



# OWWL LIBRARY SYSTEM

## PANDEMIC RESPONSE PLAN

### PURPOSE

The OWWL Library System has adopted this Pandemic Response 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, novel coronavirus (COVID-19) or other communicable disease or pandemic illness.

The primary goals of this Pandemic Response 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 Pandemic Response Plan is designed to ensure precautionary action, appropriate response, and recovery measures to a public health emergency involving a communicable disease threatening to impact or immediately impacting the System staff and trustees, member library staff, and the communities served by the member libraries.

### ADMINISTRATION

The Executive Director as authorized by the Board of Trustees administers the Pandemic Response 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, the administrative authority shall be passed to the Finance Director.

### DEFINITIONS

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

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Equipment worn to minimize exposure to a 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 the OWWL Library System regardless of job classification or title.
- **Contractor:** Any individual performing paid services for the OWWL Library System but not an employee of the OWWL Library System.
- **Essential:** Designation made to an employee or contractor whose duties require them to be physically present at the OWWL Library System headquarters to perform their job OR tasks that are vital or necessary to the safety or operational needs of the System.
- **Non-essential:** Designation made to an employee whose duties do not require them to be physically present at the OWWL Library System OR tasks that are not vital or necessary to the safety or operational needs of the System.
- **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 DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES

In the event of a state-ordered reduction of the in-person workforce, the Executive Director shall be designated as an Essential Employee and is permitted to be physically present at the OWWL Library System headquarters to perform tasks essential to their job or the operations of the system including, but not limited to, maintenance to the facilities that could otherwise threaten or pose a risk to the facilities if not performed; bookkeeping such as accounts payable, accounts receivable, and processing payroll; coordinating delivery of materials between member libraries and the system headquarters; 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 the OWWL Library System headquarters to perform only the designated essential tasks as assigned.

## TELECOMMUTE/WORK FROM HOME

In the event of a state-ordered reduction of the in-person workforce, the OWWL Library System Working Remotely Policy will be implemented.

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

The Executive Director in coordination with Computer and Network Services (CANS) department will provide instructions for downloading/installing any software for employees to perform their duties remotely. The Executive Director/CANS will also provide instructions for transferring office phone lines to personal phones as applicable to the employee's job description.

## IN-PERSON REPORTING

The Executive Director will coordinate the schedule for employees and contractors reporting to the system headquarters in-person to perform essential tasks so that the OWWL Library System remains in compliance with the state-ordered reduction of in-person workforce. No employee or contractor is permitted to report to the system headquarters without authorization from the Executive Director.

## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

PPE as required by local, state, or federal laws or Executive Orders will be provided by the OWWL Library System. As per OSHA guidelines, employees are not financially responsible for mandated PPE. Employees 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.

The OWWL Library System will provide any necessary training for mandated PPE including proper use and disposal.

The OWWL Library System 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 in coordination with the Finance Director will monitor PPE supply levels and replenish the supply as needed in accordance with the Procurement Policy.

Failure 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 for all employees.

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

## CLEANING CONTAMINATED AREAS

- The Executive Director and Custodian will immediately close off the 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 the area so that particles will not circulate throughout the facility.
- After the determined length of time, the area(s) used by the employee will be cleaned, vacuumed, and disinfected including the employee's office, bathrooms, common areas, and shared electronic equipment and other office supplies.
- The area(s) will be cleaned by the Custodian wearing appropriate PPE.
- Once the area(s) has (have) been appropriately disinfected, it (they) can be opened for use.
- The OWWL Library System will continue routine cleaning and disinfecting and logging these activities as recommended.

## CONTACT TRACING

The Executive Director will adhere to local and state guidance regarding Contact Tracing which may include reporting or contacting other employees, contractors, trustees, and visitors who may have been in close contact with the employee suspected or confirmed to have the communicable disease.

The Executive Director will keep the health status of employees confidential.

## COMPENSATION

The OWWL Library System will adhere to all local, state, or 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

- If an employee is exposed to a communicable disease or exhibits symptoms of a communicable disease, they 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.
- If an employee has a suspected or confirmed case they must not report back to work until they have met all of the following criteria in consultation with a healthcare provider and in accordance with local, state, and/or federal criteria specific to the communicable disease.
- All other employees will be provided instructions for returning to work dependent on the determination of the risk of exposure by the local or state health department during Contact Tracing.

## MITIGATING RISK

Reporting to work following a known-exposure to a 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 policy and may result in disciplinary action.

The OWWL Library System will not take any retaliatory action for employees 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 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 health and safety of the system employees and trustees, member library employees, and member library communities.

- Assess the emergency declaration as it relates to the system’s employees, facilities, and services.
- Notify the appropriate persons including all employees and the Board of Trustees.
- Determine the next steps, with the information available, regarding:
  - Services/service points
  - Delivery
  - 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 Pandemic Response Plan will be published in a clear and conspicuous location at the OWWL Library System and on the system’s website. A copy will be provided to all employees.

## ONGOING USE EVALUATION

This Pandemic Response Plan was as required by law with the health and safety of the system employees and trustees, member library employees, and member library communities as the top priority.

The Pandemic Response Plan will be evaluated annually by the Executive Director and the System Policy Committee and updated as needed by the Board of Trustees.

Questions or concerns regarding the OWWL Library System’s Pandemic Response Plan should be forwarded to the Executive Director.

*Amended: April 13, 2022  
Adopted: December 9, 2020*