**OPLINLIST: Food for Thought Regarding Holiday Scheduling 2018**

I keep the old schedules and make sure holiday time off gets rotated year by year. If you had it off last year, it's someone else's time this year!

Perhaps make a policy stating that staff can only request time off twice a year for three- day weekends?

My supervisor kept a running tally of how many holidays each individual had worked. What happened was my supervisor could talk to people about how they had only worked 2 or less holidays so it wasn’t fair per this policy for them to request off when someone who worked 3 or more holidays wanted to do so on the same holiday. That seemed to make sense to everyone and we all knew that was how the system worked to be equal (i.e. everyone on staff knew that the holiday system worked this way—it wasn’t a secret like the boss was keeping tabs on you or anything). You had to pick your important holidays and compromise with your coworkers if needed. I never heard of anyone getting upset over this arrangement because we all understood the playing field.

Persons cannot request time off more than 60 days in advance. This might make more work for you scheduling, but it also might help your employees pay attention to their planning closer to when a holiday is upcoming.

Our vacation requests must be approved. If it interferes with operational needs, deny the request. When I started in in 2008, they did a yearly schedule and if two people put it for the same time, it went by seniority.

Policy that states two employees can't be on vacation at the same time due to operational needs would at least force them to trade off on 3-day weekends.

Every organization has this issue. We don’t do first come first approved (especially around Christmas). We literally look at the last couple of year’s schedules and see who was off then. It doesn’t necessarily mean you will be denied this year, but you might. If it’s a special circumstance (first grandchild, for example), the rest of staff are willing to accommodate that.

Usually at our October meeting, I ask them to submit their request with the caveat that if there are overlapping requests, I will ask them to work together and come up with a compromise that will end up a win-win for all involved.  If there is an impasse, then the person who did not take time off during other Holidays will be given preference.  After all, the library has to be open for business and the staff has to realize that.  They also have to realize that there are times when their request for time off will be rejected due to staffing requirements.

Do you have a budget for substitute hours? Maybe use substitutes to let more permanent staff members take off around the holidays.

List the days the library is closed when you ask staff for their vacation requests. It could help those who don't normally plan as far in advance.

Make the vacation requests for a shorter amount of time, perhaps only the first half of the year rather than the whole year.

Do you have to rewrite policy? Can you just not grant the request?

Just make the policy something vague yet enforceable about sharing holiday in a fair and equitable manner and then figure out what’s not equitable and work out fixes among your staff.

Figure out how many holidays you have that are causing problems and have a policy/procedure/guideline where you can sign up for 1/6th of them or whatever the math would be given your staffing levels.

Only schedule out 6 months at a time and have rotating sign ups so in January you claim vacation through June in Staff A, Staff B, Staff C, DEF order. In February Staff B signs up first and staff A is last.  In March it’s CDEFAB.  Or some variation on this.

Our policy states they have to work their regularly scheduled day prior to or after the holiday to get paid holiday pay.  It seems to work for us.

When it comes to time off for major Holidays, in my department, I ask the staff requesting time off to work together and come up with a schedule that allows time off for all, but at the same time assures proper staffing of the department.

Our departments get together as a group twice a year and schedule the weekends.  Each person is required to work their fair share of holiday weekends.  The department head figures out ahead of the meeting how many each person has to work or how many they can take off.  So, they will be meeting soon to decide for January through June of 2019.  If too many people want the same weekend off, we look back to the previous year or two to see who worked it last.  A person who worked a holiday last year gets preference over a person who had it off.