonemployees are likewise prohibited from distributing material or soliciting employees on IHLS premises at any time.

Nothing contained herein is intended to or should be construed to limit or interfere with employee rights, to the extent it applies, as set forth under all applicable provisions of the Illinois Public Relations Act.

Use of IHLS Facilities, Vehicles, Equipment, and Materials

Use of Facilities, Vehicles, Equipment, and Materials

IHLS facilities, equipment, and materials including its vehicles, supplies, credit cards, electronic mail system, cellular telephones, and all communication and information transmitted by, received from, or stored in these systems are the property of IHLS and are for use to conduct IHLS business. The facilities and all equipment and supplies may not be used for a commercial venture, religious or political causes, or other solicitations that are not job-related. It is understood that some IHLS equipment may be used for personal business, on an incidental basis.

To help balance professional and personal needs, personal telephone calls are allowed. Personal toll and long-distance calls should be placed using the employee's personal telephone credit card or on the employee's personal cellular telephone. Personal correspondence received electronically must be sent to each employee's personal e-mail account. Such correspondence may be viewed on IHLS equipment. It is understood that any personal business conducted during working hours should be kept to a minimum.

The electronic mail system cannot be used to create any offensive or disruptive messages. Employees should not assume the confidentiality of any message. Even when a message is erased, it is still possible to monitor that message. If asked, employees must disclose any passwords. Messages sent electronically to an employee should be treated as confidential by other employees and accessed only by the intended recipient. Employees are not authorized to retrieve or read any email message that is not sent to them unless authorized by the intended recipient or the Executive Director. IHLS reserves the right to review, audit, intercept, access, and disclose all messages created, received, or sent over the electronic mail system.

The workstation/desk assigned to an employee should be recognized as containing their personal property, as well as IHLS materials. Common courtesy should be shown towards another employee and their workstation. Employees may choose to designate a drawer or drawers to contain personal items that will be respected as such by other employees. If an employee is sharing the workspace, we ask that no personal items be displayed in the desk-sharing space.

IHLS staff is expected to support and protect the confidentiality of contacts with member libraries and of library patron and circulation information in accordance with the American Library Association policies and with the Illinois Library Records Confidentiality Act.

Use of Employer-Issued Equipment for Documentation

Effective January 1, 2026, VESSA permits employees to use IHLS-issued equipment (such as phones, computers, or other devices) to document or preserve evidence of domestic violence, sexual violence, gender violence, or other crimes of violence committed against themselves or a family or household member. This may include recording, photographing, or saving communications related to the incident.

Employees will not be subject to discipline, retaliation, or denial of access to equipment for using these devices in accordance with this law. IHLS will also provide employees access to any relevant recordings, images, or communications stored on the device that pertains to the incident.

This protected use, however, does not exempt employees from following IHLS policies regarding appropriate use of equipment or fulfilling essential job duties. IHLS may comply with subpoenas, investigations, or court orders involving the device or its contents, as required by law. (For VESSA rules on related leaves of absence, go to page XX)

Use of IHLS Vehicles

IHLS vehicles should be used for IHLS business only. The use of IHLS vehicles for business purposes must follow the procedures established for scheduling and using IHLS vehicles. The use of IHLS vehicles for IHLS-related business is not required but encouraged. You do have the option of driving your personal vehicle.

Driver Qualifications

Employees may operate an IHLS-owned vehicle only if they:

- Are acting at the direction and with the explicit permission of IHLS
- 21 years or older and have three years of driving experience
- Meet MVR criteria
- Hold a valid license for the class of vehicle in question, and
- Are otherwise qualified under federal and state regulations to drive the vehicle in question.

Disqualifying Driving Records

Employees whose essential job functions include driving IHLS-owned vehicles are subject to a Department of Motor Vehicles background check before beginning employment and annually thereafter. IHLS reserves the right to run a motor vehicle report (MVR) on employees whose essential job functions don't include driving an IHLS vehicle but who have use of a company vehicle while performing work on behalf of IHLS. Employees cannot operate IHLS-owned vehicles if their MVR report score is 15 or above. A score of one to 14 is considered to be marginal and will be a factor considered in a hiring decision, particularly for those whose position entails considerable driving of IHLS vehicles. IHLS expects the employee to notify their immediate supervisor (self-report) if they have a disqualifying driving record and not to operate an IHLS vehicle.

For all employees whose job duties include the operation of a motor vehicle, the employee must report any driving-related charges or citations to include receipt of a ticket or citation for any moving violation (in the employee's personal vehicle or otherwise). This includes an arrest or citation for driving under the influence or driving while intoxicated. Such incidents must be reported to supervision within three (3) business days after receipt of the citation/ticket or the arrest. An employee who receives a citation for any such violation may be suspended with or without pay until such time as the citation/charge is ultimately disposed of by the court. Employees whose driving record is unacceptable will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge. Failure to report receipt of a ticket, citation, or arrest as required by this section may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Internet Safety Policy

It is the policy of IHLS to:

- Prevent user access over its computer network to, or transmission of, inappropriate material via Internet, email, or other forms of direct electronic communications;
- Prevent unauthorized access and other unlawful online activity;
- Prevent unauthorized online disclosure, use, or dissemination of personal identification information of minors; and
- Comply with the Children's Internet Protection Act [Pub. L. No. 106-554 and 47 U.S.C. 254(h) and 254(l)].

Definitions

Key terms are as defined in the Children's Internet Protection Act.

Access to Inappropriate Material

To the extent practical, technology protection measures shall be used to block or filter Internet or other forms of electronic communications and access to inappropriate information. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, blocking shall be applied to visual depictions of material deemed obscene or child pornography, or to any material deemed harmful to minors. Technology protection measures may be disabled for adults for bona fide research or other lawful purposes.

Inappropriate Network Usage

To the extent practical, steps shall be taken to promote the safety and security of users of the IHLS online computer network when using email, instant messaging, and other forms of direct electronic communications. Specifically, as required by the Children's Internet Protection Act, prevention of inappropriate network usage includes:

- a) Unauthorized access, including so-called 'hacking,' and other unlawful activities; and
- b) Unauthorized disclosure, use, and dissemination of personal identification information regarding minors.

IHLS computers are intended for use by staff working at IHLS facilities. Some computers are also designated for use by adults attending workshops or meetings at IHLS facilities. Use of IHLS computers by persons under the age of 18 is prohibited except under the direct supervision of an IHLS staff member.

Education, Supervision, and Monitoring

It shall be the responsibility of all members of the IHLS staff to educate, supervise, and monitor appropriate usage of the online computer network and access to the Internet in accordance with this policy, the Children's Internet Protection Act, the Neighborhood Children's Internet Protection Act, and the Protecting Children in the 21st Century Act. Procedures for disabling or otherwise modifying any technology protection measures shall be the responsibility of the IT Director or designated representatives.

Copyright

Ownership and copyright of all works produced by IHLS employees within the scope of their employment shall be held by IHLS.

Identity Protection

Purpose

IHLS complies with the provisions of the Identity Protection Act (5 ILCS 179/1 et seq.).

Requirements:

- All employees who have access to social security numbers in the course of performing their duties must be trained to protect the confidentiality of social security numbers. Training will include instructions on the proper handling of information that contains social security numbers from the time of collection through the destruction of the information.
- Only employees who are required to use or handle information or documents that contain social security numbers in connection with the performance of their job duties will have access to such information or documents.
- Social security numbers requested from an individual will be provided in a manner that makes the social security number easily redacted if required to be released as part of a public records request.
- When collecting a social security number, or upon request by the individual, a statement of the purpose or purposes for which the social security number is being collected and used must be provided.

Prohibited Activities

No employee may do any of the following:

- Publicly post or publicly display in any manner an individual's social security number. "Publicly post" or "publicly display" means to intentionally communicate or otherwise intentionally make available to the general public.
- Print an individual's social security number on any card required for the individual to access products or services.
- Encode or embed an individual's social security number in or on any cards or documents, including, but not limited to, using a barcode, chip, magnetic strip, RFID technology, or other technology.
- Require an individual to transmit their social security number over the Internet unless the connection is secure, or the social security number is encrypted.
- Print an individual's social security number on any materials that are mailed to the individual, through the U.S. Postal Service, any private mail service, email, or any similar method of delivery, unless state or federal law requires the social security number to be on the document to be mailed. Notwithstanding any provision in this section to the contrary, social security numbers may be included in applications and forms sent by mail, including, but not limited to, any material mailed in connection with the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act, any material mailed in connection with any tax administered by the Department of Revenue, and documents sent as part of an application or enrollment process or to establish, amend, or terminate an account, contract, or policy or to confirm the accuracy of the social security number. A social security number that may permissibly be mailed under this section may not be printed, in whole or in part, on a postcard or other mailer that does not require an envelope or be visible on an envelope without the envelope having been opened.
- Collect, use, or disclose a social security number from an individual, unless:
 - Required to do so under state or federal law, rules, or regulations, or the collection, use, or disclosure of the social security number is otherwise necessary for the performance of that agency's duties and responsibilities.
 - The need and purpose for the social security number are documented before the collection of the social security number.
 - The social security number collected is relevant to the documented need and purpose.
 - Require an individual to use their social security number to access an Internet website.
 - Use the social security number for any purpose other than the purpose for which it was collected.

The prohibitions listed immediately above do not apply in the following circumstances:

- The disclosure of social security numbers pursuant to a court order, warrant, or subpoena.
- The collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers in order to ensure the safety of other employees.

- The collection, use, or disclosure of social security numbers for internal verification or administrative purposes.
- The collection or use of social security numbers to investigate or prevent fraud, to conduct background checks, to collect a debt, to obtain a credit report from a consumer reporting agency under the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act, to undertake any permissible purpose that is enumerated under the federal Gramm Leach Bliley Act, or to locate a missing person, a lost relative, or a person who is due a benefit, such as a pension benefit or an unclaimed property benefit.

Public Inspection and Copying of Documents

Notwithstanding any other provision of this policy to the contrary, all employees must comply with the provisions of any other state law with respect to allowing the public inspection and copying of information or documents containing all or any portion of an individual's social security number. This includes requests for information or documents under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Employees must redact social security numbers before allowing the public inspection or copying of the information or documents.

Applicability

This policy does not apply to the collection, use, or disclosure of a social security number as required by state or federal law, rule, or regulation.

Health and Safety

IHLS is committed to providing a safe and healthy working environment and to complying with applicable federal and state occupational health and safety laws. To accomplish this, all employees must support and participate in this effort. Mandatory training will be periodically offered to employees. Training must be documented.

If there are concerns about an employee's ability to perform their job functions, they may be required to pass a job-based physical (fit-for-duty exam) at the request of their supervisor to ensure the safety of the employee and all other IHLS employees and affiliates.

To reduce contagious illnesses such as influenza, employees are encouraged to stay at home if they suspect they are contagious. Employees are also encouraged to wash their hands frequently and/or use hand sanitizers.

Employees are also asked to keep their work area and the general workplace clean and obstacle-free. Employees should also periodically disinfect their work area, desktop printers, keyboards, telephones, etc.

Any accidents, illnesses, incidents, or other unsafe conditions must be immediately reported to a supervisor (or designee). Also, when necessary and appropriate, employees may be asked to provide medical proof of their capability to perform the essential functions of their job and/or to prove that they are no longer contagious.

Workers' Compensation

Workers' compensation is a "no-fault" system that provides compensation for medical expenses and wage losses to employees who are injured or who become ill because of employment. IHLS pays the entire cost of workers' compensation insurance. The insurance provides coverage for related medical and rehabilitation expenses and a portion of lost wages to employees who sustain an injury on the job.

IHLS abides by all applicable state workers' compensation laws and regulations. If an employee sustains a job-related injury or illness, it is important to notify the supervisor and HR immediately. The employee will complete an injury report (Incident report) if immediate medical care is not needed. The supervisor will complete an injury report in the event that the employee cannot do so when the accident occurs with input from the employee and return the form to the HR department. The manager will file the claim with the insurance company using our workers' compensation procedures. In cases of true medical emergencies, report to the nearest emergency room.

Workers' compensation benefits (paid or unpaid) will run concurrently with FMLA leave, if applicable, where permitted by state and federal law. In addition, employees will not be paid vacation or sick leave for approved absences covered by the company's workers' compensation program, except to supplement the workers' compensation benefits, such as when the plan only covers a portion of the employees' salary as allowed by applicable state and federal law.

If FMLA is not requested by the employee, IHLS will notify the employee who is off work due to a work-related injury that the time off is also being designated as FMLA for employees who are eligible for FMLA. Continuation of group health insurance provisions, as outlined under FMLA, applies to Workers' Compensation leaves only if the time off is designated as FMLA.

Information on Workers' Compensation is available in the Human Resources office and posted on the communication boards at each of our hub locations.

Safety Committee

IHLS has a dedicated safety committee comprised of employee volunteers maintain an up-to-date version of our Safety Training Handbook and prepare our annual safety training. This team is responsible for ensuring that IHLS employees have a safe working environment. All communications from the IHLS safety team will be published on the Safety intranet.

Communicable Diseases Policy

IHLS' decisions involving persons who have communicable diseases shall be based on current and well-informed medical judgments concerning the disease, the risks of transmitting the illness to others, the symptoms and special circumstances of each individual who has a communicable disease, and a careful weighing of the identified risks and the available alternatives for responding to an employee with a communicable disease.

Communicable diseases include but are not limited to measles, influenza, viral hepatitis-A (infectious hepatitis), viral hepatitis-B (serum hepatitis), human immunodeficiency virus (HIV infection), AIDS, AIDS-related Complex (ARC), leprosy, Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), including the SARS-CoV-2 (coronavirus), and tuberculosis. IHLS may choose to broaden this definition within its best interest and in accordance with information received through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and local health departments.

IHLS will not discriminate against any job applicant or employee based on the individual having a communicable disease. Applicants and employees shall not be denied access to the workplace solely on the grounds that they have a communicable disease. IHLS reserves the right to exclude a person with a communicable disease from the workplace facilities, programs, and functions if the organization finds that, based on a medical determination, such restriction is necessary for the welfare of the person who has the communicable disease and/or the welfare of others within the workplace.

IHLS will comply with all applicable statutes and regulations that protect the privacy of persons who have a communicable disease. Reasonable efforts will be made to ensure procedurally sufficient safeguards to maintain personal confidence about persons who have communicable diseases.

Additional procedures may be developed as necessary to adhere to recommendations by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), and/or local health departments.

Bloodborne Pathogens

Normal operations are not likely to involve circumstances exposing employees or members to bloodborne pathogens. However, whenever contact with blood, bodily fluids, or other potentially infectious materials occurs, employees should treat these fluids as though they are known to be infectious. If such an incident occurs, employees should immediately cordon off the area (if necessary) to ensure that others are not exposed and ensure that the area is properly cleaned with an appropriate disinfectant. Employees who may be assisting in such instances should wear protective clothing, such as disposable gloves. Proper disposal procedures should be used for the disposal of exposed clothing. A supervisor should then be notified of the incident. A confidential medical post-exposure follow-up will be offered to any employee who has had significant exposure.

Drug-Free Workplace

IHLS adheres to the Illinois Drug-Free Workplace Act (30 ILCS 580). Any applicant offered a position will be required to submit and successfully complete a pre-employment drug screen prior to beginning employment with IHLS.

Drug and alcohol abuse may also be a violation of criminal law. Employees are hereby notified that the unlawful manufacture, distribution, sale, possession, or use of a controlled substance, including cannabis, is prohibited in the IHLS workplace. The manufacture, distribution, sale, possession, or use of illegal look-alike drugs and drug paraphernalia, and the consumption of alcoholic beverages are also not permitted in the IHLS workplace.

The Executive Director and a Human Resources representative will establish a drug and alcohol-free awareness program to inform the employees about the dangers of drug abuse and alcohol use in the workplace, the drug-free workplace policy, available resources for counseling, rehabilitation, and employee assistance programs, and penalties that may be imposed upon employees for drug or alcohol violations. Each employee will be given a copy of the Drug-Free Workplace Policy. A copy of the policy is also posted in prominent places.

As a condition of employment, employees must abide by the terms of this policy and shall notify the Executive Director or a Human Resources representative of any criminal drug statute conviction for a drug violation. Such notification shall occur no later than five business days after such conviction.

Any employee found in violation of this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, and notification to the applicable law enforcement agencies. Depending on the circumstances, the Executive Director or a Human Resources representative may impose other sanctions and require satisfactory participation in a drug abuse assistance or rehabilitation program. The Executive Director or the Human Resources representative may refer the employee to EAP for assistance in selecting a course of action in the event drug counseling, treatment, and rehabilitation are chosen.

IHLS also reserves the right to test employees for the presence of illegal drugs in accordance with applicable state law.

If an employee is displaying signs of reasonable suspicion to be under the influence of alcohol or drugs, they will be sent for testing. Human Resources will set up the testing and ensure that the testing follows legal guidelines.

Any employee who desires counseling on coping with potential alcohol or drug abuse is strongly urged to contact the Executive Director or Human Resources representative.

“See Something, Say Something”

Any employee who suspects that another employee is violating the Drug-Free Workplace Policy, ~~or who desires counseling on coping with potential alcohol or drug abuse, is strongly urged to contact the Executive Director or the Human Resources representative.~~ must report it by using IHLS’s confidential reporting system using the QR code below or speaking privately with a supervisor or manager and not with a fellow co-worker.

Please use this QR Code
for confidential reporting.



When reporting, employees should:

- Provide objective, detailed observations such as what was said, stumbling, bloodshot eyes, confusion, and the time/location.
- Follow company reporting guidelines, such as using the QR code system ~~or consulting the Employee Handbook.~~

Workplace Violence

The safety and security of every IHLS employee are of vital importance to our organization. Therefore, IHLS has adopted a zero-tolerance policy concerning violence in the workplace.

IHLS expressly prohibits any acts or threats of violence by any employee, former employee, or any other person against any IHLS employee in or about IHLS' facilities or elsewhere while engaged in work-related activities at any time. IHLS will not condone any acts or threats of violence against IHLS' employees or members on IHLS' premises at any time or while they are engaged in business with or on behalf of IHLS, on or off IHLS premises.

All employees are responsible for maintaining a workplace that is free from threatening behavior and violence. Accordingly, each employee has a duty to report any threat, instance of harassment or offensive conduct, or violent act or threat observed or experienced during working time or at any IHLS building or property. In addition, any employee who has reason to believe that a violent act may be committed on the worksite or against an individual related to the business in any way must promptly report that belief or suspicion to Human Resources and their supervisor. Reports of threats of violence or any other violations of this policy will be kept as confidential as possible; however, all such reported violations will be investigated, and all employees must cooperate in such investigations. No employee who, in good faith, either makes a report or participates in an investigation under this policy will experience retaliation of any kind.

Examples of prohibited conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Threats or acts of violence occurring on IHLS premises regardless of the relationship between the parties involved in the incident.
- Threats or acts of violence occurring off IHLS premises involving someone who is acting in the capacity of a representative of IHLS.

IHLS is committed to:

- Providing a safe and healthful work environment.
- Taking prompt remedial action up to and including immediate termination, against any employee who engages in any threatening behavior or acts of violence or who uses any obscene, abusive, or threatening language or gestures.
- Taking appropriate action when dealing with members, former employees, visitors to IHLS' facilities, or anyone else who engages in such behavior. Such action may include notifying the police or other law enforcement personnel and actively urging the prosecution of violators of this policy to the maximum extent of the law.
- Prohibiting unauthorized firearms or other weapons onto IHLS premises. No IHLS employee shall possess, while on duty, or while in a IHLS vehicle, a firearm, ammunition, fireworks, or any explosive device or weapon likely or capable of causing harm to persons or property, except that employees authorized to carry concealed firearms under state or federal law may carry a concealed firearm on or about their person only within their vehicle into an IHLS parking area where a firearm or ammunition may be placed if concealed in a case within a locked vehicle or locked container out of plain view within the vehicle in the parking area, in the manner provided by the Firearm Concealed Carry Act, (430 ILCS 66/65)(b). An employee may carry a concealed firearm in the immediate area surrounding their vehicle within a parking lot area only for the limited purpose of storing or retrieving a firearm within the vehicle's trunk. For purposes of this subsection, "case" includes a glove compartment or console that completely encloses the concealed firearm or ammunition, the trunk of the vehicle, or a firearm carrying box, shipping box, or other container.
- Establishing viable security measures to ensure that IHLS' facilities are safe and secure to the maximum extent possible and to properly handle access to IHLS facilities by the public, off-duty employees, and former employees.

The duties above are in addition to an employee immediately phoning 911 in the event an employee believes an immediate threat of harm exists.

Any employee who displays a tendency to engage in violent, abusive, or threatening behavior, or who otherwise engages in behavior that IHLS, in its sole discretion, deems offensive or inappropriate, will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including discharge.

Any employee who applies or obtains a protective or restraining order which lists IHLS premises as being protected areas should inform Human Resources. IHLS will require the employee to furnish IHLS with a copy of the order. Employees who are victims of domestic violence, sexual or gender violence, or any other crime of violence, or who have family or household members who are subjected to such violence may take a limited period of unpaid leave on the terms and conditions set forth in the IHLS Victims' Economic Security and Safety Act Leave Policy.

Smoke-Free Illinois

IHLS will provide an environment for its employees and members that is smoke free. In accordance with Illinois State law (Public Act 095-1029), smoking is not permitted in any IHLS building or within 15 feet of any building entrances, exits, windows that open, or ventilation intakes. Smoking is also not permitted in IHLS vehicles.

Employees with complaints about smoking shall direct such complaints to their immediate supervisor for resolution. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated. Complaints can also be filed with the Illinois Department of Public Health, a local state-certified public health department, or the local police department. Any employee found to have violated this policy will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. Additionally, under state law, a person who smokes in an area where smoking is prohibited can be fined \$100 for the first offense and \$250 for each subsequent offense.

Public Act 100-272 amends Public Act 095-1029 to include prohibiting the use of e-cigarettes, e-cigars, e-pipes, e-hookahs, and vape pens in most public places in Illinois and places of employment effective January 1, 2024.

No individual may be discriminated against in any manner because of the exercise of any rights afforded by the Smoke-Free Illinois Act.

General Driving Requirements

While operating a personal or IHLS-owned vehicle on IHLS business, employees must:

- Observe applicable speed limits at all times;
- Obey all traffic rules and regulations;
- Drive defensively and anticipate driving hazards, such as bad weather and bad drivers;
- Report any ~~accidents~~ or accidents or traffic violations in which they are involved to the police and their supervisors.
- Employees who use their own vehicles to conduct business must maintain proof of valid vehicle insurance in their vehicle. Proof of such insurance must also be presented periodically to IHLS. If you are using your personal vehicle for business, you must sign a personal vehicle use agreement.

The consumption of alcohol or the use of an illegal, controlled substance is prohibited. Any employee who is convicted of driving while under the influence of alcohol or drugs or who receives a driving violation (even if received while driving a personal vehicle) which may affect IHLS' insurance rates must notify their supervisor within five business days of such conviction or receipt of the violation. Payment for tickets or summons issued to employees as a result of violating the law (except for unavoidable vehicle defects) while on business will be the responsibility of the employee.

It is also expected that employees will display courteous driving habits. Failure to exercise roadway safety and courteous driving habits can result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Safety Belts

Drivers must ensure that safety belts are worn by drivers and passengers in all vehicles used for IHLS business. Lap belts must be properly secured in those vehicles equipped with automatic safety systems that require the lap portion of the belt to be manually secured. Children should not ride in IHLS vehicles unless in an emergency situation. Approved child safety restraints must be used for children of the age, size, or weight for which such restraints are prescribed by law. Employees who discover an inoperable restraint system promptly must report the defect to the appropriate supervisor. IHLS-owned vehicles in which a safety belt is inoperable cannot be used until the safety belt is repaired.

Wireless Communications Devices Use

Employees cannot use wireless communications devices, including cell phones and text messengers, when driving IHLS-owned vehicles on IHLS business, except when using an electronic communication device in hands-free or voice-operated mode. Drivers who need to use a wireless communications device must pull over to a safe location before using the device. (625 ILCS 5/12-610.2) <http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/fulltext.asp?DocName=062500050K12-610.2>

Videoconferencing While Driving

Effective January 1, 2024, individuals may not operate a motor vehicle on a roadway while using an electronic communication device, including using an electronic communication device to watch or stream video, participate in any video conferencing application (including, but not limited to, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, or Webex), or access any social media site, including, but not limited to, Facebook, Instagram, or X (formerly known as Twitter).

Electronic communication devices include hand-held wireless phones, hand-held digital assistants, tablets, or portable or mobile computers. It does not include GPS or a navigation system or device that is physically or electronically integrated with the motor vehicle.

Exemptions include (but are not limited to):

- Drivers using an electronic communication device for the sole purpose of reporting an emergency situation and continued communication with emergency personnel during the emergency situation.
- Drivers using an electronic communication device in hands-free or voice-operated mode (video not activated).
- Drivers using an electronic communication device while parked on the shoulder of a roadway.
- Drivers using an electronic communication device when the vehicle is stopped due to normal traffic being obstructed and the driver has the motor vehicle transmission in neutral or park.

- Drivers using two-way or citizens broadband radio services.
- Drivers using an electronic communication device by pressing a single button to initiate or terminate a voice communication.

Accidents

A printed envelope titled “In Case of Accident” must be kept in the glove compartment of each IHLS-owned vehicle. The card is intended to provide employees with easy access to guidance on what to do when accidents occur. In general, the following requirements apply:

- Employees must report traffic accidents immediately to the local police and then to their supervisors.
- Employees must not sign or make any statements regarding their responsibility or fault for a traffic accident that occurs while they are driving an IHLS-owned vehicle.
- Employees should avoid explaining or describing the accident to anyone except public safety personnel, their supervisor, or the claims adjuster or attorney for IHLS' insurance.
- Employees must obtain the names, addresses, phone numbers, and license numbers of the other drivers involved. Employees must collect insurance IHLS contact information and the address and phone number of the police department where the accident report is prepared.

Discipline

Employees who drive negligently or fail to comply with this policy's safety requirements and self-reporting guidelines are subject to immediate discipline, up to and including termination of employment.



Employee Handbook Acknowledgement Form

I understand that it is my responsibility to **read this handbook and become familiar with its contents**, which affect my employment. I understand that these policies and procedures can be changed at any time by IHLS with or without notice.

I further understand that this handbook is not intended to create a contract of employment, but that my employment with IHLS is an at-will relationship. IHLS reserves the right to terminate my employment with or without cause at any time, just as I have the right to leave IHLS with or without cause at any time.

This is to certify that I received, read, and understand IHLS' Employee Handbook.

Signature of Employee

Date

Printed Name of Employee



Prohibited Harassment Statement Acknowledgment Form

Harassment

All employees of IHLS are expected to treat others with dignity and respect. Harassment on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local laws is illegal, violates IHLS policies, and will not be tolerated. **Any individual engaging in harassment will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal.**

Complaint Procedure

If you believe that you are being harassed or discriminated against due to your race, color, religion, sex, pregnancy, national origin, ancestry, gender identity, age, disability, veteran status, or any other basis protected by federal, state, or local laws, the incident should be immediately reported to a supervisor or the Executive Director. The procedure outlined in the Employee Handbook should be used to report claims of harassment.

Acknowledgment

I, _____, have received, read, and understand the policy regarding harassment. I will report any incidents of harassment according to the complaint procedure.

Signature of Employee

Date

Printed Name of Employee