



TEMPORARY TELECOMMUTING POLICY

1.0 POLICY

Upon approval of the Department Director, Human Resources Director and County Manager: eligible County employees in certain classifications may be permitted or required to perform approved County work functions from locations other than official and traditional government office locations.

2.0 PURPOSE

The County of Hertford's temporary telecommuting policy is designed to address the current COVID-19 outbreak by implementing temporary telecommuting arrangements for employees at an increased risk of contracting COVID-19 provided that work functions are available. Telecommuting is a work alternative that the County may offer to specific employees based on mutual benefit. Telecommuting is not an entitlement but rather an alternative work arrangement intended to prevent the disease from spreading through the workplace. A telecommuting arrangement may include working in an alternate location exclusively or a combination of an alternate location and conventional office. Certain positions, by the nature of their expectations and responsibilities, lend themselves to the possibility of telecommuting; others do not. In all cases, the needs of the County and service to the citizens and internal customers take precedence in decisions relative to telecommuting. Telecommuting does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with the County and employees are subject to all County policies that apply when working at a County facility. This policy covers the employee's and the County's obligations when the employee works at an alternate location, including the employee's home.

3.0 SCOPE

This policy applies to employees in any position type whose job functions may be performed as effectively in an alternate work location as in a conventional work location as determined by the Department Director in consultation with the County Manager and Human Resource Director.

4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **4.1 Telecommuting** - The practice of an employee working at a location other than the conventional office such as the employee's home.
- **4.2 Telecommuter** - Employee who works in or from a nontraditional location and conducts County business functions one or more days per week.

5.0 ORGANIZATIONAL RULES

- **5.1 Employee Eligibility** - Employee eligibility for telecommuting will be determined based on all of the following:
 - A. The nature of position is one where the expectations can be clearly defined and work performance can be effectively evaluated regardless of where it is performed.
 - B. If requested, employee provides a doctor's note documenting employee's increased risk exposure.
 - C. The nature of the position is analyzed by the department and is recommended as suitable by the Human Resources Director for approval by the County Manager as a telecommuting arrangement.
 - D. The alternate work site is conducive to telecommuting as determined by the requesting department, Information Technology Director, and Human Resources Director.
 - E. The employee's past performance and work habits demonstrate that he/she can work successfully at an alternate work site.
 - F. The telecommuting arrangement does not disrupt service to the public or internal customers.



- G. The position can function independently and the supervisor can adequately assess the work performance in a telecommuting arrangement.
 - H. Non-exempt positions will not create additional overtime liability with the telecommuting arrangement.
- **5.2 Implementation:**
 - A. General Requirements**
 1. Offering the opportunity to work at an alternative location is a management option; telecommuting is not a universal employee benefit or entitlement. The employee, supervisor, departmental director or County Manager may terminate telecommuting at any time and for any reason.
 2. The telecommuter's conditions of employment with the County remain the same as for non-telecommuting employees and employees are subject to the same policies that apply when working at a County facility.
 3. Employee salary, benefits and employer-sponsored insurance coverage will not change as a result of telecommuting.
 4. Any change to the schedule must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Department Director and must be communicated to the Human Resources Director and County Manager.
 5. While telecommuting, the employee and manager shall decide in advance the method of contact (i.e. telephone, email, video app, etc.) during agreed upon hours. Telecommuters must notify their supervisor if they leave their telecommuting location, as they would inform a receptionist when leaving the traditional office during the work day.
 6. Telecommuters are prohibited from conducting face-to-face County business from their personal home.
 7. The telecommuting employee has the responsibility for accounting, accurately documenting and reporting time worked to the supervisor.
 8. An employee required to attend staff or other meetings must attend even though it may require an employee to report to a County or offsite facility.
 9. More specific conditions relating to the employee's telecommuting arrangements are detailed in the **Telecommuting Agreement** which must be completed by the employee and his/her supervisor and approved by the Department Director and County Manager.
 - B. Home Office Requirements**
 1. Since the employee's home work-space is an extension of the local government work-space, County liability for job-related accidents under Worker's Compensation will continue to exist during the approved work schedule and in the employee's designated work location. To ensure that safe working conditions exist, the employee assumes responsibility for maintaining a safe workplace and safe work behavior during work hours. The employee must certify that his home work space will meet or exceed County standards for telecommuting offices.
 2. Restricted-access materials shall not be taken out of the office or accessed through the computer unless approved in advance by the telecommuter's manager. Telecommuters shall have and use locked storage space in the alternate work location to ensure the security of any County related materials approved to be taken out of the office. Some materials, as determined by the County Attorney, are prohibited from being removed from governmental offices; telecommuters who need to access these materials will be required to come to the County departmental location to access them.
 3. Any changes to the telecommuter's work-space must be reviewed and approved in writing by the employee's manager prior to any changes.
 4. Office supplies for use in telecommuting work-space will be provided by the County through generally accepted practices and procedures, which shall be obtained during the telecommuter's in-office work period.



5. Basic level equipment such as a computer and software will be provided by the County. Provision of Internet access and basic level equipment will generally be provided by the employee and will be determined in writing as a part of the Telecommuting Agreement.

6. County equipment (if any) that is placed in the employee's home office is to be used for County business only. All equipment distributed for telecommuting remains the property of the County. The employee is required to return all County owned telecommuting equipment and related material when the telecommuting arrangement is discontinued.

C. Information Technology Services Requirements:

1. To ensure hardware and software security, all software used for telecommuting must be approved through the County's Information Technology Director and installed by the Hertford County Data Center (HCDC) Information Technology (IT) personnel on Hertford County issued equipment. Networking can only be established using compatible hardware and software. Only approved communication sources may be accessed using County equipment.

2. Software licensed to the County shall not be duplicated or used on any equipment not approved by the County.

3. Troubleshooting equipment/software problems are the primary responsibility of the telecommuter. However, limited IT support may be provided by the HCDC IT personnel.

4. Equipment, software or files that are stolen, lost or destroyed must be reported as soon as practical but no later than the next business day.

5. Unless otherwise agreed to in writing prior to any loss, damage or wear, the County of Hertford does not assume liability for loss, damage or wear of employee-owned equipment.

- **5.3** It is not possible to identify all of the situations that may arise from a specific telecommuting relationship. As such, issues will be addressed on a case by case basis and may not be binding to other arrangements.

6.0 PROCEDURES

- 6.1-The Department Director will assess the nature of the position's roles and responsibilities. The Department Director will determine the compatibility of the position's roles and responsibilities as well as the incumbent's past performance to determine suitability for telecommuting in accordance with the requirements of this policy.
- 6.2-Employee shall provide a doctor's note stating medical condition.
- 6.3-If, after completing an assessment, the Department Director is prepared to recommend a telecommuting arrangement, he/she will complete a Telecommuting Agreement form.
- 6.4-The Department Director will submit the recommended Telecommuting Agreement to the Human Resources Director and County Manager for consideration and determination.

7.0 APPENDIX, APPENDICES

Temporary Telecommuting Agreement