

Telecommuting Policy

General Program Information

1. Telecommuting is a voluntary work arrangement in which an eligible employee with approval may work from an alternate location on a predetermined basis. Telecommuting participation is voluntary on the part of the employee, the supervisor, and the County. The employee must agree to adhere to the applicable guidelines, policies, and procedures of the telecommuting program, including the Medina County Internet/Intranet and E-Mail Policy, the terms of which are incorporated herein by reference, and that the telecommuting arrangement is not a right but a complementary tool the County may, in its sole discretion, use to accomplish work. Some applications and/or data may not be made available for remote access.
2. Since telecommuting is a voluntary program that constitutes an agreement between the supervisor and the telecommuter, the employee and the supervisor must obtain, review, and sign a copy of the County Telecommuting Policy. Signature on this policy constitutes a commitment to abide and be bound by all rules, procedures, terms, and conditions of the telecommuting program as described in this policy.
3. This policy will be supplemented with a telecommute agreement which will be tailored to the specific environment and it must be read and signed by the telecommuter, his/her supervisor, and the department head. The agreement and the telecommuting must have a specified start and end date and must be renewed at least annually. It can be discontinued at any time without notice, in the County's sole discretion and without and claim of adverse repercussions. Participation in the program will be terminated if an employee's performance does not meet the prescribed standard or if the telecommuting arrangement fails to meet organizational needs. Participation in telecommuting does not change the employee's official duty work location. The signed agreement will state the telecommuter's alternative worksite and anticipated work hours that are approved for telecommuting. In the event of any inconsistency between the terms of any telecommute agreement and the terms of this policy, the terms of this policy shall govern. The telecommute agreement and/or any approved telecommuting activity may be terminated at any time by the County, in the County's sole discretion, and the employee shall do or refrain from doing anything in reliance on the continuance of any telecommuting arrangement.
4. For work-at-home arrangements, the employee is required to designate an area in his/her home as the official workstation. The space for working at home should be a separate room or area in a room that is adequate for the performance of the employee's official duties. Any work done at home shall be restricted to this official workstation.
5. If working at home, the employee must complete a safety checklist to certify that the home is in compliance with safety guidelines. The employee must ensure a safe and healthy work environment exists and should sign the Self-Certification Safety Checklist that proclaims the alternative work site is free of work-related safety and health hazards. With advance notice of at least 24 hours, the supervisor or designee has the right to inspect the home or alternative workaday before the telecommute arrangement begins, and at periodic intervals during the telecommute arrangement, to ensure that the proposed workspace is safe, and all equipment is adequately installed and performing properly. The employee must agree to permit the access to the alternative home-based workaday by agency representatives as necessary during the employee's normal working hours. Failure by the telecommuter to maintain a home office that is safe, ergonomically sound and free from distraction so as not to interfere with work, as determined by management, provides cause for terminating an employee's telecommuting arrangement.
6. The employee and the supervisor will make and adhere to arrangements for all necessary administrative procedures, including time and attendance, request and approval of leave, review of work products and accomplishments, and appropriate communications while telecommuting. The employee and supervisor will meet to develop and/or amend performance agreements for work performed away from the regular office location. The employee will complete all assigned work according to work procedures mutually agreed upon in the telecommute agreement. When applicable, the employee agrees to document and submit to the supervisor for endorsement, any changes in the work agreement or schedule.
7. Any data, document or work product developed during the employee's telecommuting or using any County equipment is the sole property of the employee's County government office.
8. During telecommuting the supervisor may check progress via telephone calls, electronic mail or other

available means. The employee has no rights in or to any County equipment and understands that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy with any telecommuting or any other activity undertaken, in whole or in part, using County equipment. By accepting any opportunity for telecommuting, the employee expressly waives any and all rights of privacy, expressly accepts liability for all actions performed during telecommuting where such actions fall outside the scope of employee's employment. The employee consents to all monitoring of all uses of County equipment and consents to any and all searches deemed necessary, in the County's sole discretion, for purposes of determining compliance with County policies, rules and regulations whether undertaken by the employee's employer, any other County agency or any law enforcement officer or agency. Use of any County equipment by any user, authorized or not authorized, constitutes consent to all monitoring, interception, recording, reading, copying or capturing and disclosure. All data contained on County equipment or systems is owned by the County.

9. The employee will not conduct personal business while in official duty status at the telecommuting workplace (e.g., caring for dependents, making home repairs, etc.), and will not use County equipment for any purpose other than County work.

10. The supervisor will require regular progress reports on productivity from the employee while telecommuting. Feedback will be required to assure the employee is continuing to provide a valuable resource to his/her supervisor and department. The employee must keep accurate records of time spent performing duties. The employee will receive necessary office supplies from the County and will not be reimbursed for personally purchased supplies, unless pre-authorized by his/her supervisor.

11. Audits will be performed on all computers that access the Medina County Backbone from a remote location. The purpose of these audits is to ensure the system's security and remote access eligibility. The telecommuter's office is responsible for performing audits at least annually on all of their remote access systems and documenting the results. Results of these audits will be submitted to the Data Board, at which time the Medina County Data Board may choose to deny this computer's access to the Medina County Backbone until any security issues are resolved.

12. If the telecommuter has problems with connectivity or equipment, **the first action is to open a web browser and try to reach a known reliable site such as www.google.com. Failing that the user must first contact their service provider for connectivity help. If that test is successful, the first call for support must be placed to his/her supervisor. Calls cannot be escalated to another individual or office without the supervisor's approval.** Users will be responsible for their own internet connection and should call their ISP if they are unable to connect to the internet.

13. The County does NOT guarantee that the "Remote Access" implementation will work with all Internet Service Providers. Furthermore, because the structure of the "Remote Access" implementation may change over time for various reasons, the County does not guarantee that future changes in the structure will not disable a previously working client. The County shall not be obligated to take any steps to enable telecommunicating.

Equipment

1. The telecommuter's County office retains ownership and control of all hardware, software, and data associated with County owned systems. County equipment is FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY. Installation, repair and maintenance are at the sole discretion and direction of the issuing organization.

2. The telecommuter's County office agrees to service and maintain any government-owned equipment issued to the telecommuting employee. The employee agrees to report malfunctions in government-owned equipment to the supervisor, and the employee agrees to bring such equipment to the traditional office for maintenance and/or repairs if necessary.

3. The telecommuter's County office agrees to research the minimum requirements needed to successfully run the intended application and only purchase laptops and printers that fit the criteria. Additionally the telecommuter's County office agrees to purchase a laptop with a minimum screen resolution of 1024x768 or the minimum resolution required for the application, whichever is higher, with a minimum color depth of 16bits or the minimum required by the application, whichever is higher.

4. The employee must protect any County owned equipment, prevent the use by others, and use the

equipment only for official purposes. County-furnished equipment must only be used for official duties, and family members and friends of telecommuters are not authorized to use any County-furnished equipment. The employee must comply with County security procedures and ensure adequate security measures are in place to protect the equipment from being damaged, lost, stolen, or accessed by unauthorized individuals. The employee must accept responsibility and will be liable for lost, damaged or stolen equipment. Access to sensitive (e.g. Privacy Act, FOUO) documents, data, records, etc. on government equipment must be consistent with all County directives and instructions. Private equipment may not be used to access or view sensitive information or Privacy Act data or used in conjunction with County equipment.

5. The employee must have Designated Approval Authority approval before installing any hardware or software on Government systems, with the exception of printers if authorized by the telecommuter's supervisor. Only authorized applications will be installed on the systems that will remotely access the County backbone. Telecommuters will not be granted Administrator access on the County owned equipment. Telecommuters shall also acknowledge that any hardware or software used with, on or in conjunction with Government systems automatically become subject to this Telecommuting Policy and any related agreements including the telecommuting agreement and including the terms related to monitoring and auditing employee use. In addition, employee agrees and understands that no County data, software or other information may be copied, in whole or in part.

6. All computers accessing the backbone must be adequately protected against loss due to malicious logic and physical or virus loss, theft, or damage. Anti-virus software must be installed on County owned computers, and will be paid for and maintained current by the office purchasing the hardware. The installation and use of a firewall is also required. For an employee with a high-speed internet connection, i.e. Cable, DSL, Satellite, or Wireless a hardware firewall is required. For an employee with a dial-up connection a software firewall will suffice.

7. The employee must return all County-furnished equipment and materials to the agency at the conclusion of telecommuting arrangements or at the county's request. If telecommuting requirements terminate, the employee must immediately return County owned hardware, software, and data.

Guidelines for Offering Telecommuting Arrangements

1. Prospective telecommuters should be screened for telecommuting eligibility. The candidate for telecommuting should display work-related behaviors consistent with those of successful telecommuters.

A history of reliable and responsible discharge of work duties. Telecommuting should only be offered to those who have achieved a minimum performance rating of satisfactory or above and have demonstrated the ability to prioritize work effectively and utilize good time management skills.

Non-probationary status. Employees who have successfully completed their probationary periods and have a full understanding of the operations of his/her department. Probationary status employees generally would not be eligible for telecommuting because probationary status periods are established to allow supervisors an opportunity to personally observe and evaluate employee performance.

Can work independently. Employees with a proven record of high personal motivation, demonstrated reliability, and the ability to work effectively with minimal supervision.

Appropriate work environment. Individuals who can maintain a safe and ergonomically sound home work area, free from distractions.

Accessible. Employee must be reachable by phone during assigned work hours.

Positions not generally eligible for telecommuting are those positions involving tasks that are not suitable to be performed away from the traditional workaday, including tasks that:

require the employee to have daily face-to-face contact with the supervisor, colleagues, clients, or the general public in order to perform his or her job effectively, which cannot otherwise be achieved via email, telephone, fax or similar electronic means;

are part of trainee or entry-level positions.