

City of Oshkosh

Telecommuting Policy

This policy is designed to provide staff guidance in regard to telecommuting practices for the City of Oshkosh. Offering the ability to telecommute can aid in recruitment, retention, and job satisfaction. Eligible employees can find telecommuting to be a positive experience that promotes work-life balance, improves productivity, as well as efficiency in their work. This telecommuting program is intended to be a work option that benefits the City and the employee.

What is Telecommuting?

The City defines telecommuting as “An employment arrangement in which an employee performs their job functions from an approved alternate worksite other than the employee’s normal office or workspace, one or more days per month on an occasional, temporary, or recurring basis.”

Telecommuting is established through the discretion of the City and is not an independent employee decision. Telecommuting is a tool that allows for flexibility in regard to work options. It does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment. Telecommuting requests will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Important Considerations

Any discussions involving telecommuting should include discussions regarding the:

- Needs of the department or division
- Needs of the employee
- Employee’s work duties and the ability to measure or assess work performed
- Availability and costs of any needed equipment
- Employee’s current and past job performance
- Employee’s work skills, including time management, organizational skills, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently
- Assessment of other employees performing similar responsibilities
- Effect on service
- Effect on the rest of the work group, or department
- Other items deemed necessary and appropriate

Some positions will not be eligible for telecommuting arrangements due to the nature of the job, including, but not limited to, positions which require direct public or employee interactions, or other physical employee presence required to perform the essential job functions.

It is the policy of the City that telecommuting arrangements are permitted when agreed to by the employee and the City; when it is feasible that an employee could fulfill their job duties from an alternate location for the period covered by the arrangement; and when the telecommuting arrangement does not disrupt the operations of the work group, division, department, or City.

Telecommuting arrangements may also be initiated by the City for any legitimate organizational purpose. The decision to authorize a telecommuting agreement is at the discretion of the City.

A. Eligibility

Only employees whose job duties can be fulfilled from a remote location are eligible to be considered for a telecommuting arrangement.

Telecommuting is only available if the City has the ability to monitor or measure the work product produced by the employee during the period of telecommuting.

Telecommuting is only available to employees who have all tools required for their job available to them at the remote location, as determined by the City. Working space, insurance, utilities, and other services for the remote workspace must be provided by the employee at their own expense as a condition of the telecommuting agreement.

Prior to beginning a telecommuting arrangement, the employee must certify to the employer that their remote workspace meets minimum safety requirements as outlined in the Telecommuting Safety Checklist section of the Telecommuting Application and Approval Form ("Form").

B. Categories and Duration of Telecommuting Arrangements

Occasional Telecommuting – An intermittent period of telecommuting based on the occasional need to telecommute for a partial or full day. This arrangement is intended for employees seeking approval to telecommute on an infrequent basis throughout the year. Occasional telecommuting would occur infrequently, not to exceed four times in a month, based on a specific need for the employee to be at or near home for the day or part of the day. Approval of the Telecommuting Application and Approval Form is required prior to beginning this arrangement, however, once the arrangement is approved, the Supervisor can approve individual days or partial days of telecommuting through a written or email request with a copy of each approved telecommuting request submitted to Human Resources. If the need for telecommuting becomes more frequent or qualifies under one of the other categories a new telecommuting application will be required.

Unpredicted Temporary Telecommuting – A period of telecommuting arising out of unforeseen circumstances (e.g., illness, injury, weather emergency, temporary school closure, etc.). Unpredicted Temporary Telecommuting typically involves single days and/or is related to health circumstances that cannot be addressed by the other categories. Normally prior approval of the Telecommuting Application and Approval Form is required, however, if circumstances do not allow time for ordinary approval of the telecommuting application, verbal approval from the supervisor prior to beginning the arrangement will be accepted, with the understanding that ordinary approval through the telecommuting application process takes place no later than the third workday of the arrangement. Duration is not to exceed three months.

Scheduled Ongoing Telecommuting – A continuous arrangement open to non-supervisory employees that involves part-time telecommuting (not to exceed 2 days per week) and is subject to periodic review / renewal not to exceed six-month intervals. Scheduled Ongoing Telecommuting is permitted for eligible employees in accordance with this policy. Approval of the Telecommuting Application and Approval Form is required prior to beginning this arrangement.

If extenuating circumstances exist, exceptions to the above guidelines may be approved by the Director of Administrative Services or designee.

C. Limitations

The approval or end of a telecommuting agreement does not affect or change an employee's conditions of employment, salary, or benefits.

Employees who are telecommuting are required to attend meetings, work, or other functions away from their alternate workspace, if circumstances require such travel. Although not common, if needed an employee who is telecommuting may be required to report to work on short notice based on City needs, such as office coverage, meetings, or other immediate circumstances.

Telecommuting employees who are not FLSA-exempt (non-exempt) must continue to report actual hours worked and may not work overtime, or additional hours that generate shift differentials, without receiving supervisor approval in advance of the work being performed.

Employees who are telecommuting will work their approved normal work schedule during the period of the telecommuting arrangement unless an alternate work schedule is established in advance.

Employees who are telecommuting must be available during their established work hours. Employees should be reachable by telephone, video conferencing or some other form of live communication during the workday, per the arrangements established with their supervisor and coworkers. Employees must be free from interruptions during work hours including but not limited to doing household chores, providing care to others, or conducting other business. If unexpected interruptions occur during approved arrangements, employees must communicate with their supervisor regarding these circumstances and punch out, if applicable, while addressing non-work-related situations.

An employee operating under a telecommuting agreement is subject to the same notification, approval, and reporting requirements for sick leave or other paid time off as if the employee were working at their normal office or workspace.

Employees who are telecommuting must have general liability homeowner's or renter's insurance. Employees are responsible for notifying their homeowner's or renter's insurance company of their intent to work from home. Employees may not host visitors, including other employees, in their home during work time. The employee must provide the City with evidence of insurance upon request.

Employees who are telecommuting are responsible for complying with all City risk management, information technology security and access policies while in their alternate workspace, as well as any other applicable City or departmental policies, as if they were working at their normal office or workspace.

Any telecommuting agreement which involves the employee working outside of the State of Wisconsin requires the approval of the Director of Administrative Services or designee. A supplemental agreement may be required as part of the approval for out-of-state telecommuting.

Maintenance of any City equipment issued to a telecommuting employee will be performed only by an authorized City representative. Maintenance and repair of employee-owned equipment is the responsibility of the employee.

D. Approval

Approval of any telecommuting agreement is at the discretion of the City. Any telecommuting agreement must be approved utilizing the Form.

Telecommuting agreements may be discontinued or modified by the City at any time at discretion of the City. The City will strive to provide reasonable notice in advance of any modification.

Telecommuting Request and Approval Process

Any employee requesting the ability to telecommute is required to follow the process outlined below:

1. Employee discusses their interest regarding telecommuting with their supervisor. This discussion is an important first step in understanding if the ability to telecommute exists based on employee assignments. This also allows for both the employee and their supervisor to understand what the mutual needs and expectations are.

2. Employee completes the Telecommuting Application and Approval Form ("Form") with input from supervision. In most cases, the Form must be completed and approved prior to the start of the telecommuting arrangement. However, when prior approval of the Form is not possible, the supervisor may verbally approve prior to beginning the arrangement and the Form is submitted as soon as reasonably possible, but no later than the third workday of the arrangement.

3. If approved, the supervisor forwards the Form on for Department Head and Director of Administrative Services (or designee) for final approval. Please refer to the Telecommuting Guidelines for Supervisors for guidance regarding requests for approval.

For further information, please contact Human Resources at 920-236-5110.

City of Oshkosh Telecommuting Policy -- Library Addendum

All decisions regarding telecommuting eligibility, approval, administration, and oversight for library employees will be made by Library Administration, rather than by City Human Resources or the City's Director of Administrative Services.

Drafted by:	Darryl Eschete
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