

Telework and Remote Work Program - Frequently Asked Questions

Updated June 3, 2022

Background

1. What is telework?

The Telework Enhancement Act defines telework or teleworking as a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.

2. What is remote work?

Remote work is an arrangement in which an employee is scheduled to perform work at an alternative worksite and is not expected to report to an ED worksite on a regular and recurring basis. A remote work employee is not assigned government workspace. This applies to employees working within and outside the commuting area of an ED worksite based on the locality pay table.

3. Who may participate in telework or remote work?

All applicable employees may be authorized to participate in the Telework and Remote Work Program (Program) to the extent practical for the employee's work unit as long as participation does not negatively impact employee or organizational performance and meets the position and employee criteria as outlined in the Telework and Remote Work policy. For detailed information regarding employee eligibility, contact your supervisor or refer to Human Capital Policy (HCP) 368, Telework and Remote Work Program. [HCP 368-1, Telework and Remote Work Program \(ed.gov\)](#).

In the case of OIG employees, the Inspector General determines which positions will be subject to the Telework and Remote Work Program policy.

Program Description

1. What types of Program arrangements are available?

The new Program offers the following options:

Telework

- **Routine Telework**

The employee works on an on-going regular and recurring basis from home or an alternative worksite one or more days per week and has an ED worksite as a duty location. Pursuant to 5 CFR §531.605(d)(2)(4), participants must, at a minimum, physically report into the official ED worksite twice each pay period in order to maintain the locality pay of the official ED worksite. This requirement, subject to the supervisor's approval, can be met by reporting to the worksite one day per week or twice in one week of a pay period.

Example: The employee teleworks four (4) days per week and reports to their official worksite (Atlanta Regional office) one (1) day per week resulting in two days per pay period at the official worksite.

- **Situational (Ad-hoc) Telework**

Telework that is approved on a case-by-case basis, where the hours worked were not part of a previously approved, ongoing, and regular telework schedule. This includes emergency telework.

Example: The employee requests to telework as a result of inclement weather, medical appointment, or special work assignments.

Remote Work

- **Remote Work:** The employee works 100 percent from their home or alternative worksite and is not required to report to an ED worksite. Since the employee does not report to an ED worksite at least twice a pay period, the employee's official worksite is their official duty station and their locality pay may be impacted.

Example: The employee's official worksite/duty location is Washington, D.C., and they submit a request for remote work from their home in Miami, Florida. If the employee is approved for remote work, their duty location must change to Miami, Florida. Their locality pay will be impacted.

2. Can I telework outside of the U.S. (Internationally)?

No, telework and remote arrangements are restricted to the United States and its territories and possessions.

3. If I work a part-time schedule, am I eligible to telework?

Yes. Part-time employees may participate in the Telework Program. For information regarding part-time employment at ED, refer to [HCP 340-1, Part-time Employment Program](#).

4. What is the process for obtaining approval to participate in the Program?

Interested employees should inform their supervisor of the interest in participating in the Program. If position criteria and employee eligibility criteria are met, the employee must complete the Program training and establish a telework or remote work agreement. The direct supervisor and approving official (Assistant Secretary for your POC or designee) will be the final approving authority of your telework/remote work agreement. For information regarding position criteria and employee eligibility, refer to [ED Telework and Remote Work Program](#).

5. Are ALL employees required to participate in the Program?

No. This Program is a voluntary.

6. Are ALL Program participants required to have a telework or remote work agreement on file?

Yes. Program participants must have an approved telework or remote work agreement in place before participating. This includes when an "unscheduled telework" option is offered by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM).

7. Is training required to participate in the Program?

Yes. All participants in the Program are required to complete telework/remote work training prior to completing their initial telework/remote agreement. This requirement includes employees that serve in a supervisory and/or management role. [Employee Training](#)

Supervisors who manage teleworkers/remote workers are also required to complete "Supervisory Telework Training" prior to approving telework/remote work agreements. This training must be completed on an annual basis. [Supervisor Training](#)

8. What if an employee does not satisfy the self-certificate and/or safety checklist requirements?

Agreements should not be approved until the safety checklist items have been resolved. Management should engage with the employee and address all issues to ensure a safe work environment. If this question is related to an employee's need for a Reasonable Accommodation, Supervisors should contact the Reasonable Accommodation Program Manager, to obtain more information. More information can be found on ConnectED using the link. [About Disability Access \(ed.gov\)](#).

9. What happens if I sustain a work-related injury while teleworking or working remotely?

Program participants are covered by the Federal Employees Compensation Act, for continuation of pay or workers compensation for on-the-job injury or occupational illness while they are teleworking or remote working. The employee should report the incident immediately to his or her supervisor and Office of Human Resources Workers' Compensation staff at BenefitsandWork/life@ed.gov.

10. Does the Telework and Remote Work policy impact ED's compliance with legal requirements regarding the acceptance and review of reasonable accommodation requests?

No. ED will continue to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, rules, policies and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations. For more information on Reasonable Accommodations, please contact the Reasonable Accommodations manager Kenton Stalder at Kenton.Stalder@ed.gov and OFO_eos@ed.gov.

11. If I am approved for remote work, will I have an assigned workstation?

Employees who are approved to work remotely will be provided with a fully functional, individual, workspace on the day(s) the employee must report to an ED facility.

12. If I'm approved for routine telework right now, will I have the ability to change it to 100% remote work option later?

A permanent change to the telework/remote arrangement requires supervisor approval and a revised Telework/Remote Work Agreement. The changes should be completed as soon as feasible.

13. Can I work while my children are in my home?

Telework and Remote Work are not replacements for childcare or elder care. Employees who have care responsibilities should examine all work hours flexibilities so that work responsibilities and caregiving responsibilities may both be addressed. Employees will be required to utilize leave if the employee is unable to successfully meet work responsibilities due to their care responsibilities.

Telework/Remote and Alternative Work Schedules

1. Does my participation in this program determine the work schedule I can select?

No, both Telework and Remote Workers, with supervisor approval, may participate in any of the work schedules available to ED employees for which you are eligible. These schedules may include a Standard Work Schedule, along with Alternative Work Schedules (compressed and flexible). Employees participating in Routine Telework and an AWS must work from an ED worksite location a minimum of twice each pay period. For information regarding Work Schedules refer to [HCP 610-3, Work Schedules](#).

2. To satisfy the two days per pay period onsite attendance on a Routine agreement, am I required to identify the days I plan to work onsite? Can the days be changed?

The telework agreement requires an employee to identify the days they would come into the office. The Time and Attendance System also requires you to establish a profile. However, as necessary, the telework agreement can be modified as well as the T&A System with supervisor approval.

Office Space

1. How will the Department assign workspace for employees that come into the office?

Employees who report to an ED facility two days per pay period or more will have an assigned cubicle or office.

Employees who are approved to participate in remote work will be provided with a fully functional, individual, workspace at an ED facility for the employee's use on day(s) the employee must report to an ED facility.

2. If I previously worked in the office, but now approved to work remote, what will happen to my assigned workspace?

As ED transitions to a new hybrid work environment, a space assessment will be conducted to evaluate real estate opportunities. Given the volume of vacant space due to approved remote work agreements, management will reclaim all workstations and offices currently occupied by those on approved remote work agreements. Please coordinate with your immediate supervisor to collect and remove your personal items from your assigned ED workspace. Keys to office furniture should be left in the locks, and keys for office doors should be returned to your Principal Operating Component's (POC) Executive Office.

IT and Equipment

1. Will general office supplies (pens, paper, folders) be covered or provided by my office?

Yes. General office supplies will be covered by your office.

On a quarterly basis ED will provide basic office supplies to employees who work remotely (e.g., staples, note pads, pens, paper clips, binder clips, highlighters, post-It notes, file folders, and accordion files), as needed.

2. Will office equipment (monitor, keyboard, mouse) be provided?

Employees within the commuting area who have requested and been approved to be on remote work agreements may take office supplies and equipment from their Principal Office Component workstation such as their monitor, keyboard, mouse, and office chair provided they have a pre-approved property pass form ([OF-7](#)). If retrieving equipment from office space is not feasible for an employee outside the commuting area, the employee may request supplies and equipment be shipped at the Department's expense.

Also, ED will provide reliable software phone lines and headset that will allow employees to effectively carry out ED business for employees who telework or work remotely who do not have a government cell phone and are required to have frequent calls with external customers.

3. Will I be reimbursed for out-of-pocket expenses incurred to conduct business for the Department?

Program participants do not relinquish any entitlement to submit reimbursement claims for appropriately authorized expenses incurred while conducting business for the Department as submitted through an OF-1164 and contingent upon Departmental budget.

Examples of appropriately authorized expenses incurred during or after March 2020 until program implementation include but are not limited to office chairs; home internet upgrades; desks; printers; printer ink; monitors, and desk lamps, with appropriate documentation.

4. Is there an expense limit in which the employee can request for reimbursement?

The MOU provides an employee can submit a request of any amount for "appropriately authorized" expense(s) incurred while conducting business for the Department for which they have provided proof. In some cases, the amount requested may exceed a predetermined cap. POCs have options for distributing funds allocated for this effort. For example, a POC could provide a timeframe for submission of authorized claims so the claims can be considered concurrently, or consider each submission on a first-come, first-serve basis. Most importantly, the methodology implemented must be fair and equitable.

5. Is there a timeframe in which POCs must review and process reimbursement requests?

The policy and MOU did not set a timeframe for consideration. POCs are to determine the timing of their process, but highly encourage the review process be the same for all employees in their POC.

6. Who do I contact if I experience IT issues?

Employees should contact the Department's Help Desk at 202-708-4357, option 2 for IT assistance or email

OCIOEnterpriseHelpDesk@ed.gov.

Records Management

1. How should I handle Department records and documentation while teleworking or working remotely?

To the greatest extent possible, while teleworking or working remotely, an employee should create and receive electronic Department records via Department-operated electronic information systems, electronic mail systems, and software including, but not limited to, the following: Outlook email and calendar, OneDrive, SharePoint Intranet sites.

For more information on Records Management please refer to [Records Management](#) or email RMHelp@ed.gov.

Time and Attendance

1. What Telework Indicator codes should I use when completing my timesheet?

Employees should enter the telework indicator code based on their telework schedule. See telework indicator codes and definitions below.

- **Frequent Regular (C)** - This code is used for employees who telework 3 or more days a week and for remote workers.
- **Regular (F)** - This code is used for employees who telework 1-2 days a week. This code can be used by employees on Routine telework agreements only. Employees who come into the office should not use the dropdown telework indicator code for the day(s) they are in office.
- **Periodic (I)** - This code is used for "no regular" telework days. This is the code for employees on "Situational (ad-hoc)" telework agreements.

2. My timesheet does not include a dropdown to select the telework indicator codes; who do I contact for assistance?

Employees must submit a copy of their approved telework/remote work agreement and alternative Work Schedule form to WebTA@ed.gov and copy their supervisor to request the telework indicator codes be added to their Web TA profile.

3. How do I update my default timesheet to include the appropriate telework indicator codes?

Visit the [How to Create a Default Timesheet](#) for instructions on how to update your default timesheet. For additional assistance, please contact WebTA at WebTA@ed.gov. FSA Employees should email FSAWebTA@ed.gov for assistance.

Travel Cost and Relocation

1. As a remote worker will the Department pay for travel cost when I am required to report to an ED facility? (e.g., meetings, special event, etc.)

In circumstances where a remote worker is mandated by their supervisor/manager to travel away from their official duty station and report to an ED facility, the employee is entitled to travel reimbursement.

This does not include normal commuting cost for non-remote employees to travel to their worksite. Employees should contact his or her supervisor for additional information regarding payment for travel cost prior to incurring such cost.

2. As a remote worker, does the commuting distance and method of travel determine my eligibility for reimbursement? (i.e., by using transit benefits or local travel voucher) or to another meeting location?

It depends, GSA has removed the 'local' travel definition from the regulations and advised that agencies prescribe internal policies surrounding local travel. As such, ED has defined local travel as travel performed within a 35-mile (one way) radius of the employee's

official duty station, that does not require a Travel Authorization. Local travel does not allow for the payment of lodging or per diem. There is no exception to this regulation and no legal authority to pay per diem (lodging and meals) within an employee's official duty station. The government does not pay commuting costs for employees to travel to their work site; therefore, in most cases, normal commuting costs should be deducted from local travel claims. Travel within the local radius should be performed using the most advantageous and economical means to ED.

3. What should I do if I need to temporarily relocate?

For changes in worksites expected to last fewer than sixty (60) calendar days, employees must send an email or written request to their supervisor notifying them of the temporary change. The requirement for teleworking employees to physically report into the official ED worksite twice each pay period still applies. For changes expected to last more than 60 calendar days, employees must revise the Telework/Remote Work Agreement to reflect the new worksite.

Duty Station Changes

1. What will be required to change a duty station (i.e., is it only changing the SF-50 of the employee)?

A change in duty station requires a request for personnel action and an updated OF-8 to reflect the position description change. This also applies to previously classified position descriptions.

2. If an employee is hired for a DC position, will they be required to wait 90 days before changing their locality?

Yes, regulations require a 90-day restriction for duty station changes. The 90-day change in duty station restriction is based on regulation. (5 § 330.502).

An agency must wait at least 90 days after an employee's latest non-temporary competitive appointment before the agency may take the following actions:

- (1) Promote an employee;
- (2) Transfer, reinstate, reassign, or detail an employee to a different position; or
- (3) Transfer, reinstate, reassign, or detail an employee to a different geographical area.

3. Can my Principal Office require me to change my duty station, remote work, or telework status?

If it's valid, yes, the decision can change.

4. What problems could occur if my duty station/official worksite is listed incorrectly on my SF-50?

Employees should notify their supervisor and/or their Executive Officer (EXO) as soon as possible if there's an error on their SF-50.

Transit Benefits

1. What should I do regarding my transit benefits?

Employees should update their transit benefits to reflect any changes to their Program participation and work schedule. Please contact the Transportation Services Division at OMMSTransportationservices@ed.gov with any questions and/or concerns regarding transit benefits.

Dismissals and Delayed Arrivals

1. Will employees with approved telework agreements be required to telework if the Federal government is closed on a day that is not their normal telework day?

Yes. Employees with approved telework agreements are required to telework when the government is closed.

2. If I telework on a day the OPM issues a delayed arrival or early department announcement, do my work schedule hours change too?

No. Program participants shall start and complete their normal workday without regard to OPM or Federal Executive Board announcements of delayed opening, early departure, or immediate departure after the workday has begun.

3. If I am not a Program participant, will I be required to work when the government is closed?

No. Employees who do not have an approved telework agreement in place will be granted administrative leave during government closures.

4. As a supervisor, do I need to provide notice to my staff who telework or work remotely if I need them to report into an ED worksite?

If an employee (within the local commuting area of an ED worksite) is required to report to the ED worksite for a finite pre-determined period, the supervisor will provide the Program participant with at least 5 business days advance notice. If the employee is a remote worker, and they are not within the local commuting area of an ED worksite, the supervisor will provide the employee with at least 15 business days advance notice.

Items to take into consideration include traveling distance, caregiving responsibilities, and mode of transportation. Program participants and supervisors must discuss these items in advance as in some cases there may not be sufficient time for the employee to report to the ED worksite. In circumstances where unforeseen mission necessity exists, less notice may be provided within reason. Upon receipt of notice, employees will take reasonable efforts to report to the ED worksite. If it is not practicable for the employee to report to the ED worksite, the employee may not be required to report.

Performance Management/Labor and Employee Relations

1. As a supervisor, how can I confirm whether my employee is working if they are not in the office?

Every employee at ED is required to be on a Performance Plan. This plan will outline the elements and standards that the employee is required to achieve during an annual rating cycle. As a supervisor, you will know your employee is actively working based on their performance as outlined in their REACH plan.

2. How will Program participation affect my performance evaluation?

Performance standards should not be adjusted to accommodate employees based on their telework or remote status. Supervisors should communicate expectations of telework/remote work arrangements, including work assignments, office coverage and staff communication to Program participants and non-Program participants in the work group. As with on-site personnel, teleworkers/remote workers will be held accountable for the results that they produce while teleworking or working remotely.

Contact Information

If I have additional questions on the Telework and Remote Work Program, who may I contact?

Employees and managers may contact the Workforce Relations Division Telework Team at EDTeleworks@ed.gov Bargaining Unit employees also have the option to contact their Union Representative with any questions or concerns.

This content last modified on 6/3/2022 4:49 PM by Kucharski, Paris (Contractor)
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