

Purpose

Telecommuting, the practice of working at home or remotely instead of in the EMPLOYER office(s), is a work alternative that EMPLOYER offers to some employees when it is advantageous to both EMPLOYER and the employee. A telecommute policy helps employees balance the demands of their work and personal lives and is a workplace strategy - not an employee right.

An employee's compensation, benefits, work status, and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in the telecommute program. Telecommuting employees must comply with all organizational rules, policies, and procedures.

Eligibility

Candidates for telecommuting must have a satisfactory or better job performance ratings, with no record of performance, attendance or conduct issues. The opportunity to telecommute must be approved by the employee's supervisor, who is ultimately responsible for decisions to continue or discontinue the opportunity, following appropriate notification to the employee.

Selection of employees to participate in the EMPLOYER telecommute program shall be based on specific, written, work-related criteria including:

- Site, department or program needs
- Employee responsibilities/duties
- Contractual obligations with external clients
- Need for, and nature of, interaction with other staff and external clients
- Need for specialized equipment
- Availability of other qualified employees on site
- Employee job performance
- After 6 months of employment with YCOE

An employee that is considered for telecommuting must be able to work independently and demonstrate productivity and time management. The resources that an employee needs to do their job must be easily transportable or available electronically. Telecommuting is not appropriate for all YCOE departments or work assignments, as many require a physical presence in the employee's assigned work location to complete job duties or to provide services to students, clients, or YCOE.

Eligibility and suitability of employees to participate in the telecommute program will vary among programs or departments depending on the function and responsibilities of the employee. Each program or department must maintain some minimum complement of employees who work on site at the EMPLOYER office in order to function effectively.

Telecommuting is not an alternative to child or elder care and, when applicable, the employee must make appropriate arrangements for dependent care.

Schedules and Hours

Employees are required to report each Telecommuting Workday into the Frontline system. An employee's regular schedule, including specific days and hours, in-office days and telecommuting days must be clearly identified on the application, and approved by their supervisor. Generally, a

telecommuter can work up to a maximum of two (2) agreed upon days working from home with the remainder of the scheduled days working at their YCOE worksite. The amount of time the telecommuter is expected to work per day or per pay period will not change due to participation in the telecommute program.

Overtime hours must be pre-approved in writing by the supervisor. Failure to obtain prior approval for overtime work may result in termination of telecommuting agreement. Deviations from the agreed upon telecommute schedule must be approved in advance by the supervisor. EMPLOYER policy will be followed for all absences.

Supervisors retain the right to require a telecommuter to return to EMPLOYER's office on a regularly scheduled telecommute day should work situations warrant such an action. If such a need arises, every effort will be made to notify the employee by 5 p.m. prior to the day of return. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible due to an emergency where an employee may need to report to YCOE's worksite within 1 hour or within a reasonable amount of time due to the employee's commute. This situation is expected to be only an occasional occurrence. If a telecommuter is frequently required to return to EMPLOYER's office during regularly scheduled telecommute days, the supervisor may re-evaluate the compatibility of the telecommuter's job responsibilities with respect to telecommuting, or the specific telecommute schedule.

Telecommuting employees are expected to attend in-person meetings and events and/or report to the worksite as directed by their supervisor as needed, notwithstanding their usual telecommuting arrangements.

If a telecommuter is sick while working at home or uses other time off, the telecommuter must report absences in accordance with EMPLOYER's current attendance procedures. Any request to use sick leave, vacation, or other leave while telecommuting is subject to the same reporting and approval process that would apply to employees who do not work at an alternative work location.

Workspace

Telecommuters must have an appropriate work area in their home/remote work location that considers ergonomics, equipment, workspace, noise, distraction, and interruption factors. The telecommuter's off-site workspace should provide an adequate work area, lighting, telephone service, a reliable internet connection, power, and temperature control. Additional requirements may vary, depending on the nature of the work and the equipment needed to perform the work. Telecommuters should only perform remote work at the location as provided on the approved request form. Alternate work locations are not allowed without prior authorization from their supervisor.

Federal and state statutory abstracts will be posted at the telecommuter's EMPLOYER office location in lieu of posting them in the employee's home/remote office. Telecommuters should review these notices while on EMPLOYER's premises.

Equipment and Supplies

In most cases, telecommuters will provide their own equipment. Telecommuters may use EMPLOYER-owned equipment at their off-site workspace with the prior approval of their supervisors provided that the equipment will be used for EMPLOYER work only and its use by a telecommuter at their off-site workspace will not impede the work of employees working at the EMPLOYER office.

Office supplies will be provided by EMPLOYER and should be obtained during the telecommuter's in-office work period. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available in the office will not be reimbursed. Telecommuters are responsible for all supplies, equipment, and/or materials provided by EMPLOYER. All items remain property of EMPLOYER and may not be used for personal or other than EMPLOYER use.

EMPLOYER does not assume liability for loss, damage, or wear of employee-owned equipment unless otherwise agreed to in writing prior to the occurrence. Maintenance, repair, and replacement of EMPLOYER-owned equipment issued to telecommuters is the responsibility of EMPLOYER. In the event of equipment damage or malfunction, the telecommuter must notify their supervisor immediately. Repairs to employee-owned equipment are the responsibility of the telecommuter. In either situation, the telecommuter may be asked to report to the office until the equipment is usable.

Telecommuters must take appropriate action to protect company-provided equipment from damage or theft. EMPLOYER equipment must be returned to EMPLOYER when an employee terminates or discontinues the telecommute arrangement. Telecommuters may use their own equipment (e.g., fax machine, printer, photocopier) provided that no cost is incurred by EMPLOYER. Repair and maintenance of employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the telecommuter.

Employee Access and Availability

Telecommuters must be available by phone (i.e. Teams call or chat) and email during scheduled hours, with the exception of their scheduled lunch period. Telecommuters are required to have voicemail services to ensure availability.

Telecommuters are required to modify their EMPLOYER voicemail announcement to indicate that they may be reached at an alternate number or that the employee will be regularly checking messages.

Supervisors may establish that employees are required to check for messages within a certain period (e.g., at least once every two hours).

Telecommuters must keep their supervisors notified of any changes to their home/remote contact information.

Security

It is the responsibility of the telecommuter to take all precautions necessary to secure proprietary information and to prevent unauthorized access. When conducting meetings that are confidential in nature (i.e. IEP meetings, personnel related, etc.) telecommuter is required to be in a setting that protects the confidentiality of the discussion. The telecommuter is required to observe all office security practices when working outside EMPLOYER's office to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of proprietary information. Steps to ensure the protection of proprietary information include, but are not limited to, use of locked file cabinets and desks; regular password maintenance; and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.

Telecommuters shall be connected to a secure internet with password required while accessing YCOE's files or software programs. To ensure hardware and software security, all software used for telecommuting must be approved by the supervisor prior to installation. All software used for telecommuting must be virus inspected and each PC must have virus protection software installed. EMPLOYER-owned software may not be duplicated unless authorized through the license agreement.

Restricted access materials shall not be taken out of the office or accessed through the computer unless approved in advance by the supervisor.

Liability

It is the responsibility of the telecommuter to maintain a safe, professional remote work site that is free from potential safety problems. Telecommuters must certify that their homes/remote workspaces are free from workplace hazards by reviewing the safety checklist. In the case of an injury while working remotely, telecommuters must immediately (or as soon as circumstances permit) report the injury or incident to their supervisor and the Human Resources Department and request instructions.

If the remote workspace is the employee's residence, the employee will remain liable for injuries to other persons and/or members of the employee's family that are unrelated to employee's work.

If the remote workspace is the employee's residence, employees are recommended to have homeowner's/renter's or applicable insurance, with a minimum of \$100,000 liability single limit policy coverage, for the duration of the telecommute assignment.

Any increase in telecommuter's home utility cost is the responsibility of the employee.

Employee is solely responsible for any tax and other legal implications for using their home or other location for business use under Internal Revenue Service (IRS) or state or local laws or ordinances.

Application Process

Employees who would like to telecommute are required to submit a written request and provide information concerning job responsibilities, proposed telecommuting schedule, types of work tasks to be performed at the off-site workspace, and a description of the off-site workspace/equipment required.

Telecommuters will be required to complete and sign the Request to Participate in YCOE's Telecommuting Pilot Program Application and submit to their supervisor.

Telecommute arrangements will be on a trial basis for the first three months and will allow supervisors to evaluate and ensure that the program continues to meet the organization's needs. During the trial period, the manager and employee will be expected to complete a survey on the program each month. At the end of the trial period, the manager will determine whether the employee will continue, make modifications to, or discontinue the telecommute arrangement.

If the program continues into the following school year, a new application must be submitted for consideration. The program may be discontinued at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or EMPLOYER. If a telecommute arrangement is discontinued by EMPLOYER, every effort will be made to provide advance notice to the employee. However, there may be instances where no advance notice is possible. Likewise, if an employee elects to discontinue a telecommute arrangement, the employee should provide notice to their supervisor.

Performance Evaluation

Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency. All employees will be evaluated in the same manner, using the same standards and as employees working in office on YCOE's sites.