



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

SECTION 100: HUMAN RESOURCES SUBSECTION: GENERAL POLICIES

SUBJECT: TELEWORK POLICY

Previous DHS HR Policy: #111

Effective Date: September 1, 2020

References:

DOAS/OPB Statewide Telework Policy – 2020
Human Resources Policy - *Standards of Conduct and Ethics in Government*
Human Resources Policy – *Official Hours and Work Schedules*
Human Resources Policy – *Fair Labor Standards Act*
Human Resources Policy - *Workers' Compensation and Special Injury Return-to-Work Program*
Human Resources Policy – *Assignment of Duties*
Human Resources Policy – *Use of State Property*

Corresponding Attachment(s):

Att. 1 – GVRA Telework Agreement

PURPOSE

- A.** This policy defines the Statewide Telework Policy for the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency ("GVRA") and contains guidelines and rules under which it will operate. Telework is a voluntary work arrangement, for eligible employees, in which some or all work is performed at a location other than the employee's primary workstation. Telework may be a viable option for certain employees, dependent upon the employee's position and duties, performance expectations, and availability of a suitable telework location. A suitable telework station may be the employee's place of residence or other Agency office location.
- B. SCOPE**
- This policy applies to all employees of the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency.

POLICY

C. GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Telework is generally a voluntary work arrangement, which may be ended at any time by the employee, manager/supervisor, or other authorized Agency official. Managers/supervisors, or other Agency officials will determine positions that will be eligible for telework.
2. Telework is a management option utilized at the discretion of the Agency. In no circumstance will telework be considered a right or entitlement of the employee. Issues regarding approval for telework are not appealable or eligible for review under the Complaint Resolution Procedure.



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

3. Telework does not change an employee's conditions of employment, performance expectations, salary, benefits, or employer sponsored insurance coverage.
4. The primary workstation for mileage reimbursement purposes for employees who telework will be designated as the conventional worksite or office where the employee would normally work if telework were not available.

D. SUPERVISOR/MANAGER RESPONSIBILITY

1. Not all employees and positions will be suitable for telework. It is the responsibility of each supervisor/manager to determine which employees and positions are suitable for telework. Considerations of criteria for telework eligibility may include:
 - a. Employees with demonstrated successful job performance;
 - b. Job duties with infrequent face-to-face communication requirements;
 - c. Job duties that do not require close in-person supervision;
 - d. Job duties that can be performed independently and away from the office with minimal impact to quality or productivity;
 - e. Alternative work place would not negatively impact service quality or organizational operations;
 - f. Minimal need for special equipment;
2. Supervisors/managers must determine if a telework arrangement is beneficial to the Agency and ensure that adequate staffing for the unit is maintained prior to approving employee telework arrangements.
3. Supervisors/managers must ensure that performance can be adequately measured and that sufficient work exists to enable the employee to be productive before authorizing telework arrangements.
4. Supervisors/managers must ensure adequate measures are in place to protect confidentiality and information security at the employee's proposed alternate worksite.
5. Supervisors/managers must ensure employees complete a GVRA Telework Agreement prior to the start of telework (See Attachment 1, GVRA Telework Agreement), unless extenuating circumstances exist. Exceptions may be necessary under certain circumstances as determined by the Executive Director or his/her designee.
6. Supervisors/managers are required to review any GVRA Telework Agreements at least annually or when there is a major job change (i.e., promotion), when the employee or manager/supervisor changes positions, or when any portion of the arrangement covered by the agreement changes. Appropriate modifications are to be made to the GVRA Telework Agreement, which must then be signed again by the employee and the manager/supervisor.



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

7. Supervisors/managers should conduct periodic reviews of employee telework arrangements to determine if the arrangement is still appropriate.
8. Supervisors/managers must ensure temporary workspace or alternative solutions are available to employees who telework in the event telework is temporary or permanently compromised.
9. Supervisors/managers must ensure teleworkers are aware of required communication standards for maintaining contact with customers, coworkers, supervisors, and other agency officials.
10. Supervisors/managers will determine the appropriate equipment needs for each telework arrangement and will be responsible for maintaining an inventory record of equipment each teleworker has at the teleworker's alternate worksite.
11. Supervisors/managers will be responsible for establishing periodic touchpoints with teleworkers and must ensure teleworkers attend all team related staff meetings, either in person or via a virtual platform.
12. Supervisors/managers will be responsible for advising teleworkers on how to retrieve office supplies from designated Agency office locations.

E. EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION AND RESPONSIBILITY

1. Employees approved to telework must complete a GVRA Telework Agreement prior to the start of telework (See Attachment 1, GVRA Telework Agreement). Exceptions may be necessary under certain circumstances as determined by the Executive Director or his/her designee. The agreement will remain on file with the employee's manager/supervisor and must be available for review by the Office of Human Resources (OHR) or other authorized Agency official. The agreement must be updated when changes are made to the agreement.
2. Employees who telework are required to adhere to all State and Agency policies, rules, and regulations.
3. Teleworkers must report to Agency work sites for meetings, trainings, etc. as required by the manager/supervisor or other authorized official.
4. Employees who telework will be evaluated under the same Performance Management Process as employees who do not telework.
5. Alternate Workplace:
 - a. The alternate workplace is an extension of the conventional worksite. State and Agency policies regarding standards of conduct apply during all work time, including work performed at the alternate workplace. Any employee participating in telework is expected to perform his/her duties and responsibilities at the alternate workplace at a proficiency level equal to or



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

greater than when performed at the conventional worksite and must work for the entire time period scheduled.

5. Work Time:

- a. Teleworkers must accurately record and devote all time teleworked to agency assignments. Teleworkers are not authorized to engage in secondary employment activities or otherwise conduct personal business while in official work status. Intentionally misreporting time worked will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.
- b. Employees who telework are required to follow all Agency policies related to call-out requirements and approval of leave.
- c. Teleworkers must be accessible to their manager/supervisor, customers and co-workers during the agreed-upon work schedule regardless of the work location. Employees may be required to report to the primary work place on telework days without advance notice, should circumstances warrant.
- d. Employees who telework (FLSA non-exempt and FLSA exempt) must record all work time in the Agency's time management system and indicate telework time as such, where applicable. Managers are responsible for ensuring employees are documenting their time worked appropriately.
- e. FLSA non-exempt employees who telework must obtain approval from their managers before working overtime when teleworking or working at the conventional worksite. Failure to do so may result in the termination of the GVRA Telework Agreement and/or other appropriate action.

6. Work Schedule:

- a. Employees may telework full-time, one or more days per week on a consistent basis, on an infrequent basis (i.e., occasional), or may be required to telework under extenuating circumstances such as during a declared State of Emergency.
- b. FLSA non-exempt employees who telework are required to have an established work schedule, including a beginning and end time, mealtime, and break time, if applicable.
- c. Employees must adhere to the telework schedule agreed upon in the GVRA Telework Agreement or receive prior approval from their supervisor or designee before modifying their telework schedule. If a GVRA Telework Agreement has not yet been signed due to extenuating circumstances, such as a declared State of Emergency, the supervisor or designee will determine the telework schedule of the employee.



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

7. Emergency Situations:

- a. Employees who are scheduled to telework are considered not impacted by the emergency closure of offices and are expected to telework as scheduled or request leave.
- b. When an emergency affects only the telework site (i.e. power outage, etc.), the employee is expected to report to the designated primary workstation or request leave.

8. Child and Dependent Care:

- a. Telework is not a substitute for childcare or dependent care. Employees who telework must make arrangements for child or dependent care to the same extent as if the employee was working in a conventional office/workplace.
- b. The Agency may be flexible regarding the work schedules of teleworkers that are balancing the care of a child or dependent during a declared State of Emergency or other extenuating circumstances identified by the Governor's office which affects the availability of schools and/or childcare providers.

9. Employee Eligibility:

Employees must meet the following criteria to be eligible for telework, unless an exception is granted by the Executive Director or his/her designee:

- a. Employed in or assigned to a position that is conducive to teleworking;
- b. Employed with the Agency for at least six (6) months;
- c. Have and maintain an annual leave balance of at least forty (40) hours;
- d. Must be free of any disciplinary action for the two (2) years immediately preceding beginning a telework schedule;
- e. Must have and maintain an overall performance rating of "Successful Performer, or equivalent."

F. EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES:

1. Managers/Supervisors will determine the appropriate equipment needs for each telework arrangement. Equipment may include Agency issued laptops, monitors, computer software or other office equipment determined reasonable by the Agency. Managers/supervisors should limit the issuance of duplicate equipment and issue equipment to teleworkers that can be utilized at both the conventional workplace and/or the alternate workplace. Equipment supplied by the Agency is the property of the Agency and the State of Georgia. The Agency retains the responsibility for the inventory and maintenance of the property in accordance with State laws and policies regarding Agency/State property. Employees are not authorized to install personally owned software on Agency issued equipment or use



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

Agency issued equipment to conduct personal business. Any and all software installed on Agency/State-owned equipment must be appropriately licensed, and provided by GVRA.

2. Teleworkers are expected to use reasonable care to safeguard Agency/State equipment from unauthorized use, loss, damage, or destruction. Teleworkers shall return any and all equipment and unused supplies provided and owned by the Agency/State at the request of the Agency and/or upon termination of employment.
3. Teleworkers are not authorized to use their personal computer(s) to conduct Agency business.
4. Teleworkers are generally expected to use their own furniture, data communication and/or services, and other equipment not provided by the Agency. Teleworkers are responsible for the maintenance, repair, and operation of personal equipment not provided by the Agency.
5. All maintenance of Agency/State owned equipment will be performed by an authorized GVRA technician and may be conducted at a GVRA office or other Agency-approved site.
6. Office supplies will be provided to the employee by GVRA and should be obtained during the employee's in-office work period. GVRA will not reimburse employees for out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available in the office.
8. If necessary equipment or other resources (e.g. internet access or power sources) are temporarily unavailable at the alternate workplace and are necessary to perform job duties, the telework arrangement will be suspended until such equipment or resources is fully functioning. Employees will be required to return to the conventional workplace to perform their job duties or request approval of equivalent leave.

G. CONFIDENTIALITY/INFORMATION SECURITY

1. Security of confidential information is of primary concern and importance. Teleworkers are expected to adhere to all applicable laws, rules, regulations, policies and procedures regarding information security. Teleworkers who access information or records of a confidential nature from an alternate work site must maintain appropriate administrative, technical, and physical safeguards to ensure the security and confidentiality of such records.
2. To ensure confidentiality and information security, Teleworkers must:
 - a. Be responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, as the employee would at the conventional workplace. Employees must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to Agency computer systems. GVRA's internet and technology use policies apply at alternate worksites as they would in the conventional workplace.
 - b. Safeguard confidential Agency information maintained in paper files, on computers, emails, cloud applications, or any other external drives. Ensure that confidential information is not disclosed to unauthorized persons.



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

- c. Return all material (paper documents, files, etc.) containing confidential information to the office work site for proper handling or disposal, if necessary.
- d. Ensure back-ups of critical information is performed on a regular basis to assure the information can be recovered if the primary source is damaged or destroyed.
- e. Immediately notify GVRA IT and manager/supervisor of any suspected or actual security violation.
- f. Ensure all computers are password protected.

H. WORKSITE SAFETY AND LIABILITY

1. Worksite Safety and Liability:

- a. Teleworkers must keep the alternate workplace free from distractions and hazards and keep themselves free from obligations which would impair his/her ability to provide the same time and level of attention to the work as when in the conventional workplace.
- b. Teleworkers must ensure that the alternate workplace used for telework purposes is safe and suitable for purposes of the employee's work. GVRA may deny an employee the opportunity to telework if the alternate workplace is not conducive to a safe and productive work environment.
- c. GVRA reserves the right to inspect the alternate workplace.
- d. GVRA and the State of Georgia are not responsible for injuries to non-employees such as family members in the teleworker's alternate workplace.
- e. Teleworkers may not host business guests at their alternate workplace if the alternate workplace is their residence/personal property. Teleworkers are required to utilize teleconferencing/virtual conferencing platforms for work-related meetings while teleworking at their personal residence/property.
- f. GVRA and the State of Georgia are not responsible for any loss or damage to the teleworker's property, real or otherwise, or property owned by the teleworker's family members, visitors, or other individuals in the teleworker's alternate workplace.

2. Workers' Compensation:

- a. The alternate workplace is generally considered an extension of the conventional worksite only during the time it is used for telework.
- b. If an injury occurs during telework hours, the teleworker shall immediately report the injury to their manager/supervisor per the Agency's policies and procedures for reporting workplace injuries. The Agency will follow the same



Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency Organizational Policy & Procedure Manual

policies and procedures for reporting workplace injuries when teleworking as those which occur in the conventional worksite. (See HR Policy – *Workers' Compensation and Special Injury Return-to-Work Program.*)

I. POLICY EXCEPTIONS

1. Exceptions to this policy may be required. The Executive Director or his/her designee may grant an exception to this policy if it is determined to be necessary in the best interest of the Agency.
2. During a declared State of Emergency or other extenuating circumstances designated by the Governor or designee, limited exceptions may be made to this policy in order to ensure necessary business continuity.

OTHER SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Contact Information

For additional information or assistance, please contact the Office of Human Resources (OHR) at (404) 232-1769, or email HR@gvs.ga.gov.