

## **Outagamie Waupaca Library System Telecommuting Policy**

*Adopted 11/18/21*

### **Objective**

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. Outagamie Waupaca Library System considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an 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 with Outagamie Waupaca Library System.

### **Procedures**

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

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

### **Eligibility**

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and supervisor, with the assistance of the Director, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement. Factors considered include, but are not limited to:

- Employee suitability. The employee and supervisor will assess the needs and work habits of the employee.
- Job responsibilities. The employee and supervisor will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- Scheduling issues. The employee and supervisor will discuss expectations for participation in meetings and collaborative work and ensure adequate office coverage for day-to-day operations.
- Equipment needs and workspace design considerations. The employee and supervisor will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework. OWLS is not required to but may choose to provide equipment for remote work.
- Information security. The employee and supervisor will review the necessity of accessing sensitive data from outside the OWLS network and the risk inherent in using external (non-OWLS) networks and equipment.
- 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.

If the employee, supervisor, and Outagamie Waupaca Library System Director agree, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular remote interactions between the employee and the supervisor, and face to face meetings, as necessary. At the end of the trial period, the employee and supervisor will each complete an evaluation of 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 office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved. The telecommuting employee may be required to be physically present at the OWLS office for some tasks and meetings.

## **Equipment**

On a case-by-case basis, Outagamie Waupaca Library System will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization and should be used for business purposes only. Outagamie Waupaca Library System reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. Outagamie Waupaca Library System will not generally be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, although exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## **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 proprietary organization and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps include secure storage and disposal of sensitive information, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

If using an employee-owned device for telecommuting:

- Any personal computer used for remote work must have current, up-to-date anti-virus software installed.
- Staff must use approved technologies, such as the VPN client or Splashtop for encrypted, remote access to their computer located at the OWLS office.
- Always lock your office computer before disconnecting your remote session. (Start Menu > Profile > Lock)

- Take necessary precautions to prevent access to OWLS data by unauthorized users, including family members.

If using an OWLS-owned device for telecommuting:

- OWLS laptops should have the Windows firewall turned on and regularly updated antivirus software.
- An OWLS-owned device may only be used by staff. It must not be used by members of the public or family members.

In all cases:

- Remote work should only be done through a trusted, password protected WiFi network or a VPN connection.
- Your device must be shut down whenever not in use, including during transport to and from the off-site location. It must be locked when unattended, no matter how briefly.
- The ILS client may only be installed on an OWLS-owned device that is encrypted and connected to the OWLS network through the VPN client.
- Staff must not check “remember me” on software login screens or store any passwords in a browser. Use an OWLS-approved password manager.
- Staff must immediately report a missing device to the Director and the OWLS Network Manager.

## **Safety**

Employees are expected to maintain a safe and ergonomically sound work environment. Outagamie Waupaca Library System will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least once per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the organization's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by third parties at his or her home worksite.

## **Time Worked**

During established work hours, it is expected that the employee will dedicate their full time and attention to work duties. 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. Hours worked in excess of 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.

While telecommuting employees may have flexibility setting their schedules, subject to supervisor approval, their regular work schedule should be posted, and at least three fourths (75%) of their working hours should occur during normal business hours which are 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday. This availability should keep the member libraries, and other system staff in mind and unusual variations to a telecommuting employee's schedule should be communicated to necessary parties.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare or dependent care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate childcare

needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period. In the case of an emergency, the applicable time off option will be used.

### **Ad Hoc Arrangements**

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

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.

All ad hoc telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.