

Telecommuting/Teleworking Policy

Purpose

This telecommuting/teleworking policy outlines guidelines for employees to work from a location other than their County offices. Otero County considers telecommuting/teleworking to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job responsibilities are well-suited for it.

Eligibility

Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, is not a County-wide benefit and Otero County has the right to deny a request for telecommuting. Telecommuting may not be available to new employees. Employees must have been in their position a sufficient time and be able to demonstrate the ability to work independently. Telecommuting is a voluntary alternative. Employees are not required to telecommute and have the right to refuse if the option is made available. Requests for telecommuting will be considered based on the suitability of the position and its requirements, and an evaluation of the likelihood of an employee being successful.

Workspace

The employee shall designate a workspace within the remote work location to be used while teleworking. The employee shall maintain this workspace in a safe condition, free from hazards. All equipment and work-related materials shall be kept in the designated work area and not be made accessible to others. Otero County will not be responsible for any costs associated with telecommuting or the setup of the employee's telecommuting workspace.

Equipment

Otero County will provide computers for telecommuters upon request. The Employee will sign a Receipt evidencing all equipment/items received by said employee in order to telework. Equipment is to be used by the employee only and strictly for County-related business. All items provided by Otero County must be listed on said Receipt and said equipment/items shall be returned to the County upon request. An employee leaving County service will return all County property they possess prior to close of business on the last day worked.

Liability

Employees will be covered by Otero County's Workers' Compensation policy. Liability is limited to injuries acquired in the employee's designated work area during the agreed-upon work hours and while performing job functions. Otero County assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the employee's workspace outside the agreed-upon work hours. Otero County is not liable for loss, destruction or injury that may occur in or to the employee's workspace. This includes family members, visitors or others who are injured within or around the workspace. The employee is liable for injuries to third persons and/or members of the employee's family on the employee's premises. All employee claims shall be handled according to the normal procedure for Workers' Compensation claims.

Otero County is not liable for loss or damage to real or personal property owned by employee.

Other Employee Obligations

Teleworking employees remain obligated to comply with all County policies and procedures, departmental policies and procedures, rules, regulations and supervisory direction.

All teleworking employees shall sign a Telecommuting Acknowledgement Agreement acknowledging that they have received, read and agree to be bound by this Policy prior to commencing teleworking.

The employee is responsible to determine any income tax implications of maintaining a home office area. The County will not provide tax guidance nor will it assume any additional tax liabilities.

Starting and finishing times shall be recorded daily by the employee on timesheets which should be maintained electronically if required by the Department Head or Supervisor so that said timesheet can be checked regularly by the Department Head or Supervisor. Any absences should be recorded on the timesheet, such as extended lunch breaks, medical and dental appointments or other personal appointments.

Security of Information

Employee is responsible for keeping documents, sensitive data and other work-related materials confidential and secure in the designated work area pursuant to each Department's standards. Employees are responsible for ensuring the security of the internet connection being utilized during work hours.

Dependent Care

Telecommuting/teleworking is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees must manage dependent care or personal responsibilities in a way that allows for successful meeting of job responsibilities.

Communication/Availability

Employees are expected to maintain a presence while working remotely. Presence may be maintained by using appropriate technology including but not limited to, computer, email, messaging application, video conferencing, telephone, instant messaging and/or text messaging. The employee is expected to maintain the same response times as if they were working on County property and will make themselves available to attend scheduled work meetings as required and/or requested.

In some instances, an employee may be required to come into the County office for executing an original document/pleading before a notary public.

All "in person" client interactions will be conducted on a County site as may be provided for by other County or departmental policies or supervisory direction, but not at the employee's teleworking location.

Evaluation

Periodic evaluations, at least annually, will be conducted to determine the effectiveness of the employee's performance and whether telecommuting remains a viable option.

Termination of Agreement

Both Otero County and the employee have the right to terminate the telecommuting/teleworking arrangement at any time by written notice to the other party.

Failure to comply with the terms of the agreement and/or this policy may be cause for disciplinary action and/or termination of the agreement.

In the event the telecommuting arrangement is terminated, the employee shall return all County-owned property to the regular office worksite by the end of the next work day or as directed by the Department Head or Supervisor.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT

I have requested to telework as a part of my job duties for Otero County, Colorado.

I have read, understand and agree to the conditions, expectations and requirements of Otero County's "Telecommuting/Teleworking Policy".

Employee's Signature

Date _____

