

Buffalo & Erie County Public Library
Personnel Policies and Procedures Manual

SUBJECT: Telecommuting Policy (Compensation for Work from Home)

CHAPTER: V

SECTION: 9

EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/94

REVISION DATE: 7/06, 4/07, Modified for the B&ECPL effective 1/1/15, 10/21/20

This policy is for application to those libraries within the City of Buffalo (Central Library and Buffalo Branch Libraries) and Buffalo & Erie County Public Library System functions.

I. STATEMENT OF POLICY

The Buffalo & Erie County Public Library (B&ECPL) considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. For the purposes of this policy, telecommuting is defined as a remote-access arrangement wherein employees will be compensated for work completed outside their regularly assigned work location for at least part of the workweek on a regular basis, or on a temporary basis as the result of extenuating circumstances.

The B&ECPL recognizes that not every job is suited for telecommuting; many jobs within the B&ECPL are not suitable because the B&ECPL is a public service organization, and providing service to patrons within library buildings is core to the B&ECPL's mission. Further, telecommuting is a privilege, which may be granted under appropriate circumstances to eligible employees, and is not a universal employee benefit. This privilege will be granted in a non-discriminatory manner with consideration given to all the factors set forth within this Policy.

II. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Only full-time and regular-part-time (RPT) employees, or part-time employees where practicable, who have been in their positions for at least 6 months may apply for participation in a telecommuting arrangement, unless otherwise negotiated as part of a collective bargaining agreement or benefit plan, or as the result of extenuating circumstances requiring a telecommuting arrangement.
- B. Employees must have and maintain a satisfactory performance record, including a demonstrated ability to work well with minimal supervision, a thorough knowledge of their job tasks and operations, a history of reliable and responsible accomplishment of work duties, and a record of effective communication with supervisors, coworkers, support staff and patrons.
- C. Any record of disciplinary action for conduct within the last 2 years may be grounds for ineligibility.
- D. Telecommuting is not available for long-distance or out-of-state work. Employees are expected to abide by any residency requirements of their position, and be able to report to their regularly assigned work location as needed.

III. GUIDELINES

- A. The approval of a telecommuting arrangement is made based on the ability of a department/library to maintain full operations, services, and commitments. Telecommuting may not be appropriate for all job titles or for all positions within a job title.
- B. In all cases, telecommuting schedules are subject to Department Head, Administration, and Human Resources approval.
- C. Requests for a telecommuting arrangement as an accommodation must be made in accordance with the B&ECPL Personnel Policy and Procedures Manual, Chapter VII, Section 3 Reasonable Accommodations.

- D. Telecommuting employees must be accessible, within reason, via telephone and email during their agreed working hours.

- E. Employees must abide by all B&ECPL Personnel Policies and Procedures while telecommuting, including but not limited to those contained in Section V, Hours of Work and Break Periods and Section VII, Types of Leave.
 - 1. Failure to abide by B&ECPL policies will result in disciplinary action.

 - 2. Abuse of telecommuting arrangements may result in termination of the agreement.

- F. The employee is responsible for providing space, telephone, printing, networking and/or Internet capabilities and security at the telecommuting work location, and shall not be reimbursed by the B&ECPL for these or related expenses.
 - 1. Expenses incurred in the implementation and execution of remote work arrangements require the approval of the Department Head.

 - 2. Standard office supplies (such as paper and pens) will be provided by the County and should be obtained by the employee at their regularly assigned work location.

 - 3. Out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available at the regularly assigned work location will not be reimbursed.

- G. The B&ECPL is not required to provide equipment for the telecommuting work location. However, with proper approval, the employee may be provided with B&ECPL-owned equipment necessary to perform work assignments.
 - 1. Employees provided with equipment must use all security controls and safeguards at all times.

 - 2. Employees working at telecommuting work locations are expected to abide by the B&ECPL Information Technology Security Policy Manual,

including but not limited to Section 7, Virtual Private Network (VPN) Policy, and the B&ECPL Computers, Communications, and Related Technology Policy (Chapter X, Section 1).

3. Employee access to the B&ECPL network shall be limited to B&ECPL-owned equipment to ensure network security.
 - a. When access to network is required to complete functions of the job, a B&ECPL-owned laptop will be provided.
 - b. Employees who have telecommuting arrangements shall not allow anyone, except B&ECPL employees, to use or access B&ECPL-provided equipment (including hardware, software, and storage devices) and services.
 4. All B&ECPL-provided equipment must be returned promptly upon termination of the telecommuting arrangement.
 5. Files and documents must be protected from unauthorized disclosure or damage and returned safely to the regularly assigned work location immediately upon request.
 6. B&ECPL information stored on an employee's personal computer is subject to public disclosure requirements.
- H. In agreeing to a remote work arrangement, the employee is confirming that their telecommuting work location is a safe and appropriate work space, which is free of safety and fire hazards.
1. Employees must not use their telecommuting work locations to receive work-related visitors or host work-related meetings or events, with the exception of meetings or events conducted virtually.
 2. The B&ECPL will not be held responsible for any and all claims, excluding worker's compensation claims, which result from working at the telecommuting work location.

- a. In the event of a job-related incident, accident or injury during working hours, the employee shall report the incident to their supervisor and Human Resources within 24 hours and follow established procedures to report and investigate workplace incidents, accidents, or injuries.
 - b. The employee must allow inspections of the employee's work area(s), home office, or other relevant location(s) to be conducted by the B&ECPL or its agent if a job-related incident, accident, or injury has occurred.
- I. Telecommuting arrangements shall not be used as a substitute for dependent child care, unless preauthorized by Human Resources due to extenuating circumstances. Employees who work remotely are expected to make dependent or child care arrangements during the period they will be working.
 - J. Telecommuting is not intended to enable employees to conduct personal or non-B&ECPL business while on B&ECPL time.
 - K. An employee's participation in a telecommuting plan is entirely voluntary.
 - L. Either the employee or their supervisor may terminate the telecommuting arrangement at any time.

IV. PROCEDURES

- A. If the employee and job are deemed suitable for a remote work arrangement, the employee and supervisor must complete a Telecommuting Agreement specifying the terms, conditions, and rationale for the remote work. The Agreement is subject to approval by the Department Head and Administration.
- B. The original agreement must be forwarded to Human Resources for approval. Once approved, the original agreement will be kept in the employee's personnel file. The employee and supervisor should maintain copies for their own records.

- C. The employee and supervisor must agree upon use of any B&ECPL-owned equipment to be used in the telecommuting arrangement.
- D. The Information Technology Department must be advised of the arrangements as they relate to use of B&ECPL-owned or personal equipment.
- E. A Telecommuting Work Plan must be included as part of the Telecommuting Agreement. The Telecommuting Work Plan must include at a minimum the following:
 - 1. Specific description of the duties to be performed;
 - 2. Established workdays and work hours;
 - 3. Explanation as to how supervision will be provided; and
 - 4. Explanation as to how work products and outputs will be reviewed, monitored and measured.
- F. Human Resources and Administration must be notified in writing of any modification to or cancellation of any Telecommuting Agreement.