



L.E. Phillips Memorial
Public Library

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Category: Human Resources

Policy Title: Telecommuting or Remote Work Arrangements Policy
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Purpose:

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library is committed to creating a work environment and culture where the needs of our customers, employees and the organization are aligned. Therefore, the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library strives to be flexible in its approach to work styles and location. The ability to work remotely enables employees to achieve a more successful balance between work responsibilities and family life. The Library may offer this option to employees in certain positions, or under certain circumstances, when it benefits both the organization and the employee, *taking into consideration the importance of teamwork, collaboration and productivity.*

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library will consider telecommuting on a case-by-case basis when an employee's job duties can be performed remotely with appropriate supervision, interaction with staff, and in a manner that meets the Library's performance, behavioral, privacy, security, and other expectations. No employee, even an employee approved to work under a telecommuting arrangement, has an expectation or property interest in any such telecommuting arrangement. Telecommuting is a privilege, not an entitlement. It is not a Library-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of your employment status with the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library. The Library may deny a remote work arrangement in those situations where it will impede meeting customer service standards of a department/division and may terminate a remote work arrangement at any time.

Eligibility:

The determination of whether an employee and/or position is appropriate for an on-going telecommuting arrangement is made on a case-by-case basis. All telecommuting arrangements shall require advance written approval of the Division Manager, Deputy Director and the Library Director.

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements should have a satisfactory performance, attendance, and disciplinary record and must be employed with the Library for a minimum of six (6) months. Any telecommuting arrangement will be on a trial basis for the first three (3) months and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of the employee or the employee's supervisor, manager or department director.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and their direct manager, with

the assistance of Administration, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, taking into consideration the following factors:

- **Employee suitability.** The employee and their direct manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee. Employees who work remotely should be good planners, self-motivated, strong communicators, able to manage their workload effectively, willing to ask for feedback, able to work independently with minimal supervision, possess time management skills, proven producers of quality work, and able to focus on priorities and meet deadlines.
- **Job responsibilities.** The employee and their direct manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement, including review of the work schedule.
- **Workspace design/equipment needs/scheduling issues.** The employee and their direct manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.

Requests to telecommute may be considered when:

1. The employee's duties can be fulfilled within the telecommuting structure.
2. Telecommuting fits with the needs of the department.
3. Telecommuting provides for space savings or increased productivity.
4. The employee has demonstrated acceptable performance and their direct manager believes the employee can maintain acceptable quality and quantity of work while telecommuting.
5. The department can maintain quality of service for employees and members of the public.

Generally, requests to telecommute should not be considered when:

1. The job requires the employee's physical presence or telecommuting would impair the department's efficiency.
2. The employee's current job duties require frequent supervision, direction or input from others who are on-site.
3. The employee's job duties require that the employee provide frequent supervision, direction or input to other employees who are on-site.
4. The employee has documented poor performance or attendance issues.

If the employee, direct manager, Deputy Director, and Library Director concur, a **Telecommuting Request Form** and **Telecommuting Agreement** will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three (3)-month trial period will commence.

Expectations:

The employee will have an established, predictable schedule. The regular telecommuting days shall be identified and agreed to at the outset and be specified in the **Telecommuting Request Form and Telecommuting Agreement**. In no instance shall an employee be permitted to work remotely **more than two (2) days per week** on a regular basis. Any change in the number of remote work days per week must be agreed to between the employee and the employee's direct manager.

In order to foster employee engagement and connection to the Eau Claire community and a

reasonable response time when an employee's presence may be required on-site, in no instance shall an employee be permitted to telework **from another state** (with the exception of a newly-hired employee who is in the process of relocating to Eau Claire. In such instances, a time limit on the remote work arrangement will be established by the employee's direct manager.) Work outside the state of Wisconsin causes legal, human resources, tax, and liability issues that are not easily accommodated, and should be avoided. It is expected that employees working remotely maintain an ability to return to work within one (1) hour, or any shorter response time specified in the Employee Handbook, Department policy, individual labor agreement, or the employee's telecommuting agreement.

The employee and their direct manager will agree on (1) the number of days of remote work allowed each week, (2) the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and (3) the manner and frequency of communication. Approval of a telecommuting arrangement does not prevent the employee's supervisor or manager from adjusting schedules, at its sole discretion, including requiring the employee to come on-site for group training or to accommodate staffing needs (absences, etc.)

Flexible scheduling may not be utilized on top of a remote work arrangement to limit on-site work, especially on Mondays and Fridays. Nor can a remote work arrangement be utilized specifically to provide an employee with three-day weekends to the exclusion of other staff members. The remote work shall be spread fairly among all department/division members desiring a remote work arrangement.

Telecommuting is not intended to permit staff to have time to work at other jobs, run their own business, or be a replacement for appropriate child, pet, elder or dependent care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child/elder/dependent care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. If an employee has a need for time off related to the above or other non-work matters, employees shall use appropriate vacation time, sick time, or a floating holiday. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to working remotely. If a manager is concerned that persons in need of primary care who are present in the alternate work location will interfere with the employee's ability to perform work during the telecommuting hours, the employee may be asked to demonstrate that another individual will be present to provide the care. The manager may request whatever reasonable verification it finds acceptable, such as a good faith representation by the employee, a credible representation from the care provider, or other confirmation of the care.

Employees who telecommute shall comply with all L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library Employee Handbook policies and department procedures/work rules.

Employees who telecommute are expected to maintain regularly-scheduled work hours, to be fully accessible during those hours by phone and by email, and to attend necessary meetings and appointments in person as required by the manager or supervisor. Remote workers are expected to participate in virtual department/division meetings with their cameras on, if requested, barring any technical difficulties. If it is found that an employee is not performing work during the telecommuting hours, the **Telecommuting Agreement** may be revoked and the employee may be subject to discipline.

Meetings with visitors or members of the public conducting business with the L.E. Phillips

Memorial Public Library shall not be conducted at the employee's remote work location.

Computers, Equipment and Office Supplies:

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. The space shall be free from noise, interruptions and distractions. The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library will not be responsible for costs associated with initial set-up of the employee's home office such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space. Nor shall the Library be responsible for operating costs, office furniture such as a desk, standing work stations or chairs, or any other incidental costs associated with the use of the employee's residence for a remote work location.

Managers shall work with the IT Department to determine the appropriate computer and equipment needs for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis.

Employees who telecommute shall use Library-issued computers or laptops. Personal computers are prohibited for telecommuting employees, unless it is being used to connect to the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library virtual desktop portal, requiring explicit permission and setup from IT.

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library is not responsible for providing internet access or a cell phone for employees not identified as requiring a Library cell phone to use at home. The requirements of the Library's **Electronic Communications Policy** (shall be complied with during the remote work arrangement.

The Library's IT Division shall not provide home or telecommuting site visits. When needed, the employee shall follow the standard IT Helpdesk protocol. The IT Division will troubleshoot remotely and the telecommuting employee may be required to bring their equipment into the Library for service.

Employees who telecommute are not permitted to have a Library-provided printer at home. Employees should print to their department printer on-site and pick up documents when they are in the office.

Equipment supplied by the Library will be maintained by and shall remain the property of the Library. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the Library, will be maintained by and remain the property of the employee. The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the Library is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. A **Telecommuting Equipment Checklist** shall be completed for this purpose.

The employee agrees to return Library equipment, records, and materials within five (5) business days of the termination of the **Telecommuting Agreement**. All Library equipment is subject to inspection by the Library upon reasonable notice. Upon termination of employment, all Library property will be returned to the Library, unless other arrangements have been made.

The L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library will provide the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary.

Telecommuting employees must have a safe and ergonomically correct workspace in order to telecommute. Employees will be required to conduct an ergonomics self-evaluation of their telecommuting location by using the **Telecommuting Ergonomics Self-Evaluation Form**.

Security:

Consistent with the Library's expectations of information security for employees working at Library facilities, telecommuting employees will be expected to meet all Library security and privacy expectations while working under a telecommuting arrangement, as well as use of computers, network, internet and email (see Library's **Technology and Communication Acceptable Use Policy**). It is expected that employees fully review and are familiar with these policies.

The telecommuter's signed Employee Handbook Acknowledgment, and any other applicable computer, network, and department work rules and permissions remain in full effect while telecommuting.

Safety/Risk Management:

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. A **Telecommuting Safety Checklist** is required to be completed prior to the start of the remote work arrangement. The Library assumes no responsibility for injuries occurring in the employee's at-home workspace outside the agreed-upon work hours. Injuries sustained by an employee in their home office location in the course and scope of their regular work duties are normally covered by the Library's worker's compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for promptly notifying Human Resources/Risk Management of any injuries.

The employee is solely liable for any injuries sustained by family members or third parties.

By participating in the telecommuting arrangement, the employee agrees to hold the Library harmless against any and all claims including injuries to others at the telecommuting location. Employees should consider telecommuting-related issues that may impact or be impacted by any applicable insurance on their dwelling used as a remote work location. Employees who do not have any type of homeowner's or renter's insurance must evaluate whether such insurance, at the employee's expense, might be appropriate. Employees who have homeowner's or renter's insurance must investigate if their current coverage is appropriate for telecommuting.

Time Worked:

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the L.E. Phillips Memorial Public Library's timekeeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the employee's supervisor. Under no circumstances is a non-exempt employee permitted to perform "off the clock" work. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the immediate termination of the Telecommuting Agreement.

Telecommuting Request/Procedure:

An employee requesting a telecommuting arrangement shall complete a **Telecommuting Request Form**. Additional department-specific forms may also be required. The request shall be submitted to the employee's direct supervisor/manager.

The employee's direct supervisor/manager and/or Division Director shall review, complete, and provide a recommendation for telecommuting. The request form shall be signed and submitted to Administration for review.

The Deputy Director and the Technology Manager shall provide a recommendation regarding said request and submit the request form to the Library Director for final approval or denial.

Telecommuting Agreement:

An approved **Telecommuting Request Form** and a signed, written **Telecommuting Agreement** between the telecommuting employee and the department is required, and shall be placed in the employee's personnel file. The **Telecommuting Agreement** shall include any department procedures required during the telecommuting arrangement.

The **Telecommuting Agreement** may be modified at any time by the employee or the employee's direct manager upon mutual agreement of the parties. The **Telecommuting Agreement** shall be reviewed on an **annual** basis with the employee's direct supervisor/manager and re-executed at that time.

The availability of telecommuting as a flexible work arrangement for employees can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the Library. Reasons for discontinuation of a telecommuting arrangement may include the employee's tasks are no longer suitable for telecommuting; work product, productivity, or accountability standards are not being met; or a short-term need or other premise that gave rise to the telecommuting arrangement no longer exists. The Library will make every effort to provide reasonable advance notice of at least two (2) weeks prior to terminating a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, where less or no notice is possible. In addition, management retains the right to terminate or modify this agreement on a temporary or permanent basis in its sole discretion.

An employee may also seek to end the telecommuting arrangement by notifying the department that he or she wishes to discontinue telecommuting. The employee must give as much notice as is reasonably necessary to facilitate regular reporting to the on-site work location. Greater notice may be required in those instances where the employee shares a workspace with another employee.

Links to the Library's telecommuting request forms shall be maintained on the Library's Intranet site, including:

- **Telecommuting Request Form**
- **Telecommuting Agreement**
- **Telecommuting Equipment Checklist**
- **Telecommuting Safety Checklist**
- **Telecommuting Ergonomics Self-Evaluation Form**