



## Remote Work Policy

### PURPOSE

The purpose of the Work from Home Policy is to provide employees with the guidelines and controls for working remotely on an intermittent and as needed basis. Remote work is not a formal, universal employee benefit and not an entitlement. Remote work may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. The County has the right to refuse to make remote work available to an employee and to terminate a remote work arrangement at any time.

### POLICY & PROCEDURE

#### Eligibility Criteria

Remote work does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the County, and employees are subject to the same policies that apply when working onsite.

Individuals may request on occasion to have the ability to work from home. For this request to be accommodated the employee must have been employed with Grand Traverse County for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment and must have a satisfactory performance record. Not all roles will lend themselves to remote work, therefore, it is not available for every job or every employee in the County.

Before entering into any agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the human resource department, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas: The employee's manager will consider allowing the employee to work from home when the employee has demonstrated work habits and performance well-suited to successful home office work and the home office provides opportunity for improved employee performance or retention, reduced commuting miles, organization savings, or other benefits. The following guidelines need to be considered:

- Work habits
  - Remote work workers must have demonstrated self-motivation, self-discipline, adequate knowledge to complete tasks correctly, the ability to work independently, the ability to manage distractions, and the ability to meet deadlines.
- Job/Tasks/Assignments
  - Employee suitability. The employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for being successful when remote work.
  - Job responsibilities. The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for remote work.
  - Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, and scheduling issues. The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for when the employee is allowed to work from home.
  - The job/tasks/assignments which are proposed for remote work must have minimum requirements for direct supervision or contact with customers. The worker's need for

- specialized material must be minimal or flexible; and the remote work employee's work objectives and tasks must be clearly defined with measurable results.
- While remotely working, the employee must be reachable via telephone or cell phone, video conferencing, or e-mail during agreed-upon work hours or specific core hours of accessibility.
  - Employees must be able to carry out the same duties, assignments, and other work obligations at their home as they do while working on County's premises.
  - Those remotely working will not act as primary caregivers for dependents during the agreed-upon work hours. This does not mean dependents must be absent from the home during the time that they are remotely working. It means the dependents may not require the worker's attention or supervision during work hours. Workers must make dependent care arrangements to permit concentration on their work assignments. Emergency situations will be handled by the supervisor on a case-by-case basis. Remote work is not intended to be a substitute for day care or other personal obligations.
  - The remote workspace is considered an extension of Grand Traverse County workspace. Therefore, you must maintain a distinct separation between work activities and personal activities by ensuring a safe and suitable workspace that is appropriately confidential and free of distractions that may interfere with work.
  - Tax and other legal implications. The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state, and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working at home. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee. Remote work is not designed to accommodate other personal needs.

If the employee and manager agree, and the human resource department concurs, a working-from-home agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties. The agreement is included in this policy.

## **Confidentiality and Access**

Equipment and files should only be accessible to the employee and safeguarded from access by other members of the household and visitors. The employee's manager should have access at a reasonable time to equipment and any paper records at an employee's home.

## **Security**

Consistent with the County's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, when remotely working employees will be expected to ensure the protection of confidential information accessible from their home. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

## **Compliance with Law, Policies, and Procedures**

Remote work arrangements must comply with federal, state, and municipal laws that apply to County employees. This includes, but is not limited to, the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) and the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA). All employees that work from home must adhere to all County policies and procedures including those about computer equipment including, but not limited to, the following: Human Resources policy, Information Security, Internet, E-Mail, Virus, Software Licenses, Remote Access, etc.

## **County Equipment**

The equipment and supplies necessary to work from home will be provided by a combination of both the employee and the County. The equipment issued when an employee works from home should be sufficient to support the employee's work requirements; however, the Department Director/designee should make cost-effective decisions as it relates to equipment.

When remotely working you must have the ability to communicate with other employees and service recipients in a manner consistent with a non-remotely working employee. In other words, remote work employees must be readily available. Examples of the technology needed to ensure availability include access to cell phone communication, Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP) Instant Messaging, or similar instant communication methods.

County provided computer equipment that adheres to County standards for hardware, software, and related equipment will be provided to remote work employees. The specific type of equipment depends on the job and will be recommended by departmental or County IT staff for approval by the Department Director/designee. County employees must be aware that any County work done on an employee's personal computer is considered County property and a public record, subject to disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act unless an exception applies.

The County is responsible for the maintenance and support of County-owned equipment, including hardware and software. Support will be provided by IT and/or the teleworker's departmental IT staff. Customer Support Center support and equipment maintenance will be provided Monday thru Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

When remotely working you must have reliable transportation and are required to be able to be at their regular County office within one hour of a call should a situation arise. Any exceptions outside one hour must be discussed with the employee and their manager or supervisor.

## **Emergency and Other Unexpected Contingencies**

If an equipment failure or power outage occurs at the remote work location, which affects the ability to complete work tasks, the employee must promptly notify their supervisor. The employee may be required to report for work at the primary work location to complete their workday or use personal leave to account for the time.

## **Ad Hoc Arrangements**

This policy only generally permits remote work on occasion. However, a manager may allow for additional remote work arrangements for limited circumstances such as severe weather, special projects, or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All ad hoc remote work arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the County.

## **Review**

It is important for County employees to know that if you have a worksite office you do not qualify for any kind of reimbursement at your home. At any time, the agreement to work from home may be reviewed by the employee or County. This policy is also subject to review and does not form part of any contract of employment.

All remote relationships are at the discretion of the County and may be terminated by the County at any time for any or no reason, and in no way change the terms and conditions of employment with the County.

## **Questions**

Questions regarding this policy or any of the related forms should be directed to Human Resources

Note: This policy may differ for those employees who are members of recognized unions, organizations, or associations. Any questions related to the content of this policy, or its interpretation, should be directed to Human Resources.

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