



WISCONSIN
LIBRARY
ASSOCIATION

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Dear Wisconsin Library Administrators and Board Trustees,

The Wisconsin Library Association (WLA) applauds the hard work library staff, administrations, and Boards have put in the past few weeks during these tumultuous times. As a result of Governor Evers' "Emergency Order #12: Safer at Home" libraries across the State of Wisconsin are closed for in-person services. Many libraries have transitioned to staff being sent home, with some working remotely and some not working at all.

As a leader and advocate of libraries in Wisconsin, WLA recommends all public, special, and academic libraries in Wisconsin approve continued payment of regular wages and salaries for staff during this time of closure due to COVID-19.

Please consider that:

- 1) Continued payment of wages and salaries is a way to assure that experienced staff will still be in place to return to work once your library reopens.
 - a) A loss of income may result in some staff finding alternative employment.
 - b) Libraries will then have to recruit, hire, and train new staff when the library reopens which will cause loss of service to your patrons.
- 2) Continued payment of wages and salaries is budget neutral because the money to pay staff is already set for this year.
- 3) Continued payment of wages and salaries is a way to support staff so they do not have to worry about paying bills or going into debt.
- 4) Continued payment of wages and salaries is a way to support your local economy because library staff will be able to spend their full wages rather than having to cut back; wages will go back into the local community.

Various libraries are handling "work from home" and "reduced workloads" differently as to what they are requiring staff to do at home. Not all staff have home computers or internet connections in order to work remotely online. Wisconsin's Department of Public Instruction's Library Division will be releasing examples next week, so we defer to that coming list for suggestions. As Library Administrators or Board of Trustees you know the value our libraries add to our communities and the vital loss of connection and relationship so many are experiencing with our libraries closed.

Please consider supporting your library staff through these difficult times so they will be ready to return to supporting patrons and the community as quickly as possible.

Sincerely, WLA Board of Directors and Staff