

## **Mahoning County Alternative Work Arrangement Policy**

An Appointing Authority may implement an alternative work arrangement. An alternative work arrangement allows employees to telework, work at a satellite location, work a flex schedule, or work a COVID-19 staggered shift for all or part of their workweek. The Appointing Authority will consider an alternative work arrangement on a case-by-case basis and both the employee and the job must be suited to such an arrangement. An alternative work arrangement may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others, and does not affect basic terms and conditions of employment with the County. This includes an employee's rate of pay, retirement benefits, and County sponsored insurance coverage, if applicable.

The decision to implement an alternative work arrangement is solely within the discretion of the Appointing Authority and can be modified or terminated at any time. The employee will be notified when the Appointing Authority feels it is appropriate to terminate an alternative work arrangement. The employee will then be required to report to their normal work location and work their normal work hours.

Employees are obligated to comply with all County rules, policies, and procedures. A violation of such may result in a revocation of the alternative work arrangement and discipline, up to and including termination.

### **1. Eligibility for Teleworking**

The Appointing Authority and/or designee, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- **Job Responsibilities:** The Appointing Authority will consider the job responsibilities, essential functions of the job, the suitability of the employee to work independently, department needs and/or customer service requirements.
- **Equipment Needs:** The Appointing Authority and/or designee should review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for telecommuting, ensuring that the employee will be able to perform the essential functions of his/her position while maintaining confidentiality and other security measures as appropriate. Additionally, consideration needs to be given to the availability of internet connection, laptop or tablet, phones or other equipment. The Appointing Authority will determine the employee's device needs and ensure that these devices are secure in accordance with the County's IT Security policies. Any County equipment removed from County property for telecommuting purposes will be inventoried and shall not be removed from the satellite workspace during this assignment. County equipment shall not be utilized for any purposes other than County business. Employees utilizing County equipment while teleworking must protect the equipment from damage. The County reserves the right to review any activity performed on the equipment during this assignment. Any office equipment or supplies that are needed to work from home must be approved by the Supervisor prior to removal from the office. The Supervisor is

responsible to maintain a log for each employee who is working remotely and takes office supplies and/or equipment.

- Workspace Design Considerations: The workspace must be safe and free from hazards. The workspace must be reasonably free from interruptions and distractions that would affect work performance. For employees who must verbally communicate with others as part of their duties, the workspace must be quiet and allow for professional communications during those times.

## **2. Hours of Work**

Employees are responsible for accurately reporting their time worked while teleworking. All overtime and compensatory time approval and policies apply. If an employee needs to use leave, the employee must comply with call-off procedures for obtaining approval prior to using leave. [For more information consult the Department of Labor, Wage & Hour Division's Field Assistance Bulletin No. 2020-5.] Employers are responsible to track the number of hours of compensable work performed by employees who are teleworking.

Employees who are approved to work COVID-19 staggered shifts must be able to report to their designated work location within a reasonable amount of time on days they are not scheduled to work in the office in the event their Supervisor requests them to do so. When an employee is working staggered shifts and is called in on a day the employee is not scheduled to work in-person in the office, the employee is not entitled to receive overtime until they work for more than forty (40) hours in the workweek.

## **3. Communication**

Employees must be reachable during their normal work hours, and any other times designated by their Supervisor. The employee must also be able to report to their designated work location within a reasonable amount of time should their Supervisor request them to do so. If an employee becomes aware, or anticipates, any disruption in technological communication during their normal work hours, they must immediately notify their Supervisor. The County is not responsible for paying employees while teleworking if they are unable to perform work due to operational or technological issues, such as the availability of adequate internet connection.

## **4. Security and Records for Teleworking**

Consistent with the County's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the same protection of information accessible from home. Employees are responsible for protecting all sensitive data and personally identifiable information.

While working remotely, employees must take steps to preserve the security and confidentiality of information. Employees must keep confidential documents and materials in secure locations. Personal devices used by employees for work purposes may be subject to Ohio's Public Records Laws.

If working on personal devices, employees must have up-to-date anti-virus software and appropriate computer and internet security installed and activated; “remember password” functions turned off. The County is not responsible for any loss to the employee’s property whether caused by physical damage, computer virus attacks, or other intrusions via the internet.

**5. Child Care**

Alternative work arrangements are not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Time worked at home must be time worked with regular expectations of job performance and meeting business demands.

**6. Alternative Work Arrangements**

The Appointing Authority may permit alternative work schedules during this time of emergency to accommodate staff while carrying out the public mission. Such may include flexible hours, staggered starts, weekends, etc. All other policies apply. The County retains the right to investigate alleged abuse of this alternative work arrangements policy and may cease or modify an employee’s approval for alternative work arrangements at any time.

**7. Resignation or Termination**

In the event of resignation or termination of employment, the employee must return all County equipment, supplies, and data by the end of the next business day and verify that any data stored on personal equipment has been removed and that all public documents and records have been returned to the County. Failure to do so will be pursued to the fullest extent of the law.

**Acknowledgement**

By signing below, I acknowledge receipt of the Alternative Work Arrangement Policy and agree to abide by its terms.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Department

Date: December 3, 2020