Mannsville Free Library Telecommuting Policy and Procedure
Date of Adoption/Amendment: June 9, 2020
Reviewed: Every 5 years or as needed

Telecommuting

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. MFL considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the job are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and jobs but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not a companywide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment.

Telecommuting can be informal, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule of working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for the first three months and may be discontinued at will and at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such change to accommodate commuting, child care, and other issues that may arise from the termination of a telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Eligibility

Only exempt (i.e., not subject to the overtime provisions of the Fair Labor Standards Act) employees are eligible to be considered for regular, occasional and emergency telecommuting. Non-exempt employees are eligible for occasional and emergency telecommuting where their function is absolutely necessary for the department to continue critical functions, operations, and services. Eligibility may also be adjusted for a staff member who has a disability and needs to work from home.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the director or business office manager, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, reviewing the following areas:

- **Employee suitability**. The employee and manager will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
- **Job responsibilities**. The employee and manager will discuss the job responsibilities and determine if the job is appropriate for a telecommuting arrangement.

- **Equipment needs, workspace design considerations and scheduling issues.** The employee and manager will review the physical workspace needs and the appropriate location for the telework.
- **Tax and other legal implications.** The employee must determine any tax or legal implications under IRS, state and local government laws, and/or restrictions of working out of a home-based office. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.
- **Additional considerations.**
    - Do key duties require ongoing access to equipment, materials, and files that can only be accessed on MFL property?
    - Do key duties require extensive face-to-face contact with supervisors, other employees, or member library staff on MFL property?
    - Do security issues require the key duties to be conducted on MFL property?

If the employee and manager agree, and the executive director concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a three-month trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the manager, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each evaluate 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 on time-based performance.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.

Regular, Occasional, and Emergency Telecommuting

There are three types of telecommuting: regular, occasional, and emergency.

Regular Telecommuting - the employee will have an established, predictable schedule. For example: Tuesdays and Thursdays, or every other Wednesday. Another form of regular telecommuting could be for an entire workweek(s) but only for a limited period of time. In any case, the regular telecommuting days and the duration of the telecommuting arrangement, if for a limited period of time, are identified and agreed to at the outset and are specified in the

Telecommuting Agreement. They may be changed upon agreement between the employee and the department. Employees may be required to be available during core business hours to enhance communications and member library support.

Occasional Telecommuting - is characterized by situations when an employee will telecommute sporadically, generally on an as-needed basis. Examples of occasional telecommuting are instances when an employee might not have transportation to work or times of extremely inclement weather. Because occasional telecommuting will only occur once in a while, departments should keep that in mind when evaluating the employee's and the position's suitability. To handle an occasional telecommuting scenario, the department and employee can establish the parameters of the telecommuting arrangement in advance, such as identifying the telecommuting location and specifying how often the employee is expected to check email and return phone calls on telecommuting days.

Emergency Telecommuting - is a one-time-only arrangement whereby, during a crisis or emergency situation at MFL, the employee telecommutes because his or her job responsibilities must still be fulfilled to provide for continuity of operations. Examples of a crisis or emergency situation are a pandemic, natural disaster, weather emergency, or other situation that presents a significant overall threat to MFL staff and facilities. Telecommuting is a means of providing for fulfillment of important functions.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, MFL will determine, with information supplied by the employee and the supervisor, the appropriate equipment needs (including hardware, software, modems, phone and data lines and other office equipment) for each telecommuting arrangement. The business office and IT departments will serve as resources in this matter.

Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. Equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization, will be maintained by the employee. MFL accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. MFL reserves the right to make determinations as to appropriate equipment, subject to change at any time. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory of all MFL property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all company property will be returned to the company, unless other arrangements have been made.

MFL will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. MFL may reimburse the employee for other business expenses (mailing letters or packages, etc) with preapproval from the MFL business office. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. MFL will not be

responsible for costs associated with the setup of the employee's home office, such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

Security

Consistent with the organization's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of organizational, member library and patron information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, locking their workstation when not in use and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.

Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. MFL will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least twice per year. Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties are normally covered by the company's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the employer of such injuries as soon as practicable. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite.

Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate child care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering a trial period.

Time Worked

Telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to accurately record all hours worked using MFL's time-keeping system. Hours worked in excess of those scheduled per day and per workweek require the advance approval of the telecommuter's supervisor. Failure to comply with this requirement may result in the immediate termination of the telecommuting agreement.

Ad Hoc Arrangements

Temporary telecommuting arrangements may be approved for circumstances such as inclement weather, special projects or business travel. These arrangements are approved on an as-needed basis only, with no expectation of ongoing continuance.

Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave to the extent practical for the employee and the organization and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate.

All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.

Procedure

Complete the following forms and submit a copy to your supervisor:

1. Fill out and sign the MFL Telecommuting Application Form
2. Complete the Telecommuting Self-Assessment
3. Complete the Safety Checklist

Your supervisor will set up a time to meet with you and review these materials to determine if telecommuting would be appropriate. If so, your application will move to the administrative level to determine the level of support (equipment, etc.) you will need and a final determination will be made.

MFL Telecommuting Application Form

Applicant Name _____ Title _____

Department _____ Supervisor _____

Number of days week/month I would like to telecommute:

Anticipated duration of telecommuting agreement:

Location I anticipate working from:

Please describe how you think your job responsibilities are suited for telecommuting:

TELECOMMUTING APPLICANT

I have discussed telecommuting with my supervisor and understand that my application does not guarantee that I will be eligible to telecommute. I have read the telecommuting policy and understand that it is not an entitlement and that it is not appropriate for every employee. I understand that telecommuting can be terminated at any time by MFL or me.

__ I have completed the Telecommuting Safety Checklist

__ I have completed the Telecommuting Self-Assessment

Telecommuting Applicants Signature _____
Date _____

SUPERVISOR

I have discussed the possibility of telecommuting with the above mentioned employee. I believe this employee is a good candidate based on job responsibilities and performance in his or her current position.

Supervisors Signature_____ Date _____

DIRECTOR/BUSINESS OFFICE MANAGER

Approval _____ Disapproval _____

Reason:

Signature _____ Date _____

MFL Telecommuting Self-Assessment

Applicant Name:

General

- Do you have sufficient portable work for the amount of telework proposed? Briefly describe.

- Are you comfortable working alone for the amount of days you have requested to telework? Will you miss the social interaction?

- Will your teleworking affect your coworkers? Do they need you in the office to complete work? Will they be doing extra work because you are teleworking?

- Are you willing to be flexible about the telework arrangement to respond to the needs of the manager, the workgroup, and the work?

Self-Management

- Do you have the ability to do work with minimal direct supervision?
- Do you have organized work practices?
- Do you have good planning skills?
- Do you have effective time management skills? Are you able to meet schedules and deadlines?

Technology

- Do you feel comfortable with the technologies, if any, that will be needed to telework?
- Are you willing to learn any new technologies required to telework?
- Are you planning to use your own personal computer, monitors, mouse, keyboard, phone, etc. or are will you need MFL to provide equipment?

Communication

- Do you have the ability to ensure good communication with your manager, co-workers, and customers?
- Will you return emails, calls, and other messages in a timely manner?

Appropriate Space

- Is the telework office space conducive to getting your work done?

- Is the telework office space safe?

- Are dependent care (i.e., child care, elder care, or care of any other dependent adults) arrangements in place?

- Will you be distracted in the telework office space (e.g., by children, friends, television, or other responsibilities)?

- Do you have a comfortable desk and chair, locking file cabinet or drawer, and other furniture that would allow you to work comfortably and keep all MFL data secure?

MFL Telecommuting Safety Checklist

Applicant Name

	General	Yes	No
1	Workspace is away from noise, distractions, and is devoted to your work needs?		
2	Workspace accommodates workstation, equipment, and related material?		
3	Floors are clear and free from hazards?		
4	File drawers are not top-heavy and do not open into walkways?		
5	Phone lines and electrical cords are secured under a desk or along wall, and away from heat sources?		
6	Temperature, ventilation, and lighting are adequate?		
7	All stairs with four or more steps are equipped with handrails?		
8	Carpets are well secured to the floor and free of frayed or worn seams?		
	Fire Safety		
9	There is a working smoke detector in the workspace area?		
10	A home multi-use fire extinguisher, which you know how to use, is readily available?		
11	Walkways aisles, and doorways are unobstructed?		
12	Workspace is kept free of trash, clutter, and flammable liquids?		
13	All radiators and portable heaters are located away from flammable items?		
14	You have an evacuation plan so you know what to do in the event of a fire?		
	Electrical Safety		
15	Sufficient electrical outlets are accessible?		
16	Computer equipment is connected to a surge protector?		
17	Electrical system is adequate for office equipment?		
18	All electrical plugs, cords, outlets, and panels are in good condition? No exposed/damaged wiring?		
19	Equipment is placed close to electrical outlets?		
20	Extension cords and power strips are not daisy chained and no permanent extension cord is in use?		
21	Equipment is turned off when not in use?		
	Computer Workstation		
22	Chair casters (wheels) are secure and the rungs and legs of the chair are sturdy?		
23	Chair is adjustable?		
24	Your back is adequately supported by a backrest?		
25	Your feet are on the floor or adequately supported by a footrest?		
26	You have enough leg room at your desk?		
27	There is sufficient light for reading?		
28	The computer screen is free from noticeable glare?		
29	The top of the screen is at eye level?		
30	There is space to rest the arms while not keying?		
	Other Safety/Security Measures		
31	Files and data are secure?		
32	Materials and equipment are in a secure place that can be protected from damage and misuse?		
33	You have an inventory of all equipment in the office including serial numbers?		
34	If applicable, do you use up-to-date anti-virus software, keep virus definitions up-to-date, and run regular scans?		