



# The County's new **TELEWORK POLICY** will serve both constituents and employees **TODAY** and into the **FUTURE**

While the COVID-19 pandemic presented significant challenges and risks to our community, it also presented opportunities to reevaluate the way we work at Milwaukee County. In 2020 and beyond, employees from a diverse set of departments, skillsets and tenure have proven the effectiveness and efficiency of telework. It is this track record of success that has been the launch point for a new telework policy for Milwaukee County's workforce.

## THE COUNTY'S NEW TELEWORK POLICY



**Empowers departments** and managers to determine the best way to utilize telework to support operational and service goals



**Bolsters** employee recruitment and retention efforts

**Encourages** flexibility and work-life balance



**Emphasizes** employee performance, outputs and expectations (regardless of work location)



**Breaks down barriers** some individuals have to working for the County including access to reliable transportation

**Emphasizes equity** by seeking to meet employee needs where possible through workplace flexibility



**Promotes cost-saving** through space consolidation



## WHAT'S NEXT

**July/August:** Telework eligibility will be determined and communicated to individual employees by Department Directors and Managers.

**September:** Implementation of agreed-upon working arrangements will begin.

# Frequently Asked Questions

## **Q: What is Milwaukee County's telework policy?**

**A:** Effective Fall 2021, suitable Milwaukee County positions, as determined by department leads, will be eligible to telework as outlined in the July 2021 telework policy. The Milwaukee County Telework Policy provides broad flexibility for departments and offices to make telework decisions based on operational and employee needs.

## **Q: Why is Milwaukee County implementing a new telework policy?**

**A:** For many County employees, the COVID-19 pandemic meant a shift in how and where day-to-day work was completed, with many spending the majority of 2020 teleworking. Employees from a diverse set of departments, skillsets and tenure have proven the effectiveness and efficiency of telework. It is this track record of success, along with new ways to recruit and retain top talent, and the opportunity to break down key barriers to employment (such as transportation) that were the key drivers of the County's new telework policy.

## **Q: Who qualifies for telework?**

**A:** Telework eligibility will be determined and communicated to individual employees by Department Directors and Managers, with implementation of agreed-upon working arrangements to occur by September 2021. Suitability for telework will be based on operational needs and the duties and responsibilities of the position as outlined in the job or position description. Department Directors will use the Telework Decision Making Guide to help determine eligibility.

## **Q: Is telework optional or mandatory?**

**A:** Employees who are in telework-eligible positions but prefer to work in the office may make a request to their manager to work in a Central Workplace. Approval to work in the office may be based on operational needs and/or the number of employees scheduled to work in the office at any time. For open positions, a department may establish telework as a condition of employment, based on position needs. In such cases, this requirement should be included when the position is advertised and in correspondence offering employment.

## **Q: Will the county pay for my home office?**

**A:** Telework employees are responsible for establishing and maintaining a designated, adequate work space at their Alternate Work Location. Telework employees will be issued a single computing device or appropriate device to perform their work. Other equipment will be handled on a case-by-case basis. For more details on telework expenses and provisions, please refer to page 6 of the telework policy.

## **Q: What if my internet isn't strong enough?**

**A:** Telework employees are responsible for ensuring they have the internet access needed to perform their work duties. Internet reliability is a consideration of telework suitability. Any challenges with internet access should be discussed with the employees' manager.

# Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: Will I have to uphold different standards or performance measures as a telework employee?**

**A:** Just as they would for employees working in a Central Workplace, managers are responsible for determining a consistent and appropriate means of evaluating telework employees' overall work performance and/or tasks completed to maintain employee accountability. Telework employees and those working in a Central Workplace will be held to the same expectations and time tracking with respect to their position and responsibilities.

**Q: What about security risks / sensitive information?**

**A:** Telework employees must agree to abide by Milwaukee County's policies, procedures and directives covering Acceptable Use, information security, and data privacy as well as the requirements of applicable state and federal government statutes.

**Q: Are there mandatory hours for employees who work from home?**

**A:** Telework employees must be available to their colleagues during core work hours, as arranged and agreed upon with their supervisor.

**Q: How will you address team culture?**

**A:** Team culture is a priority for Milwaukee County leadership. Department leaders and team managers will be working to develop culture and team building opportunities that take into account the new telework policy and provide new ways to build relationships.

**Q: What about policies for snow days, mileage and other procedures that don't currently address employees that are teleworking?**

**A:** The Telework Policy references, but does not duplicate existing AMOPs (i.e. Snow Day Policy). Departments are asked to review existing AMOPs that are under their purview and make plans to revise the necessary procedures.