

This learning checklist for "Innovations in Employee Benefits" was prepared for the Empire State Library Network on February 28, 2025, and is licensed for internal use by all members of the nine regional library councils of New York. **This document is not legal advice.** (c) The Law Office of Stephanie Adams, PLLC. Further information on further use, please contact [info@losapllc.com](mailto:info@losapllc.com).

## Innovations in Employee Benefits

Employee Benefit	How to Make it Happen
<p>1</p> <p>Update the Employee Manual Adopt an Employee Manual</p>	<p>This is a project with an HR specialist or attorney that either starts fresh or updates a tired and out-of-date manual. The new/updated manual is passed by the board.</p>
<p>2</p> <p>On-site Child Care Provider On-site Elder Companion Provider</p>	<p>This can be via a third-party provider or provided in-house.</p> <p>This can take many years of planning but is feasible either as an in-house offering or through a third-party contractor.</p>
<p>3</p> <p>Educational Assistance Program</p>	<p>This is a program set up in compliance with the IRS guidance found here:</p> <p><a href="https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/frequently-asked-questions-about-educational-assistance-programs">https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/frequently-asked-questions-about-educational-assistance-programs</a></p>
<p>4</p> <p>Employee Assistance Program</p>	<p>This is a third-party provided resource that can offer or connect workers and their family members to mental health counseling, child and elder care, credit counseling and financial planning, wellness, and other important supports.</p>
<p>5</p> <p>On-site delivery acceptance benefits</p>	<p>This is a policy allowing a limited number of personal packages to be delivered at the business location, to avoid loss through theft. <b>Public</b></p>

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<p>ASSOCIATION LIBRARIES, COOPERATIVE SYSTEMS, and COUNCILS ONLY.</p>	<p><b>institutions should exercise care to avoid the perception of misuse of public resources.</b></p>
<p>6</p> <p>Affiliation benefits</p> <p>ASSOCIATION LIBRARIES, COOPERATIVE SYSTEMS, and COUNCILS ONLY.</p>	<p>These are negotiated benefits that a local business may provide: 25% off coffee with any employee ID, etc.</p>
<p>7</p> <p>Micro-award program</p>	<p>This is a budgeted program that offers small rewards for acknowledged acts of achievement, kindness and professionalism.</p> <p>In a program like this, employees can nominate each other, and awards can be given monthly, quarterly...whatever works.</p> <p>Examples could be movie tickets, a gift card for a nominal amount (\$20 or less), tickets to a local exhibit, etc.</p> <p>Can be administered by the “Friends” if you have such an organization <b>but must be by written policy.</b></p>
<p>7a</p> <p>Rewards for the entire staff such as a holiday party</p>	<p>Care should be exercised not to use public funds for purposes that do not benefit the library directly.</p>

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<p>8</p> <p>Compensation analysis, COLA, merit raises, project accomplishment stipends</p>	<p>At the end of the day, competitive compensation rates and positive rewards for good performance can't be beat.</p> <p>This requires long-range commitment by the governing board.</p>
<p>9</p> <p>“Continuum of Leave” FAQ covering sick leave, FMLA, PFML, WC, ADA, Disability, vacation, personal days, personal leave, and how they combine at your library.</p>	<p>Employees should be able to know how they can take time off to take care of themselves or their family, or as accommodation for a disability, without having to cross-reference four policies or sections of the collective bargaining agreement. A FAQ that takes employees through these different combinations can be very helpful</p>
<p>10</p> <p>Structured Individual “Fun Days”</p>	<p>This is the ability of an employee to work with their supervisor to structure a day that includes only the things they love best about their job.</p>
<p>11</p> <p>Structured Individual “Quiet Days”</p>	<p>For introverts! This is the ability of an employee to work with their supervisor to structure a day that includes a quiet day where only non-interactive work is done.</p>
<p>12</p> <p>Opting in to Paid Family Medical Leave</p> <p>Public entities only</p>	<p>Association libraries, cooperative library systems, and the councils have to offer Paid Family Medical Leave.</p> <p>Public entities (municipal libraries, school district public libraries, etc.) can “opt in” to Paid Family Medical Leave, and the coverage can greatly enhance the ability of workers to take time out to</p>

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	<p>take care of their families. This can be an effective tool for attracting new workers.</p> <p>Caveat: if there is a union contract, the addition of PFML must be coordinated with the union before it is effective.</p>
<p>13</p> <p>Assurance of Insurance for accusation related to obscenity or “harmful to minors” charge (unlikely in NY, but still nerve-wracking to consider).</p>	<p>Although in NY public librarians have protection from prosecution for disseminating material “harmful to minors”, it can be reassuring to know if the library has insurance for employees accused of crimes simply for doing their job. This coverage, when included in a policy, is generally part of “Employer Coverage.” Policies should be reviewed to see if this coverage is provided and if it is, employees should have the comfort of knowing that.</p>
<p>14</p> <p>Employment Contract</p>	<p>A good way to keep any employee and to assure them of certain terms and benefits is to use an employment contract. Employers that want to use an employment contract should work with an attorney for a contract drafted expressly for their library.</p>