



## Telecommuting Policy

### Purpose

The East Greenbush Community Library's (Library) Telecommuting Program (remote work) is designed to recognize the benefits of providing library employees alternatives to traditional work practices that provide flexibility and increase the effectiveness of the Library.

### Definition

For the purposes of this policy, telecommuting is defined as a remote-access arrangement on a formal regular basis (set schedule of working away from office), informal short-term project basis, or a temporary basis as the result of extenuating circumstances.

In general, telecommuting is a privilege, which may be granted under appropriate circumstances to eligible employees whose job responsibilities are suitable to such an arrangement. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not an organization wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment. Many jobs within the Library are not suitable because the Library is a public service organization and providing services to patrons within library buildings is core to the Library's mission.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at the request of either the telecommuter or the employer. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, childcare, and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

### Eligibility

Full-time or part-time regular employees who have been in their positions for at least six months may request a telecommuting arrangement unless it is negotiated as part of the hiring process. Eligibility may also be adjusted for a staff member who has a disability and needs to work from home.

The choice of a work schedule for an individual or unit must be made subject to the overriding requirement that full department operations, services, and commitments be maintained. In all cases, flexible schedules are subject to approval by the library director and department head.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and supervisor, with assistance of the director, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- **Employee suitability.** The employee and supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to the traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.

- **Job Responsibilities.** The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- **Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, and scheduling issues.** The employee and supervisor will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- **Tax and other legal implications.** The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state, and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.
- **Additional considerations.**
  - Do key duties require access to equipment, materials, and files that can only be accessed on Library property.
  - Do key duties require face-to-face contact with supervisors, other employees, or member library patrons on Library property?
  - Do security issues require the key duties to be conducted on Library property?

If the employee and supervisor agree, and director concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared, reviewed by department heads, signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and email between the employee and supervisor, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and supervisor will each evaluate the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the Library in both content and frequency.

## Types

There are three types of telecommuting: regular, occasional, and emergency.

### Regular Telecommuting

- The employee will have an established, predictable schedule.
- Regular telecommuting days, and the duration of the telecommuting arrangement, if for a limited period, are identified and agreed to at the outset and are specified in the Telecommuting Agreement.
- Employees may be required to be available during core business hours.

### Occasional/Ad Hoc

- Characterized by situations when an employee will telecommute sporadically, generally on an as-needed basis.
- Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as special projects, or business travel.
- Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.



- To handle an occasional telecommuting scenario, the department and employee can establish the parameters of the telecommuting arrangement in advance, such as identifying the telecommuting location and specifying how often the employee is expected to check email and return phone calls on telecommuting.
- All informal telecommuting arrangements are made/approved on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

### **Emergency Telecommuting**

- A one-time-only arrangement whereby, during a crisis or emergency at the Library, the employee telecommutes because his or her job responsibilities must still be fulfilled to provide for continuity of operations.
- Examples of a crisis or emergency are a pandemic, natural disaster, or other situation that presents a significant overall threat to Library staff and facilities.
- Telecommuting is a means of providing for fulfillment of important functions.

### **Equipment**

- On a case-by-case basis, the Library will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs, including hardware, software.
- Equipment and supplies may be supplied by the organization on a case-by-case basis. If provided, it will be maintained by the employee according to library security procedures.
- The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. The Library will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as Internet access, remodeling, furniture, or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

### **Security**

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of organizational, member library and patron information accessible from their home office.

### **Safety**

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards.

### **Time Worked**

Telecommuting employees will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the Library's time-keeping system. Hours worked more than those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.