

Guidelines for Alternate Work Arrangements

TYPES OF ALTERNATE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

Alternate work arrangements enable full-time and part-time employees to better balance professional and personal obligations. As a result such arrangements can enhance productivity, reduce absenteeism and tardiness, be more environmentally friendly, improve employee satisfaction and reduce traffic congestion.

Alternate Schedule

Alternate scheduling may provide the opportunity for enhanced customer service through the extension of office hours, if appropriate.

Examples of alternate schedules may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 7:30 AM – 4:30 PM with a 1 hour lunch break
- 8:00 AM – 4:30 PM with a 30 minute lunch break
- 8:30 AM – 5:30 PM with a 1 hour lunch break
- 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM with a 30 minute lunch break

Compressed Work Week

There are a number of ways to establish a compressed work week schedule.

Examples of compressed work weeks include the following:

- Four (4) 10 hour days per week
- Four (4) 9 hour days and one (1) 4 hour day per week

Job Sharing

Job sharing may be a viable alternative when an employee desires part-time work, but the job function requires full-time staffing. Employees can achieve the level of work/life balance they desires, while the organization realizes reduced benefit costs and enhanced bench strength/cross training in job functions.

There are a variety of ways in which work time can be split for job sharers. Examples of job sharing scenarios include the following:

- Half or split days where one job sharer works the morning shift and the other the afternoon shift. The advantage is that sharers are in touch with the job each day.
- Half or split week with each job sharer working two and a half days. For example, one job sharer works Monday through Wednesday morning, while the other works Wednesday afternoon through Friday.
- Split week in which the job sharers work two days one week and three the next, alternating the extra day. For example, Wednesday is worked by one sharer one week and the other the next.
- Split week on an unequal basis. For example, one sharer always works two days and the other three.

Apart from allocation of hours, jobs can be divided in a variety of ways. It is possible to share a job according to a division of the tasks, projects, or other aspects of the assigned functions. Some jobs may be divided according to customers/departments while others may be divided based on the daily work needs. The classifications of each job sharer must be the same, and they must perform the same scope and level of work.

Neither employee can work greater than 25 hours/week, with the exception of occasionally covering absences for the additional person, and the combined hours worked among the job sharers generally cannot exceed 40 hours per week. Requests for a temporary increase in work hours beyond 25 per week must be approved by the Directors of Budget and Human Resources.

Telework

Teleworking can reduce costs for both the employee (commuting expenses) and the City (office space limitations). The feasibility of a telework arrangement should be determined by evaluating the work to be accomplished, the anticipated benefits to the department, the employee's demonstrated skills, and the interactions required between the teleworker and other staff members and/or customers.

A formal *Telework Memorandum of Understanding* and *Telework Assignment Form* is used to document all pertinent terms of the telework arrangement. Employees and supervisors should work together to modify the forms as necessary to accommodate terms specific to the individual, the employing unit, and the work assignment.

EXPECTATIONS

In any alternate work arrangement, the employee is expected to meet the same performance standards previously established for his/her position.

Any alternate work arrangement should be achieved without curtailing normal service hours, incurring overtime costs, impairing the department's effectiveness in carrying out its operations, placing undue burden on others in the department, or creating issues regarding safety, security, customer service or supervision. Terms and conditions of the arrangement should be clearly documented.

In certain circumstances, it may not be possible to proceed with an alternate work arrangement when an acceptable outcome does not prove feasible. Since an alternate work arrangement is a business decision, it can be modified or terminated as determined necessary by management to meet operational needs. The City, in accordance with managerial interests, also reserves the right to deny or restrict alternate work arrangements in order to ensure that operational needs will not be adversely affected.

The following examples could result in a modification or discontinuance of an alternate work arrangement: business needs are no longer being met; job requirements change; performance falls below an acceptable level; office coverage or staffing needs change; a staffing shortage develops; or valid negative client or co-worker feedback is received.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Employees who wish to request an alternate work arrangement should discuss the matter with their immediate supervisor. The immediate supervisor will, in turn, recommend to the department head/designee, approval or disapproval of the request. The department head/designee will evaluate the request and, if necessary, consult with other staff and/or Human Resources to determine whether a suitable arrangement can be established.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FOR SUPERVISORS

The supervisor should give full consideration to a request for an alternate work arrangement and respond to the employee's request within thirty (30) days.

The supervisor is expected to use the same performance measurement criteria that was in place for the employee prior to the establishment of the alternate work arrangement. An employee requesting an alternate work arrangement must have received a minimum of a "solid performance" rating on his/her most recent performance evaluation. Generally, an employee must be employed with the City for at least six (6) months before he/she will be eligible to telework. Exceptions can be approved at the discretion of the Department Head.

Evaluating Alternate Work Arrangement Proposals

In evaluating a proposed alternate work arrangement, supervisors should consider the following points to determine the feasibility of successful implementation of the request:

- The effect of the request on the department's goals and commitments including costs, customer service, safety, and security;
- Whether the type of work performed by the employee is conducive to the arrangement requested;
- Whether the arrangement will create difficulty in scheduling meetings, coordinating projects, etc.;
- The requirement that the employee be able to alter his/her schedule, as necessary, to attend meetings, training sessions, etc.;
- Whether there will be adequate coverage available during City operating hours for any responsibilities that require in-office staff;
- Whether the schedule will create a significant burden for other staff members;
- Whether significant cross-training will be required to ensure an adequate on site knowledge base at all times;
- Whether the employee's productivity and overall work record demonstrate the ability to succeed in the proposed arrangement;
- Whether lack of supervision will, at any time, be a concern;

- Whether equipment will need to be purchased and, if so, the cost and availability;
- Whether the employee accepts responsibility for making the arrangement work;
- Whether the employee expresses willingness to consider other arrangements; and
- Whether the employee appears flexible and willing to make adjustments to ensure success.

Determine the work configuration that will function best for the department/division. Some departments/divisions may find it workable to allow a great deal of flexibility. For others, only a limited number of positions lend themselves to alternate work arrangements. If the supervisor is not sure what will work for his/her department/division, limit flexibility initially with a commitment to review practices as the supervisor and the workgroup gain experience. Supervisors may consider a rotating schedule on a monthly or quarterly basis.

Supervisors need to be confident that the work will get done whether they are present or not. Establishing an arrangement on a trial basis can allow supervisors to determine whether the arrangement is likely to work on an on-going basis. Supervisors should also determine the results that need to be achieved in order to evaluate the effectiveness of a particular arrangement.

Based on these considerations, the supervisor will recommend to the department head/designee approval/disapproval of the request. If the department head/designee disapproves the employee's request, the supervisor should notify the employee in writing. The supervisor should receive approval from the department director before finalizing a denial of a request, removing an employee from an approved arrangement, or adjusting an employee's alternate schedule.

Job Sharing Considerations

For a job share arrangement, the supervisor should consider the following additional points and address any items which may be a concern:

- How difficult will it be to find a qualified job sharer based on the experience and education requirements for the job?
- If one part of the job share position should fall vacant, will the working hours left and related job content be attractive to new applicants?
- Can the workload reasonably be divided in an equitable way to achieve a balanced team?
- Does the employee clearly understand the implications of the arrangement (pay and benefits) and that there is no guarantee it can be reversed if the employee is not satisfied with the arrangement after implementation?

Telework Considerations

For a telework arrangement, the supervisor should consider the following additional points and address any items which may be a concern:

- Can the employee's performance and productivity be assessed effectively?
- Does the employee have the necessary information systems and technology (hardware, software, and connectivity), as well as security for those systems?
- Are some or all of the work activities portable, and can they be performed effectively while working away from the City worksite?
- Does the position require daily unscheduled face-to-face contact with other employees or the public at the standard City worksite?
- Does the position include activities that will benefit from quiet or uninterrupted time?
- Is the employee able to work independently without close supervision?
- Does the employee have the ability to prioritize work effectively and utilize good time management skills?
- Is the employee effective at meeting deadlines?
- Does the employee possess proactive communication and planning skills?
- Is the employee disciplined, reliable and professionally motivated, and does he/she show a high sense of responsibility in accomplishing work assignments?

The following tasks should be completed before implementing a telework arrangement:

- **Establish Length of Commitment and Reversibility** - Establish dates on which the supervisor and the employee will review the effectiveness of the *Telework Memorandum of Understanding* and make adjustments as necessary. The employer may rescind the Memorandum of Understanding consistent with the specified notice requirements. The employee may rescind the Memorandum of Understanding with supervisor concurrence.
- **Define Accountability and Performance Measurements** - Define the tasks or scope of work to be completed via telework, the timeframes for completion, and how work will be reviewed, reported, evaluated, and measured.

- **Establish Communication Requirements and Availability** - Determine how communication between the teleworker and the worksite will be handled. Consider whether to establish scheduled times when the teleworker will be available to colleagues and/or customers. The *Telework Memorandum of Understanding* may allow the supervisor to visit the worksite at mutually agreed upon times. The teleworker is expected to remain flexible in order to respond to business requirements, such as being available to work at the office on a normal telework day.
- **Establish Security and Confidentiality Requirements** - Assess the sensitivity of the information to which the teleworker must have access and determine what, if any, precautions are necessary. Ensure that the employee's computer used to telework is adequately secured and that such an arrangement will not present an undue threat to the City's information systems.
- **Identify Equipment, Equipment Insurance, and Office Supply Requirements** - Determine what equipment and supplies are needed at the alternate work site and who will provide them. Advise the employee that he/she must comply with licensing agreement terms for use of all software owned by the City. Maintain an inventory of equipment and supplies used at the teleworker's work site. City equipment and other resources located at the alternate work site are not typically insured. If departments do not ensure the equipment that will support the telework arrangement, the *Telework Memorandum of Understanding* should specify whether the department or the employee bears the risk of loss.

Managing Alternate Work Arrangements

Consider the following points in developing a plan to effectively manage the work of individuals working an alternate work arrangement:

- Establish a plan that ensures clear communication and accountability;
- If the arrangement involves flexible hours or an alternate work location, specify the hours, days, and location of work, as well as the times when the employee will be on site for meetings and to communicate directly with other team members;
- Review implications of the arrangement with the employee emphasizing adequate record-keeping of hours worked and leave time;
- Before agreeing to long-term implementation, establish the arrangement on a trial basis with a designated review period;
- In a job sharing arrangement which results in a reduction in the employee's scheduled work hours, make sure that the employee understands there is no assurance that he/she can return to the previous schedule outside of the trial period, should the employee request it;

- Ensure the employee understands the terms of the arrangement and that, once the arrangement is implemented, its continuation depends on it working effectively for both the employee and the department; and
- Document all pertinent details of the arrangement, including work hours and schedule, performance plan with measurable outcomes, and a review schedule, providing the employee with an executed copy of the terms.

Establish a clear, mutual understanding of the terms of an arrangement by putting them in writing. Share a copy with the employee and place a copy in the employee's department file. Make sure that the written agreement states that the arrangement is subject to revision based on departmental work requirements.

Modifying Alternate Work Arrangements

If a supervisor feels there is a situation that warrants a change in the alternate work arrangement, the supervisor should discuss the situation with the employee to determine if a modification can be made or an acceptable alternative exists. If the supervisor determines it is necessary or appropriate to discontinue the alternate work arrangement, he/she may do so by communicating such decision to the employee verbally and/or in writing. Any decision communicated verbally must be documented.

Guidance on alternate work arrangements can be sought from the Department of Human Resources.