



CITY OF WATAUGA – PERSONNEL, ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCIAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUAL

POLICY TITLE	Work Flexibility Program
INITIAL EFFECTIVE DATE	November 9, 2020
LAST REVISION DATE	January 1, 2023
POLICY NUMBER	7.07

OBJECTIVE The Work Flexibility Program is to allow for work and homelife balance. The City recognizes employees are most productive when they are able to successfully achieve a balance in their personal and professional lives and one way to achieve this is to promote a remote work option or flexible work schedule. Options for flexible work schedules have been made available to promote productivity. Dependent upon the needs of the City and the employee, employees may be permitted to work flexible work schedules or work remotely.

SCOPE This policy applies only to eligible employees and must be approved by the Department Director and City Manager.

POLICY

A. General

The Work Flexibility option is viable when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Work Flex or remote work may be appropriate for some employees and positions, but not for others. The Work Flexibility program is not an entitlement, it is not a city-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms of employment with the City of Watauga. The Work Flexibility Program will not affect an employee's compensation, benefits, work status or work responsibilities. The duties, responsibilities, and conditions of employment remain the same as if the employee were working at their regular work site. The employee shall comply with all City of Watauga policies and procedures while working at home or in an alternate location. The Work Flexibility Program shall not result in any additional cost to the City of Watauga.

B. Eligibility

Employees are eligible to have work flexibility to adjust their workweek or work remotely if approved by their Department Director and City Manager and when it is in the best interest of the City to do so. Not every job or every employee is well suited for work flexibility or remote work. The employee must have a good performance record, no documented absenteeism problems or other discipline problems. Work Flex by one employee should not negatively affect the workload

or productivity of others by shifting burdens, creating delays, or adding steps in the workflow. All work flex arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the City.

C. Term

Work Flex schedules as well as remote work can be arranged on a long-term, short-term, or as needed basis as long as it is approved. In some situations, employees may be directed to work remotely. The remote schedule may be for all or part of a workweek. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest remote work as a possible work arrangement to a director for consideration.

Temporary remote work arrangements (less than 3 months) may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects, or business travel. These arrangements are approved by the department director on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Work Flex or remote work arrangements may be discontinued at any point at the direction of the City. Every effort will be made to provide notice of such change to accommodate commuting and other issues that may arise from the termination of a work flex or remote work arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is provided.

D. Working Hours

Non-exempt employees participating in the Work Flexibility Program shall work a full 40 hour work week and accurately record all hours worked in accordance with regular timekeeping practices. In accordance with ***Policy 6.02 Overtime and Compensatory Time***, all non-exempt employees are required to receive their supervisor's prior authorization before performing any overtime work. Failure to comply with these requirements may result in the immediate termination of the work flex arrangement.

E. Remote Work Responsibilities

1. Employees approved to work remotely are required to comply with all City of Watauga's policies and procedures as if the employee were at the primary work site.
2. The employee will arrange primary care for children under the age of six during at-home work hours. The Work Flexibility Program is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate childcare. In the case of a dependent's illness, the employee must use leave benefits in accordance with City policy.
3. The employee will work at home during the hours agreed upon by the employee and his/her supervisor. Changes to this schedule must be reviewed and approved in advance by the employee's Department Director.

4. Remote work employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using the City's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per work week require the advanced approval of the telecommuter's supervisor.
5. The employee will be expected to attend in-person meetings relating to his/her job including those held on a remote work day.
6. Employees must maintain a professional appearance when interacting with others. Video conferencing will require the employee to wear appropriate clothing that follows the City's Dress Code found in Policy **10.06 Dress Code, Uniforms and Personal Appearance**.
7. Employees agree to maintain safe conditions in the at-home workspace and to practice the same safety habits in the designated workspace as they would on the City's premises.
8. In case of an injury while working at home, the employee shall immediately report the injury to his supervisor per City policy. Worker's compensation liability will be limited to work-related injuries at the designated workspace at the alternate work site during approved work hours.

F. Procedure

All Work Flexibility Program arrangements shall be approved by the Department Director and City Manager. Before entering into any arrangement, the employee and director will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

1. The employee and director (or designee) will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
2. The employee and director (or designee) will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a remote work arrangement or work flex schedule.
3. The employee and the director (or designee) will review and approve the remote work location. The most common remote work location is the home of the employee; however, other locations may be considered.
4. The employee is responsible for providing space, telephone, printing, networking, and/or Internet capabilities at the remote work location and shall not be reimbursed by the employer for these or related expenses. The employee and director (or designee) will review any technology and equipment needs and the appropriate location for telecommuting to determine if remote work is feasible.

5. The employee and the director (or designee) will review any scheduling issues and establish expectations for scheduling telecommuting days and working hours.

G. Work Flex Schedule

A flextime work schedule permits flexibility in arrival and departure times. The work hours are selected by the supervisor and the employee to complete a full work week of 40 hours.

1. A flextime work schedule can be arranged in various ways to accommodate a work unit, division or department. Department head must approve all Flexible work schedules.
2. In lieu of receiving overtime pay in a work week, when a non-exempt employee physically works in excess of 8 hours a day, he may use those hours in excess of eight, and flex his work hours for the remainder of that work week (e.g., An employee works 10 hours on Monday, then uses the two hours worked in excess of the eight toward his workday on Tuesday to take off two hours).

The following provisions apply in such cases:

1. When flexing hours in a work week. Prior Director approval is required.
2. In one-hour increments, up to eight hours per day may be accumulated as "credit" hours and subsequently used as time off in a work week.
3. Non-exempt employees shall flex hours within one work week. Hours cannot be carried over from one work week to the next.

G. Forms

All requests for Work Flexibility will be submitted for approval to Department Director and City Manager on the **Work Flexibility Request Form**.