ARTICLE 15 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The County encourages professional development of all nurses and expects each nurse to attend training annually, whenever possible. Nurses are responsible for maintaining current required licensure and certifications. Department Director Health-Department Director/Health-Center-Director may grant time off with pay and other related costs, such as registration, per diem, lodging, and mileage, to allow nurses to attend conferences, seminars, briefing sessions, training programs, webinar and other programs of a similar nature which are intended to improve or upgrade specific nursing skills. The Department Director Health-Department Director/Health-Center-Director will grant time off with pay when the improvement or upgrading of a specific nursing skill is required. The Department Director Health-Department Director/Health-Center-Director will approve other related costs when they require such training. In all cases, the County shall only be obligated to pay for training that is pre-approved and authorized.

The County will pay the nurse for costs associated with the professional leave approved by the Department Director Health-Department Director/Health-Center-Director. Travel time will be counted as work time for a non-exempt nurse attending an approved professional conference of one (1) -day duration or less whenever travel occurs on the same day as the conference. When a non-exempt nurse attends an approved multi-day conference, travel time will count as work time when they are the driver of the vehicle or when the nurse is a passenger in a vehicle traveling during the passenger nurse’s regular work hours. Travel time does not count as work time for passengers in a vehicle driving to or from an approved multi-day conference outside of regular work hours.

Travel arrangement to a conference will be determined between the nurse and supervisor with consideration to travel costs, time and safety.
The County will pay for nurses' certification that is directly related to the delivery of assigned services.

On at least a semi-annual basis, each nurse will meet with their program manager to review the budget for professional leave. The parties will discuss how to allocate budget resources to meet the needs of the agency, to maintain a high level of professionalism, to review requests for professional leave, and to evaluate professional leave classes taken.

To encourage professional development, any regular full time, seasonal, or part time employee who wishes to pursue educational courses or certification training directly related to the employee's career in County service, may apply for financial assistance as follows:

1. Employees must secure their department head's approval before the training class or course begins. A Memorandum of Agreement must be completed and signed by the employee and department head. The original Agreement must be forwarded to Human Resources; and a copy forwarded to Payroll.

2. The department head may choose to reimburse 50 to 100 percent of the course/class, upon successful completion of the course/class. The employee may be reimbursed for a maximum of three courses per school year provided that a grade of “C” of above is earned. The employee must provide a statement of course credit, training certification, and a tuition receipt to the department head.

3. If the County provides funds for tuition assistance, the employee agrees to remain in the employ of the County for a minimum period of one full year dating from the completion of the course/s or repay the County for the full amount of the tuition/training reimbursement. Educational assistance will not be provided to an employee whose employment terminates prior to completion of the course/s, unless terminated as a result of a layoff.

4. The employee agrees that if they fail to continue in County employment for the
5. The employee agrees that any repayment required by No. 4 above, shall be deducted from the employee's final payroll check.

6. The Department Director department head may, in special circumstances, choose to pay 50% to 100% of the costs prior to the class/course start date. In such circumstances, employees must abide by all conditions set forward in this policy and agree to reimburse the County as outlined above.
ARTICLE 17 SENIORITY

Section 17.1 Definition. The seniority unit shall be the bargaining unit and defined as the total
hours of service within the ONA bargaining unit.

Section 17.2 Acquisition of Seniority. A nurse shall acquire seniority at the end of their
probationary period. The nurse's seniority will date back to the date of hire as a regular bargaining
unit nurse. When a nurse acquires seniority, their name will be placed on the seniority list indicating
hours of service within their job classification, department, and County, in the order of their
seniority.

Section 17.3 Seniority List Posting. The Health Department shall maintain and distribute by
email current seniority list in accordance with the requirements of Section 2. Such list shall be
updated at least quarterly. In case of dispute, official records shall be those maintained in the
Human Resources Department.

Section 17.4 Definition of Lay-Off. A layoff is defined as:
1. Any involuntary separation of a regular nurse from the County due to the
   elimination of a position.
2. Any involuntary change in employment category.
3. Refusal of nurse to accept mandatory increase in hours.
4. Any involuntary reduction of hours.

Section 17.5 Lay-Off. Should it become necessary for the County to lay off one or more nurse,
the County shall determine the specific positions eliminated and shall give each affected nurse(s)
and the Association a minimum of six (6) weeks' notice. Reductions in the work force will occur in
the following order:

ONA reserves the right to add, change, modify or delete any of the above
proposals at any time during negotiations.
1. Nurses within the affected classification and department may volunteer for lay off.

2. Temporary nurses;

3. Probationary nurses;

4. Limited Duration nurses;

5. Regular and seasonal nurses in inverse order of seniority within the affected classification.

For the purposes of layoff, regular full-time, regular part-time and seasonal positions are treated together. A nurse who is laid off may bump within the nurse’s classification, the least senior nurse from the position for which they are qualified according to the following criteria:

1. meets the minimum requirement for the job classification; and

2. is able to perform the work of that classification without extensive training in a service-specific essential job skill. Orientation will be provided to the nurse for the new position.

The bumped nurse may bump any nurse in accordance with the above provisions.

Extensive is defined as training requirements sufficient to legitimately deny bumping such as a certification or formal recognition of a service-specific essential job skill the absence of which would prevent the nurse from performing that service.

Nurses who receive layoff notice will notify the County of their intent to exercise bumping rights within two (2) weeks of the notice.
Section 17.6 Recall. A nurse who is laid off shall be placed on a recall list for a period of eighteen (18) months. If there is a recall, nurses will be recalled in the inverse order of lay-off, provided they are qualified at the time of the recall to perform the work in the job classification to which they are recalled without extensive training. A recalled nurse shall be notified by first class mail and shall be given ten (10) working days from the date of the mailing of the notice in which to report for work.

Official records of the mailing of notices are those maintained in the Human Resources Department. It shall be the nurse's absolute and complete responsibility to maintain their current address with the Benton County Human Resources Department. Eighty (80) hours of orientation shall not be considered training pursuant to this Section.

Section 17.7 Scheduling. Seniority will be considered in the assignment of shifts, days and hours of work, and will be given preference so long as departmental efficiencies are not adversely affected.

Section 17.8 Filling of Vacancies. Whenever the County seeks to fill a vacancy within the bargaining unit, the County shall post the job announcement with the job description, qualifications and requirements of the vacancy on the County’s web page for at least ten (10) working days before the filling of the vacancy, post notice with the job description, qualifications and requirements of the vacancy on the departmental bulletin board and provide notice to the Association. The County may close a specific recruitment to an intra-departmental promotion, thus limiting application to current departmental staff. If the promotional recruitment fails, a general recruitment will follow. If more than one (1) qualified ONA nurse applies for the position, the County shall provide preference to the nurse with the greatest seniority, provided that all other objective merit factors are equal.

Section 17.9 Seniority During Periods of Disability. Nurses who are on disability leave and are receiving income from non-County sources, shall not accrue seniority hours.
Section 17.10 Continuous Service. A nurse's continuous service seniority shall be considered broken by voluntary resignation, discharge for just cause, retirement, and lay-off in excess of eighteen (18) months. Seniority shall not accrue during any period of leave without pay.