

Subject: Health Emergency Plan

Application: Employees, trustees, customers, consultants, contractors, vendors, and volunteers

Purpose:

The Westchester Library System (WLS) has adopted this Health Emergency Plan in compliance with New York State Labor Law §27-c to implement operational plans in the event of certain declared public health emergencies including, but not limited to, COVID-19 or other communicable disease or pandemic illness.

The primary goals of WLS's Health Emergency Plan are to establish:

- The roles and responsibilities during all phases of a public health emergency
- Preparedness activities and response protocols
- Coordination and decision making for the continuation of operations

The Health Emergency Plan is designed to ensure precautionary, response, and recovery measures to a public health emergency involving a communicable disease threatening to impact or immediately impacting WLS's staff, trustees, volunteers, and/or community members.

Administration:

The Executive Director as authorized by the Board of Trustees administers the Health Emergency Plan. This includes activating the plan, establishing an internal communications network and coordinating all response and recovery activities. If, for any reason, the Executive Director is unable or unavailable to administer the plan, administrative authority shall be passed to the Chief Financial Officer.

Definitions:

The following terms are hereby defined for the purposes of this policy:

- *Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)*: Equipment worn to minimize exposure to communicable disease or pandemic illness as mandated by local, state, or federal law and/or any Executive Orders related to the public health emergency or mandates issued by federal agencies including the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- *Employee*: Any person employed by WLS regardless of job classification or title.
- *Contractor*: Any individual performing paid services for the library but not an employee of WLS.

- *Essential:* Designation made to an employee or contractor whose duties require them to be physically present at the Westchester Library System to perform their job, or tasks that are vital or necessary to the safety or operational needs of WLS.
- *Non-essential:* Designation made to an employee whose duties do not require them to be physically present at the Westchester Library System, or tasks that are not vital or necessary to the safety or operational needs of WLS.
- *Communicable Disease:* Illness caused by an infectious agent that occurs through the direct or indirect transmission of the infectious agent or its byproducts or via inanimate environment or object to a susceptible person or persons.
- *Retaliatory Action:* The discharge, suspension, demotion, penalization, discrimination or other adverse employment action taken against any employee.

Essential Employees or Duties:

In the event of a state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce, the Executive Director shall be designated as an Essential Employee and is permitted to be physically present at WLS premises to perform tasks essential to their job or the operations of WLS including, but not limited to, maintenance to the facilities that could otherwise threaten or pose a risk to WLS's facilities if not performed; bookkeeping such as accounts payable, accounts receiving, and processing payroll; and/or accepting, sorting, and opening postal mail or packages.

These essential tasks may be delegated to a specific employee or contractor at the discretion of the Executive Director. This employee or contractor is permitted to be physically present at WLS to perform only the designated essential tasks as assigned.

Telecommute/Work from Home:

In the event of a state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce, the WLS Remote Work Policy will be implemented.

All employees whose duties and routine tasks require the use of a computer and/or Internet access will be provided WLS-issued equipment necessary to perform those duties and tasks.

The Executive Director will provide instructions for use of any software for employees to perform their duties remotely.

Any directives to employees related to telecommuting or reporting in-person related to a health emergency will supersede any existing arrangements made under the WLS Remote Work policy.

In-Person Reporting:

The Executive Director will coordinate the schedule for individuals reporting to WLS in-person to perform essential tasks so that WLS remains in compliance with the state-ordered reduction of

in-person workforce. No individual is permitted to report to the WLS office without authorization from the Executive Director.

Personal Protective Equipment:

PPE as required by local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders will be provided by WLS. As per OSHA guidelines, trustees, employees and volunteers are not financially responsible for mandated PPE while in the service of WLS. Individuals may provide their own PPE if they desire and if it is in compliance with all local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders and CDC and OSHA regulations.

WLS will provide any necessary training for mandated PPE including proper use and disposal.

WLS will keep a supply of PPE in storage in the event a public health emergency is immediately declared. All employees will be aware of the storage location of PPE. The Executive Director will monitor PPE supply levels and replenish the supply as needed.

Failure of an employee to comply with PPE mandates may result in disciplinary action.

Exposure to Communicable Disease:

If required by local, state or federal laws or Executive Orders, mandatory, continuous health screening practices will be implemented.

In the event an individual is exposed to a known case of the communicable disease that is the subject of the public health emergency, exhibits symptoms of such disease or tests positive for such disease, the following procedures will be immediately implemented:

- The individual must not report to the work site or they must leave the premises immediately, if already at work, and notify the Executive Director.
- The Executive Director will notify both local and state health departments and will follow guidance specific to workplaces with a suspected or positive case.
- The Executive Director and the individual will determine which other individuals were in close contact and possibly exposed to the communicable disease.
- The Executive Director and the individual will determine which areas of the work site are now considered “contaminated” and need to be immediately closed.

Cleaning Contaminated Areas:

- The work site will immediately close off contaminated area(s).
- The area(s) will be quarantined for a length of time determined by local or state health departments.
- The HVAC system will be temporarily turned off in the area(s) so that particles will not circulate throughout the facility.

- After the quarantine period, the area(s) used by the individual will be cleaned, vacuumed and disinfected including offices, workspaces, cubicles, bathrooms, common areas, shared equipment such as computers, tablets, keyboards and shared office supplies.
- The area(s) will be cleaned by current building management or a vendor contracted by WLS using OSHA and CDC approved cleaning supplies and disinfectants while wearing appropriate PPE.
- Once the area(s) has (have) been appropriately disinfected, the area(s) can be opened for use.
- Routine cleaning and disinfecting and logging of these activities as recommended will continue.

Contact Tracing:

The Executive Director will adhere to local and state guidance regarding contact tracing. This may include reporting or contacting other individuals who voluntarily supplied their information for the purpose of contact tracing and who may have been in close contact with the individual(s) suspected or confirmed to have the communicable disease.

The Executive Director and the designated contract tracing team will keep the individual's health status confidential.

Compensation:

WLS will adhere to all local, state and federal laws or Executive Orders regarding sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to the communicable disease.

Returning to Work:

- An individual who is exposed to the communicable disease or exhibits symptoms of the communicable disease must follow all local and state health department directives, which may include being tested for that communicable disease and/or quarantining for a specified amount of time at home.
- An individual who has a suspected or confirmed case must not report back to work until they have met all of the required criteria in consultation with a healthcare provider and in accordance with local, state and/or federal criteria specific to the communicable disease.
- All other individuals will be provided instructions for returning to work dependent on the determination of risk of exposure by the local or state health department during contact tracing.

Mitigating Risk:

Reporting to work following a known exposure to the communicable disease, having symptoms consistent with the communicable disease or following a positive test without being medically cleared to return to work as defined above will be considered a violation of WLS policy and may result in disciplinary action.

WLS will not take any retaliatory action for individuals not reporting to work due to a suspected or confirmed case of the communicable disease. Employees must follow the established protocols outlined in the Personnel Policy/Employee Handbook for reporting an absence.

Continuation of Operations:

In the event of a declared public health emergency involving a communicable disease, the Executive Director will address operations according to the following outline. Some circumstances will require deviation from this sequence in order to best serve the safety and health of all individuals on WLS premises.

- Assess the emergency declaration as it relates to the organization's facilities, materials, staff and community.
- Notify the appropriate persons, including employees, volunteers and the Board of Trustees.
- Determine the next steps, with the information available, regarding:
 - Services or service points
 - Hours of operation
 - Personnel
- Draft a press release or statement to the public.
- Document in detail the sequence or timeline of events before, during and after the declared public health emergency.
- Prepare for recovery.

Communication:

Once approved by the Board of Trustees, this Health Emergency Plan will be published in a clear and conspicuous location at WLS and on the website. A copy will be provided to all employees.

Ongoing Use Evaluation:

This Health Emergency Plan was developed as required by law with the health and safety of WLS's employees, volunteers, Board of Trustees and community as the top priority.

The Health Emergency Plan will be evaluated annually by the Executive Director and Board of Trustees and updated as needed.

Questions or concerns regarding the Westchester Library System Health Emergency Plan should be directed to the Executive Director.

Approved: June 30, 2026