



**MILWAUKEE**  
**PUBLIC LIBRARY**

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** May 4, 2020

**TO:** Members of the Finance and Personnel Committee of the Milwaukee Common Council

**FROM:** Paula Kiely, Milwaukee Public Library Director

**RE:** Furlough and Work Share Plan

The Milwaukee Public Library's (MPL) plan for furloughs and work share was developed along with other departments in response to the anticipated financial hardship expected by the city. If implemented, 115 employees would be furloughed and 40 would be placed on work share with reductions ranging from 10-60%.

In developing the plan, several principles guided our work. Chief among them were reducing expenditures while limiting the impact on Milwaukee residents, maintaining essential services, and causing the least amount of harm to employees – primarily financial hardship from reduced or suspended income.

We relied on guidance for defining essential work from CISA Emergency Management guidelines and took into account near-term plans to continue maintenance and oversight of our library buildings (including planned and scheduled improvement projects) and phased reinstatement of services, beginning with drive-up service at Central Library, curbside service at two branch locations, and the reopening of the Wisconsin Talking Book and Braille Library. These public services became permissible under the expansion of Governor Evers's Safer at Home Order, Emergency Order #28.

Other essential services incorporated into our plan include access to digital resources, reference assistance via email and text, virtual and online programming primarily directed at youth and families, and the transition of the Mill Road library to the new Good Hope Branch. Final decisions were based on individual employee ability to perform their job from home, as well as the work needed to execute our near-term plan.

Once the Safer at Home restrictions lessen and we are able to further scale up library services, employees will need to be called back. Each position is essential for MPL to operate at Central Library and all branches and each step of reopening will be a deliberate process to make sure we have the proper protocols, supplies and equipment necessary to keep staff and patrons safe. Because these protocols and supplies will need to be tailored to each specific site and space in the library system, Central departments and branch libraries will be brought back into service in a phased manner. While there may be some community concerns about the time it takes to get their neighborhood library reopened, our plan includes equity goals so no area of the city will be left behind.

C: Mayor Tom Barrett  
Dennis Yaccarino, Budget Office  
Maria Monteagudo, Department of Employee Relations  
Milwaukee Public Library Trustees