

Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (MNPrairie) June 2018- Telecommuting Report

Executive summary

Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (MNPrairie) adopted an agency-wide telecommuting policy effective December 2015.

One-quarter of employees now telecommute.

Benefits of telecommuting being experienced include:

- Reduced growth in worksite and related overhead costs, including parking
- Improved productivity
- Dispersed workforce during severe weather events or related situations
- Retained experienced staff who would otherwise have resigned when they relocated
- Viewed as a progressive employer during employee recruitment
- Positive and engaged workforce
- Reduced absenteeism

MNPrairie uses telecommuting as an effective business strategy --not as a perk-- that is mutually beneficial to the employer and employee.

Some of the challenges of telecommuting include:

- Retaining relationships and connectedness among telecommuters and in-office staff
- Managing the impact of telecommuting on the workload of office support staff and others
- Accessing adequate internet connections in rural areas
- Telecommuting from outside local trade area as experienced employees have relocated
- Monitoring performance

The MNPrairie management team recommends continuing to use telecommuting as an effective business strategy –not as a perk—that is mutually beneficial to the employer and employee. With 24 percent of the agency’s workforce telecommuting, it must be treated as an integral way of conducting MNPrairie’s business. Accordingly, continued attention must be paid to effective support of successful telecommuting.

In addition, the telecommuting policy should be updated to reflect federal tax information handling requirements at the next review.

Minnesota Prairie County Alliance (MNPrairie) Policy & Procedure Statement

Policy No.	TBD
Title:	Telecommuting Policy
Effective date:	May 1, 2016
Personnel responsible:	Executive director, managers and supervisors
Personnel to whom applicable:	All employees

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Purpose of policy. In an effort to achieve the following benefits, MNPrairie sets forth a policy to define telecommuting, to guide decisions about appropriate telecommuting arrangements, and to clarify employee and MNPrairie responsibilities and obligations when a telecommuting agreement is in place.

Benefits of telecommuting can include the following:

- Improved employee recruitment and retention
- Improved employee morale and greater job satisfaction
- Reduced absenteeism
- Increased employee and work unit productivity
- Improved customer service through ability to focus on work
- Reduced travel time and costs
- Reduced worksite space and related overhead costs, including parking
- Improve disaster recovery and contingency strategy where dispersed workforce is advantageous

Legal references and authority. No legal constraints.

Definitions.

Telecommuting definition and scope. For the purposes of this policy, telecommuting is a voluntary arrangement, supported by a telecommuting agreement, between MNPrairie and the employee to conduct their work in a designated offsite workspace, most often the employee's home, on a regular basis.

Other arrangements whereby an employee works at a location other than their primary worksite (such as visiting clients or attending meetings or training off site) or an employee is authorized by a supervisor to work at home for the purposes of completing a brief project or other brief and time-limited arrangements, are not governed by this policy.

Telecommuting does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment.

Primary worksite definition. The MNPrairie office in Dodge, Steele, or Waseca counties that the employee would primarily work at if not telecommuting.

Telecommuting worksite definition. The designated offsite workspace in which the employee will regularly conduct their work.

MNPrairie property definition. Supplies, equipment, data or documents provided by MNPrairie or produced by a MNPrairie employee, client, or other party related to MNPrairie business.

Minimum criteria for consideration of telecommuting arrangement. The success of a telecommuting arrangement is dependent upon the characteristics of the job, the employee, the employee's home technology, and the supervisor all being well-suited for such an arrangement.

Job minimum requirements. To be considered for a telecommuting arrangement, the employee's job must consist of duties that can be fulfilled while telecommuting, including the following:

- Not require face-to-face contact with clients at a primary worksite.
- Not result in decreased internal or external customer service if conducted through telecommuting.
- Consist of duties that can be fulfilled while telecommuting.

Employee minimum requirements. To be considered for a telecommuting arrangement, the employee must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Be employed with MNPrairie for a minimum of 12 months of continuous employment. A rare exception to this requirement may be considered with approval by the executive director.
- Be in compliance with MNPrairie policies.
- Meet or exceed expectations of their job, informed in part by the employee's most recent performance review.

Technology minimum requirements. To be considered for a telecommuting arrangement, the employee's proposed telecommuting worksite technology must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Minimum internet connection speed of 5 Mb per second.
- Internet connection by DSL (digital subscriber line), cable or fiber. Except as provided below, wireless access through internet service providers (ISPs), including microwave or satellite solutions, do not meet this minimum requirement. For a social worker/case manager, wireless access through an ISP microwave solution may meet this minimum requirement unless the employee's supervisor determines at any time—in consultation with the MNPrairie Information Technology (IT) department—that the wireless access connection negatively impacts the employee's productivity.
- Proximity between the employee's router and the intended location of the MNPrairie docking station that enables a connection between the two via an Ethernet cable.

And the employee must meet the following minimum requirements:

- Have the ability to solve basic hardware and software problems.

- Have a clear understanding of their intended telecommuting worksite network set-up and how to connect MNPrairie equipment to it, including:
 - Location of their home router and how to connect to it directly (not through wi-fi)
 - Location of the Ethernet cable and the USB (universal serial bus) cable port and any other necessary ports, etc.
- Have read and acknowledged understanding of the remote access documents located in the *How-Tos* folder provided by the MNPrairie Information Technology (IT) department, specifically the guides on:
 - Connecting to the MNPrairie network using VPN (virtual private network)
 - Signing back into Outlook, Lync, and VPN after changing your password
- Have in place an approved [MNPrairie Remote Access User Security Agreement](#) at the time of the approval of the *Telecommuting Application and Agreement*.

Other telecommuting worksite minimum requirements. In addition, the telecommuter's worksite must be established in a manner that enables the employee to:

- Work uninterrupted.
- Secure MNPrairie property for use only for MNPrairie business.
- Secure non-public, protected, and sensitive data from sight and sound by other parties in compliance with federal and state requirements.

Additional factors considered. When ascertaining whether a telecommuting arrangement is likely to be successful, the following additional factors will be considered:

- The needs of the employee's work team and division
- Team responsibilities
- Employee's work skills, including organizational, time management, self-motivation, reliability, and ability to work independently.
- Impact of telecommuting on the work of other employees
 - MNPrairie acknowledges that telecommuters may require different in-office support (such as printing and mailing documents, checking and triaging physical mail). Such support may be made available but only as agreed to by the affected employee's supervisor and only to the degree that it is not less efficient for MNPrairie in the aggregate as a result of the telecommuting arrangement. It is important that explicit communication about such arrangements be made as part of establishing the telecommuting arrangement.
- Telecommuting worksite location, including the distance from the primary worksite, distance from the employee's clients, impact on ability to respond timely to client or work team needs, and impact on productivity
- Any other prevailing conditions identified by the supervisor after discussion with management

Seniority is not a factor in determining eligibility to telecommute.

Telecommuting agreement requirements. In addition to continuing to meet the minimum requirements for consideration of a telecommuting arrangement that are identified above, the following requirements apply as well:

- Policy compliance. The telecommuter must comply with all MNPrairie policies. Failure to comply may result in revocation of the telecommuting agreement and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.
- Dependent care. The telecommuter must manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a manner that would be appropriate if they were working at their primary worksite and in a manner that allows them to successfully meet job requirements. (i.e., Telecommuting is not an appropriate alternative to having dependent care in place.)
- Performance expectations. The telecommuter is expected to be at least as productive, if not more so, than an employee who regularly works at the primary worksite.
- Handling mail. The telecommuter is responsible for making arrangements to handle printing and mailing of their documents and checking and triaging their mail that arrives at their primary worksite in a manner that is timely, appropriate, and consistent with the preceding *additional factors considered* section on the *impact of telecommuting on the work of other employees*. [Telecommuter Mail- OSS sending instructions](#)
- Telecommuter work schedule. Telecommuting itself does not alter an employee's work schedule. Rather, any changes to a work scheduled are handled in accordance with the work schedule policy.
- Telecommuter availability. The telecommuter is expected to be available at their telecommuting worksite by phone, video-conference, and email during scheduled work hours unless conducting business elsewhere on behalf of MNPrairie as appropriate or unless on approved paid or unpaid leave.

The telecommuter is also expected to be at a primary worksite or other designated location as necessary to attend meetings, training sessions, and as designated by the supervisor, including being called in to work at a primary worksite in special circumstances as deemed necessary by the supervisor, manager, or executive director.

A limited number of telecommuting temporary work stations, known as landing pads, will be available at each of the three MNPrairie worksites for a telecommuter to work at for short durations.

- Equipment malfunction. In the event of an equipment malfunction or internet connectivity weakness, the telecommuter will notify their supervisor and the IT department immediately. If the malfunction or connectivity situation precludes the telecommuter from working on assigned work at their telecommuting worksite, the telecommuter will be assigned other work, and/or report to their primary worksite, or be assigned by their supervisor to another worksite pending the repair of equipment or resolution of the connectivity weakness. Repeated circumstances of equipment failure or connectivity weakness may be cause for review of continued suitability of the telecommuting arrangement.
- Weather emergencies or other extenuating circumstances. If loss of electrical power, heat, or other circumstances preclude the telecommuter from safely and effectively working at their telecommuting worksite, the employee shall consult with their supervisor immediately and report to their primary worksite unless other appropriate arrangements are made with their supervisor (including reporting to an alternative primary worksite or other approved location or taking PTO, vacation, or sick leave in accord with those policies) until the situation is remedied.

See [Emergency Closings policy](#) regarding continuation of operations during emergencies.

- Telecommuting worksite location, environment and safety. The telecommuter and the supervisor shall agree upon the location of the designated telecommuting worksite before the telecommuting agreement is executed. Subsequent changes to the location must be approved by the supervisor.

In determining the location of the telecommuting worksite, the telecommuter must consider data privacy and security requirements including both sight and sound aspects. The telecommuter's computer docking station must be hardwired to the employee's router to improve network reliability and speed to help assure maximum productivity.

The telecommuter is responsible for establishing and maintaining a safe work environment. The telecommuter shall review the [Workstation Guide](#) on ergonomics and apply the recommended office set-up.

MNPrairie will not be responsible for the provision of or costs associated with the telecommuting worksite, including utilities, internet connection, remodeling, furniture, lighting, repairs or modifications to workspace, etc.

To facilitate contact with MNPrairie in the event the telecommuter is incapacitated, the employee will post the name and telephone numbers of the following in a visible location in their telecommuting worksite: their supervisor, manager, and the front desk at their primary worksite.

The telecommuter (or their designee in the event of incapacitation) will provide access to their telecommuting worksite and MNPrairie property upon request.

The telecommuter may not conduct any client or customer meetings in their homes. Doing so will be cause for discontinuing the telecommuting.

- MNPrairie supplies, equipment, and property. MNPrairie will provide appropriate office supplies and equipment for the telecommuting employee as deemed necessary based on job-specific requirements, subject to change at any time. The array of equipment that may be made available is informed by the standard telecommuter equipment list in the MNP 1590 [Telecommuting Application and Agreement](#).

The telecommuter will use MNPrairie equipment and supplies for MNPrairie business only. Unauthorized use by other parties is strictly prohibited.

All inventory supplied will be documented on the *Telecommuting Inventory Receipt*, (appendix B of the Telecommuting Application and Agreement, linked above,) and signed by the telecommuter and supervisor upon receiving inventory.

The telecommuter will protect MNPrairie property from damage or theft. No smoking will be allowed in the vicinity of MNPrairie property. Food and beverages will be handled with care around MNPrairie property.

MNPrairie will maintain equipment provided by MNPrairie.

MNPrairie accepts no responsibility for maintenance, repairs, or damage to employee-owned supplies or equipment.

Upon termination of the telecommuting agreement or employment, the telecommuter will return all MNPrairie property in acceptable working condition to the organization via arrangements made with the supervisor not to exceed two calendar weeks. Failure to return MNPrairie property or returning property in damaged condition may result in the telecommuter being required to reimburse MNPrairie for the cost of repair or replacement of such.

- Other business-related expenses. With prior approval, MNPrairie may reimburse the employee for MNPrairie business-related expenses such as shipping costs, etc. that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities and the [Employee Expense Reimbursement Policy](#).

- Liability and taxes. MNPrairie accepts no liability for third party injuries or property damage occurring at the telecommuter worksite. MNPrairie encourages telecommuters to consult with their homeowner's or renter's insurance agent to protect themselves as they deem fit.

MNPrairie holds no responsibility to address tax implications or zoning constraints or other related legal concerns for the telecommuter's use of personal real estate for telecommuting. MNPrairie encourages telecommuters to consult with their own tax and legal experts accordingly to understand and address any such implications or constraints.

- No cash or checks at the telecommuter worksite. A telecommuter may not take cash or checks to their telecommuting worksite.
- Theft or criminal activity. Telecommuters are responsible for contacting their supervisor and for filing a police report with their local law enforcement in a timely manner in the event of any theft or criminal activity related to MNPrairie property.
- Injury. The employee is obligated to provide prompt notice of an injury while telecommuting in accordance with MNPrairie's Worker's Compensation procedures.
- Data privacy and security.

Meeting data practices requirements. The telecommuter is responsible for meeting all federal and state data practices requirements while transporting non-public, protected, or sensitive data and while working with such data at the telecommuting worksite. The telecommuter must take all necessary precautions to secure and prevent unauthorized access to MNPrairie data, supplies and equipment. Steps include, but are not limited to, locking file cabinets and desks, and regular password maintenance.

Transporting data. Transportation of non-public, protected, or sensitive data must be done in a locked bag. Such data is permanently stored at the primary worksite, with the only data that is transported limited to that which is necessary to conduct work assignments before returning to the primary worksite.

Destroying data. Destruction of any physical data must be done in accordance with data retention and destruction requirements and done at the primary worksite.

Compensation for telecommuter travel time.

1. *Commuting.* An employee shall not be compensated for time commuting between their primary worksite (Dodge, Steele, or Waseca MNPrairie office) and their telecommuting worksite.
2. *Other.* When an employee does not report to their primary worksite during the day or makes business calls before or after reporting to their primary worksite, the allowable compensated time shall be:
 - The lesser of the time from the employee's telecommuting worksite to the first stop or from their primary worksite to the first stop;
 - All time spent traveling between points visited on MNPrairie business during the day;
 - The lesser of time spent traveling from the last stop to the employee's telecommuting worksite or from the last stop to their primary worksite.

Compensation for mileage. Compensation for mileage shall be made in accordance with the [Employee Expense Reimbursement Policy](#).

Length of agreement and periodic review; termination.

Telecommuting trial period. Each new telecommuting agreement is subject to a trial period not to exceed 90 days.

Review during trial period. Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will minimally include interaction by phone and/or e-mail between the supervisor and the employee, and monthly in-person meetings to discuss work progress and challenges. During the trial period, the employee and supervisor will each evaluate the arrangement and its effectiveness, making recommendations for continuing, continuing with modifications, or terminating the telecommuting agreement. The employee's supervisor will document the evaluation using the [Telecommuter 90-Day Review](#) see Appendix A of [Telecommuter Application and Agreement](#) once the review has been completed, provide the employee a copy, and send the original to the Human Resources division for inclusion in the employee's personnel file.

Annual review of telecommuting agreement. Each telecommuting agreement will subsequently be evaluated annually at the time of the employee's regular performance review with continued suitability to be documented as part of the review. At this time, the employee's supervisor shall also consult MNPrairie's IT department concerning the employee's ability to meet of the minimum technology requirements including consideration of the employee's volume and type of IT help desk tickets.

This does not preclude more frequent review if the situation merits.

Termination of agreement during trial period. At any time during the trial period, the telecommuting agreement may be terminated by MNPrairie or the employee with a 24-hour notice.

Employee termination of telecommuting agreement. An employee may terminate their telecommuting agreement and return to a traditional work arrangement upon 30-days written notice to the supervisor and upon the availability of office space at the primary worksite –unless a shorter period is mutually agreed to.

The notice should include the date the employee intends to terminate the agreement and their reason for doing so.

Employer termination of telecommuting agreement. Telecommuting may be discontinued by MNPrairie. When practical, MNPrairie may provide a two-calendar-week advance notice of intent to terminate the agreement. Reasons for termination of the telecommuting agreement may include, but are not limited to:

- Non-compliance with the telecommuting agreement. This may result in immediate termination of the agreement.
- Declining performance or changes in organizational needs.
- Factors outside the control of MNPrairie, including but not limited to changes in caseload or program requirements.

Policy approval:

Author(s):	Management Team
Reviewed and Approved by:	
MNPrairie Management Team	03/15/2016
MNPrairie JPB Policy Committee	04/25/2016
MNPrairie Joint Powers Board	05/17/2016

- **Revision history:** 2015-xx [Adopted 12/22/2015.]



LEAPP* Tip Sheet

*League Empowerment and Performance Program

LEAPP is the League's work culture program. The basic idea of LEAPP is that as League employees, we all have results we are working towards achieving for our cities



and for our fellow co-workers. Those results are our primary focus. When and where our work is performed is something each of us can determine,

as long as we continue to meet our results. With that said, in a team environment, employees regularly check in with each other and with their supervisors to ensure adequate coverage prior to "unplugging" for a day or more. Your supervisor approves your results and is the primary person who determines whether you are meeting them. You and your supervisor will talk about your results often during your employment but especially during your annual performance evaluation.

What are the basic ground rules?

Yep, there are a few. Here are the most important ones:

Keep your calendar up to date. It's important your coworkers are able to schedule appointments with you. Also, the League is being flexible with you so please return the favor by being flexible about changing your personal commitments if someone is struggling to find a time that works for everyone and your calendar is the hold-up.

Tip: If you're going to be unavailable for four or more hours, update your calendar to reflect that.

Tip: If you're working offsite, show that time as "working elsewhere."

Be responsive. Stay up to date on your e-mails and voicemails. Return e-mails and calls on the same business day as much as possible but always within 24 hours.

Tip: It's perfectly fine to leave a voicemail or send an e-mail that says, "I don't have your answer yet but I'm working on it; I should have it by (Friday)."

Tip: An ideal voicemail message is one that tells the caller when they can expect a return phone call.

LEAPP is a privilege, not a right. Under the LEAPP program, you only need to take vacation when you are gone for more than one full day. This gives you a lot of flexibility! With great flexibility, comes great responsibility ... to meet your results and give the League your best effort on your job duties.

Tip: We expect and understand that employees will use the flexibility of LEAPP and sometimes that means less than a 40-hour work week, even for a non-exempt employee. If this occurs every week for an extended period of time, we might question whether there's a need for a full-time position

Tip: Non-Exempt employees who check their e-mail from home need to count that as "hours worked" and record it on their timesheet. That's the law.

LEAPP means you are treated like an adult – make your own decisions, spend your time the way that makes sense for your life. Just make sure you're giving back as much as you're getting.



LEAPP QUIZ

True or False	1. Everyone who works in a LEAPP has the ability to do their work from home?
True or False	2. Anybody who has to do their work at the League Building is not really in a LEAPP.
True or False	3. The League does not have core work hours because we are in a LEAPP.
True or False	4. One difference between LEAPP and a “flexible work environment” is that under LEAPP, you don’t need permission to work from home or take one day off?
True or False	5. LEAPP means we no longer need policies on taking leave, completing timesheets or paying overtime.

Answers:

- 1) **FALSE** – some people’s jobs are so closely tied to the building that it is impossible to do most – or even sometimes any -- of their work from home.
- 2) **FALSE** – being in a LEAPP is about focusing on results, not about where your work gets performed.
- 3) **TRU-ISH** (trick question) under LEAPP, there are no longer any core hours (hours during which all employees need to be present in the building), BUT we still have business hours of 8-5, Monday through Friday. Most employees do need to be here during business hours, at least some of the time, to meet their results.
- 4) **TRUE**, but you are still accountable for meeting your results. You decide when to do the work, but you must plan ahead to have what you need at home. In a team environment, employees regularly check in with each other and supervisors to ensure adequate coverage for office needs prior to being “unplugged” for a full day. If you’re constantly asking co-workers to help you with things because they are at the office and you’re not, you are not going to make a lot of friends.
- 5) **FALSE**. Paid leave is still available so we still need policies, and we still have to complete timesheets, especially non-exempt employees. We have to comply with the Fair Labor Standards Act.

TOOL: SAMPLE ALTERNATIVE WORK ARRANGEMENTS PERSONNEL POLICIES

Alternative Work Arrangement policies can prove to be strategic tools when implemented effectively. They can have a strong, positive impact on employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention. However, not everything in this sample policy will work for every city. Each city should evaluate which of the following Alternative Work Arrangements would benefit its employees as well as help manage the needs of the City effectively.

Alternative Work Arrangements Policies¹

[City name] is committed to helping employees face the demands of juggling work, family and life related issues by offering a number of possible Alternative Work Arrangements. This provides City employees with increased flexibility with their work schedule while allowing the City to maintain a progressive and productive work environment. Alternative Work Arrangements are an opportunity to maintain employee productivity through various forms of creative work arrangements.

Alternative Work Arrangements are voluntary work alternatives that may be appropriate for some employees and some jobs. It is not a guarantee, nor a City-wide benefit; and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the City. The availability of Alternative Work Arrangements for employees of the City can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of the City. The City will provide advance notice of such a change as agreed to in the Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement in order to accommodate commuting, child care, or other problems that may arise from such a change. There may be instances, however, where no notice is possible.

All City employees will be considered for Alternative Work Arrangements on a case-by-case basis, where creative work arrangements have been shown to accomplish both work and personal goals, and to meet the criteria and guidelines set forth below.

When making the decision to approve an Alternative Work Arrangement, supervisors and the City Administrator will consider factors such as:

- Department coverage
- Impact on external customers
- Impact on internal customers, including co-workers and employees of other departments
- Safety issues
- Supervision issues
- The employee's performance

Guidelines for establishing an Alternative Work Arrangement include:

- The Alternative Work Arrangement must be set in advance, and approved by the supervisor and the City Administrator.
- There must be adequate department coverage during all standard hours.

- There must be no adverse impact on internal or external customers.
- Internal and external customers must be informed of the schedule, and given direction on whom to contact in the employee's absence.
- The schedule must not result in additional overtime for the employee or co-workers.
- The employee will receive no more than eight hours of holiday pay for each city holiday.
- The supervisor or City Administrator may end the Alternative Work Arrangement at any time, with adequate notice to the employee.

Alternative work arrangements available through the City of [City name] include:

- Flexibility in the Scheduling of Hours,
- Flexibility in the Place of Work, and
- Flexibility in the Number of Hours Worked

Employees interested in one of these options must follow the prescribed approval process. Alternative Work Arrangements may vary depending on the position and department. Supervisors are responsible for determining the work schedules within their departments subject to the approval of the City Administrator. Because the primary focus is serving the needs of the customers, it is important to realize Alternative Work Arrangements may not be possible for many positions.

An Alternative Work Arrangement Agreement is included in this policy as Appendix A. It is to be completed and signed by _____ [the City Administrator] and the employee prior to beginning the Alternative Work Arrangement. The agreement should outline the specific details of the Alternative Work Arrangement, who is responsible for covering any costs incurred as a result of the Alternative Work Arrangement, any specific insurance requirements, performance expectations, and so forth. With the exception of part-time, reduced hours or job sharing (where salary and benefits may be pro-rated), Alternative Work Arrangements typically do not impact an employee's salary, benefits, and career progression.

Core Hours Policy

- The core hours all employees (exempt and non-exempt) are expected to work are _____ [enter your city's core hours here: for example, 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., Monday through Friday or 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday, etc.]. Police, fire, and public works employees do not have core hours and work the schedules established by their supervisors.

Alternative Work Arrangements may take the following forms:

Flexibility in the Scheduling of Hours

The City considers flexibility in the scheduling of work hours to be a viable work arrangement in cases where the job duties and the workstyles of both the employee and the supervisor are compatible with an arrangement. Flexible schedules allow an employee to structure the hours they work to help balance personal obligations with work.

Flexitime: Employees work eight hours per day adjusting their hours on an agreed upon schedule.

Compressed Work Week: Employees work 40 hours per week but choose to work the hours in fewer than five days. Some cities choose to offer this type of Alternative Work Arrangement as a Summer Hour Policy?

Eligibility for Flexibility in the Scheduling of Hours

Individuals requesting formal flexibility in the scheduling of work hours must be employed with the City for a minimum of _____ [enter what your city is willing to accommodate or consider making this available immediately upon hire] months of continuous, regular employment and exhibit above average performance, in accordance with the city's performance appraisal process.

Notice Requirements

The written request for flexibility in the scheduling of hours must be submitted in advance to the employee's _____ [supervisor and the department director]. The employee's _____ [supervisor and department director] shall review and submit his or her recommendation to the _____ [City Administrator] for review and recommendation to the _____ [City Council] for final consideration. A denial of the request at any stage of the review process will be final, with no further review.

Any flexible work schedule arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the employee or the City.

Performance Expectations

Evaluation of employee performance during the trial period will include weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period the employee and supervisor will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications.

Work Hours

The employee and supervisor will agree on the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication.

Employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the City. Employees working a flexible schedule will be held to a higher standard of compliance than other office-based employees due to the nature of the work arrangement. Hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, will require the advance approval of the supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the flexible work schedule agreement.

Flexibility in the Place of Work (Telecommuting)

The City considers telecommuting to be a viable work arrangement in cases where individual, job, and supervisor characteristics are best suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows an employee to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of the workweek.

Eligibility for Flexibility in the Place of Work

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with the City for a minimum of _____ [enter what your city is willing to accommodate or consider making this available immediately upon hire] months of continuous, regular employment and exhibit above average performance, in accordance with the city's performance appraisal process.

Notice Requirements

The written request for telecommuting arrangements must be submitted in advance to the employee's _____ [supervisor and the department director]. The employee's _____ [supervisor and department director] shall review and submit his or her recommendation to the City Administrator for review and recommendation to the City Council for final consideration. A denial of the request at any stage of the review process will be final, with no further review.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the City.

Performance Expectations

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include daily interaction by phone and email between the employee and the supervisor, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period the employee and supervisor will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency, but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than time-based performance.

Work Hours

The employee and supervisor will agree on the number of days of telecommuting will be allowed each week, the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. The employee agrees to be accessible by phone or email within a reasonable time period during the agreed upon work schedule.

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the City. Telecommuting employees will be held to a higher standard of compliance than office-based employees due to the nature of the work arrangement. Hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, will require the advance approval of the

supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the telecommuting agreement.

Work Environment

For employees working remotely from home on a routine basis, the employee must establish an appropriate work environment to avoid problems associated with safety or poor ergonomics. The City will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of the employee's home office such as remodeling, furniture, lighting, repairs, or modifications to the home office space. Employees will be offered appropriate assistance in setting up a work station designed for safe, comfortable work.

The City will supply the employee with the appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) for successful completion of job responsibilities. The organization will also reimburse the employee for all other business-related expenses such as phone calls, shipping cost, etc. reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities.

The City's normal policies and procedures regarding computer use, data practices and security continue to apply to employees working remotely. Employees should ask their supervisors if they have any questions about whether or how a particular city policy applies to a remote work environment.

Flexibility in the Number of Hours Worked

The City considers a reduction in the total number of hours worked for a period of time during an employee's tenure to be a viable option for balancing the needs of work with personal and family needs. There are a number of practices that reduce the number of hours worked in a given week and those that allow employees to take leaves of absence (paid or unpaid).

Reduction in Hours Worked: The employee reduces the number of hours worked per week for a defined period of time.

Job Share: Job sharing is a form of part-time employment in which one position is filled with two or more part-time employees. Job sharing has added benefits for City management. At the City's discretion and within available resources, each job sharer can work up to _____ [enter the number of hours your city is willing to consider; for example, two job sharers at a maximum of 20 hours each is the equivalent of a fulltime employee]. Job-sharing, as an Alternative Work Arrangement, must ensure the continuity and coordination of the work being done between the two individuals sharing the job. This requires the employees to work as a team to accomplish one full-time position's duties. Cities also benefit from having the special skills and abilities of two unique individuals.

- Both employees must be on the same salary grade although they can be on different steps.
- The hours of work can be shared in a number of ways, the most popular being 2.5 days each or 3 days and 2 days. This should be negotiated with the individuals concerned and the City Administrator, and any agreement must meet the operational needs of the Department. It is

essential, where possible, to have a short period of overlap to ease communication and ensure continuity.

- A trial period of six months is incorporated into a job share contract of employment to ensure the arrangement meets the needs of all concerned.
- Personal time off and paid holidays should be aggregated and allocated on a pro rata basis, e.g. if each employee is covering half the hours, then the paid leave would be split 50-50. If one employee is working 60% of the hours, he or she would receive 60% of the paid time off and the other employee would receive 40%.

Move from Regular Full-time to Regular Part-time (and back again): Allows employees to change their employment status from Regular Full-time to Regular Part-time and back again during a defined period of time. This strategy allows the City to retain an employee who may have had to choose to leave City employment for a variety of reasons.

Leave of Absence (FMLA Policy): Allows employees to take an unpaid leave of absence of up to 12 weeks. The FMLA can be used for the birth and care for a newborn or adopted child, care for an immediate family member with a serious health condition, medical leave for the employee herself, or in circumstances relating to an immediate family member's being called onto active duty as a member of the National Guard or Reserves. (See the City of _____ FMLA Policy for more details.)

Phased Retirement (working reduced hours): Allows employees to transition into retirement over a period of time while at the same time providing consistency to the City. This Alternative Work Arrangement can be an essential strategy for knowledge transfer between employees. Careful review of benefits policies including the long term impact it may have on pension benefits should be part of an employment agreement disclosed. (Also see information on the PERA website at mnpera.org; search for Phased Retirement Option)

Eligibility for Flexibility in the Number of Hours worked

Individuals requesting formal reduction in the number of work hours must be employed with the City for a minimum of _____ [enter what your city is willing to accommodate or consider making this available immediately upon hire] months of continuous, regular employment and exhibit above average performance, in accordance with the city's performance appraisal process.

Notice Requirements

The written request for reduction in the number of hours must be submitted in advance to the employee's _____ [supervisor and the department director]. The employee's _____ [supervisor and department director] shall review and submit his or her recommendation to the City Administrator for review and recommendation to the City Council for final consideration. A denial of the request at any stage of the review process will be final, with no further review.

Any reduction in the number of hours worked made will be on a trial basis for the first three months, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the employee or the City.

Performance Expectations

Evaluation of employee performance during the trial period will include weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems and clear discussion of work priorities and goals. At the conclusion of the trial period the employee and supervisor will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications.

Work Hours

The employee and supervisor will agree on the reduced work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication.

Employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by the City. Employees working a reduced work schedule will be held to a higher standard of compliance than other employees due to the nature of the work arrangement. Hours worked in excess of 40 hours per week, will require the advance approval of the supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the reduced work schedule agreement.

Benefit Eligibility

Written documentation of the impact the reduction in hours worked has with regard to employee group insurance, paid time off, vacation accrual, and retirement benefits should be clearly documented in a signed agreement. (For members of unions, the collective bargaining agreement language will apply.)

Summer Hours Policy¹

The operating hours of the City are _____ [for example, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.]. Flexible work schedules may be permitted during the summer months, starting the following week in which Memorial Day is observed and ending the week prior to when Labor Day is observed.

The summer flextime schedule at the City is a work schedule that allows employees to work extra time on an alternating workweek basis Monday through Thursday in order to leave at 12 p.m. on Friday. The time of arrival and departure may not differ from the standard operating hours by more than two hours, except for the Friday early departure. For example, a typical summer flextime arrangement is Monday through Thursday arriving at 8 a.m. and departing at 5:30 p.m. and on Friday arriving at 8 a.m. and departing at 12 p.m.

Full-time employees receive eight hours of pay for each city holiday. If a holiday falls in a week in which the employee is working a summer flextime schedule, the employee can work additional hours, or use personal time off (PTO) to make up the difference if needed.

Not all departments may be eligible for summer hours. When making the decision, the City will consider factors such as:

- Department coverage
- Impact on external customers
- Impact on internal customers, including co-workers and employees of other departments
- Safety issues
- Supervision issues
- The employee's performance

A summer flextime arrangement may be suspended or cancelled at any time.

Personal Time Off Policy

The City believes employees are the key to our success. While work makes up a large portion of an employee's life, we believe a balance between work and play is essential in maintaining quality performance and a fun atmosphere in which we work. To help foster this idea, the City has designed a new vacation and sick policy incorporating both policies into one—a personal time off (PTO) plan. This new plan will be applicable to all full-time employees hired after _____ [insert effective date for your city, if applicable].

All full-time employees will accrue PTO hours according to the following table:

<u>Years of Service</u>	<u>Hours per Pay Period</u>	<u>Days per Year</u>
0 – 2 years	3.07 hours	10 days
3 – 5 years	4.61 hours	15 days
6 – 10 years	6.15 hours	20 days
11+ years	7.69 hours	25 days

For purposes of this policy, the year is interpreted to start on an employee's date of hire.

PTO is designed to give employees time needed away from their everyday work schedule. The City values its employees and recognizes the need for time off for their family and home life. In accordance with this belief, a maximum of 40 hours of accrued and unused PTO time may be carried over from one calendar year to the next.

In addition to normal vacation time, PTO is designed for reasonable personal sickness, family sickness, family activities, and extra holiday time. We realize family emergencies may arise from time to time, but when possible, we request that employees pre-schedule all personal leave time to avoid staffing issues. All vacation time must be pre-scheduled and pre-approved by the employee's supervisor, but may be taken in hourly increments. Approval for all scheduled time away is subject to applicable workloads.

Career/Education Leave Policy

The City recognizes an employee's need for time off to seek educational advancement opportunities can serve to enhance an employee's present position performance or future promotional opportunities within the City.

Eligibility

A full-time employee who has been employed continuously with the City for a minimum of five years and additionally, if employed longer than five years, has not been granted a similar leave within the previous seven years of employment, is eligible for a period of time off without pay.

The reason for requesting such a leave must be substantiated in detail by the employee in writing, and must be related to the exploration of a potential career change or for educational advancement opportunities that serve to enhance an employee's present position performance or future promotional opportunities within the City.

Length of Leave

An employee may request a period of time off without pay for a period of not less than three months and no more than six months, under this policy.

Notice Requirements

The written request for leave must be submitted in advance to the employee's supervisor and the department director. The employee's _____ [supervisor and/or department director] shall review and submit his or her recommendation to the City Administrator for review and recommendation to the City Council for final consideration. A denial of the request at any stage of the review process will be final, with no further review.

Consideration for Approval

The City shall grant or deny such leave at its discretion upon review of the circumstances of the request and consideration of the following:

- The ability of the City to function without the services of the employee for the extended period, and the cost of temporary replacement of the employee, if necessary or even feasible, depending upon the nature of the employee's job.
- The employee's length of service and attendance record.
- The employee's job performance.
- The benefit of such leave to the City as well as to the employee.
- No such leave will be granted to an employee who has been employed full-time with the City for less than five years or who has had such leave within the previous seven years.

Job Protection

In general, an employee returning from an authorized leave shall be reinstated to his or her former position or a position equivalent in pay, benefits, and other terms and

conditions of employment, which the employee was receiving prior to the commencement of the leave.

An employee must return to work the first day following the end of the leave and must notify the City at least one month prior to that date of his or her intention to return. If the employee does not return to work on the date specified, he or she shall be considered to have voluntarily terminated employment with the City.

The City may cancel a leave of absence at any time the employee utilizes the leave for purposes other than stated at the time the leave was granted.

Insurance Benefits

An employee is responsible for the full premium costs, plus COBRA fees, to maintain applicable insurance benefits during the entire duration of this unpaid leave.

Pension Benefits

An employee is responsible for both the employee and the employer contributions, plus interest, to maintain service and pension credit during the entire duration of the unpaid leave. Search the PERA website at mnpera.org; type “furlough” into the search box for more information.

Leave Time Benefits

An employee shall not accrue any leave time benefits for the duration of the unpaid leave, and holidays shall not be paid during the leave. All accumulated benefits (including seniority) at the time the leave is granted, would be frozen until such time the employee returns to work.

Salary Review

The employee’s salary review date will be extended by the entire length of this unpaid leave, and the new anniversary date established shall be the date used for any future salary reviews.

ⁱ While typically it is the employee who initiates an alternative work arrangement, there may be situations in which the employer/city initiates alternative work arrangements to meet operational or workload requirements. The City should proceed cautiously with initiating alternative work arrangements with individual employees; we suggest the city consult with the city attorney in this situation

ⁱⁱ This section may not be needed if the City is offering alternative work arrangements year-round but it is provided here as another option for a City to consider.