



Telework Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions

Below is a list of Frequently Asked Questions relating to the Department of Children and Families Pilot Telework Program. If you have any questions relating to the program that is not listed below, please email your inquiry to DCFtelework@dcf.nj.gov.

General Questions

Q. When and how long is the telework program in effect?

- A. The pilot telework program is in effect for one year to begin no later than July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2023. The Department intends to initiate the program beginning June 13, 2022.

Q. Will the program be longer than a year?

- A. Currently, the end date for the pilot program is June 30, 2023, at which time the Civil Service Commission will evaluate to determine a continuation.

Q. What positions are eligible for the telework program?

- A. Employees will be deemed eligible by their supervisor and/or Cost Center Manager, based on the Telework Pilot Program criteria, ePARs and/or unit/office/division operations.

Q. Are there any employees that will be ineligible for the telework program?

- A. Yes. An employee whose primary job duties are not conducive to telework is not eligible to participate. Also, employees with pending performance, attendance, or related disciplinary action(s); or employees currently on a performance improvement plan or PIP are also not eligible for the program.

Q. What if the telework does not work out?

- A. There may be instances in which both the employee and manager have made a good faith effort to make a telework arrangement work without success. Both the teleworker and the supervisor should understand that if telework does not work out for an individual, it does not, in any way, reflect on that individual's commitment or ability to perform his/her job. The Department's Telework Guidelines and the telework agreement include a clause stating that either the manager or the employee may terminate the telework agreement for operational needs or performance issues. For more information about the termination process, please review the DCF Telework policy.

Q. What is the eCATS code when working at remote location?

- A. Employees will need to use the eCATS subcode, TELWK, for the time period spent working at their authorized remote work location.

Application for Telework

Q. If someone is on leave, should they apply for Telework now?

- A. No. Employees should wait until they return to the office to complete the application paperwork and participate in the NJWorkSmart training.

Q. Should employees that are going on leave shortly submit applications?

- A. No. Staff who will be on a leave beginning June 13 or after should not apply for Telework or the Alternative Workweek Program until their return.

Q. I am uncertain about whether I want to apply for Telework. If I choose not to sign up now, can I sign up at a later date?

- A. Yes. DCF will hold enrollment periods four times a year for individuals who are currently unable or who choose not to participate in the Telework pilot program.

Q. If an employee chooses to try AWP or Telework and decides that it is not working for them, is the employee able to go back to his/her/their normal schedule or is s/he/they locked into the initial choice?

- A. Employees are not locked into a choice. An employee may choose to withdraw from either program. Before doing so, the employee should notify their Supervisor and the Office of Human Resources.

Q. If an employee has been approved for Telework, can they also apply for the [DCF Flex Time](#) program?

- A. No. Employees who participate in the Telework program will not be eligible for either the Flextime or AWP programs.

Q. If an employee's request to Telework is denied, can they reapply?

- A. Yes, if an employee is not approved to participate in the pilot telework program due to performance issues which have been rectified, they can reapply in 3 months provided that they meet eligibility criteria. Open enrollment for any staff who did not apply initially wishing to participate in the program will be 2x/year. Staff returning from leave can apply when they return from their leave of absence.

AWP

- Q. June 13 is the middle of a pay period. How does that work with AWP since we're supposed to work the same hours both weeks of a pay period?**

- A. The AWP program will not launch the week of June 13th. The application period will open the week of June 6th, and upon approval, staff will be able to begin an AWP schedule beginning Saturday, June 18th.

Q. If an employee is approved for Telework but later wants to enroll in AWP will that be possible?

- A. Yes. The employee will need to first withdraw their Telework application through their supervisor and submit a new completed application for the AWP.

Q. Can I schedule a half hour for lunch if I participate in AWP?

- A. No. Staff must use their lunch and break times. That time cannot be forfeited, shortened or combined to shorten the workday.

Child Care/Dependent Care

Q. May I choose my Telework days based on my childcare needs?

- A. No. Per the CSC Guidelines, state employees must make alternate arrangements for child or elder care and **must certify** that they are not a primary caregiver for anyone, of any age, while they are teleworking. Failure to adhere to this or any of the requirements of the Telework pilot program will result in your removal from the Telework pilot program and possible administrative action.

Eligibility

Q. Are new employees eligible for telework even though they don't have an ePAR score yet?

- A. Yes, as permitted by their Supervisor or Cost Center Manager, according to unit/office/division operations.

Q. Are Personnel Trainees eligible for Telework?

- A. Yes, as permitted by their Supervisor or Cost Center Manager, according to unit/office/division operations.

Q. Are trainees eligible to participate in Telework or AWP?

- A. Yes, as permitted by their Supervisor or Cost Center Manager, according to unit/office/division operations.

Q. What if I am on a performance improvement plan and/or have been advised that I have time/attendance issues?

- A. If an employee is on a performance improvement plan or has time/attendance issues, his/her/their supervisor may deny his/her/their participation in Telework or AWP. If the PIP/issues are resolved by the next enrollment period and the Supervisor or Cost Center Manager allows, the employee may participate, according to unit/office/division operations.

Emergency Situations

- Q. If an emergency situation comes up involving one of my cases or my work, who will be required to respond?**
- A. Telework is work. The only thing that changes is the location where the work is being performed. If there is an emergency situation requiring you to report to the office, make a home visit or attend court or participate in an off-site meeting, you are required to do so. Failure to perform expected duties while Teleworking will result in your removal from the Telework pilot program and possible administrative action.
- Q. If I must be in the office on one of my approved Telework days, can my supervisor approve me to work from home on a different day in that same week?**
- A. No. Neither Telework or AWP days can be rescheduled due to an unexpected event.

Flexible Remote Work

- Q. I am retiring soon and will not be applying to Telework. Will the flexible remote telework still be an option?**
- A. No, the flexible remote telework was a temporary policy that will end with the implementation of Telework on June 13, 2022.

Ineligible Titles

- Q. I am in a title listed in Attachment A to the DCF Pilot Telework Policy, but I do not work in any of the organizational units that are listed. Am I eligible to apply for Telework?**
- A. Yes, the list of ineligible titles is specific to the organizational units that are listed. To participate, you will have to meet the other qualifications and receive approval from your Supervisor, Cost Center Manager and the Office of Human Resources.

Location of Telework

- Q. Are employees able to Telework from a location other than their home? Can employees telework while out of state?**
- A. Per the [CSC Guidance](#) related to the Telework Pilot Program, employees may only Telework from their home/residence.

Reassignment/Promotion

- Q. What is the process when an employee is promoted or reassigned to another role or office?**
- A. If an employee is reassigned or promoted, they will have to reapply for the program in consultation with their new Supervisor.

Technology

- Q. If I have signed a NJ Portable Computing User agreement previously, do I have to sign another?**

A. Yes. The signed portable computing user agreement must be with the Telework application package.

Q. If an employee has not received the portable hardware that they need to telework by June 13 will the employee still be able to apply to participate in the Telework Pilot Program?

A. If an employee has not received a tablet, they should enter a help desk ticket. Until an employee receives a tablet, they may not telework.

Telework Schedule/Hours of Work

Q. May I request Friday and Monday as my days to telework?

A. No, per the CSC guidance, employees may request to telework on either Friday or Monday but not both. See the [Program Guidance](#).

Q. Are we required to return to working 9 to 5, if we have previously changed our core hours, when doing telework?

A. The department's expanded core hours of work (7:00 AM to 7:00 PM) continue in effect. Employees are expected to follow their approved work schedule while engaged in telework. As always, there may be situations in which an employee's hours of work will need to be modified based on operational needs of the office or organizational unit.

Q. Will employees be able to request to Telework on consecutive days.

A. Yes, as permitted by their Supervisor or Cost Center Manager, according to unit/office/division operations.

Q. What is the process if an employee wants to change the days they telework?

A. An employee who wishes to change their telework days must reapply for the program and receive permission from their Supervisor, Cost Center Manager and the Office of Human Resources. Such a request may be denied based upon operational need.

Training

Q. What training is required to participate in the Pilot Telework Program?

A. All staff who have been approved to participate in the Telework Pilot must complete the NJ WorkSmart training, a 4-course online training package through the state's Learning Management System (LMS). The training is intended to equip employees with practical techniques for working successfully in a hybrid environment. Supervisors will also be required to complete a 5th course devoted to communication, accountability, respect and engagement.

Q. Where can we find the training?

A. The NJ WorkSmart training is available through the state's (LMS) in your [MyNewJersey](#) portal.

Q. If an employee is participating in the AWP Program and NOT the Telework Program, is the NJ WorkSmart training still mandatory?

A. No. There is no training requirement to participate in the AWP.