



## **DCF TELEWORK PILOT PROGRAM**

**April 25, 2022**

### **Telework Program Overview**

#### **Question:**

Can a copy of the slides that were shared on the all-staff Teams call be shared with staff? Thanks

#### **Answer:**

A copy of the presentation is available on the DCF Return to Office Page.

### **Telework Generally**

#### **Question:**

It would be beneficial if we could replicate a hybrid option if necessary. For example, only go into office if we need to access printers, files, fieldwork, etc. Checking of emails, documentation, etc. can be done at home.

#### **Answer:**

The Telework Pilot Program Guidance approved by the Civil Service Commission (CSC) limits the number of remote workdays to no more than two days in a calendar week. This policy is applicable to all New Jersey state workers.

#### **Question:**

Instead of fixed days to telework, would alternating days, on a weekly basis, be acceptable? This would provide more flexibility to employees and work units. This would also allow work units to more fairly allocate telework days.

#### **Answer:**

The CSC Order establishing authority for the Telework Pilot Program requires that employees' remote workdays must be fixed. If an employee wishes to change their schedule, they may reapply. Flexing from week to week is not permitted.

**Question:**

Can I modify my hours of work when I am working remotely?

**Answer:**

When working remotely, staff must maintain their regular work schedule. If there is a need to modify work hours, staff must seek and receive prior approval from their supervisor.

**Question:**

Can I enroll in multiple programs? For instance, can I telework two days per week and also participate in the Alternate Workweek Program?

**Answer:**

Staff will need to choose whether to continue with their current work hours, participate in the Telework Pilot Program, Alternative Workweek Program (AWP) or Flextime Program. Participating in one deems an employee ineligible for the others. Please keep in mind that some employees will not be able to participate in the Telework Pilot Program, so we are offering AWP or Flextime to provide those staff with other options.

**State of Residence****Question:**

If an employee has been grandfathered in by HR to maintain their out of state residence of record according to the NJ employee residence law, will that employee also be permitted to work from home in their out of state residence as part of the remote work policy?

**Answer:**

Yes. The Telework Pilot Program allows staff that live outside of New Jersey under the NJ First ACT to also work remotely in their homes.

**Application & Eligibility for Remote Work****Question:**

Why is there an application process for remote work?

**Answer:**

Until the Civil Service Commission issued its Telework Pilot Program Order and Guidance, the State of New Jersey did not have a remote work policy. All work performed remotely was done ~~so~~ during COVID-19 under the public health emergency, which has since expired. The telework pilot program guidance applies to all eligible state workers. Some titles and roles will be exempt from participating because of their

Division/Office/Unit operations. Approval to participate will be determined by supervisors and cost center managers.

**Question:**

I would like to know if my specific title will be eligible for the telework program and if so when would that be starting?

**Answer:**

Approval to participate will be determined by supervisors and cost center managers. The program will begin when DCF's Telework policy is approved by the Civil Service Commission.

**Flexible Remote Work Allowance**

**Question:**

Will the new telework policy continue to make allowances for telework on a scheduled office day if you have a doctor's appointment where you were already taking half the day off, a child's school conference, home repair, etc. as has been an option so far?

**Answer:**

No. Staff will need to choose whether to participate in the Telework Pilot Program, Alternative Workweek Program or Flextime. Participating in one deems an employee ineligible for the others. The December 4 directive permitting telework in specified circumstances will be replaced by the Telework Pilot Program. Therefore, the conditions for flexible remote work allowance no longer apply. Staff will be required to use personal benefit time to address these types of situations.

**Question:**

Will Managers have the ability to permit staff to work remotely on a day in which they are taking half a day of leave for an appointment or participating in a training?

**Answer:**

No. See above.

**Hours of Work**

**Question:**

Will the new policy still allow staff that apply and are approved for telework to continue to have approved staggered start times, i.e., 8-4; 10-6, on their scheduled in-office days? This is highly beneficial to staff that work a distance from the office due to better traffic patterns earlier or later in the day.

**Answer:**

The expanded core hours will continue, and staff will be permitted to stagger their start times.

**Question:**

If found eligible for telework, and after choosing my days to WFH, do I have to work from home? Will I be allowed to come into my official station on my assigned wfh days? Is there flexibility in how we use our scheduled wfh assigned days? I hope my question is clear.

**Answer:**

If an employee would like to report to their assigned work location on a scheduled telework day, that is permissible, but the employee cannot choose another day to work remotely instead.

**Holidays**

**Question:**

If one of the telework days selected falls on a holiday, will the employee be allowed to select another day during that same week, or will they have to forfeit that day and only work 1 day that week?

**Answer:**

If an employee's telework day falls on a holiday, the day is forfeited as a telework day. Another day that week cannot be substituted.

**Alternate Workweek Program (AWP)**

**Question:**

I saw that AWP and Flex schedules were mentioned in the presentation about telework. Is that policy available for staff?

**Answer:**

Please be advised that DCF is working on an Alternative Workweek Program. Once the policy is approved by the Civil Service Commission it will be announced and circulated to staff.