

## **East Bonner County Library District**

### **Telecommuting Policy**

#### **Telecommuting**

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. The East Bonner County Library District (EBCL) considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment.

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Telecommuting can be suggested by either an employee or a supervisor.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis and may be discontinued at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization. Every effort will be made to provide timely notice of such change to accommodate commuting, child care, and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement.

#### **Eligibility**

Exempt (i.e., not subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act) employees are eligible to be considered for regular, occasional and emergency telecommuting.

Non-exempt employees are eligible for occasional and emergency telecommuting where their duties are necessary for the department to perform essential functions, operations, and services.

Eligibility may also be adjusted for a staff member who has a disability and reasonable accommodation cannot be made on site.

Before entering into any telecommuting arrangement, the employee, supervisor, and director will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- **Employee suitability.** The employee, supervisor, and director will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, to determine suitability for successful telecommuting.
- **Job responsibilities.** The employee, supervisor, and director will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.
- **Equipment needs, workspace design considerations, and scheduling issues.** The employee, supervisor, and director will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.

**The following must be considered:**

- Whether key duties require ongoing access to equipment, materials, and files that can only be accessed on EBCL property.
- Whether key duties require extensive face-to-face contact with community members or staff on EBCL property.
- Whether security issues require the key duties to be conducted on EBCL property.

**Tax and other legal implications.**

Out-of-state employees or contracted workers must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.

If the employee, supervisor, and director agree, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties.

The telecommuter and supervisor will establish a regular schedule of communication prior to the start of the telecommuting arrangement. After the trial period ends, the supervisor and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

**Regular, Unexpected/Emergency, and Ad Hoc Telecommuting**

There are three types of telecommuting: Regular, Unexpected/Emergency, and Ad Hoc

Regular Telecommuting - the employee will have an established, predictable schedule and will be required to be available to staff during regular library hours.

Unexpected/Emergency Telecommuting - Examples of unexpected/emergency telecommuting would include transportation issues, or times of extreme inclement weather. Because occasional telecommuting will only occur once in a while, departments should keep that in mind when evaluating the employee and the position's

suitability. During unexpected or emergency telecommuting, the supervisor will establish and specify how often the employee is expected to check email and return phone calls on telecommuting days.

Ad Hoc Arrangements - Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance. Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization, with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.

## **Equipment**

On a case-by-case basis, EBCL will determine, with information supplied by the employee, supervisor, and IT staff, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement.

Equipment supplied by the Library will be maintained by the Library. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. EBCL accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. EBCL reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all EBCL property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made.

EBCL will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. EBCL may reimburse the employee for other business expenses (mailing letters or packages, etc.) with pre-approval from the library director. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. EBCL will not be responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

## **Security**

Consistent with the Library's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of library and patron information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, locking their

workstation when not in use and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

## **Safety**

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. EBCL will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least twice per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands.

## **Time Worked**

Telecommuting 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 EBCL software. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

## **Procedure**

Complete the following forms and submit a copy to your supervisor:

1. Fill out and sign the Telecommuting Application Form
2. Complete the Telecommuting Checklist (and Staff Technology Checkout Form, if applicable).

Your supervisor and the director will set up a time to meet with you and review these materials to determine if telecommuting would be appropriate.