



# Remote and Teleworking Toolkit





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COVID-19  
WORK FROM  
HOME

## Work is what we do, not where we are.

Companies adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic have been making the shift toward telecommuting to protect their own workforce and for the protection of others. In addition to this “new normal,” many employees are navigating working from home while parenting and overseeing their child’s schooling through distance learning.

Adopting a mobile, flexible work style for employees is essential during this time of constant change. Create an adaptable work environment in which employees can respond in the most agile way possible to business demands while having the control and influence over their own work environment. By encouraging team-based discussions, these documents and resources aim to determine flexible ways of working that best meet team needs while ensuring business requirements are attained. Focus on the outcomes of the work, not the presence of the employee.

### Teleworking Benefits:

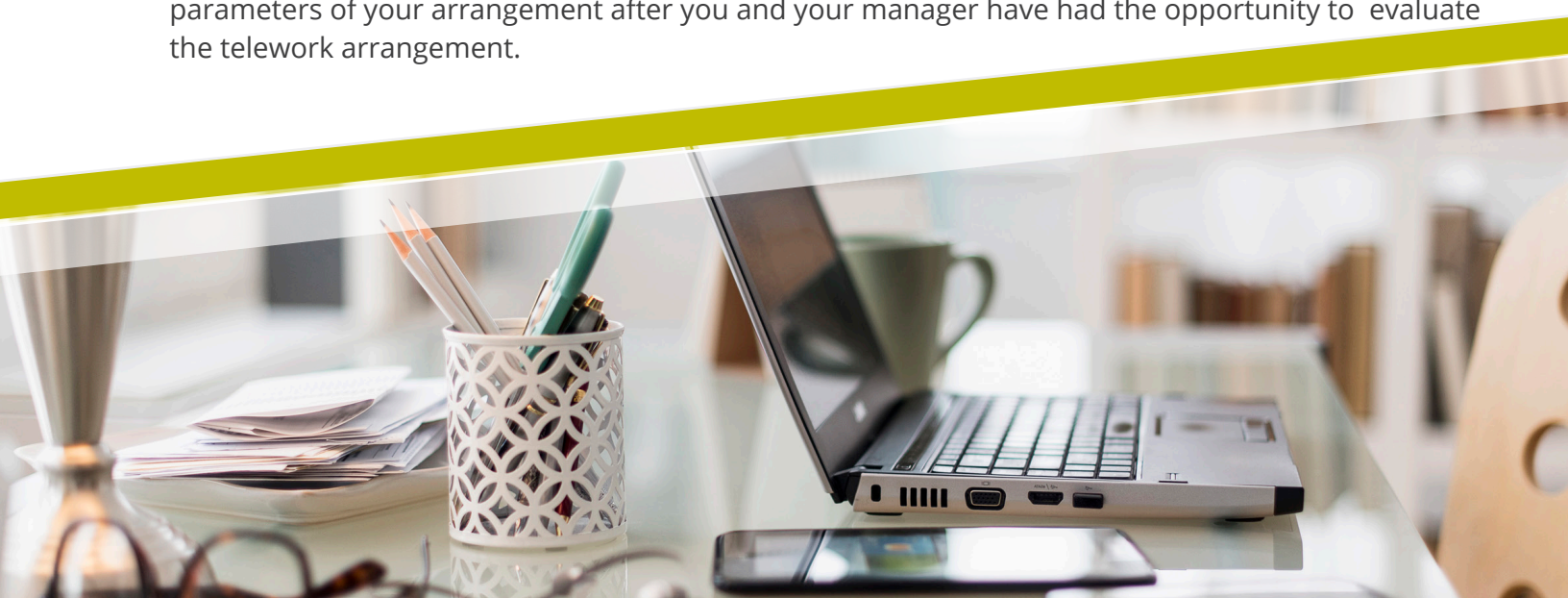
- Increases productivity and job satisfaction among employees.
- Improves the organization’s ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees.
- Reduces costs associated with physical office space, including overhead costs, real estate leases, energy, and parking expenses.
- With no commute travel, it creates more free time for employees.
- Enhances work-life balance for your workforce.
- Allows workers to remain productive if the physical office is affected by an emergency or disaster.
- Reduces absenteeism in the form of sick days, snow days, family leave, and personal appointments.
- Helps manage demand for parking.
- Achieves company’s sustainability goals and increasing environmental quality through commute trip reduction goals.





## Key questions and elements to include in written proposal:

- **Why you want to telework** — Explain exactly why you want to telework and what teleworking will mean to you. Focus on the nuts and bolts of your telework arrangement such as how things will be done or how communication will occur.
- **Employer benefits** — Relate how it will benefit your agency. In some cases, it may be better to focus more attention on how telework will benefit the agency/organization versus how it will benefit you.
- **Job responsibilities** — Summarize what you do and identify specific tasks or parts of your job that lend themselves to teleworking. Focus attention on telework’s positive effects on your work responsibilities.
- **Employee characteristics** — Discuss why you would be a good candidate for teleworking. Remember successful teleworkers need to have work habits that support independent task performance such as:
  - the ability to work with minimal direct supervision
  - organized work practices
  - good planning skills
  - the ability to meet schedules and deadlines
  - effective communication skills
- **Home environment** — Describe where in your home you will work. If applicable, include a safety checklist self-certifying the space is free from hazards.
- **Equipment and communications** — Describe what equipment you will use (e.g. your employer’s or yours) and how you plan to communicate with your supervisor, coworkers, and customers.
- **Schedule** — Be Flexible. Suggest a schedule that will be “comfortable” for your manager. Consider starting out with one day every one or two weeks and increasing the number of days, if you wish, as you both gain more experience.
- **Trial period** — Suggest a short trial period (e.g. 3-6 months minimum) with the option to change the parameters of your arrangement after you and your manager have had the opportunity to evaluate the telework arrangement.



## Empathy in the workplace

The current pandemic has changed how and when federal employees work, but agency leaders say managing a remote workforce isn't that different from supervising their colleagues on site.

### **Today's challenges do demand a different mix of flexibility, empathy, and creativity.**

Speaker Sophie Wade reminded attendees of the 2019 Flex Summit that the shift in workplace dynamics and ever-growing need for empathy is largely driven by technology, which speeds up processes and blurs boundaries between work and personal time. Wade insists we all need new skills — particularly empathy — to work effectively in this new environment. Click [here](#) to watch her short and powerful presentation.

While an empathetic culture should start with those at the executive level, managers and their teams also hold a critical responsibility to promote this way of working. Underscored in all of this is the need for effective collaboration, which starts with employees feeling that they are in safe, accepting environments. Empathy helps us develop and build trust, which is essential when dealing with a remote or distributed workforce.

### **When extending support, be prepared for what you may get back**

Once you or your company embraces a more empathetic culture, putting it into practice while keeping things work-appropriate can be a challenge. Showing empathy at work is different from exercising it in your personal life, so it's essential to know how much to share, how much to ask, and where to draw those lines. This form

of “professional empathy” ensures that co-workers feel supported, while not invading their privacy. When asking an employee or co-worker how they are feeling, be acutely aware of social queues. Some people may prefer to keep the details to themselves, but others may share significant amounts of detail — perhaps more than you'd expect — so it's important to be prepared for that as well.

In order to effectively break down traditional workplace barriers and create a happier, healthier and more empathetic company culture, it's important to find ways to be more transparent about your own life and work experience. At some organizations that already have an existing open culture, the concept of experience-sharing may be enough to increase empathy and support within the work community. For other businesses where this is a newer practice, consider small steps like hosting a culture expert or developing a scale to create a common language. With everything you do in the workplace, bringing your life experience and your truest self to work is always the best way to ensure that you are supporting your teams, your co-workers and the culture overall.



### **Watch Sophie Wade presentation:**



[youtube.com/watch?v=QS-NkZDJajg](https://youtube.com/watch?v=QS-NkZDJajg)

## Supervisor checklist

Telework works best when employees and supervisors communicate clearly about expectations. The following checklist will help establish a foundation for effective teamwork and continued productivity.

**Understand relevant policies.** Review the following telework-related policies. Supervisors should verify that their employees have read and understood this information.

**Review technology needs and resources.** Identify technology tools staff use in their daily work and determine whether the resources will be accessible when working from home and ensure employees know how to access your team's local technical support should they need assistance.

- ⦿ Ensure employees know how to set up call forwarding and how to access voicemail from home.
- ⦿ Determine which platform(s) you will use to communicate as a team, clarify expectations for online availability and confirm everyone has access to the technology tool(s) and support resources.

**Review work schedules.** Telework sometimes gets confused with flex work. Be clear about your expectations with employees for maintaining their current work schedule or if you are open to flexible scheduling based on employee needs. If children are at home, flex work may be a viable option and would need to be discussed.

**Draft a work plan.** Review the questions below with staff and work through answers together.

- ⦿ What routine responsibilities/tasks cannot be fulfilled while working remotely and how will it impact operations or other people? What are ways to reduce the impacts?
- ⦿ What routine responsibilities and tasks require regular communication and collaboration with others? Pro actively contact each colleague to confirm how you will communicate while everyone is working remotely.
- ⦿ Oftentimes employees experience fewer interruptions while teleworking. Are there any special projects or tasks that you can advance while working remotely?
- ⦿ What events or meetings are scheduled during the time in which the telework arrangement is in place? Will they be postponed or canceled, or will they take place using technology? What follow-up needs to occur due to postponements or cancellations?





**Make a communication and accountability plan.** Supervisors should tell employees how often they should send updates on work plan progress and what those updates should include. Supervisors should also communicate how quickly they expect the employee to respond while teleworking and the best ways for the employee to contact the supervisor while working remotely.

- ⦿ If you typically make daily rounds to visit employees at their desks, you can give them a call during this period. Maintain team meetings and one-to-one check-ins, altering the schedule if needed to accommodate any alternative schedules that have been approved.
- ⦿ Conduct regular check-ins. Start each workday with a phone, video, or instant message chat. Your employees will be eager for connection and information during the disruption and the structure will help everyone create a positive routine. Every other day or weekly may be fine, so long as you are in contact frequently enough that your employees are in sync with you and/or with one another.

**Be positive.** A positive attitude toward teleworking and a willingness to trust employees to telework effectively is key to making such arrangements successful and productive. Teleworking presents an opportunity for managers to become better supervisors. Instead of focusing on how many hours your employees are working, re-emphasize a focus on measuring results and reaching objectives — regardless of the work arrangement. The employee's completed work product is the indicator of success, rather than direct observation. By focusing on the employee's work product, telemanagers will improve their organizational abilities and their own skill in managing by objectives.

**Debrief after normal operations resume.** Employees and supervisors should review work plans when work returns to normal, assess progress on the employee's work plan and prioritize any unresolved or new work that resulted from temporary operational disruption.



## Tips for being an empathetic leader

Cultivating empathy is a leadership skill that allows you to create bonds of trust. It gives you insight into what others are feeling and thinking, and it helps you understand their reactions. At its foundation, empathy informs your decision making by sharpening your perceptions and intuition.

Empathy is a right-brain activity, the kind that many people consider a touchy-feely discipline — a soft skill, as it is often called these days. But at its core, empathy is a valued currency. Sometimes leaders need to get out of their own shoes and put on someone else's to truly understand what is happening around them.

Here are some tips that every leader should consider when striving to be more empathetic:

**Truly listen.** Empathetic leaders don't just listen but truly listen. There's a big difference. True listening means listening with open ears, open eyes, and an open heart. It means paying attention to body language, to tone of voice, to the hidden emotions behind what's being said. Most of all, it means not thinking about what you're going to say next. You'll always gain more from listening than from speaking.

**Don't interrupt.** Empathetic leaders know how easily distractions can affect the quality of listening. A distracted listener often grows impatient or frustrated and interrupts the speaker in an attempt to get them to move along with what they're saying, leaving the speaker unable to express their thoughts or make their point. However strong the distraction, don't rush people or cut them off — or worse, try to be the kind of fixer who has a slapdash solution to everything. Giving people the space to say what they have to say is an important form of empathy.

**Be fully present.** When an empathetic leader speaks with someone, you'll never catch them glancing at their watch or scanning the room or checking their phone. It's simple: When someone is speaking, listen. If they're expressing their feelings, be there with them. Concentrate on putting yourself in their shoes and think of ways you can be supportive.

**Leave judgment behind.** Even when the feelings of others are in direct opposition to their own, empathetic leaders don't judge. They let go of their biases and allow themselves to be open to new perspectives. When you're an empathetic leader, you don't look at the feelings of others in terms of agreement or disagreement but as a window into their perceptions and world view, an opportunity to better understand what they're experiencing and expressing.

**Watch body language.** Empathetic leaders understand that nonverbal communication can say more about what you are thinking than any words. Body language is often the most direct way people communicate what they think or feel, even when their verbal communication says something quite different. Be aware of your own body language as you deal with others: remain open and listening, lean in when people speak, and show that you're interested in what they are saying. Spend some time considering how you come across when you communicate with others.

**Encourage the quiet ones.** In meetings, there are always two or three who do most of the talking. And then there are the quiet ones who for whatever reason never speak up as much, even if their ideas are solid. As a leader, make it a point to encourage people to have a say; the simple act of encouraging the quiet ones will empower everyone around you.

**Take a personal interest.** Empathetic leaders have genuine curiosity about the lives of those who work for them, and they show their interest by asking questions about people's lives, their challenges, their families, their aspirations. It's not professional interest but personal, and it's the strongest way to build relationships. When a leader lacks empathy, others approach with their guard up and everyone feels alone in looking after their own interests. With an empathetic leader, though, everyone knows they can be open about what they are thinking and feeling without being judged, dismissed or ignored.

**Lead from within:** Empathy is an emotional and thinking muscle that becomes stronger with use. It doesn't come across as weak but as the best kind of strength.





## Balancing work and children at home

As more businesses are going remote to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and navigate distance learning with children at home, many workers are faced with telecommuting for the first time.

Remember that we are all in this together, and that we need to show one another (and ourselves) grace and patience.

### *Here are some tips for working at home with children:*

**Give the children attention first.** Before you switch your attention to work, meet your children's needs first. By doing this, they are less likely to interrupt you while you are working.

**Be creative about how and when you work.** For example, it may be helpful for you to work before your children wake up or after they go to bed. Please remember to reach out to your supervisor in advance to discuss adjusting your work schedule.

**Do your most focused work when the children sleep.** Use the time while your children sleep to get your most important tasks complete. If your children don't nap, implement designated "quiet times" throughout the day to help you keep focused.

**Switch between children and work in time blocks.** If your children require more attention, block out a chunk of time to tend to their needs as opposed to trying to work and watch the children at the same time. Focusing on one task at a time is much easier to handle.

**Rotate childcare with your spouse.** Pair up with your spouse to rotate time looking after the children. Switch roles after your designated work time is over.

**Develop your children's collection of games.** Take time to build your inventory of games and help your children understand the rules so they can play independently while you work.

**Rotate activities and keep some in reserve.** Having a rotation of toys can help alleviate boredom that children experience when they don't have something new to play with. Rotating toys in and out of a storage area can help create excitement about playing with toys, especially if they have not seen the toys in a month or two.



**Send the children outside in all weather.** Rain or shine, sending your children outside can provide much needed quiet time to get work done. Make sure they have the right gear for any kind of weather and send them on their way.

**Start an activity with them, then leave.** Sometimes children just need a little motivation or direction to start an activity. As soon as your child is having a good time and self-directing play, you can leave and get started working.

**Stay healthy.** Keep healthy, tasty snacks on hand that can be easily accessed for the whole family.

**Make your home conducive to self-directed play.** Creating play and hobby spaces for children provides them with easy access to games and supplies for activities causing less distractions while trying to work.

**Encourage your children to manage themselves.** Children who develop hobbies and skills that require their own independent work, interest, and focus become used to managing themselves. Use the opportunity you have with them while at home to help your children grow in self-reliance.

### Resources for Learning at Home

#### Apps:

RazKids  
Seesaw  
Epic  
Vooks  
Book Creator  
Magnetic ABC  
TenFrames  
ABCmouse  
Monster Math  
Scratch Jr  
Starfall  
Let's Read  
Kids Learning Tube  
Free School  
Homeschool Pop  
StoryBots  
Khan Academy  
Smithsonian Channel  
The Brain Scoop  
Word World PBS  
TED-ed  
Sci Show Kids  
National Geographic Kids  
Peekaboo Kidz  
Storyline Online

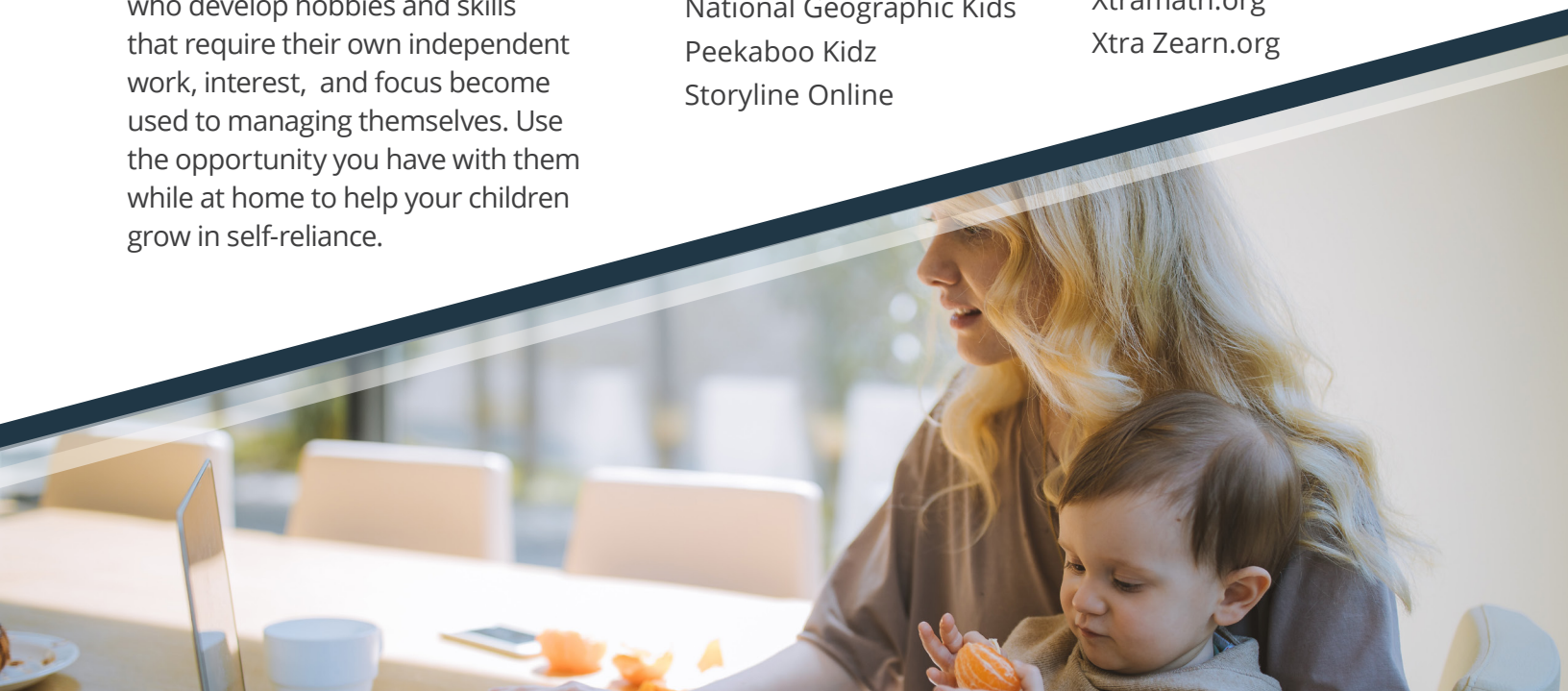
Story Time with Ms. Becky  
KidTimeStoryTime

#### Podcasts:

Brains On  
Six Minutes  
But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids  
Story Pirates  
Circle Round  
Smash Boom Best  
Wow in the World  
Eleanor Amplified  
The Two Princes  
Ear Snacks  
KidNuz

#### Websites:

Freckle.com  
Lexialearning.com  
Starfall.com  
MysteryScience.com  
Readworks.org  
STMath.com  
KhanAcademy.org  
Gonoodle.com  
Abcya.com  
Xtramath.org  
Xtra Zearn.org



## Ergonomics and safety

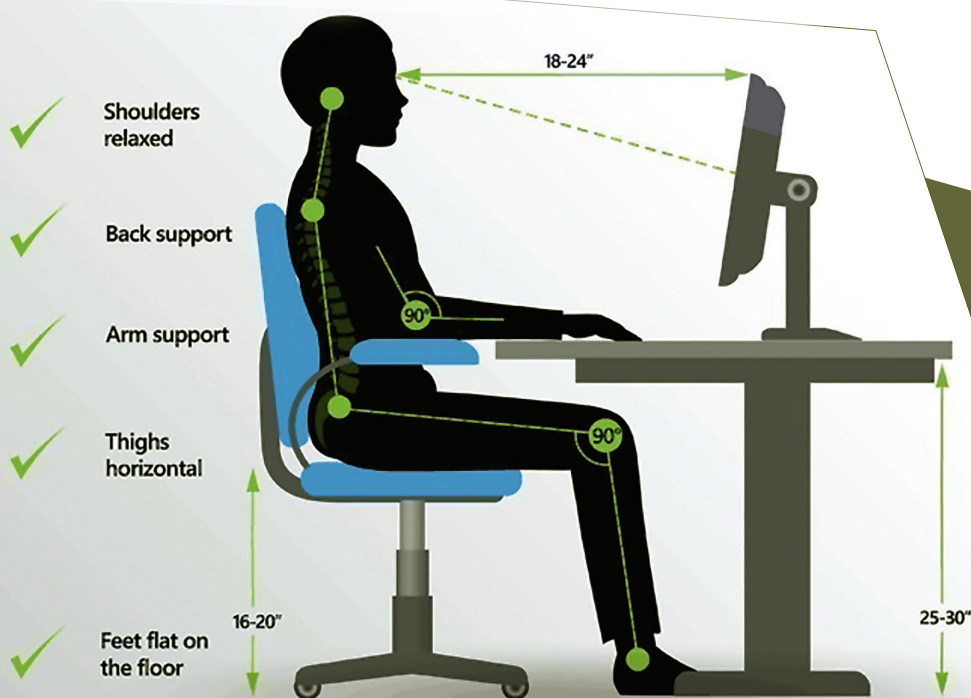
Ergonomics risks can be even more problematic for telecommuters. While this group is not inherently more prone to ergonomic injuries, they may not be provided the same ergonomically friendly equipment as employees within a company's four walls. In most cases, telecommuters are often left on their own when it comes to setting up their workstations.

Consider the following potential ergonomic concerns for telecommuters:

- ⦿ **Chairs** - If employees do not have proper chairs, they risk injury from poor fit, lack of lumbar support, missing or poor armrests, or even sitting on a hard surface such as a dining room chair.
- ⦿ **Laptops** - A laptop keyboard could be too high, creating a risk for shoulder injuries.
- ⦿ **Monitors** - A monitor that is either too high or too low can cause a risk for neck or shoulder injuries.

### Tips to provide employees

1. Desk should be slightly below elbow height for better posture
2. Use an adjustable office chair with lumbar support
3. Hips and knees should be at the 90 degree angles with feet flat on the floor when sitting at your desk; do not let your feet dangle
4. Keep wrists straight when using your mouse and keyboard
5. Adjust laptop or monitor to sit slightly below eye level to avoid neck strain; do not hunch over laptop or computer screen
6. Apply the 20/20/20 rule to help decrease eye fatigue: Look away from your monitor at least 20 feet, for 20 seconds, every 20 minutes
7. Use a phone speaker or headphones if you frequently talk to coworkers on the phone
8. When using a cell phone, type with one finger instead of your thumbs to avoid soft tissue injury
9. Keep cords under control and free of clutter
10. Designate a space for your home office; do not turn your couch into a workstation
11. Create a safe work space from home -- check out OSHA's ergonomic checklist.





## Hosting virtual meetings

For meeting organizers:

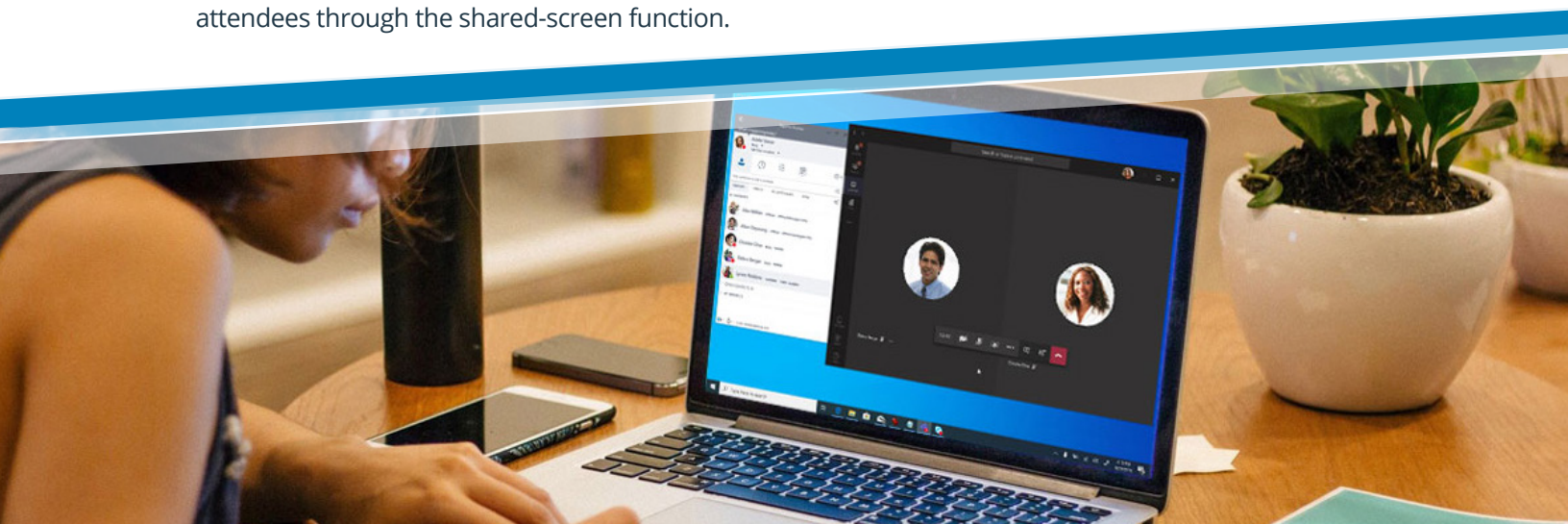
- ⦿ Prepare. Make the most out of the meeting and make sure it is productive and useful.
- ⦿ Be welcoming. Before jumping straight into the meeting, spend a couple minutes and have everyone introduce themselves. This also allows time for anyone late to the meeting to join.
- ⦿ After introductions, quickly explain expectations and the purpose of the meeting.
- ⦿ Create an agenda and send it out in advance.
  - ▣ Six components of an agenda:
    - Agenda header that identifies meeting details and purpose
    - The key objective that answers why the meeting is being held and what needs to be accomplished
    - Input, such as assigning meeting responsibilities
    - Meeting's discussion items
    - Time allocation of each agenda item
    - Follow-up with participants with meeting minutes
- ⦿ Keep attendees engaged and ask questions throughout the meeting. Use real-time polling, gamification, or group problem solving to increase productivity.
- ⦿ End meeting on time

### Virtual Meeting Etiquette

Even though virtual meetings don't seem as professional, the truth is that they are. As such, they deserve the same respect and etiquette.

Here are some tips for everyone attending a virtual meeting:

- ⦿ Work from a quiet room that's free from distractions.
- ⦿ Make sure the room is brightly lit.
- ⦿ Use a laptop because it is more steady and keeps hands free for taking notes.
- ⦿ Always test out the technology beforehand.
- ⦿ Use the mute button when not speaking to eliminate disrupting background noise.
- ⦿ Always look into the camera.
- ⦿ Know how to set up an online meeting to share documents and information with meeting attendees through the shared-screen function.
- ⦿ Let people know in advance when setting up an online meeting so everyone allots the appropriate amount of time to log-in to the screen-sharing system and become familiar with its functionality.
- ⦿ Routinely address remote participants to ensure engagement with all meeting participants.
- ⦿ Schedule virtual screen-sharing practice sessions for novice users 15 minutes prior to a scheduled call.
- ⦿ Monitor the group chat during the virtual meeting.
- ⦿ Remember to dial-in remote teammates when meeting face-to-face with other attendees.
- ⦿ Engage. When attending an online meeting or conference call, personally engage by asking questions, seeking clarifications, and making suggestions.



## Mental wellness

While working from home may seem like a dream, for many, this big change can be a source of anxiety for those making the transition to their new office.

Here are some tips to stay balanced while working from home:

**Keep your routine.** Even if you are not going into the office, it is important to maintain your normal routine. Exercising, showering, getting dressed in “work” clothes, and doing your hair and makeup just as if you are heading into the office can help put you in the right frame of mind for work.

**Take a break.** Just because you are working from home, doesn’t mean that you are not entitled to the same breathers. Stepping away for breaks throughout the workday helps boost productivity. You can set a timer on your phone to focus for a 20-minute block then take a break when the time goes off. During your break, fix yourself a cup of coffee, stand up and stretch or unload the dishwasher. Five minutes is all you need to refresh your brain.

**Get structured, but not too much.** Be thoughtful about where you choose to set up your workstation. You will want to find a quiet area for tasks that require deep thinking and concentration. Also, make sure to designate “work-free” zones in your home so you don’t associate those spaces with work.

**Repurpose your commute.** Just because you are no longer commuting to work, doesn’t mean you need to start your workday when you would have

left home for the office. Instead, use this time for self-care or family time.

**Set clear boundaries.** When working from home, it’s important to communicate with co-workers as well as household members what your work schedule looks like and stick to it. Working from home doesn’t mean you are working more hours. When your workday ends, be sure to put away your work equipment or stay out of the room designated as your workspace.

**Don’t forget to eat.** Without a commute eating up your morning, you’ll have more time to prepare a substantial and healthy breakfast. Hydrating and fueling your body with healthy foods helps boost energy and productivity. Don’t forget about lunch. You can use that extra time in the morning to prepare your lunch.

**Stay connected.** Even though you can’t physically pop over to someone’s desk, you can take some time to drop your coworkers a text, message, or phone call. If you have video meeting capabilities, you may choose to get in some face time with your co-workers. You’ll create more meaningful interactions and avoid loneliness.

### Some additional resources

- Consider the Employee Assistance Program (EAP): free counseling to help employees navigate workplace stress.
- Access your comprehensive health care benefits, including options like Teledoc.
- Take a course on the Science of Well-Being, by Yale University, through Coursera, a free online learning platform.



## Teleworking tips and resources

Employees who telework often learn that working remotely is different than they expected and that it requires specific skills and habits. The following tips will help you get to work while at home.

**1. Define your workspace.** It can be easy to sit on the sofa with your laptop and expect to get work done. Experienced teleworkers will tell you they tried that and it simply doesn't work! We are creatures of habit and most of us are used to lounging with our laptops to read the news, watch TV, play games and chat with friends and family. Establishing a workspace, even if it is your kitchen table, gives your brain a cue that it is time for work and not play.

### **2. Master the basics.**

- Add your telecommute schedule to your email signature line.
- Set up call forwarding and how to access your voicemail from home.
- Know how to remote into your company network or desktop and other online tools regularly used.
- Use Skype or Teams or another instant messaging client to stay connected to colleagues.
- Plan for video calls/meetings by making sure you know how to turn on your computer's camera and microphone and being aware that your colleagues may be able to see the background behind you.
- Communicate with your teams, not just your supervisor. Teammates can get frustrated if you are not able to be reached when they assume you are working. Let them know what your schedule is.

**3. Set daily goals,** track them and share your progress. You may be surprised by how differently the work day passes without the comings and goings of an office to break things up or influence what you do next. Start each day of telework by writing down what you need to achieve and then track your progress. Pay attention to how long tasks take you to complete and start adjusting

your daily goals to match your current rhythm. Communicate with your supervisor or colleagues if you think your telework plan needs to be adjusted.

**4. Eliminate distractions.** If home is where your heart is then telework can mean pets, children, or a favorite hobby are only a few feet away. Depending on your living arrangement, you may need to hang a "do not disturb" sign so your family members don't interrupt you. Pets often need a closed door to keep them away and you might need headphones to block the neighborhood noise.

**5. Prioritize privacy.** Whether you are in your home or a common area, take five minutes to assess the privacy of your workspace. Can someone standing behind you read confidential information on your computer screen? Are your windows open so your neighbor can hear your phone call? What information do you need to secure before grabbing a cup of coffee or heading to the restroom? Your personal privacy matters too, so see if there anything around you that would not want to be visible during a video conference with your boss.

**6. Stay connected.** Many people say they do not call or instant message colleagues who are working remotely because they don't want to bother them. Remember, they are working, not vacationing at home! You should feel confident about calling or messaging an employee who is teleworking anytime you would walk to their office or call them if you were working on-site. You can even keep your daily coffee run – simply plan to call or video chat with a cup in hand at the time your crew would normally walk to your favorite espresso cart.

**7. Dress for work.** Just like sitting on the couch can make us feel a little too relaxed, wearing pajamas all day makes it hard to get into work mode. Dressing casually is definitely a perk of working at home but getting "ready for work" is a daily ritual that many teleworkers swear by.



This TELEWORK AGREEMENT effective \_\_\_\_\_ is between \_\_\_\_\_ (referred to as "Employee") and INSERT COMPANY NAME (referred to as "Employee").

**Term of Agreement**

This agreement shall become effective as of the date written above, and shall remain in full force and effect, if employee teleworks, unless the agreement is terminated by the employer.

**Employee's Alternate Work Site**

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate Phone Number(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Fax Number (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

**Work Schedule:**

| Week Day | Office | At Worksite | Start | Finish |
|----------|--------|-------------|-------|--------|
| Mon      |        |             |       |        |
| Tue      |        |             |       |        |
| Wed      |        |             |       |        |
| Thu      |        |             |       |        |
| Fri      |        |             |       |        |

\_\_\_ Fixed (complete schedule below) or \_\_\_ Flexible (submit schedule, in advance, each week)

The daily work schedule for the days when working at home is subject to negotiation with and approval by Employee's manager. The manager may require that Employee work certain "core hours" and be accessible by telephone during those hours.

**Work Hours, Overtime, Vacation**

Work hours are not expected to change during the program. In the event that overtime is anticipated, this must be discussed and approved in advance with the manager, just as any overtime scheduling would normally have to be approved.

**Equipment**

Employee agrees that use of equipment, software, data supplies and other accessories are limited to authorized persons and for purposes related to the organization, including self-development, training and tasks.

At its sole discretion, (INSERT COMPANY NAME) may choose to grant the Employee use of laptops and similar equipment but as a normal course of action, the Employee is expected to have personal equipment that makes Telecommuting possible.

Employee may use personal equipment for teleworking purposes. In such cases, Employee will be responsible for the maintenance and insurance required for the equipment. (INSERT COMPANY NAME) does not assume liability for loss, damage or wear of Employee-owned equipment.

In the event of equipment failure or malfunction, Employee agrees to notify the supervisor immediately. Employee understands that any malfunction that is not repaired in a reasonable amount of time will temporarily suspend the telecommuting privilege.

**Termination of Agreement**

Employee's participation as a teleworker is entirely voluntary. Teleworking is available only to eligible employees, at Employer's sole discretion. Teleworking is not an employee benefit intended to be available to the entire organization. As such, no employee is entitled to, or guaranteed the opportunity to, telework. Either party may terminate Employee's participation in the program, with or without cause, upon reasonable notice, in writing, to the other party. Employer will not be held responsible for costs, damages or losses resulting from cessation of participation in the teleworking program. This Agreement is not a contract of employment and may not be construed as such.

**Employee Acknowledgment**

I understand teleworking is voluntary and that my supervisor or I may end this telework agreement at any time. I also understand that this agreement is not a contract for employment.

Furthermore, by signing this telework agreement I acknowledge I have read and will abide by the NSS Telework Policy, including the Telework Guidelines, Home Office Safety Guidelines, and the Home Office Self-Certification Safety Checklist.

Employee's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor's Review**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the employee's Telework Agreement and Home Office Self-Certification Safety Checklist and approve this request.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have reviewed the employee's Telework Agreement and Home Office Self-Certification Safety Checklist and I am unable to approve this request at this time for the following reason(s):

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Supervisor's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please Return a Copy of this Form to the Employee Transportation Coordinator (ETC) or Human Resources.

**Employee Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Job Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Telework Address:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Employee Phone Type:**  Cell  Home

**Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Department Administrator:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Telework Applied for:**  Routine  Informal

**Current Work Schedule:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Proposed Telework Days:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Describe your current job duties.**

**For example, research, data entry and processing, reports, customer service, writing, administrative, reading, computer programming, field visits.**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



List the duties from above that can be performed at your proposed telework location.

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List the duties from above that cannot be performed at your proposed telework location.

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Do you have adequate space in your home/telework location to perform the duties of your job?  
 yes  no

Do you have the following equipment available to you at your home?  
 Computer  Internet access  Desk  Phone

List any potential barriers that would make teleworking difficult.

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Approved  Not Approved

Reasons for not approving:

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Supervisors Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved  Not Approved

**Reasons for not approving:**

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**Directors Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

Approved     Not Approved

**Reasons for not approving:**

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**HR Directors Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### **Purpose of Policy**

The purpose of this policy is to establish a policy and procedures to use, where appropriate, telecommuting in order to achieve administrative efficiencies, reduce traffic congestion, support Continuity of Operations plans, and sustain the hiring and retention of a highly qualified workforce by enhancing work/life balance.

### **Those Affected**

All divisions and departments.

For employees who are represented under the terms of a collective bargaining agreement, this policy prevails except where it conflicts with the collective bargaining agreement, or any memorandum of agreement to the collective bargaining agreement, relative to the members of the bargaining unit.

### **Telework Definition**

Telework is an alternative work arrangement available to employees through a mutual agreement between employees, supervisors and department directors. It is based on the needs of the job, work group, and organization, and the employee's past and present levels of performance. Telework is intended to reduce the number of commute trips taken by employees, reduce pollutants, save energy and to enhance employee job performance and satisfaction without impairing productivity or service to customers.

### **Policy**

The telework policy shall apply to all employees at (organization) who have been employed in regular-status position for a period of \_\_\_\_ months or more.

Telework is not appropriate for all employees. No employee is entitled to, or guaranteed the opportunity to telework. The employee and supervisor will assess the job responsibilities of the employee to determine if the job is appropriate for teleworking. The supervisor has full discretion to deny a telework agreement if they deem it not appropriate.

### **Type of Arrangements**

The (organization) authorizes two different telecommuting arrangements, which both require completion of a Telework Application and Telework Agreement.

**Informal telework:** Ad-hoc telework arrangements may be approved for an employee when the employee is working on a project requiring uninterrupted focus or when the employee must be home for a situation that would otherwise require the use of vacation, comp time, personal holidays, or management leave. Additionally, Supervisors are able to approve telework in advance in anticipation of inclement weather. If an employee performs telework on a regular basis rather than occasional basis the telework becomes routine telework and the appropriate agreement must be comp

**Routine telework:** Permitted for employees only under the terms of the Telework Agreement reached between the employee and the immediate supervisor and approved by the Department Administrator.



**Eligibility**

- Telework agreements will only be approved if the employee has a portion of their workload that can be completed outside of the office. Other eligibility considerations are:
  - If the needs of both internal and external customers can be met without adverse impact to the organization.
  - Employees must have successfully passed their probationary period and have a documented history of meeting or exceeding expectations on their performance evaluations and other performance documentation over the last 12 months. Requests for telework from newly hired employees who have not been employed in a regular status position for a period of 12 months or more may be approved based on a Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) qualifying health condition.
  - The teleworker must be able to arrange with their co-workers and supervisor for coverage of on-site job demands that arise on telework days. If during the effective period of a Telework Agreement coverage cannot be provided without a decrease in service levels or additional cost to the (organization), the supervisor may require the employee to report to his/ her regular workstation at (organization) premises.
- The employee's schedule shall be outlined in the agreement and in compliance with wage and hour laws, (organization's) policies and any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Any personal leave time to be taken during a telework period must be preapproved and requested in the same manner as other leave requests. For informal telework agreements, each instance of telework must be separately approved by the supervisor prior to the telework commencing. Such approval should be documented in writing, which may be by email.
- Prior to each telework period the employee and supervisor shall discuss and identify the assignments to be completed by the employee while teleworking.
- Criteria will be identified prior to the start of the arrangement, that will be used to evaluate the success of the assignments, in addition to any work product expected by the supervisor to be completed. Agreements for routine telework must be evaluated at regular intervals, with the minimum evaluation period of once every three months.
- The supervisor will determine appropriate equipment needs for each telecommuting arrangement and will supply necessary general office supplies. For security purposes, it is preferred for the employee to login remotely using their own laptop. If the employee does not own a laptop, the Supervisor will determine if taking an (organization) owned laptop is appropriate and must be approved by Human Resources and IT. Office furniture and household expenses will not be supplied by (organization). Equipment supplied by the employee will be the responsibility of the employee to maintain. The employee acknowledges that equipment used for business purposes but owned by the employee is subject to Public Records laws and may be inspected as necessary. The (organization) accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to the employee- owned equipment.
- Technical support is available to employees via the (organization's) laptops, for network related connectivity issues and software programs. It is the teleworker's responsibility to ensure the internet connection has been tested at their home office prior to the beginning of their telework agreement. Any down time related to technical issues should be reported to the supervisor immediately.

- Employees who telework are expected to be available during their work hours via email and have functioning internet and phone service. It is up to the employee and supervisor to determine the communication strategy and outline it in the Telework Agreement.
- Participation in the Telework program may be revoked if an employee violates or abuses the program. Violations and abuses include but are not limited to:
  - ⦿ Failure to provide satisfactory work products or deficits in performance.
  - ⦿ Using telework hours to conduct personal business, perform work outside of City business, and/ or taking breaks that exceed authorized periods without prior approval.
  - ⦿ Failure to receive prior authorization from their supervisor to adjust work hours.
- An employee who wishes to end their telework arrangement may do so with written notification to their supervisor.

### **Procedures**

(This process is contingent on the organization's culture and procedural processes. In some organizations there is no formal application and approval process – it is simply a discussion between employee and manager. In establishing a procedure for how the employee requests and gains approval to telework, the organization should strive to create a procedure that is least cumbersome and yet still protects the interests of the organization. Some procedures are so time consuming, particularly for managers, that they provide a disincentive to approval.)

- Employee reads and understands the telework policy.
- To initiate a telework arrangement, an employee should complete the Telework Application and submit the application to their direct supervisor. The Supervisor will review the application and make a recommendation for approval or denial within seven working days. Concurrently, the employee should complete a Telework Checklist to determine any necessary items that would be needed to carry out their telework assignment. Informal telework arrangements can be pre-approved in advance without a specific date being identified.
- If approved, the supervisor and teleworker will complete a Telework Agreement and forward the completed agreement to the department Administrator for approval.
- The application, agreement and checklist are forwarded to (organization's HR) for review and final approval. Any concerns will be addressed within seven working days of receipt. Denied requests will be returned to the employee with explanation.
- Along with their supervisor, the employee determines the best working schedule, workspace needs, and necessary check-in meetings to assess productivity.
- All teleworkers will adhere to City policies while working from their home office or other approved telework location.



This toolkit is brought to you and funded by grants from Oregon Department of Transportation and the Mid-Willamette Valley Council of Governments. For more information contact:

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