

STATE TELEWORK PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is teleworking?

Teleworking is a program that provides employees the opportunity to work on specified days at a Remote Work Site (most commonly, the employee's home).

What are the benefits of teleworking?

There are many general benefits to teleworking, and there are benefits that will be specific to your organization and staff. Some examples might be:

- Improvements in employee morale and effectiveness.
- Reductions in transportation costs including car insurance, maintenance, and wear.
- Retention of employees due to increased job satisfaction.
- Reduction in automobile-created air pollution and traffic congestion.
- Potential for increased productivity.

What types of positions are suitable for teleworking?

Generally, any job that has tasks which are portable and can be performed away from the Main Work Site is suitable for teleworking. In addition, jobs which have set starting and stopping times that are easy to define, where face-to-face contact can be planned and scheduled are generally suitable. The supervisor can determine which specific tasks are suited to teleworking.

What types of employees are suitable for teleworking?

Employees who require minimal supervision and are organized, motivated self-starters will be well suited to teleworking.

What are the criteria for participating in the State Telework Program?

The position must be deemed eligible for telework and the supervisor must agree to permit the employee to telework. The employee must be a non-probationary employee who has received at least an overall "Satisfactory" rating on the employee's most recent performance appraisal. Once approved to participate, the employee must continue to perform at the level of overall a "Satisfactory" or better.

Does an employee have a right to be a teleworker?

No. Teleworking participation is not a right. Management is responsible for deciding if the position is one that is appropriate for work at a remote job site and for examining both the content of the work and the performance of the employee.

Can a supervisor participate in the telework program?

Generally speaking, yes, if the position is identified as one that is suitable for teleworking and the employee otherwise is eligible to telework.

How will a supervisor monitor the work of an employee who is teleworking?

Prior to each telework day, the supervisor and employee are required to specify work tasks on the Telework Work Plan. The supervisor should review work performed by the employee on the employee's next day at the Main Work Site.

Is the supervisor permitted to visit the teleworker's Remote Work Site?

Supervisors are permitted to make scheduled and unscheduled visits to the employee's Remote Work Site during scheduled telework hours.

Do teleworkers have to buy their own computer equipment?

No, but if the agency does not have computer equipment available for teleworkers and lacks funding to purchase it, and if the employee does not have a computer that is suitable to perform tasks at the Remote Work Site, the lack of equipment may impact the employee's ability to telework.

Is a specific telework schedule required to participate in the State Telework Program?

Yes, a telework schedule should be established using the Telework Work Schedule form.

Will teleworking eliminate the need for dependent care?

No. Teleworking is not a substitute for child or elder care. Employees should continue to make the same arrangements for dependent care as if working at the main office.

What should a supervisor consider before agreeing to a teleworking arrangement?

The supervisor and employee should examine the requirements of the position and determine what tasks can be accomplished at a Remote Work Site. Additionally, the supervisor should consider things like:

- Whether the employee is on probation (probationary employees are not permitted to telework);
- Was the employee's work performance rated overall Satisfactory or better on the employee's most recent performance evaluation;
- Does the employee have the requisite knowledge of the job to work independently;
- In order to complete tasks, does the employee need work-related input or support that is available only if the employee is at the Main Work Site; and
- Is the necessary equipment available for the employee (whether State issued or the employee's own equipment).

How will work performance be monitored?

Generally, performance while teleworking should be monitored in the same way that performance is monitored at the Main Work Site. A good tool for planning expected outputs during the telework day is the Telework Work Plan. This work plan must be completed prior to the telework day and the supervisor should review the employee's work product on the employee's next day at the Main Work Site.

What if a supervisor or a teleworker believes the teleworking arrangement is not working?

Teleworking is not a right or condition of employment. A supervisor may end an employee's participation in the Telework Program if the employee's performance declines, the employee is no longer eligible for participation, or if the employee's continued participation in the Program is not in the best interests of the agency.

Since participation in the Program is entirely voluntary, an employee may discontinue teleworking at any time.

Will the employee be reimbursed for utilities or other expenses associated with work at a Remote Work Site?

No. The State assumes no financial or other responsibility for the teleworker's expenses related to working at a Remote Work Site.

Are there restrictions on the use of State-owned equipment, software, or information at a Remote Work Site?

Yes. State-owned equipment can be used for official purposes only. Teleworkers must adhere to all rules, regulations, and procedures relating to security and confidentiality of work-related information and data. Agencies must maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of records.

What if a supervisor or a teleworker believes the teleworking arrangement is not working?

Teleworking arrangements are not a right or condition of employment. Management may end an employee's participation in the teleworking program if the employee's performance declines or if continued participation is detrimental to an agency's needs. Also, the employee may end participation at any time.

How will a supervisor monitor the work of an employee who is at home or at a Remote Work Site?

Quantity and quality should be measured as it is currently being done in the office. For non-quantifiable or project-oriented tasks, measurement normally consists of:

- Establishing the nature and objective(s) of the task;
- Setting a deadline or due date; and
- Meeting for progress or status reports.

Additionally, before each telework day, the supervisor and employee must complete the Telework Work Plan and the supervisor should verify that the work was completed on the employee's next day at the Main Work Site.

If permitted to telework, will there be changes in the teleworker's pay or benefits?

No, pay and benefits are unaffected by participation in the State's Telework Program.

Can an employee work in an overtime status while teleworking?

Yes, if the overtime has been preapproved by the employee's supervisor.