



## Comsewogue Public Library COVID-19 Telecommuting Policy

### **Purpose**

The Comsewogue Public Library's (the Library) Telecommuting Program is designed to recognize the benefits of providing employees alternatives to traditional work practices that provide flexibility, to increase the effectiveness of the Library during the pandemic.

### **Definition**

For the purposes of this policy, telecommuting is defined as a remote-access arrangement for at least part of the workweek on a regular basis. In general, telecommuting is a privilege, which may be granted under appropriate circumstances to eligible employees whose job responsibilities are suited to such an arrangement.

### **Eligibility**

- Full time or part time regular employees who have been in their positions for at least six months may apply for participation by completing a Telecommuting Agreement, unless it is negotiated as part of the hiring process. Employees currently working in other flexible scheduling arrangements are not precluded from participating.
- Employees must have and maintain a minimum Performance Rating. Telecommuting will not be available to employees on probation and/or in progressive discipline.
- The choice of a work schedule for an individual or a unit must be made subject to the overriding requirement that full department operations, services, and commitments will be maintained. In all cases, flexible schedules are subject to unit approval.
- Employees should have demonstrated an ability to work well with minimal supervision, have a thorough knowledge and understanding of their job tasks and operations, have a history of reliable and responsible accomplishment of work duties, and have demonstrated an ability to establish priorities and manage their time.
- The opportunity to work at home is a management option; except during emergency situations, when it may be required of specific or of all employees at the Director's discretion. Telecommuting is not a universal employee benefit. An employee's participation in the Telecommuting Program is entirely voluntary.

## Guidelines

- The approval of telecommuting, and the determination of the number of days an individual may telecommunicate are made based on the Library's ability to maintain operations, services, and commitments. In all cases, telecommuting schedules are subject to department and Administration approval. Employees are expected to normally be in the office at least one day per week.
- Employees are required to complete a Telecommuting Agreement (see attachment) and have it approved before they begin telecommuting. A current signed and approved Telecommuting Agreement must be on file during any telecommuting arrangement.
- Telecommuting Agreement should be reviewed quarterly, but must be reviewed and renewed annually.
- The supervisor and the employee must agree upon the equipment to be used in telecommuting. The employer is not required to provide equipment for the telecommuting location; however, within the approval of supervisor, the employee may be provided with employer-owned equipment necessary to perform work assignments.
- The Library has established security controls and conditions for use of Library equipment. The telecommuting employee must apply approved safeguards to protect Library equipment and supplies. All Library records, files and documents must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or damage and returned safely to the official work location immediately upon request. In addition, any computers used for the editing or sending Library documents must have up-to-date virus protection active. The Technical Support department is responsible for monitoring and retrieving as required, Library equipment assigned off-site.
- In order to reduce worker's compensation liabilities, employees will not use their homes to receive work-related visitors. Meetings should take place at Library offices, or with the Director's approval at another appropriate location. Telecommuters are covered by worker's compensation when performing official work duties at the telecommuting location.
- Telecommuting employees will verify via the Telecommuting Agreement that the telecommuting location provides workspace that is free of safety and fire hazards and shall agree that the Library will not be held responsible for any and all claims, excluding worker's compensation claims, that result from working at the telecommuting location.
- While telecommuting, employees should be accessible, within reason, via telephone and emails during agreed-upon work hours. If a meeting is scheduled on a telecommuting day, employees should teleconference unless instructed otherwise.
- Employees will maintain their pay status while working from a telecommuting location. Employees who work pre-approved overtime will be compensated in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.
  - Supervisors are responsible for not accepting the results of unapproved overtime work and will act vigorously to discourage it.

- By signing the Telecommuting Agreement, employees agree that failing to obtain proper approval for overtime work may result in removal from the telecommuting program or other appropriate action.
- Telecommuters are subject to all of the Library's policies and procedures as other employees.
- Telecommuting will not adversely affect an employee's eligibility for advancement or any other employee right or benefit.
- The Library reserves the right to modify or eliminate the Telecommuting program at any time.

### **Procedures**

- If the employee and job are deemed suitable for telecommuting, a Telecommuting Agreement specifying the terms and conditions of telecommuting must be signed by the employee, the employee's supervisor, and/or the department head, as well as the Director, prior to start of the telecommuting arrangement. The request should also include a rationale statement as to how this arrangement would be beneficial to the Library.
- The original Telecommuting Agreement must be forwarded to Administration for inclusion in the employee's personnel file. The employee and supervisor should retain a copy of the Telecommuting Agreement for their records.
- The employee and supervisor must agree upon whether any Library owned equipment to be used in the telecommuting arrangement.
- A Telecommuting Work Plan must be included as part of the Telecommuting Agreement. The Telecommuting Work Plan must include at a minimum the following:
  - Specific description of the duties to be performed;
  - Established workdays and work hours;
  - Explanation as to how supervision will be provided; and
  - Explanation as to how work products and outputs will be reviewed, monitored and measured.
- Administration must be notified in writing of any modification to or cancellation of any Telecommuting Agreement.
- Individuals should check with their tax accountant to determine if they are eligible for tax credits related to a home office.