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SOUTH CAROLINA STATE LIBRARY TELECOMMUTING POLICY

THE LANGUAGE USED IN THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE AN EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT BETWEEN THE EMPLOYEE AND THE AGENCY. THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT CREATE ANY CONTRACTUAL RIGHTS OR ENTITLEMENTS. THE AGENCY RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REVISE THE CONTENT OF THIS DOCUMENT, IN WHOLE OR IN PART. NO PROMISES OR ASSURANCES, WHETHER WRITTEN OR ORAL, WHICH ARE CONTRARY TO OR INCONSISTENT WITH THE TERMS OF THIS PARAGRAPH CREATE ANY CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT.

Objective

Telecommuting allows employees to work at home, on the road, or in a satellite location for all or part of their workweek. The South Carolina State Library (SCSL) considers telecommuting to be a viable, flexible work option when both the employee and the position are suited to such an arrangement. Telecommuting may be appropriate for some employees and positions but not for others. Telecommuting is not an entitlement, it is not an agency wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with the South Carolina State Library (SCSL).

Procedures

Telecommuting may be temporary, such as working from home for a short-term project or on the road during business travel, or a formal, set schedule working away from the office as described below. Either an employee or a supervisor can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement to the Director of Human Resources. However, the supervisor and Deputy Director of the Division must agree that telecommuting is a viable option for the employee before arrangements can be made.

Any telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for 90 days and may be discontinued at will and at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the organization. Every effort will be made to provide a 14-day notice of such change to accommodate commuting, childcare, and other issues that may arise from the discontinuation of the telecommuting arrangement. There may be instances, however, when giving a 14-day notice is not possible.



Eligibility

Individuals requesting formal telecommuting arrangements must be employed with SCSL for a minimum of 12 months of continuous, regular employment, and must have a satisfactory performance record.

Before entering into any telecommuting agreement, the employee and manager, with the assistance of the human resource department, 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, with the assistance of the Human Resource Department.
- 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 discuss 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.

If the employee and manager agree, and the human resource department concurs, a draft telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a 90-day trial period will commence.

Evaluation of telecommuter performance during the trial period will include regular interaction by phone and email between the employee and the manager, and weekly face-to-face meetings to discuss work progress and problems. These face-to-face meetings may occur in person or via virtual meeting. At the end of the trial period, the employee and manager will each meet with the Human Resources Department to 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 and will focus on work output and completion of objectives.

An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and supervisor must be maintained throughout the telework time. The level of communication will be agreed to by all parties and approved by the Human Resource Department. At the conclusion of the trial period, the manager and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working



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in the office or in a manner and frequency that is appropriate for the job and individuals involved.

Employees are expected to attend department meetings, staff meetings, and in-service training on-site unless other arrangements have been approved in advance.

Eligibility exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Agency Director.

Equipment

On a case-by-case basis, SCSL 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 human resource and information technology departments will serve as resources in this matter. Equipment supplied by the organization will be maintained by the organization. The employee will maintain equipment supplied by the employee, if deemed appropriate by the organization. SCSL accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment. SCSL reserves the right to make determinations and changes as to appropriate equipment needed for success. Equipment supplied by the organization is to be used for business purposes only. The telecommuter must sign an inventory list of all SCSL property received and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment, all agency property will be returned to the agency.

SCSL will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies (pens, paper, etc.) as deemed necessary. SCSL will reimburse the employee for business expenses, which have been agreed upon in advance of incurring, such as phone and shipping costs. These expenses must be deemed necessary in carrying out the employee's job responsibilities.

The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within his or her home for work purposes. SCSL 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. An office chair may be provided and will be included in the inventory list.

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 proprietary agency and customer information accessible from their home office. Steps include the use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the environment.



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Safety

Employees are expected to maintain their home workspace in a safe manner, free from safety hazards. SCSL will provide each telecommuter with a safety checklist that must be completed at least twice per year. Employees must report any Injuries sustained by the employee in a home office location and in conjunction with his or her regular work duties to the Human Resource Department for determination of coverage by the State of South Carolina's workers' compensation policy. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to her or her home worksite.

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 SCSL'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 temporary 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 temporary telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.

Adopted by the S.C. State Library Board

Date: 9/24/2020