

COMMENT DUE DATE: DECEMBER 20, 2024

Date: December 10, 2024

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It is important that you provide your comments regarding the **draft copy** of policy by the comment due date. Comments are directed to *STO.LegalServices.Policy@okdhs.org.

SUBJECT:

OKDHS Chapter 2. ADMINISTRATIVE COMPONENTS

Subchapter 1. Human Resources Management

Part 9. Telecommuting And Alternate Work Location

OKDHS:2-1-301 [REVISED]

(Reference WF 24-H)

SUMMARY:

Section 2-1-301, Telework policy is amended to:

1. Better define the supervisor's role in Telework agreements.
2. Stipulate telework is not a substitute for dependent care.
3. Publish the requirements for at home Internet access.
4. To require annual recertification of Telework Security and Confidentiality protocol.

SUBCHAPTER 1. HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

PART 9. TELECOMMUTING AND ALTERNATE WORK LOCATION

OKDHS:2-1-301. Telework

Revised ~~07-12-22~~12-20-24

(a) **General provisions.** This Section discusses Oklahoma Human Services (OKDHS) rules governing teleworking by its employees. OKDHS has the sole and final authority to designate the place or places, including telework, where its employees perform their duties ~~Within state government agencies, teleworking is permitted by, and managed, per Office of Management and Enterprise Services (OMES) Human Capital Management (HCM), Oklahoma Administrative Code, and Section 840-4.19 of Title 74 of the Oklahoma Statutes (74 O.S. § 840-4.19). OKDHS complies with all elements of that directive by encouraging its employees to telework whenever possible. OKDHS employees who are able to telework are expected to do so. They may work in the office no more than two days per week without special permission. Division directors may approve others to work in an office more or less than two days per week when circumstances may dictate.~~ Telework:

(1) allows an employee to work outside of the traditional on-site work environment for all or part of the regular workweek.

(2) may be appropriate for some employees and some positions but telework is not an entitlement, nor is it an agency-wide benefit, and it may be discontinued at any time at the sole discretion of OKDHS leadership.

(3) may be used as a recruitment or retention tool when deemed appropriate for particular positions. OKDHS complies with all elements of that directive by encouraging its employees to telework whenever possible. OKDHS employees who are able to telework are expected to do so. They may work in the office no more than two days per week without special permission. Division directors may approve others to work in an office more or less than two days per week when circumstances may dictate; and

(4) is not a substitute for dependent care.

(b) **Definitions.** The following words and terms when used in this Section have the following meanings unless the context clearly indicates otherwise:

(1) **"Official duty station"** means the official designated workspace or OKDHS office where an employee is assigned to perform the duties and responsibilities of the position for which he or she is hired.

(2) **"Telework"** means work performed outside of the employee's assigned duty station. When teleworking, an employee's job duties, obligations, and responsibilities are the same as those for employees assigned to official duty stations.

(3) **"Telework duty station"** means the workspace, other than the official duty station, where an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of the position for which he or she is hired.

(c) **Telework criteria.**

(1) OKDHS evaluates the suitability of the telework arrangement for each position. Division directors and supervisors are responsible for determining which job functions may be accomplished through telework. Supervisors develop

performance measures and reporting metrics for each position that has been identified as suitable for telework.

(2) An employee and his or her direct supervisor shall agree upon an employee's employee's telework duty station and the conditions under which the employee will perform his or her duties while teleworking.

(3) If the employee is teleworking out of state for any length of time, Division division director approval is required. Such agreement also includes expectations when and under what circumstances an employee is expected to appear in person at his or her official duty station.

(4) Employees must have high-speed internet service at their telework duty station. The OKDHS-provided cell phone's hotspot satisfies this requirement for all but Adult and Family Services On-Demand employees, who require more internet bandwidth than is available via a hotspot.

(d) **Compensation and benefits.** Compensation and benefits accrue at the same rate whether an employee is teleworking or in an office.

(e) **Appearance Employee conduct and appearance during business meetings.** Employees are expected to conduct work in the same professional manner that is expected in an office environment. When teleworking, employees must ensure their dress, appearance, and behavior are appropriate for the circumstances. For example, business casual dress is expected when engaged in remote meetings or encounters with parties not associated with OKDHS.

(f) **Information security and confidentiality.**

(1) When an employee is obligated to conduct business in a public location, the employee must take steps to mitigate the risks of inadvertently disclosing confidential information to third parties. Such steps include restricting any other person's ability to view the employee's electronic devices or documents and not discussing confidential case specific information, including over any phone or other electronic device when individuals are capable of listening or intercepting the employee's communications. Any employee who anticipates conducting business in a public location must receive training that addresses information security and confidentiality. All internet-based use of an employee's work computer in a public location must be conducted utilizing the employee's VPN login credentials for heightened security purposes and not solely utilizing a public Wi-Fi network.

(2) Employees recertify their understanding of telework security and confidentiality protocols by completing the annual "Security and Email Encryption Guideline" online training found in the OKDHS Learning Management System.

(g) **Job-related illness or injuries while teleworking.** Teleworking employees must immediately report any illness or injury to supervisors, just as they would when working at an official duty station.

(h) **Equipment.** OKDHS provides each employee with a laptop computer and a cellular telephone, both of which support teleworking.

(1) Employees may use OKDHS-owned equipment only for legitimate OKDHS business-related purposes.

(2) The employee is responsible for using due diligence to protect OKDHS-owned equipment from theft, damage, or unauthorized use.

(i) **Employee travel.** When teleworking the employee's official OKDHS duty station is the location of origin in calculating mileage unless the telework duty station is more cost-effective in terms of either time or distance.

(j) **Discontinuation of Telework Arrangements.** OKDHS retains the right and sole discretion to discontinue the teleworking agreement with the employee at any time. OKDHS will make every effort to provide thirty-calendar days' notice of such change to the employee whenever possible. However, there may be instances where there is less notice, or no notice given. In the event an employee is failing to meet performance metrics, has had disciplinary issues within the past 12 months, or has received a rating of "does not achieve expected results" on his or her Performance Review, telework may be disapproved, suspended, or revoked. OKDHS retains the right and sole discretion to modify the teleworking arrangement in any manner in order to meet the business needs of the agency.

(k) **Telework reporting.** The Human Resource Management director has executive oversight of the OKDHS telework program.