

## PERSONNEL SERVICES BULLETINS (PSBs)

600-3

**Subject:** Temporary Citywide Telework Policy for City Employees During the COVID-19 Outbreak

**Date:** March 13, 2020

### I. Background

Public health officials have discovered a new coronavirus, called COVID-19, that can be transmitted from person to person. The virus is spread between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet) through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The spread of this disease is virulent. While the scope and ultimate reach of the contagion have not definitively been assessed, the World Health Organization announced on March 11, 2020 that its course should be described as a pandemic.

### II. Purpose

As an integral element of the City's efforts to mitigate COVID-19, it is implementing a temporary citywide telework policy to enact and encourage social distancing strategies in the workplace. The temporary policy will allow certain employees to work from home, while ensuring the continuity of agency business operations. This policy does not supersede City rules, regulations, or policies applicable in the workplace, but rather is designed to facilitate the performance of City business in alternate work locations.

### III. Policy and Procedure

#### A. Agency Head Responsibilities

Agency heads must implement a telework plan immediately. The plan must set forth the maximum number of employees eligible to participate in the telework program in consideration of eligibility criteria and agency capacity to support telework, including technological and telecommunications capabilities, as well as availability of supervisory staff. Agency heads shall coordinate with their respective Deputy Mayor, Law Department, OLR, OMB, DCAS, and DoITT on implementation of their telework plans. Agencies shall submit their telework plans to [telework@dcas.nyc.gov](mailto:telework@dcas.nyc.gov) for central storage and tracking purposes.

#### B. Eligibility for Telework

Agency heads must create a roster with the maximum number of employees eligible to participate in the temporary telework program.

1. Non-represented and represented employees who provide essential services in a business continuity context, which can be performed in a remote capacity, are most ideal for telework opportunities. Employees whose tasks have measurable deliverables including, but not limited to, responsibilities such as writing, research, or editing reports, and other tasks that require minimal supervision, should be considered appropriate for telework consideration.

2. An employee must be able effectively to communicate with clients, stakeholders and team members from home or other alternative work site in order to be eligible. Where an employee's responsibilities require case management through a workflow system, remote access to that system should be available for telework to be appropriate.
3. Telework is generally not appropriate for a first responder, healthcare worker, educator or field worker (e.g. parks worker, motor vehicle operator, caretaker, inspector). A position that requires frequent interactions with members of the public may not be appropriate for telework.
4. Agency heads may consider work history in making telework eligibility determinations.
5. If an employee is subject to self-isolation or quarantine, and the position is one in which telework is feasible, the employee is permitted to work from home on a voluntary basis if the employee is healthy enough to work and other criteria within this policy are met.
6. Employees need not sign an agreement to participate in the telework program as this policy does not supersede City rules, regulations and policies applicable in the workplace.

#### **C. Work Schedules**

1. Work hours should adhere to existing employee schedules (e.g. 9am-5pm), whenever possible. Any deviation from pre-existing schedules being sought by an employee must be requested by the employee and approved by the Agency Head.
2. An agency that has instituted staggered work schedules for its employees may adjust the telework schedule to conform to the staggered schedules for employees in the workplace.
3. Schedules may be developed on a full-time or part-time basis. Telework days may be five days a week or a hybrid schedule of telework and in-office work (e.g., telework three days a week and at the workplace two days a week).
4. At an Agency Head's discretion, alternating "teams" of employees may provide telework and in-person coverage.
5. Agencies shall develop a written protocol for supervisory oversight that ensures that teleworking employees are working their designated hours.

#### **D. Location and Equipment**

1. The designated alternate work location must be an appropriate work environment. This location should be one in which the employee's telework duties can be performed in a safe and ergonomically appropriate manner. The teleworker must agree to perform all work at the primary alternate location. If business or exigent circumstances arise requiring the

employee to work at location other than the primary designated location, the employee shall immediately notify his or her supervisor.

2. Agencies shall provide equipment (computer, phone, internet access), where possible. Personal equipment (e.g. an employee's own laptop) may be used, provided that strict adherence to information security protocols is followed. Any questions about information security protocols should be referred to DoITT and NYC Cyber.
3. Agencies must facilitate access to necessary agency systems at the alternative work location.
4. Agencies must provide access to CityTime, if technically feasible, or develop another method for timekeeping. DoITT and FISA-OPA, as well as any other applicable agency, shall assist agencies in complying with this provision to the extent feasible.

#### **IV. Compliance with City Policy**

- A.** All terms and conditions of City employment will continue to apply.
- B.** Workplace rules prohibiting private activities during work hours must be followed notwithstanding the fact that employees are working from home.
- C.** Overtime must be approved in advance.
- D.** Leave time must be requested and processed in the same manner as in the workplace.
- E.** Employees participating in the Telework Program are required to participate in conference calls and team meetings as necessary.
- F.** Employees who telework must follow all information security protocols when using City and/or electronic equipment and accessing systems.
- G.** Employees must maintain any approved safeguards to protect agency records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and comply with the privacy requirements set forth by the City of New York.

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Commissioner