



Wright County Personnel Policy 516 Telework Procedures and Guidelines

Policy Adopted: Pending

516.01 TELEWORK PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

1) Purpose

This policy governs the practice of working from alternative locations. Telework is a business management strategy that when reasonable and practical, can have a positive effect on productivity, transportation, business costs, recruitment, and retention. Telework should not adversely affect other operational needs of the organization and is voluntary for the employee and at the sole discretion of management and/or the employee's supervisor. An employee is not entitled to a telework arrangement, it is management's prerogative to establish a telework arrangement.

The teleworking goals for Wright County are:

- Improve customer service;
- Increase productivity and efficiency;
- Attract and retain critical employee talent; and
- Save work space and costs.

516.02 Definitions

a. Alternative Work Location

A work location alternative away from a centrally located or main business/office site. Examples of an alternative work site can be a home office, a work center, or an assigned office in a remote location.

b. Telework Hours

Work schedule, including hours and days of work, agreed to by the teleworker and the County, reflected in the Telework Agreement, during which the employee will be teleworking.

c. Mobile Worker

Primary job functions of mobile workers are completed in the field generally requiring an employee to meet and work on-site with clients/customers who are located throughout the County (e.g., social workers and building inspectors). Mobile workers are not considered teleworkers but are responsible for providing proper equipment control, maintenance and data security privacy of work product. This definition does not include positions where driving is a continuous task (i.e., Sheriff's patrol, maintenance workers, and highway maintenance worker).

d. Occasional at Home Worker

Employee who works at home on a short-term or intermittent basis. Occasional at home work must

comply with all terms and conditions of the Teleworking policy and must meet all requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). These employees are not required to fill out a telework agreement.

e. Telework

Telework is an employee that performs telework pursuant to a Telework Agreement between Wright County and the employee. Telework means “working at a distance.” Telework is defined as work performed at an alternative work location linked electronically to Wright County. Telework is an arrangement between Wright County and the employee entered into when supported by business justifications and provided solely at the employer’s discretion.

516.03 Selection Criteria

Supervisors should assess each request for telework on a case by case basis, considering at a minimum the following criteria:

- a. The needs of the department/work unit.
- b. The employee’s duties and responsibilities.
- c. Overall costs and who is responsible for these costs. Note: the arrangement should be at least cost neutral.
- d. Employee’s current and past job performance.
- e. Expectations for future performance by the employee and how performance will be measured.
- f. Positive or negative effects on quality customer service.
- g. Positive or negative effect on the work unit, department, division, and Wright County as a whole.
- h. Availability of a high-speed internet at the alternative work site.
- i. Availability of electronic equipment and software.
- j. Availability of adequate equipment and workspace at the alternative work site.
- k. Employee has demonstrated essential work skills, such as time management, organization skills, self-motivation, and the ability to work independently.
- l. Individual department or division parameters.

516.04 Terms and Conditions

- a. Employees who wish to telework must make a request to work at an alternative work location to his or her supervisor. The employee’s supervisor will consider the request and determine if a telework agreement is consistent with the County’s need.
- b. If an employee’s request to telework is approved by the employee’s supervisor, the supervisor must develop the hours of telework and other provisions of the telework agreement, and the employee and the supervisor must both sign the telework agreement.
- c. The supervisor shall next request approval of the telework agreement from the Department Head. If the Department Head approves, he or she shall also sign the telework agreement.
- d. The telework agreement shall next be sent to the Human Resources Director for final approval or denial of the arrangement. If the Human Resources Director approves, the Director shall also sign the teleworks agreement before teleworking can begin. A final copy of the agreement will go to the employee, supervisor, and a copy will be provided to the Human Resources Director for the personnel file.
- e. An employee has no automatic right to telework and the County has the right to refuse or deny any teleworking request from an employee, and the County and the employee may terminate a telework agreement at any time and for any reason.

- f. The supervisor and employee will work together to develop acceptable work expectations that will be evaluated (at a minimum) on an annual basis.
- g. An employee must complete his/her probationary period to be eligible for telework.
- h. The agreement shall be reviewed by the supervisor (at a minimum) annually.
- i. Any modifications to the telework agreement must be reflected in a new telework agreement, signed by the employee, supervisor, Department Head, and Human Resources Director.
- j. The telework agreement must be reviewed whenever the teleworker changes job positions.
- k. The County may, in its discretion, terminate a telework agreement at any time and for any reason. A 21-day Notice of termination of the agreement may be provided unless circumstances require shortened or no notice.
- l. In accordance with the Worker's Compensation Insurance Policy, in the event of a work related injury while teleworking, the employee is required to notify his/her supervisor and complete all necessary reports for reporting an accident/incident.
- m. The County is not liable for loss, destruction, or injury that may occur in or to the employee's home and/or alternative work location. This includes the employee's family members, visitors or others that may become injured within or around the employee's home and/or alternative work location.
- n. The telework hours of the teleworker shall be established by the employee's supervisor, and shall be included in the telework agreement. The telework hours for a teleworker shall be consistent with the requirements in any applicable collective bargaining agreement and the Wright County Personnel Policies. During agreed upon telework hours, the employee shall be available for consultation with his/her supervisor, co-workers, the public and/or other County officials. An employee shall inform his or her supervisor of any absences from the teleworking location during scheduled work hours. If a teleworker is found to be unavailable during his or her telework hours, the telework agreement may be terminated.
- o. Teleworkers will complete a timesheet. Work hours, overtime compensation and vacation schedules shall conform to County policy and to any applicable collective bargaining agreement. Teleworkers may work overtime hours only if approved in advance by the supervisor. The employee's compensation, benefits, job classification, work status and work responsibilities will not change due to participation in a telework agreement. The amount of time the employee is expected to work per day or pay period will not change as a result of participation in the teleworks agreement.
- p. **Non-exempt employees must record all hours worked regardless of whether they are on or off County premises.**
- q. The principal work location for an employee assigned to a telework job assignment is the alternative work location agreed upon between the employee and the County, reflected in the telework agreement. When an employee is scheduled to work at the Wright County facility on a particular day, that facility location will be deemed the employee's principal work location for that day, even if the employee is typically assigned to work at their alternative work location pursuant to a telework agreement.
- r. Telework is not to be used in lieu of child care. Employees who are teleworking from their home as the alternative work location must determine adequate arrangements for child or dependent care to maintain a professional and optimal working environment.
- s. Teleworkers will be included in regular meetings, planning sessions, trainings, and educational activities whenever possible. Regular and significant communication with the office (supervisors and co-workers) will maintain continuity with the tempo and goals of the department and County. Frequent and informal communication by the teleworker will maintain and improve important networking and information exchanges.
- t. Business meetings and client visits to the employee's home are prohibited.

- u. The County has the right to make a scheduled site visit to the alternative work location to ensure proper procedures are being followed, and to address any issues or questions the teleworker may have.
- v. Wright County will provide the following equipment from the IT approved list (subject to requesting department's budget):
 1. A suitable mobile computing device
 2. Up to two monitors
 3. Docking station
 4. Keyboard & Mouse
 5. Webcam (if necessary)
 6. Surge protector

Wright County will not provide the following equipment:

1. Desk phones
2. Phone Lines
3. Modems
4. Wireless Routers
5. Internet Access

- w. In order to qualify for the Wright County Telework Program, the employee's internet connection must be high-speed, broadband and reliable. Hotspots will not be acceptable for telework. The network method must be determined with input from the IT Department.

Network Access Method	Internet Connection Requirement
Citrix	10Mbps High Speed
Virtual Desktops (Not yet available)	10Mbps High Speed
VPN (Virtual Private Network)	20Mbps High Speed

Not all Internet customers receive the advertised speed from their ISP. The Internet connection speed can be verified using www.speedtest.net. The employee shall provide a screenshot of the speed test to his or her supervisor at the time of the request, showing both download and upload speeds. Home Wi-Fi connections **must** be secured using WPA2 encryption.

- x. Wright County is responsible for the initial installation, maintenance, and repair of County-owned equipment. The employee must provide the Wright County IT Department with Wi-Fi credentials in order to complete the installation process.
- y. If equipment malfunctions, teleworkers must notify their supervisors promptly. If the malfunction precludes a teleworker from performing work assignments, the teleworker may be assigned to another project or required to return to the employee's official work location.
- z. Technical support shall be done remotely, using only standard IT approved tools. Teleworkers shall use the standard Wright County procedures for requesting assistance. For issues that cannot be resolved remotely, the teleworker shall bring their computer or equipment to the County for onsite service.

- aa. Wright County will maintain a record of its software, hardware, and other property located in the alternative work location.
- bb. Teleworkers must return all County owned equipment, software, products, documents, and data if they are separated from employment with the County, go on an extended leave of absence of longer than 30 working days, or the teleworking arrangement is ended.
- cc. Wright County IT Department will not make any changes to non-county owned equipment.
- dd. **Wright County is not responsible for supporting the Internet connection at the Teleworker's residence.**

Telework is not:

- A viable work arrangement for all positions or well suited to all employees;
- An accommodation to complete personal or other non-County endeavors during work hours;
- Considered a contract or guarantee of continued employment;
- A benefit; or
- An extension of the work day.

516.05 Work Location and Equipment

- a. The alternative work location should comply with all building codes and be free of health and safety hazards and/or obstructions. The employee shall complete the safety checklist and certify to safety requirements in the telework agreement and review the home office safety provisions in the Wright County Teleworks Handbook.
- b. The Teleworker will be responsible for all costs related to improvements in the home necessary to ensure an adequate and safe workspace. The teleworker shall provide all necessary office furniture. The teleworker is also responsible for all costs of maintaining the alternative work location, including: water, heating, electricity, internet costs, property taxes, insurance and all other costs.
- c. At the discretion of the teleworker's Department, ergonomic office furniture or equipment may be supplied to the teleworker.
- d. The supervisor will need to provide justification and budget support to expenditures and keep a log of all equipment provided to a teleworker. Phone and computer options must be discussed and approved by Information Technologies. The employee is responsible for returning all equipment upon termination of the teleworking agreement.
- e. The teleworker must take appropriate steps to minimize damage to County-owned equipment at the home work site and ensure that it is not used by any unauthorized person.
- f. County owned equipment cannot be used for any purpose other than County business.
- g. Employees should consult an accountant for any advice on tax related issues for using a home office. Employees should consult the employee's insurance agent for any questions regarding appropriate property/liability coverage issues.

516.06 Mileage Reimbursement

Please refer to Section 506 (Business Related Expense Reimbursement) of the Wright County personnel Policy Manual for mileage reimbursement information.

516.07 Security Requirements

All teleworkers are required to follow Wright County Personnel Policy 711 regarding Use of Technology. Additionally, the County-owned equipment shall not be used by non-employees, family members, or friends at the Teleworker's alternative work location. The employee shall

take all precautions necessary to secure the County-owned equipment from unauthorized access.

The County-owned equipment shall be treated the same as if it was in the office. Internet usage on the County-owned devices may still be tracked. No rogue or outside software shall be installed, and the devices shall be encrypted. Software installations may only be done by County IT staff.

Telework computers will receive standard Windows and antivirus updates over the Internet.

516.08 Data Privacy and Information Security

- a. Provisions of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and program data privacy policies must be followed when performing work at an approved alternative work location. The teleworker and the supervisor should agree on the type and form of data to be taken to and from the alternative work location. Agreements between the teleworker and the supervisor must be reached on the security and transfer process necessary to comply with data privacy laws, rules, and regulations.
- b. Teleworkers must provide security for the data and information that is transported to and from their approved alternative work location. Simple measures such as removing CD's/storage devices and documents that contain sensitive data from desk or home work areas and placing them in secure storage devices may prevent a major and potentially costly security breach and loss of information for the County.
- c. Teleworkers needing restricted access to information while working at an alternative work location will discuss this need with their supervisor before taking such information off-site. The teleworker is responsible for protecting the privacy and confidentiality of data at alternative work locations the same as they are in the assigned office location.
- d. Data created and maintained on the teleworker's personal home computer, if generated for the purpose of conducting County business, is subject to the County's record management and data privacy rules and regulations. This means proper retention and disposal procedures as well as data privacy protections are required. Such data remains the property of the County.
- e. The teleworker's home address and telephone numbers are private information and are not given out without the express authorization of the teleworker. The teleworker's home address and phone numbers may be used by the County as authorized by law.