



# Agency Telework Policy

*Updated April 2023*

STATE OF IOWA DEPARTMENT OF  
**Health** AND **Human**  
SERVICES

Agency Telework Policy  
Department Wide Policy

Effective Date: 14 April 2023  
Revision Date: 14 April 2023

**Reviewed and Approved:**

Kelly Garcia

Director

Iowa Department of Health and Human Services

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. Vision .....	1
2. Purpose.....	1
3. Scope .....	1
4. Definitions .....	1
5. Guiding Principles .....	2
6. Eligibility.....	3
7. Telework Agreement .....	3
8. Changes.....	4
9. Ad Hoc Arrangements.....	4
10. Roles and Responsibilities.....	4
11. Equipment and Supplies .....	6
12. Compliance .....	6
13. References.....	6
14. Expiration .....	6
15. Appendix A: Telework Agreement.....	7

## **1. VISION**

- 1.1 The Iowa Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) strategies and missions, telework supports the achievement of important objectives for an efficient and effective health and human services system, including cost savings, improved performance, and maximized organizational productivity.
- 1.2 Developed as a strategic program, telework supports healthy workplaces and is an effective recruitment and retention tool with the capacity to improve the competitive positions of the Department.
- 1.3 Leveraged as a management tool, telework mitigates potential disruptions to workplace productivity (e.g., severe weather).
- 1.4 Implemented to support employees' work and family responsibilities, telework allows employees to achieve success in their careers and personal lives.

## **2. PURPOSE**

- 2.1 HHS is committed to a focus on performance rather than presence for employees.
- 2.2 Telework allows employees to work at home, on the road, or at a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. HHS considers telework to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement.
- 2.3 HHS establishes policy under which eligible employees may be authorized to telework to the extent the arrangement does not diminish the employee or the organizations' performance, and is conducive to operational needs of the agency. Telework is a privilege and does not change the terms and conditions of employment with HHS.
- 2.4 This document establishes the agency-wide telework policy for HHS. The policy is intended to provide a framework for consistency in the implementation of telework at HHS.

## **3. SCOPE**

- 3.1 This policy applies to all HHS staff. It does not supersede other HHS policies to include, but not limited to, overtime, time reporting, leave utilization, work expectations, disciplinary actions, work rules, or travel.

## **4. DEFINITIONS**

- 4.1 Ad Hoc – An opportunity to telework for a specific timeframe and reason.
- 4.2 Agency / Organization – The State agency entering into the Telework Agreement.
- 4.3 Appointing Authority – the appointed chief administrative head of a department or that person's designee.
- 4.4 HHS - The Department of Health and Human Services, as established by Iowa Code Chapter 217.
- 4.5 Department – The Department of Health and Human Services.
- 4.6 Employee / Departmental Staff – An individual employed by the State of Iowa Department of Health and Human Services who is responsible for conducting official business on behalf of the department.
- 4.7 Executive Leadership – The team comprised of executive and senior leadership of the Department, as defined by the Director.

- 4.8 Manager / Supervisor – A person with the authority to enter into Telework Agreements with subordinate employees.
- 4.9 Domicile – The city, town, or metropolitan area within which an employee’s official work site is located.
- 4.10 Official Work Site – The official physical address established as the place of business for the State agency, division or program for which a telework arrangement has been approved.
- 4.11 Telework Agreement – A written agreement between an employee and manager requiring each to adhere to applicable policies of this program and any other terms required by management.
- 4.12 Telework Program – A work arrangement in which an eligible employee performs the duties and responsibilities of their position, from an approved alternate worksite.
- 4.13 Telework Site (alternate work site) – The management-approved physical addresses from which the employee engaged in the Telework Agreement conducts State business.
- 4.14 Teleworker – An eligible employee engaging in the Telework Agreement.

## **5. GUIDING PRINCIPLES**

- 5.1 The Executive Leadership of the HHS endorses workplace policies that empower employees to achieve work-life balance and integration. Supporting families and strengthening quality of life are central to the missions of the HHS and these core aims extend to employees.
- 5.2 Effective performance management through active supervision is key to a successful telework program. Such management begins with Managers/Supervisors and continues up to Executive Leadership. Each successive supervisory level plays an important role.
  - 5.2.1 Managers/Supervisors are expected to serve as the day-to-day management support for employees, including working through performance issues whether an employee is onsite or offsite.
  - 5.2.2 Bureau Chiefs and Division Administrators/Directors are responsible for ensuring an equitable and systemic approach to telework in their bureaus and divisions, respectively, and providing support to Managers/Supervisors in carrying out their responsibilities.
- 5.3 The Executive Leadership of the Department promotes team building and collaboration, recognizing that these principles are sometimes best fostered through an in-person environment. At times, telework may not be the most viable option.

## **6. ELIGIBILITY**

- 6.1 All employees—including new employees—in a role conducive to telework are eligible for telework. Managers/Supervisors should consult the Telework Supervisor Toolkit for additional guidance.
- 6.2 Approval for participation in the Telework Program is within management’s authority and is not an employee entitlement. The operational needs of the State, the mission of the HHS, and the goals and responsibilities of a particular program and its employees determine how often and to what extent telework is approved.
- 6.3 Telework is optional, unless specified otherwise in an employee’s PDQ.
- 6.4 Entering into a Telework Agreement does not change the employee’s assigned domicile.
- 6.5 Employees are expected to telework from in-state or contiguous state Telework Sites. Managers/Supervisors should consult the Telework Supervisor Toolkit.
  - 6.5.1 Situations may arise where an out-of-state Telework Site may be approved on a short-term basis. Refer to Section 9, Ad Hoc Arrangements.
- 6.6 International Telework Sites are strictly prohibited.
- 6.7 The Telework Program may be used to provide reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disability Act for employees who qualify, including those employees who have partially recovered from an injury, illness, or other medical event and who can perform work on a full- or part-time basis from a Telework Site
  - 6.7.1 Managers/Supervisors are required to go through the ADA interactive process. Refer to the Telework Supervisor Toolkit for additional information on this process.

## **7. TELEWORK AGREEMENT**

- 7.1 Employees seeking to telework must consult with their Manager/Supervisor. If determined suitable, the employee must complete and sign a Telework Agreement in partnership with their Manager/Supervisor.
  - 7.1.1 To assist the employee and Manager/Supervisor in determining fitness to telework, assessment information is available in the Telework Supervisor Toolkit.
  - 7.1.2 The Telework Agreement lists the frequency of which the employee is authorized to telework, as well as the employee’s responsibilities regarding telework.
- 7.2 After the employee has read, agreed to, and signed the completed Telework Agreement, Managers/Supervisors must include the Agreement in the employee’s official HR file.
- 7.3 A completed Telework Agreement must be in place prior to beginning telework.
  - 7.3.1 For employees in existing telework arrangements at the time of issuance of this policy, a Telework Agreement must be in place within 30 days of the policy effective date.

## **8. CHANGES**

- 8.1 A Telework Agreement may be suspended or cancelled at any time by the appropriate Appointing Authority. Refer to the Telework Supervisor Toolkit.
- 8.2 As necessary, Managers/Supervisors may modify or amend Telework Agreements at any time by written notification from the appropriate Department to the employee. The employee is expected to comply and sign the new Telework Agreement to continue to telework.
- 8.3 Likewise, employees may submit a written request for modifications or amendments to their Telework Agreements to their Manager/Supervisor at any time, including but not limited to changes to the Telework Site, work days, and core hours. If approved, the employee is expected to sign the new Telework Agreement to continue to telework.

## **9. AD HOC ARRANGEMENTS**

- 9.1 Ad hoc arrangements may be approved for circumstances including but not limited to inclement weather and special projects. These arrangements are approved on an as needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.
  - 9.1.1 Closure of offices follows existing Department of Administrative Services (DAS) policy.
  - 9.1.2 Managers/Supervisors may authorize ad hoc arrangements for all other circumstances.
- 9.2 Ad hoc arrangements do not require a Telework Agreement.

## **10. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### 10.1 Employee

- 10.1.1 In addition to the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in this policy, employees:
  - 10.1.1.1 Provide the same level of support, availability, accessibility to customers, coworkers, and supervisor as if working at the official worksite. This includes achieving work requirements, participating in staff meetings, working assigned duty hours, and responding to phone calls, emails, and voicemail in a timely manner in accordance with established procedures and expectations.
  - 10.1.1.2 Comply with their individual Telework Agreement.
  - 10.1.1.3 Accurately report time and attendance. Employees must submit their time and attendance in accordance with existing policy.
  - 10.1.1.4 Inform their Manager/Supervisor when unable to perform work due to illness or personal situations.
  - 10.1.1.5 Report loss of power or Internet access at a Telework Site immediately to their Manager/Supervisor. Employees may be directed to report to the official work site or another approved Telework Site to conduct their work or may be required to take paid or unpaid leave for the period of the outage. When loss of power or Internet access at a Telework Site is known in advance, employees shall report to work at their Official Work Site or

shall schedule paid or unpaid leave, in accordance with existing leave policy.

- 10.1.1.6 Maintain compliance with applicable HHS and DAS policies, including Acceptable Use policies, in accordance with provision 3.1.
- 10.1.1.7 Ensure the worksite is safe, free from hazards, and provide an adequate, professional work environment with regard to connectivity, technology, physical safety, and security.
- 10.1.1.8 Shall provide adequate, reliable internet service and other general utility costs at their own expense.
- 10.1.1.9 Establish a working environment in which they are not subject to frequent interruptions by pets and non-business-related persons. Employees must arrange for any dependent care and other responsibilities to ensure that the employee can work with minimal interruption. Telework is not a substitute for dependent care.
- 10.1.1.10 Maintain and secure work-related confidential information and documents.
- 10.1.1.11 Report any damage to state-owned or leased equipment, loss of equipment, breach of confidentiality, “work-site” injuries, etc. in accordance with existing policies.

## 10.2 Managers/Supervisors

10.2.1 In addition to the responsibilities outlined elsewhere in this policy, Managers/Supervisors:

- 10.2.1.1 Provide the same level of support, availability, and accessibility to staff as if they are working at the official worksite.
- 10.2.1.2 Actively support telework and appropriately work through obstacles as needed.
- 10.2.1.3 Ensure appropriate in-office staffing levels during core office hours to meet operational needs and to support effective team engagement and collaboration.
- 10.2.1.4 Establish performance standards and expectations equivalent to in-office employees and hold all employees accountable to the same.
- 10.2.1.5 Execute Telework Agreements with new employees when the employee is determined eligible for telework.
- 10.2.1.6 Review, discuss and, as appropriate, modify and approve Telework Agreements with telework employees on an annual basis, at minimum, to validate arrangement is still effective and in the best interest of the agency. Managers/Supervisors review with employees expectations regarding methods and frequency of communication.
- 10.2.1.7 Ensure teleworkers are afforded the same professional opportunities, assignments and treatment as non-teleworking employees concerning performance appraisals, work assignments, promotions, training and development opportunities.
- 10.2.1.8 May use and require employees to use approved time-management tracking tools.



10.2.1.9 Direct teleworkers to report to the Official Work Site for activities requiring their presence, to include days when the employee is otherwise authorized to telework.

### 10.3 Division of Information Technology (DoIT)

10.3.1 The HHS Division of Information Technology (DoIT) maintains a telework equipment policy covering Department-owned desktops, laptops, desk phones, cellular phones, printers, and other employee IT needs.

## 11. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

11.1 Equipment, supplies, and resources provided by the Department to teleworking employees shall be used exclusively by the employee for business purposes.

11.2 Employees are responsible for the safekeeping of all Department-owned equipment and supplies located at the Telework Site(s).

11.3 Employees are not entitled to any compensation for the use of the employee's home as an office, employee's furniture, equipment, or supplies used in the employee's home, or any home costs for utilities, internet, or phone costs incurred in the performance of the employee's work-related duties.

11.4 Employees shall obtain general office supplies needed for work from the Department. The Department will not reimburse employees for personal purchase of such supplies.

## 12. COMPLIANCE

12.1 As indicated in provision 8.1, employees found to be out of compliance with this policy may have their Telework Agreement revoked at any time.

12.2 An employee found to have violated this policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

## 13. REFERENCES

### POLICIES, DIRECTIVES, INSTRUCTIONS

State of Iowa Employee Handbook

HHS Employee Handbook

Telework Supervisor Toolkit

Acceptable Use Policy

DAS Severe Weather Policy

HHS DoIT Equipment Policy

## 14. EXPIRATION

14.1 This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.

## 15. APPENDIX A: TELEWORK AGREEMENT

### TELEWORK AGREEMENT

**Name of Employee:**

**Name of Department:**

**Employee Job Classification:**

**Telework Site(s):**

Address:

City/State/Zip:

Business Phone:

**Telework Start Date:**

**Workdays and core hours at the Telework Site:**

**State and/or County equipment the Teleworker is taking from the Official Work Site to the Telework Site:**

**Telework conditions or exceptions specific to this agreement:**

*I affirm by my signature below that I have read this entire Agreement and that I understand and agree to its entire content. I affirm that I have been provided, read, and agree to comply with the HHS Telework Policy. I also affirm that I have been made aware of the following: the responsibilities for documenting time, attendance, approval of leave requests and provisions governing the approval of overtime and compensatory time; performance requirements and measurement; proper use and safeguard of government property; maintenance of records; and standards of conduct.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Employee's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's/Supervisor's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Manager's/Supervisor's  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date