

## Telecommuting Policy

This policy establishes guidelines for Telecommuting for Broome County employees. The following guidelines will be reviewed periodically and may evolve to ensure the health and safety of Broome County's workforce. These guidelines apply to all employees. These are temporary and discretionary, subject to operational needs as determined by Broome County management. This policy may be rescinded at any time and is not subject to appeal.

### Purpose and Intent

Broome County employees are and will remain responsible to provide services that the community expects and is reliant upon. In order to continue operations, the intent is for employees to work at their regular locations, however when that is not possible due to health or other personal considerations and job duties and technology allows, employees will be able to work remotely.

Telecommuting is a temporary arrangement that may be rescinded at any time. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and/or jobs but not necessarily for all staff, and this determination will be made exclusively by Broome County management. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the County. Any Telecommuting assignment will be evaluated as frequently as the Department Head/County believes is necessary.

This guide outlines key considerations, best practices, and guidance specific to Telecommuting, including information on eligibility, assignments, home technology requirements, pay, hours of work etc.

### Hours Worked

All employees who work when the County is open, either remotely or on-site, shall be paid for hours worked at their regular hourly rate of pay.

## Telecommuting Guidelines

### Who May Work Remotely

Permitted situations where Telecommuting may be authorized, assuming the employee is able to perform duties:

- Employee has a temporary health complication but is able to perform duties
- Employee is healthy but dependent(s) have serious health complications requiring temporary care and attendance by the employee
- Temporary childcare responsibilities that are not resolvable by other alternatives
- Employee is healthy but under quarantine or other quarantine by their healthcare provider or the Health Department
- Employee has recently traveled to a high-risk area, as defined by the CDC or NY Dept. of Health
- At the discretion of the Department Head, and with final approval from the Personnel Officer, additional department and/or employee requests for telecommuting will be considered.

**All requests and considerations for telecommuting will be at the discretion of the Department Head with final approval made by the Personnel Officer. The business of the County will take precedence over telecommuting work days. Employees may, at the discretion of their immediate Supervisor or Department Head, be called to work at their normal located worksite on their regular telecommuting workday, to meet workload or operational requirements.**

**Any Telecommuting arrangement may be discontinued, at any time, by Broome County or at the request of the employee.**

### **Key Considerations:**

#### **Priorities & Essential Work**

The Department Head/Supervisor will evaluate the responsibilities and priorities of the position, considering customer/collaborator impact and feasibility of completing some or all duties remotely. It is likely that many employees either will not have enough work available remotely to fill their regular work day, or will have demands on their time, for example child care, that will make it impossible to work their full work day. In those cases, the employee should submit regular work hours for time actually worked and utilize other leave credit for the remaining hours.

Although telecommuting may provide some level of flexibility to an employee and ease demands of personal obligations (i.e. child care), the expectation is that employees will be as productive and committed to their work obligations as if they were physically in the office.

#### **Technology**

At a minimum, an employee needs a computer, internet, and phone access to work remotely. Broome County IT will not provide technical support for personally owned devices and equipment, other than instructions needed to set up remote access.

Systems that Broome County provides to the employee are Broome County property and may be recovered or discontinued at any time and at the sole discretion of Broome County. Employees that are provided system resources will be required to properly care for the resources received. Employees are required to adhere to all Broome County IT policies and procedures while using remote access capabilities. Additionally, employees are required to take the necessary steps to keep all systems used for remote access in a safe location and avoid any misuse. No one other than the Broome County employee is allowed to access Broome County data and documents or utilize Broome County systems.

The department of the remotely working employee(s) will be responsible to cover the cost of replacement of systems and resources that are lost or damaged.

#### **Computer and Internet**

To work remotely an internet connection is required. Employees will be required to go through the Broome County Gateway to access Broome County resources (virtual desktops, virtual applications and remote PC access). If the employee will be using their own personal equipment, then personally owned equipment will be required to have all current updates with current anti-virus systems installed. It is imperative that IT security be maintained at all times.

Employees understand and will not download any Broome County data to a personal device, and this is strictly forbidden. Employees understand and will not print any Broome County data to a personal printer, and this is strictly forbidden. This helps to ensure the integrity and confidentiality of the Broome County owned data. IT staff cannot work on personal equipment. If there is a problem with any Broome County IT supplied equipment, then the employee will be required to schedule an appointment to bring in the equipment for repair or replacement.

Employees are responsible for following all Broome County practices and policies to maintain security and protect confidentiality. Broome County will not reimburse for internet or phone expenses incurred, or any damages you may experience to your personal devices.

Employees are encouraged to contact the IT Help Desk for any assistance for any Broome County system access needs.

### **Phone**

To work remotely, an employee may also need to roll phone calls forward from their work phones to either a home phone or cell phone. IT can also forward or copy voice mails to email. IT will provide instructions on how to forward incoming calls.

### **Home Environment**

Department Heads and/ or Supervisors and employees must consider whether the home environment is conducive to remote work. Factors include the demands of other household members, household construction, appropriate lighting, seating, and other basic conditions. Expectations should be set with other household members regarding interactions and availability.

To ensure that employee performance will not suffer in remote work arrangements, Broome County requires employees to:

- Choose a quiet and distraction free working space
- Dedicate their full attention to their job duties during working hours
- Adhere to normal break and attendance schedules
- Be accessible to Broome County personnel and clients/ customers by phone and/or email
- Maintain strict confidentiality of Broome County and/or client information
- Employees working remotely must adhere to all Broome County policies and procedures as if working from their regular office setting
- Remote working employees shall not hold any in-person business meetings with internal or external clients, customers, or other employees at their residence
- Employees shall not conduct any unauthorized non-Broome County work during their remote Telecommuting work schedule
- Employees who work remotely will be covered by Workers' Compensation for injuries occurring in and out of the course of employment during their Telecommuting work schedule. The employee must report any job-related incident that occurs during work hours to their supervisor as soon as possible within 24 hours and follow established procedures for reporting and filing a claim. The employer reserves their right for investigation of any claim filed as if it occurred on the employers' [ premises including but not limited to review of accident location, preventive measures and future risks.

### **Pay**

All employees who work remotely during their Broome County work schedule will be paid for hours worked at their regular hourly rate of pay. Overtime and comp time accruals must be approved in advance by the employee's Supervisor or Department Head. Vacation and holiday leave time or any time away from work must be approved in advance just as when working on Broome County locations. Any sick time must also be recorded as when working on site.

**Remote Agreements & Expectations**

Department Heads or Supervisors and employees must sign a written Telecommuting Agreement outlining duration and expectations.

**Time & Performance**

Department Heads and/ or Supervisors must identify and clearly outline to an employee a system of how time and performance will be managed. All systems must include methods of regular communication specific to work priorities, deliverables, timelines, etc.

\*Where there is a question not covered by this policy, the Broome County Employee Handbook and IT Security Policies will apply.