

## **PREAMBLE**

This Agreement (the "Agreement" or "CBA") is made between the Reader Institute for Community Journalism, Inc. ("RICJ"), publisher of the Chicago Reader, hereinafter known as the Employer, and the Chicago News Guild, Local 34071, chartered by The News Guild-Communications Workers of America (AFL-CIO, CLC), hereinafter known as the Guild, for itself and on behalf of all employees of the Employer described in Article 1 - Recognition, Coverage and Jurisdiction.

## ARTICLE 1 - RECOGNITION, COVERAGE AND JURISDICTION

**Section 1.** The Employer recognizes the Guild as the sole and exclusive bargaining agent for the purposes of collective bargaining with respect to rates of pay, hours, and other terms and conditions of employment for all employees covered by this Agreement.

**Section 2.** This Agreement covers all employees of the Employer in the Chicago Reader Editorial Department, except as provided herein. In its certification dated January 27, 2015, the National Labor Relations Board described the unit as follows:

"All full-time and regular part-time employees employed by the Employer in its Editorial Department but excluding all other employees, confidential employees, managerial employees, guards and supervisors as defined by the Act."

**Section 3.** The following are excluded from this Agreement: Editors in Chief and Managing Editors.

**Section 4.** The Guild and Employer recognize that excluded supervisors perform bargaining unit work in the Guild's jurisdiction in the Editorial Department of the Chicago Reader, and the performance of such work may continue. With the exception of the performance of bargaining unit work by excluded supervisors, and the performance of freelance work as set forth below, performance of the following shall be assigned only to employees covered by this Agreement:

- a. The kind of work normally performed and the proportion of work normally performed by the non excluded employees (everyone except the Editors in Chief, and Managing Editors of the Chicago Reader on October 12, 2017).
- b. Any kind of work similar in skill, or performing similar functions, as the kind of work normally performed and the proportion of work normally performed by the non-excluded employees (everyone except the Editors in Chief, and Managing Editors of the Chicago Reader on October 12, 2017).

**Section 5.** The Employer may continue to use freelancers in accordance with past practice. The Employer shall not utilize freelancers to perform work normally performed by full-time non-excluded employees, nor shall it utilize freelancers to replace non-excluded employees.

## **ARTICLE 2 - GUILD SHOP**

Employees who are covered by this Agreement at the time it becomes effective and who are members of the Union at that time shall be required, as a condition of continued employment, to remain members in good standing in the Union for the duration of this Agreement.

Employees covered by this Agreement, and all Employees who are hired hereafter who are not members of the Union at the time this Agreement becomes effective, shall be required to become members of the Union on the thirty-first (31st) day following the commencement of their employment, or the date of execution of this Agreement, whichever is later, and remain members in good standing. The union must notify the employer of the exact starting date of union membership.

The Union agrees to make membership in the Union on the same terms and conditions generally applicable to other members of the Union.

## ARTICLE 3 – DUES DEDUCTION

**Section 1.** Upon the Employee's voluntary written assignment, the Employer shall deduct from the salary account of such Employee and pay to the treasurer of the Guild not later than the 15th day of the month following the month in which the deductions are made, all regularly recurring membership dues levied for the previous month accompanied by a list of names of the Employees from whose salaries such deductions were made and the amount withheld from each. Such membership dues shall be deducted from the Employee's salary in accordance with a schedule certified by the treasurer of the Guild. An Employee's voluntary written assignment shall remain effective in accordance with the terms of such assignment. A sample of the form of the assignment is included below in this Agreement and is hereby made a part thereof.

**Section 2.** The dues deduction assignment shall be made upon the following form:

### ASSIGNMENT AND AUTHORIZATION TO CHECKOFF GUILD MEMBERSHIP DUES

To: Reader Institute for Community Journalism, Inc.'s Chicago Reader editorial employees covered by this assignment and authorization to check off Guild membership dues:

I hereby assign to the Treasurer of the Chicago News Guild, and direct you to pay them, the amount of my membership dues and any legal assessments which, under the law I may assign and direct you to pay and which shall accrue to the CHICAGO NEWS GUILD during the period for which this assignment and direction shall remain in effect, commencing with those accruing for the month of **[enter month]**.

An appropriate percentage of such dues and assessments shall be deducted from each paycheck. I hereby state the amount of my membership dues which so accrue to be those specified in or calculated according to the schedule heretofore filed with you by and on behalf of the CHICAGO NEWS GUILD. You are authorized to rely upon that schedule or any new schedule or schedules which may be filed with you by or on behalf of the CHICAGO NEWS GUILD specifying the amount of membership dues and assessments to be paid by members of the Guild Bi-weekly earnings, as that term may be used in any such schedule, shall include only regular straight-time weekly pay, excluding overtime.

The assignment and authorization shall remain in effect until revoked by me, but shall be irrevocable for a period of one year from the date appearing below or until the termination of the collective bargaining agreement between yourself and the Guild, whichever occurs sooner. further agree and direct that this assignment and authorization shall be continued automatically and shall be irrevocable for successive periods of one year or for the period of such applicable collective bargaining agreement between yourself and the Guild, whichever period shall be shorter, unless written notice of its revocation is given by me to yourself and to the Guild by

registered mail not more than thirty (30) days and not less than fifteen (15) days prior to the expiration of each period of one year, or of each applicable collective bargaining agreement between yourself and the Guild, whichever occurs sooner. Such notice of revocation shall become effective for the calendar month following the calendar month in which you receive it.

I authorize and assign the Reader Institute for Community Journalism, Inc. to deduct dues in accordance with the terms of this aforementioned procedure by the pay period following fourteen (14) calendar days after I have signed this authorization and assignment.

Employee's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **ARTICLE 4 - STRUCK WORK**

An employee shall not be required to go through picket lines established by a union on strike sanctioned by its international union, should such sanction be required, nor shall an employee be required to perform work for any struck publication.

## **ARTICLE 5 - INFORMATION TO UNION**

**Section 1.** For collective bargaining purposes, the Employer shall furnish in writing to the Guild, within one week after a new employee is hired, the following information: name; address; phone number; date of hire; whether full-time, part-time or temporary; job title; gender; minority group; date of birth; classification and experience rating; experience rating anniversary date; and salary.

**Section 2.** For collective bargaining purposes, the Employer shall furnish in writing to the Guild, within one week after an employee terminates employment, the date and reason of said termination.

## ARTICLE 6 - PERSONNEL FILE

**Section 1.** An employee's personnel file is available for his or her inspection. Employees should contact Human Resources to make an appointment if they wish to review their file.

**Section 2.** Employees are responsible for notifying Human Resources of changes in address, telephone number, and/or family status (birth, marriage, death, divorce, legal separation, etc.) as income tax status and group insurance may be affected by these changes. This responsibility includes employees on leave of absence status. The employee should update all personal information in the Gusto payroll system.

See Personnel File Request Form and Address Change form attached.

### PERSONNEL FILE REQUEST

Date:

Received in HR:

Employee Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(please print)*

Telephone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_, request to review my personnel file.  
*(Employee Signature)*

I understand the Human Resources Department will comply with this request within five business days from the date this letter is received.

Appointment Scheduled: \_\_\_\_\_

Human Resources Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## ARTICLE 7 - HIRING AND ADVANCEMENT

**Section 1.** In the event the Employer finds it necessary to fill vacancies or requires additional Employees in covered positions in the Editorial Department, the Employer shall post the vacancies and notify the Guild of such vacancies. The posting shall include the job opening to be filled, the description of the job, and the qualifications of said job. The Guild or Guild-covered Employees may thereupon submit to the Employer, within seven (7) calendar days of such notification, a list or lists specifying the names and experience of such candidates for such positions. Such candidates shall be considered along with applicants from other sources for such job openings. The RICJ is an equal opportunity employer regardless of race, creed, color, age, gender expression or identity, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, marital status, veteran status, disability, parental status, or immigration status. RICJ shares the Guild's goal for having a diverse and inclusive organization. For each bargaining unit position, the Chicago Reader will interview at least two women and/or members of traditionally underrepresented groups who meet the minimum qualifications and applied in a timely manner for the position. Any group that is more than 50 percent of the bargaining unit is not considered an underrepresented group. The Employer shall grant at least one interview to any Employee in the bargaining unit who possesses the minimum qualifications for the position and who indicates an interest in the posted position, provided the employee applies for the position through the application process during the time period the application is open.

The Employer agrees to work with the Guild or Guild-covered employees to encourage internal promotions and/or lateral moves. However, the Employer will actively recruit for positions that have been vacated.

**Section 2.** It shall be the policy of the Employer in selecting new Employees to extend equal opportunity to all applicants regardless of their age, sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, marital or parental status, family relationship, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or political belief, mental or physical disabilities, which may be reasonably accommodated.

**Section 3.** It shall be the policy of the Employer to actively recruit women and members of minority groups for all positions covered by this Agreement and to make a strong effort to achieve through its affirmative action program a workforce reflecting the composition of minorities in the metropolitan area. In the event of a reduction in force, the Employer and the Guild will meet prior to the effective date of any such reduction for the purpose of ensuring the reduction does not disproportionately impact any one group.

## ARTICLE 8 - PART-TIME AND TEMPORARY

**Section 1.** A part-time employee is one who works on average between twenty (20) hours and twenty-nine (29) hours per week over the course of a twenty-six-week period. A part-time or temporary employee shall be paid on an hourly basis equivalent to the weekly salary provided set forth in Article 13 – General Wage Provisions. The Employer must, at the time of hire of a temporary or part-time employee, determine placement in that salary schedule based on the employee's previous experience in comparable employment.

A temporary employee is one employed, by way of example, to work on a special project or to fill a temporary vacancy created by a medical leave or a personal leave. Contractors are not included in the definition of Temporary Employees for purposes of this Agreement. Temporary employees shall not be employed for longer than three (3) months, but the duration of employment may be extended by mutual agreement of the parties to accommodate longer-term absences. The Guild shall be notified in writing as to the nature of such a project and its duration. The provisions of this Article do not include Hourly Copy Editing, Contractors, or Freelancers.

**Section 2.** A temporary employee shall not be employed for work normally or appropriately performed by a regular part-time or full-time employee, nor where, in effect, such employment would eliminate or displace a regular part-time or full-time employee. Temporary employees employed for more than sixty (60) days shall be required to become members of the Guild on the sixty-first (61st) day following the commencement of their employment. The termination of such temporary employees shall not be subject to the grievance and arbitration procedure. During the term of temporary employment, temporary employees shall receive all the benefits of this Agreement except notice pay, insurance, vacation, or Paid Time Off and pension (if applicable).

A part-time employee who works shall receive all benefits provided at the time of execution of this Agreement, including, but not limited to, pro rata vacation benefits and ability to carry over up to one week of vacation; holiday pay and sick time allotment and carryover shall be in accordance with the City of Chicago and State of Illinois Sick Leave Ordinances. Part-time employees are entitled to full health insurance benefits.

**Section 3.** The Employer intends to hire fellows or other staff members for positions funded directly and solely by a fellowship or a grant ("Grant Funded Employees") and such Grant Funded Employees will be covered by the terms of this Collective Bargaining Agreement with the exception of Article 10 of the CBA (the layoff procedure) and Article 21 (Parenting Leave). Instead of the CBA's layoff procedure applying, without limiting rights of termination for cause, any Grant Funded Employee will have their employment terminated when the funds for the fellowship or grant expire. The potential for this termination shall be made clear in job postings for Grant Funded positions. Members of the bargaining unit who are not currently Grant Funded Employees shall not be moved into that funding category during the duration of this Agreement. As of the date hereof, the only Grant Funded Employee is D-M Brown.

**Section 4.** Notwithstanding the foregoing, D-M Brown shall not be deemed a Grant Funded Employee for purposes of Section 3. However, should the position currently occupied by D-M

Brown be filled by another person for any reason, then that position shall be deemed Grant Funded.

## ARTICLE 9 - DISCIPLINE AND DISCHARGE

**Section 1.** Discipline and discharge may be for good and sufficient cause, or to reduce the workforce, but shall not be made solely as a result of putting this Agreement into effect.

**Section 2.** Upon dismissal, an Employee making a written request within four (4) working days shall receive in writing from the Employer, or its representative, a statement of the cause of discharge.

**Section 3.** There shall be neither dismissal of nor other discrimination against any Employee because of their membership or activity in the Guild, nor because of age, sex, race, creed, color, national origin, religion, non-job-related disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or veteran status. Age, sex race, creed, color, national origin, religion, non-job-related disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression or veteran status shall not be a consideration in any element of wages and salaries, promotions or conditions of employment.

**Section 4.** A new Employee shall be a probationary Employee for a period of sixty (60) working days. The dismissal of an Employee during the Employee's probationary period shall not be subject to the provisions of Sections 1 and 2 of this Article and shall not be subject to review under Article 12 - Grievance Procedure.

**Section 5.** When discipline is less than dismissal, no Employee shall be subjected by the Employer to a fine issued by the Employer or an unpaid suspension as a step in the disciplinary process or as a disciplinary measure. In general, without limiting Employer's rights under Section 1 of this Article 9, the procedure for progressive discipline shall be as follows:

- A. Oral Warning
- B. First Written Warning
- C. Final Written Warning
- D. Dismissal

Incidents of severe misconduct may result in skipping steps in progressive discipline procedure, including incidents which may be grounds for immediate dismissal.

## ARTICLE 10 - LAYOFFS

**Section 1.** The Employer agrees to give the Guild at least two week's notice of its intention to effect dismissal to reduce the workforce, stating the affected employees. This time period may be extended by mutual agreement during such notice period; the Employer shall meet with the Guild and consider any suggestions made by the Guild with a view to reducing or avoiding such layoffs. Within the period, any employee may indicate to the Guild a willingness to resign voluntarily, provided the total of such resignations shall not exceed the number of proposed layoffs. The parties understand the employer is not obligated to accept any such resignations as a substitute for a layoff. At the end of the notice period, such number of employees to be dismissed to reduce the force, after the impact of any such resignations and/or implementation of any alternative dismissals have been assessed, shall be notified. Such dismissals shall be effective at the end of the notice period. Determination of employees to be dismissed in accordance with this provision shall be done in the following manner:

The Employer shall prepare a list of employees and rank such affected employees in the order of their seniority of employment with the Employer.

**Section 2.** Layoffs shall be in inverse seniority order. The Employer may lay off out of seniority order when an employee has demonstrated special abilities or qualifications for particular functions, or when an employee occupies a role such that remaining employees could not reasonably be expected to take on their responsibilities in the event of a layoff.

**Section 3.** Seniority shall mean length of continuous employment with the Reader Editorial Department, including time prior to the acquisition of the Reader by the Employer. Each employee dismissed to reduce the force, or who voluntarily resigns under the terms of this Agreement, shall be placed on a rehiring list for a period of six months and shall be rehired according to seniority for the same or comparable jobs when such openings occur. Time spent on a rehiring list by a dismissed employee shall not constitute a break in continuity of service, but shall not be counted as service time for any purpose under this Agreement.

## **ARTICLE 11 - SEVERANCE PAY**

**Section 1.** In the event an Employee is dismissed to reduce the workforce for economic conditions or a shortage of work, any Employee who has completed the 60-day probationary period shall be entitled to receive three weeks of severance, in addition to payment for any accrued but unused vacation and payment for all hours worked through the last day of employment.

## ARTICLE 12 - GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

**Section 1.** The Guild and Employer shall designate respective committees of their own choosing to take up any matter arising from the application of this Agreement or affecting the relations of an employee and the Employer. Both sides shall have no more than two representatives on the committee unless mutually agreed by the Employer and the Guild.

**Section 2.** The parties agree to meet within fifteen (15) business days after request for such meeting by either the Employer or the Guild.

**Section 3.** Any matter involving the interpretation, application, administration or alleged violation of this Agreement (except renewal of this Agreement), including any question whether a matter is arbitrable, not satisfactorily settled within 45 days of its first consideration may be submitted to final and binding arbitration by either party. Such arbitration shall be conducted pursuant to the voluntary labor arbitration rules of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. The panel must be made up of arbitrators who are members of the National Academy of Arbitrators. Each side has the right to strike one panel. The costs of such arbitration shall be borne equally by the parties, except that no party shall be obligated to pay any part of the cost of a stenographic transcript without express consent.

**Section 4.** Upon mutual agreement of the parties, any matter described in Section 3 above shall be submitted to expedited arbitration. Such final and binding arbitration shall be conducted pursuant to the expedited labor arbitration rules of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service. The panel must be made up of arbitrators who are members of the National Academy of Arbitrators. The costs of such expedited arbitration shall be borne equally by the parties, except that no party shall be obligated to pay any part of the cost of a stenographic transcript without express consent.

## ARTICLE 13 - GENERAL WAGE PROVISIONS

**Section 1.** The following salary schedule shall be in effect for all full-time union employees. This pay schedule represents pay equity and ensures proper hiring practices for new and existing employees.

### Classification and pay schedule

Title	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Editors	\$60,000	\$63,000	\$66,000	\$69,000	\$72,000	\$75,000
Production/Art Department Staff	\$57,500	\$60,500	\$63,500	\$66,500	\$69,500	\$72,500
All other titles	\$55,000	\$58,000	\$61,000	\$64,000	\$67,000	\$70,000

### Levels defined by years of service:

- I - Beginning of year one (1) to end of year two (2) of employment
- II - Beginning of year three (3) to end of year four (4) of employment
- III - Beginning of year five (5) to end of year six (6) of employment
- IV - Beginning of year seven (7) to end of year eight (8) of employment
- V - Beginning of year nine (9) to end of year ten (10) of employment
- VI - Eleven (11) years of employment and beyond

“Years of service” shall be defined as the period of continuous employment by the *Chicago Reader* and its successors and thus is not limited to time since the formation of the present Employer (the Reader Institute for Community Journalism).

**Section 2.** Employees receive a five (5) percent wage increase to their base salaries on February 1, 2025. The five (5) percent wage increase will also apply to the pay schedule set forth in Section 1.

**Section 3.** Part-time annual salaries shall be calculated proportionally based on Section 1 of Article 14.

**Section 4. No Pay Cuts.** There shall be no reduction in salaries.

**Section 5. Maintenance of Differentials.** Subsequent to the execution of this

agreement (not upon execution), an employee paid above the highest rate in the wage schedule (Level VI) shall maintain the same dollar differential above the highest rate in the wage schedule when that rate is increased.

**Section 6. Merit Increases.** The Employer reserves the right to pay an employee at a rate higher than their current rate in the pay schedule at its discretion.

## ARTICLE 14 - HOURS AND OVERTIME

**Section 1.** The work week shall be defined as forty (40) hours of work Sunday through Saturday, except as noted in Section 8 below. Employees are entitled to four hours of respite per week.

**Section 2.** Overtime must be authorized by the Employer or its representative. A request by a supervisor to an employee who is not otherwise authorized to remain on the job beyond their normal working hours in any workweek shall constitute authorization of overtime.

**Section 3.** Overtime shall be all time worked beyond the regular working hours specified in Section 1. With the exception of columnists, critics, and artists, all employees who work approved overtime will be paid at time and a half beyond 40 worked hours in one week. Columnists, critics, and artists have the option of receiving paid overtime at time and a half or compensatory time at the same number of hours worked beyond 40 hours.

**Section 4.** No employee shall be required to work more than twelve (12) hours in a twenty-four-hour period unless the employee and her/his supervisor mutually agree otherwise.

**Section 5.** The Employer and employee shall cooperate in the keeping of records of overtime. Overtime shall be reported promptly in writing to the employee's immediate superior, and if so reported by the next Monday following the overtime worked, shall be paid on the next payday. The employee or their supervisor must fill out an [Overtime Submission Form](#) online.

**Section 6.** Travel time to and from authorized out-of-town assignments shall be considered working time. When allowed, all travel should be scheduled during the operational hours of 8 am - 5 pm CST.

**Section 7.** The following hours of work are in effect through **the end of the contract**.

- From Memorial Day through Labor Day, all full-time employees are allowed to work a 36-hour work week. Employees are entitled to four hours of respite per week.
- Part-time employees who work at least 20 hours per week but less than 30 hours per week will receive two hours of respite time.
- The schedule of Memorial Day through Labor Day will be referred to as "Summer Hours" and will be effective until the Friday of the holiday week.

**Section 8.** If attendance at an in-person meeting is required, a remote option **may** be provided. An employee can arrange with their supervisor to not attend the meeting, if there are circumstances that would constitute a reasonable absence. All employees are encouraged to attend all-staff and in-person meetings.

**Section 9.** Employees have the option to work from home, in any other remote location, or in the RICJ office. Management cannot require employees to work in the RICJ office. Employer requires all permanent staff members to reside in the Chicago and Chicagoland areas, unless otherwise identified by job postings or position requirements.

**Section 10.** Return to Office Working Group: The Employer will establish a working group to assess piloting a program to have groups of employees return to the office to foster collaborative working conditions.

## ARTICLE 15 - VACATION

**Section 1.** The Employer shall continue the current vacation accrual schedule and policies now in effect, summarized below, and no changes shall be made without written agreement of the Guild, with the understanding that employees with twenty (20) or more years of continuous service shall receive a vacation bonus of \$325. The vacation bonus is a one-time-per-year, lump-sum payout, provided on or about July 1st only to then currently employed full-time Employees.

**Section 2.** All vacations must be scheduled in advance with the Employee's manager. Vacations will be scheduled to accommodate the Employer's needs and, to the extent possible, the Employee's own needs as well. The final determination of vacation schedules is the Employee's manager's responsibility.

**Section 3.** Except for new employees in their first year of service, whose vacation days accrue as explained in Section 6, the vacation days for other employees will become immediately available upon January 1<sup>st</sup> of each year. However, should the employee's employment terminate during the year, any unused vacation will be compensated on a prorated basis.

**Section 4.** The employee can roll over 10 days of unused vacation to the following year.

**Section 5. Part-Time Employees:** Part-time Employees will receive vacation benefits on a pro rata basis of what is provided to a full-time Employee. Part-time Employees will not receive a vacation bonus.

### Section 6. Vacation Accrual (Employees hired after Jan 1, 2024)

Upon ratification, new employees will accrue 1.538 hours of vacation for every full work week for the first year of employment, adjusted for part-time employees as specified in Section 5. At their anniversary, they will receive a fraction of 120 hours vacation determined by the portion of the year remaining, rounded up to the nearest month. Example: If the employee's first anniversary of work falls in August, five months (including August, with the rounding up) remain in the year, and the employee shall receive 5/12 of 120 hours, accrued all at once as described in Section 3. In the example, this works out to precisely 50 hours; in cases where the math is less clean, vacation time shall be rounded up or down to the nearest hour. Upon the employee reaching the subsequent January 1st ("Beginning of year 2"), the chart below comes into effect. There is no waiting period to request or use vacation hours accrued.

Years of Service	Vacation Hours for Full-Time Employees	
Beginning of year 2 until the end of year 3	120	
Beginning of year 4 until the end of year 6	160	
Beginning of year 7 and beyond	200	

## ARTICLE 16 - SICK LEAVE

**Section 1.** The Employer shall implement the following sick leave accrual schedule and policies, summarized below and attached hereto, and no changes shall be made without written agreement of the Guild.

**Section 2. Sick days. Employees shall receive sick days as follows.**

- Number of sick days per calendar year: 12 (twelve) days available January 1 of each year. Sick leave benefits are specifically restricted to employee-related illness and medical needs as well as illness and medical needs of dependents in the employee's care, to take care of a family member, and to address domestic violence and public health emergencies. In the event of illness or emergency that prevents you from requesting sick leave in advance, you must provide notice as soon as practicable. If you are unable to provide notice in the case of unforeseeable leave, you may have someone provide notice on your behalf.
- Sick days are available to be used between January 1 and December 31. Up to three sick days (24 hours) can be carried over into a new calendar year. If the Cook County Sick Leave Ordinance provides more sick days and/or sick leave carry for any given employee than this provision, then the former will determine the number of sick days/and or sick leave carry over.
- New employees, in their first year of employment, will receive sick time after sixty (60) days of employment.
- The employer is planning to roll out a Employee Sick Leave bank in 2025, that allows employees to donate anticipated unused hours to an employee bank, for employees who may need additional sick leave for them or their families. This process must be reviewed by our legal team.

## ARTICLE 17 - SHORT-TERM DISABILITY AND FMLA

**Section 1. Short-term disability (STD).** 8 weeks at 100% of salary paid; additional 10 weeks at 50% of salary paid, after which an employee may enroll in COBRA and go on unpaid leave for up to 3 months; at the end of that time the position may be refilled.

- A. All employees looking to utilize short-term disability are required to have a physician complete a short-term disability form. A copy of this form will be retained in the employees personnel file. The employee must provide medical certification of the disability that includes the start and expected end date of the disability. This certification must be submitted to human resources.
- B. After short-term disability pay is fully exhausted, an employee's eligibility for short-term disability pay will be reinstated one full year from the date on employee's physician "return to work" statement.
- C. Return to Work - The employee must return to work as soon as permitted by his or her healthcare provider.

**Section 2. FMLA leave.** Employees are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job protected leave in accordance with the FMLA as of the date of the execution of the Agreement. An employee whose absence has been designated as Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) leave is eligible for reinstatement as provided by the FMLA.

## **ARTICLE 18 - PAID LEAVE FOR ALL WORKERS ACT (PLAWA)**

As of January 2024, Illinois law requires employers to give employees five days (40 hours) of paid leave per year. While Federal/State and Local laws request a 90-day waiting period, RICJ allows for PLAWA days to take effect on the first day of employment, and we allow for six days (48 hours) per staff member.

## ARTICLE 19 - HOLIDAYS

**Section 1.** Each Employee shall have the following holidays with full pay, including the Employee's birthday or another day mutually agreed upon in advance between the Employer and the Employee:

New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, Juneteenth, Independence Day plus one additional day as designated by the Employer, Labor Day, Indigenous People's Day, Thanksgiving Day, Friday after Thanksgiving, Christmas Day, the working days between December 25<sup>th</sup> and January 1<sup>st</sup>, and one floating holiday, a day that is mutually agreed upon in advance between the Employee and Employer.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Indigenous People's Day, and Juneteenth are Company observed holidays, but if an employee is unable to use the holiday on the designated holiday, it will be treated as a floating holiday and should be celebrated on or within thirty (30) days thereafter, a day that is agreed upon in advance between the Employee and the Employer.

**Section 2.** Holidays that fall on Saturday and Sunday will be recognized as they are observed by the federal government.

**Section 3.** Any Employee who is scheduled to work on any such holiday and is not required to work on that day shall be paid regular straight-time pay for that day.

**Section 4.** Any Employee whose regular day off falls on a holiday and who is not required to work shall receive one day's regular straight-time pay for the holiday in addition to all applicable pay for hours worked in such week.

**Section 5.** At the option of the Employee, the Employee may designate an alternate day as compensation for the holiday instead of an additional day of pay. If the holiday is not taken or paid for by advance mutual agreement of the Employer and the Employee within six (6) months of the day celebrated as the holiday it can be scheduled by the Employer upon not less than fourteen (14) days' notice to the Employee or paid in cash at the Employer's sole discretion.

**Section 6.** Any Employee REQUIRED to work on a federally recognized or RICJ designated holiday due to publication deadlines will have the choice of the following:

- A. Any Employee required by their supervisor to work on any such holiday shall be paid one and a half times the regular straight-time rate on such holiday shifts.
- B. The Employer intends to create a workflow where the following is unnecessary, but at the option of the Employee, the Employee may designate an alternate day off as compensation for the holiday. This may be done even if the Employee elects to work the holiday to meet deadlines, without their supervisor requiring such work. In the event that the holiday work is required by a supervisor, the Employee has the choice of taking an alternate day off or being paid the one and a half times straight-time rate.
- C. If the holiday is not taken or paid for by advance mutual agreement of the Employer and the Employee within six (6) weeks of the day celebrated as

the holiday it can be scheduled by the Employer upon not less than fourteen (14) days' notice to the Employee or paid in cash at the Employer's sole discretion.

**Section 7.** In weeks in which such holidays occur, any Employee required to work on a scheduled day off which is not a holiday shall be compensated therefore at the overtime rate. Regular days off shall not be changed during holiday weeks solely to avoid payment of the overtime rate.

**Section 8.** These provisions shall apply only when the majority of the hours of the particular shift worked falls within such holiday period.

## ARTICLE 20 - HEALTH CARE

**Section 1.** The Employer shall continue the current insurance options (including, but not limited to medical, dental, and vision) and policies now in effect, contributing eighty per cent (80%) to the monthly premium. No changes shall be made without written agreement of the Guild.

**Section 2.** If the Employer negotiates a new medical plan or plans or other insurance coverage for employees of the Chicago Reader Guild-covered employees of the Chicago Reader shall be offered the opportunity to participate in said plan(s) on a same-as basis, or may continue to participate in the plans currently offered.

**Section 3.** The News Guild shall have the right to withdraw from the Company plan and take over the administration of their health care plan at any time during the Agreement term, after providing the Company sixty (60) days' written notice of intent to withdraw. Should the Guild choose to withdraw from the Company plan, the Company agrees to contribute an amount equal to the Company contribution, for such full-time and part-time employees towards single, dual or family coverage, in place at the time of the withdrawal until the end of the term of this Collective Bargaining Agreement. It is understood and agreed thereafter, the sole obligation of the Company is to send the agreed upon contribution and the appropriate employee deduction, to the News Guild selected health care provider(s).

## ARTICLE 21 - RETIREMENT SAVINGS ACCOUNT

**Section 1.** RICJ will maintain an employer-sponsored or state-sponsored qualified retirement savings plan (the Plan) for all Employees. RICJ will match the contributions of employees who have completed six (6) months of employment. Employer will match 100% of the employee contribution, up to a maximum of 3% employee annual salary, beginning on September 9, 2024. Employee deadline to make changes must be completed and submitted to HR by August 1, 2024.

Employees will be fully vested in the plan (meaning they keep RICJ contributions if they leave the company) after one year of service.

## ARTICLE 22 - EXPENSES AND EQUIPMENT

**Section 1.** The Employer shall pay all authorized and legitimate expenses incurred by an Employee during the course of their assigned duties in accordance with the Employer's expense reimbursement policies and procedures. On Press Deadline Night only, the employer shall reimburse employees who are required to work between 9:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. for taxi or ride hailing services. Expense account procedures should be submitted for approval by the first Tuesday after the week in which the expenses are incurred. Necessary working equipment shall be supplied to all Employees.

**Section 2.** Short-term Internet subsidy. All employees will receive a \$50/month subsidy for the use of Internet.

## ARTICLE 23 - UNPAID LEAVES OF ABSENCE

**Section 1.** By arrangement with the Employer, Employees may be granted leaves of absence. Such leaves will be unpaid and shall not count as service time with the Employer.

**Section 2.** If an Employee is selected or elected to hold office on a full-time basis in The (International) Newspaper Guild (CWA) or the Chicago (Local) News Guild, the Employee shall, upon request, receive a leave of absence, without pay or benefits, provided no more than one full-time staff member shall be entitled to such leave, which shall not be longer than one year. However, such leaves may be extended upon application if approved by the Employer. Such leave shall not count as service time. The Employer shall have the right to replace the Employee who receives the leave of absence.

**Section 3.** An Employee elected as a delegate to The (International) Newspaper Guild (CWA) convention by arrangement with the Employer shall receive a leave of absence, without pay, of up to two weeks. No more than one full-time staff member shall be entitled to such leave. Such leave shall count as service time.

## **ARTICLE 24 - PARENTING LEAVE**

The Employer will provide sixteen (16) weeks of paid leave at a 100% of salary to be taken within the first year of the birth or adoption of a child by employee. Upon completion of Parenting Leave under this Section, employees are eligible to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid leave in accordance with the FMLA as of the date of the execution of the Agreement.

## ARTICLE 25 - JURY DUTY

**Section 1.** Employees must notify their supervisor immediately upon receipt of a jury summons so that arrangements can be made for the absence.

**Section 2.** Employees must provide their supervisor with a copy of the summons.

**Section 3.** When court is not in session or when the employee's presence as a juror is not required, it is the employee's responsibility to return to work whenever a reasonable amount of time is left in the workday.

**Section 4.** Employees are required to report to work if they are excused from jury duty.

**Section 5.** In order to be paid for jury duty leave, employees must endorse their jury duty paycheck over to the employer and submit it to the Payroll Department.

**Section 6.** Employees serving on jury duty will receive your regular straight time pay for a maximum period of such jury duty service for up to two (2) weeks.

## ARTICLE 26 - MILITARY LEAVE

**Section 1.** Employees who volunteer for active duty, are involuntarily activated into a branch or the armed services, or are a member of a reserve component of the armed forces of the United States or the National Guard, will be granted an unpaid leave of absence from their position to meet training, active or reserve military requirements. The Employer will grant such leave in accordance with applicable federal and state laws.

### A. Procedures

- a. The Employer requires that employees give as much notice as possible prior to a military leave unless called up on an emergency basis.
- b. Notice of military training or orders should be submitted in advance to the employee's supervisor with the Military Leave Request Form. You can request a Military Leave Request Form from the Human Resources Department.

### B. Benefits for Those on Military Leave

- a. Employees on a Military Leave of Absence may be eligible to continue their medical and other benefits. The Human Resources Department should be contacted for specific guidelines.

**Section 2.** Employees in the reserves or National Guard will receive the option of taking training time off without pay or using earned vacation during the required military training period. Employees returning from reservist training, active military duty, or National Guard training will be reinstated according to federal and state laws.

## ARTICLE 27 - FUNERAL LEAVE

**Section 1.** Employees are eligible for funeral leave with pay for up to five consecutive or non consecutive regularly scheduled working days (including the day of the funeral), due to a death in the immediate family. "Immediate family" is defined as a spouse, domestic partner, parent, step-parent, aunt, uncle, grandparent, natural, step- or adopted child, grandchild, sibling or sibling-in-law, mother-in-law, father-in-law, chosen family, and any adult who stood in loco parentis (in the place of a parent) to the employee during childhood.

**Section 2.** Employees must notify their supervisor immediately if a family member dies and indicate when they expect to be absent from work.

**Section 3.** A request for an extension of Funeral Leave must be filed with the employee's supervisor and, if granted, will be handled as an Excused Leave of Absence.

## **ARTICLE 28 - PAID SABBATICAL**

The employer commits to form a working group for the purposes of establishing a company policy regarding paid sabbatical. This working group may convene during meetings of the employee-leadership (also known as the labor-management) committee.

## **ARTICLE 29 - HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Employer agrees to make every reasonable effort to ensure that the employer's place of business, including employee's workplace area on premises, is in conformity with federal, state and local health and safety laws/regulations.

## **ARTICLE 30 - UNUSUAL RISK**

**Section 1.** No employee shall be required without his/her consent to work at unusual risk of injury, disease or death.

**Section 2.** An employee assigned to duty at the scene of domestic rioting or civil commotion where there is clear and present danger of gunfire or other deadly assault shall receive additional death and dismemberment insurance.

**Section 3.** An employee assigned to work involving unusual risk shall be provided with all protection and protective devices the Employer deems essential to the assignment.

**Section 4.** An employee, provided he/she communicates with a supervisor, shall not be docked for the time lost if he/she is unable to report to work because of domestic rioting or civil commotion.

## **ARTICLE 31 – PRIVILEGE AGAINST DISCLOSURE AND AUTHENTICATION**

**Section 1.** The Employer shall continue the present practice of providing legal representation to Employees involved in legal matters concerning libel or surrendering or disclosing information relating to the news-gathering function within the scope of their employment. The Employer reserves the right to make final decisions concerning the scope, intent and direction of such legal representation.

**Section 2.** When a demand for disclosure of information relating to the news-gathering function is made upon an Employee by a federal, state or municipal court, grand jury, agency, department, commission or legislative body, such Employee shall notify promptly the Employer, or if the demand is made upon the Employer, the Employer shall notify promptly the Employee.

Following such notification, the Employer's counsel will be consulted and, if their advice is followed, the Employer agrees to indemnify such Employee against any penalties or judgments if such action results from the proper pursuit of the Employee's duties. In libel matters, when the Employer assumes the Employee's defense and the Employee cooperates fully with the Employer's counsel in presenting the defense, the Employer agrees to indemnify the Employee against any penalties or judgments, if such action results from the proper pursuit of the Employee's duties.

## **ARTICLE 32 - OUTSIDE WORK**

**Section 1.** Employees of the Employer shall be free to engage in outside work outside of working hours provided such work is not in competition with the Employer and provided further that no employee shall exploit his/her connection with the Employer without the consent of the Employer.

**Section 2.** The Employer and the Guild concur that employees and managers must refrain from engaging in practices which are inconsistent with accepted journalist ethics as defined by a jointly negotiated ethics policy between the Guild and the Employer.

## **ARTICLE 33 - NO STRIKE/NO LOCKOUT**

During the term of this Agreement, the Parties agree that the Bargaining Unit Members shall not engage in a strike, slowdown, or other work stoppage, and the Guild Bargaining Unit Leadership at the Reader shall not instigate, encourage, or condone the same. Further, the Reader agrees that it shall not lock out bargaining unit members.

## **ARTICLE 34 -UNION REPRESENTATION ON COMPANY BOARD**

The Chicago News Guild will have up to one nonvoting representative who will serve on the Editorial Committee of the Board.

## **Article 35 – EMPLOYEE/LEADERSHIP COMMITTEE**

An employee/leadership advisory committee will be formed to review and advise on policies. This committee will include up to three unit members as well as management representatives and may include non-unit staff at the Employer's discretion. This committee must meet monthly each year. Additional meetings may be scheduled with agreement by all parties.

Meetings will be called and a written agenda therefore provided to all committee members at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting. The committee may establish procedures for meeting management.

## **ARTICLE 36 - GUILD BUSINESS**

**Section 1.** The RICJ bargaining unit of the Chicago News Guild will be afforded a total of up to three hours to conduct union meetings twice a month during work time.

**Section 2.** Guild officers will have the right to meet with any new employee in the RICJ bargaining unit during work time for an onboarding process that will last up to 30 minutes within the first three weeks of RICJ hiring the employee.

## **ARTICLE 37 - PROHIBITION OF THE USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

**Section 1.** Independent of the Guild's jurisdiction as established in Article 1, the Employer is prohibited from using artificial intelligence (AI) to perform any tasks affecting members of the unit, unless the Employer seeks and is granted majority assent from the bargaining unit. The parties may jointly agree to form a Committee to discuss what AI resources the RICJ and Employees use (and how) to aid them in the work currently being performed.

## ARTICLE 38 - DURATION AND RENEWAL

**Section 1.** With the exception of articles included in the Side Letter, this Agreement shall commence on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of February, 2024, and expire the 31<sup>st</sup> day of January, 2026, and shall inure to the benefit of and be binding upon the successors and assigns of the Employer.

**Section 2.** Within sixty (60) days prior to the expiration date of this Agreement, the Guild may initiate negotiations for a new Agreement. The terms and conditions of this Agreement shall remain in effect until such negotiations are lawfully terminated or upon execution of a new agreement.

### Reader Institute for Community Journalism

Solomon Lieberman

Signature

Solomon Lieberman

Name

CEO & Publisher

Title

09-04-2024

Date

### The Chicago Guild



Signature

Philip Montoro

Name

Unit cochair

Title

09-03-2024

Date



Signature

Katie Prout

Name

Unit cochair

Title

09-03-2024

Date

## The Chicago Guild (continued)

*K. Cardoza*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Kerry Cardoza  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Unit cochair  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title  
\_\_\_\_\_  
09-03-2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

*Audrey Grinum*  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Title  
\_\_\_\_\_  
09-03-2024  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

## SIDE LETTER

August 23, 2024

Mr. Craig Rosenbaum  
Executive Director  
Chicago News Guild  
1 North State Street, 15th Floor  
Chicago, IL 60601

Dear Mr. Rosenbaum:

This Side Letter memorializes that the Chicago News Guild and the *Chicago Reader* (RICJ) agree that the following provisions in the Collective Bargaining Agreement will not be retroactive to February 1, 2024, but will take effect upon the date that the parties actually execute the Collective Bargaining Agreement.

- A. Article 13: General Wage Provision
- B. Article 15: Vacation
- C. Article 20: Healthcare
- D. Article 21: Retirement Savings Account
- E. Article 22: Expenses and Equipment
- F. Article 24: Parenting Leave\*

\* With an exception for Kerry Cardoza.

Sincerely,

**Reader Institute for Community  
Journalism**

Solomon Lieberman  
Signature

Solomon Lieberman  
Name

CEO & Publisher  
Title

09-04-2024  
Date

**The Chicago Guild**

  
Signature

Philip Montoro  
Name

Unit cochair  
Title

09-03-2024  
Date

## The Chicago Guild (continued)



Signature

Katie Prout

Name

Unit cochair

Title

09-03-2024

Date



Signature

Kerry Cardoza

Name

Unit cochair

Title

09-03-2024

Date



Signature

Andy Grimm

Name

Local President

Title

09-03-2024

Date

# Signature Certificate

Reference number: JCJPW-HBG3G-PDOE2-NFMZD

## Signer

## Timestamp

## Signature

### Kerry Cardoza

Email: kerry.cardoza@gmail.com

Sent: 03 Sep 2024 14:12:25 UTC  
Viewed: 03 Sep 2024 14:26:41 UTC  
Signed: 03 Sep 2024 14:28:10 UTC

#### Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 03 Sep 2024 14:26:41 UTC



IP address: 24.136.9.27  
Location: Chicago, United States

### Katie Prout

Email: kathryn.prout@gmail.com

Sent: 03 Sep 2024 14:12:25 UTC  
Viewed: 03 Sep 2024 15:24:02 UTC  
Signed: 03 Sep 2024 15:25:01 UTC

#### Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 03 Sep 2024 15:24:02 UTC



IP address: 73.8.254.231  
Location: Chicago, United States

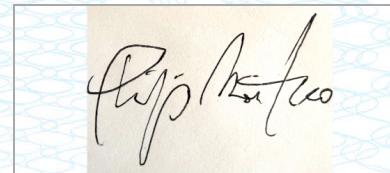
### Philip Montoro

Email: kt27kn@gmail.com

Sent: 03 Sep 2024 14:12:25 UTC  
Viewed: 03 Sep 2024 21:07:33 UTC  
Signed: 03 Sep 2024 21:16:07 UTC

#### Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 03 Sep 2024 21:07:33 UTC



IP address: 24.148.46.113  
Location: Chicago, United States

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## Signer

## Timestamp

## Signature

### Andy Grimm

Email: president@chicagonewsguild.org

Sent: 03 Sep 2024 14:12:25 UTC  
Viewed: 03 Sep 2024 22:28:09 UTC  
Signed: 03 Sep 2024 22:29:36 UTC

### Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 03 Sep 2024 22:28:09 UTC



IP address: 149.75.48.107  
Location: Chicago, United States

### Solomon Lieberman

Email: slieberman@chicagoreader.com

Sent: 03 Sep 2024 14:12:25 UTC  
Viewed: 04 Sep 2024 13:59:04 UTC  
Signed: 04 Sep 2024 14:01:08 UTC

### Recipient Verification:

✓ Email verified 04 Sep 2024 13:59:04 UTC



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Location: Park Ridge, United States

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