



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2022-04 -27 (9)

Date: April 27, 2022
To: THA Board of Commissioners
From: April Black
Executive Director
Re: Remote Work Program

This resolution would authorize a new remote work program to attract and retain a talented work force, improve productivity, and job satisfaction, increase customer service, and enhance work/life balance, as well as decrease carbon emissions, parking issues, and operating costs.

Background and Recommendations

This resolution allows THA to implement a new Remote Work Policy. THA has consulted with both Unions and THA staff regarding the proposed policy.

Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) supports remote work as an alternative work arrangement and recognizes it to be a viable, flexible, sustainable work option when the employee, the position, and the specific work performed at any given time are suited to such an arrangement. Even with an approved Remote Work arrangement, all THA employees are expected to be able to report into a THA worksite within one-day notice, unless an approved "reasonable accommodation" is on file.

Remote work arrangements can be a temporary, provisional or a formal, recurring schedule where the employee works at a location other than their primary worksite. Either an employee or a supervisor can propose remote work as a possible work arrangement. The approval of each remote work arrangement is at the sole discretion of the Department Director and the employee's immediate supervisor.

Recommendation

Authorize THA's Executive Director to adopt this new Remote Work Program policy.



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

RESOLUTION 2022-04-27 (9) (Remote Work Program for flexibility)

A **RESOLUTION** of the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City of Tacoma.

WHEREAS, During the pandemic, following state guidelines and for the safety of all employees, the agency has required employees to remote work and maintain great customer service; and

WHEREAS, This policy will provide a framework for establishing, evaluating and authorizing remote work arrangements where advantageous and appropriate.

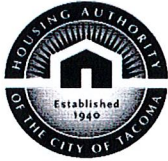
WHEREAS, The proposed policy will positively impact THA's work culture and enhance work/life balance.

Resolved by the Board of Commissioners of the Housing Authority of the City Of Tacoma, Washington, that:

THA's Executive Director is authorized to adopt a new Remote Work Program.

Approved: April 27, 2022


Stanley Rumbaugh, Chair



TACOMA HOUSING AUTHORITY

Policy No.	HR-25.20
Policy	Remote Work Program
Date	March 25, 2022

1. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework for establishing, evaluating, and authorizing remote work arrangements where advantageous and appropriate. Where feasible, remote work options may help attract and retain a talented work force, improve productivity and job satisfaction, increase customer service, and enhance work/life balance, as well as decrease carbon emissions, parking issues, and operating costs.

2. Sources for Policy

- ▶ Collective Bargaining Agreements.
- ▶ Washington State Minimum Wage Act, Chap. 49.46 RCW.
- ▶ Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, 29 U.S.C. § 201 *et seq.*
- ▶ THA Emergency Telework Policy.

3. Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all regular THA employees.

4. Who is Responsible for Implementing Policy

Who	Responsibilities
<i>Employees</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Comply with this policy.
<i>Department Directors and Management</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In consultation with Human Resources, understand and perform any responsibilities as they pertain to the Remote Work Program and procedures.• Evaluate the nature of the job's essential functions and determine whether the position is eligible for telework.• Identify functions that may be accomplished remotely and determine whether the employee needs full access to Agency systems and/or applications, and what type of equipment they may need.• Ensure that employees receive and sign applicable agreement(s) including the - Alternate Schedule Application, Safety Checklist, The Remote Work Safety Checklist, IT Appropriate Use Policy and THA Confidentiality Agreement and Access Policy.• Ensure that the level and quality of customer service is maintained during the telework assignment, that essential job functions are accomplished, and that operational deadlines are met without increased overtime accrual.
<i>Information Technology Manager</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with departments to facilitate the procurement of the necessary technology, equipment, etc. to support any Remote Work Agreements that are approved.
<i>Director of Human Resources</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop and maintain procedures for implementation and ongoing maintenance of the Remote Work Program policy.• Determine the appropriate means of communicating the policy and procedures to all employees and interested parties.

*Human Resources
Department*

- Consult and assist Department Directors and their management teams when deciding whether a position is suitable for telework and whether to authorize an employee to work remotely.
- Provide information to employees who are interested in learning more about working remotely.

5. Definitions

<i>Eligible Employee</i>	An employee whose job tasks, essential job functions, in-person duties and responsibilities, and remote work site are suitable for a remote work arrangement as determined by the employee, his/her supervisor, and the Department Director.
<i>Primary Office</i>	The worker's usual and customary Agency work site.
<i>Remote Workspace</i>	A work site other than the employee's usual and customary work site (Primary Office). The remote workspace may include the employee's home, another office, or other work site as approved by the supervisor and Department Director.
<i>Emergency Remote Work Schedule</i>	THA has adopted remote work as a critical component of our Agency Continuity of Operations policy. Use of remote work in this capacity enables our Agency to continue functioning through hazardous weather, pandemics, physical attacks, or any other event that would result in the closure of our buildings. Emergency Remote Work conditions will be adopted for a time period called out in an Executive Action by the Executive Director, and will be governed by the Emergency Telework Policy.
<i>Routine Remote Work Schedule</i>	Pre-approved as an ongoing, regular remote work schedule for an employee during the pay period. An approved routine remote work schedule allows an employee to work remotely a set, pre-determined number of days and hours each pay period.
<i>Ad-hoc Remote Work Schedule</i>	Remote Work approved for a certain occasion or fixed time-period. This schedule is not part of a previously approved, Routine Remote Schedule or an Emergency Remote schedule. Ad-hoc remote work schedules will continue to be based on hours that are conducive to good customer service and staff availability for questions, concerns, or emergency situations from landlords, tenants, or others we do business with.
<i>Remote Worker</i>	An employee who works at a remote workspace to produce an agreed upon work product.
<i>Good Standing</i>	Employees must be performing satisfactorily, in good standing, to be eligible for remote work. For example, employees who are on a Performance Improvement Plan, or who have received a written warning regarding poor performance or who are the subject of disciplinary or corrective action in the past six months, are not eligible for remote work.

6. Forms Associated with this Policy

<i>THA Form HR</i>	Remote Work - Alternate Schedule Application
<i>THA Form HR</i>	Remote Work - Safety Checklist
<i>THA Form HR</i>	Remote Work - Agreement
<i>THA Form AS</i>	IT Appropriate Use Policy
<i>THA Form AS</i>	THA Confidentiality Agreement and Access Policy

7. Policy

Tacoma Housing Authority (THA) supports remote work as an alternative work arrangement and recognizes it to be a viable, flexible, sustainable work option when the employee, the position, and the specific work performed at any given time are suited to such an arrangement. Even with an approved Remote Work arrangement, all THA employees are expected to be able to report into a THA worksite within one-day notice, unless an approved “reasonable accommodation” is on file.

Remote work arrangements can be a temporary, provisional or a formal, recurring schedule where the employee works at a location other than their primary worksite. Either an employee or a supervisor can propose remote work as a possible work arrangement. The approval of each remote work arrangement is at the sole discretion of the Department Director and the employee’s immediate supervisor. Tacoma Housing Authority reserves the right to revoke a remote work arrangement, and to require an employee to return to the worksite, when it is determined the remote work arrangement is no longer suited for the employee, the position or the specific work performed. If the Remote Work Agreement is ended, the employee will have two weeks to transition back to working from the primary worksite, absent exigent business circumstances.

An employee’s ability to work remotely may be based on their performance, specific work assignments and essential job functions, consistency, and in-person team relationship building and other in-person work duties. Employees must make childcare, elder care, and/or pet care arrangements during remote work as if they were working in the office. Approval for out-of- state hiring will be granted on a case-by-case basis. However, ongoing remote working out-of-state or out-of- country is not permitted.

Remote work employees must comply with all THA policies and behavioral standards. To work remotely, employees must have a signed Remote Work Agreement on file.

7.1 Remote Work Arrangements

7.1.1. Eligibility for an Ad-Hoc or Routine Remote Work Arrangement

Regular, full-time employees are eligible to request an Ad-hoc or Routine remote work arrangement. Remote work is only available to employees in “good standing”. Remote working is available to represented employees per this policy and any relevant collective bargaining agreement.

Where the request is based on medical necessity as an accommodation of a disability, THA will consider such requests as part of its reasonable accommodation interactive process, including, for example, reviewing appropriate medical documentation, evaluating the position’s essential job functions, exploring options for accommodation, and discussing the matter with the employee and/or their healthcare providers. In these instances, supervisors must consult with Human Resources.

Ad-hoc remote work is for a particular purpose and for a set number of days. It is not expected to continue. In general, Ad-hoc remote workdays are permitted with the supervisor’s approval and one day notice, such as for a specific project, period of time, or inclement weather. Ad-hoc remote work arrangements of longer than twenty (20) days require the approval of the Department Director and may be subject to the requirements of a routine remote work arrangement. THA retains discretion to change or discontinue a remote work arrangement at any time.

7.1.2. Application for an Ad-hoc or Routine Remote Working Arrangement

Employees interested in considering the option to request a remote work arrangement should discuss the matter with their supervisor. When an employee routinely works away from the office, a signed Remote Work Agreement will be required.

7.1.3. *Approval of Remote Work Arrangements*

Type of Arrangement	Length	Written Agreement Required	Who Approves?
Emergency	As dictated by Executive Order	Yes, asap	Supervisor/Department Director
Ad-hoc	1 – 19 Days	No	Supervisor
Ad-hoc	20 + Days	Yes	Supervisor/Department Director
Routine	Any Length	Yes	Supervisor/Department Director/HR

THA may determine that some positions, departments, or sites are not eligible to participate in remote work arrangements unless it involves a reasonable accommodation. Reasonable accommodation requests for remote work may not be possible if the essential functions of the position require on-site work. Routine remote work arrangements will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Routine remote work arrangements will continue until ended by the employee and/or the supervisor.

Disapproval or reconsideration of a request to remote work must be pre-approved by the Human Resources representative and will be explained in writing to the requestor and is not subject to appeal. In partnership with the HR department, Department Directors have discretion to decide whether to permit remote working for their department teams and will consider several factors in assessing a request for a remote work arrangement, including, but not limited to the following.

7.1.4. *Organizational Basis for Remote Work*

- Consideration of the employee's essential job functions and whether the work can be performed outside of the office on a regular basis.
- Length of time requested to remote work is reasonable from a business standpoint.
- Impact of the arrangement on the department's workload, productivity, and morale are minimal.
- Overall ability of the department to meet objectives is not compromised as a result of the employee's remote working arrangement.
- Employee's likelihood of efficiently and successfully performing all job duties while remote working.

7.1.5. *Job Performance History*

- Employee has demonstrated that they are able to work with minimal supervision and direction.
- Employee must be in "Good Standing" (see above Definitions).

- Employee has demonstrated proficiency with job related software and computer hardware.
- 7.1.6. *Accountability and Job Performance Standards*
- Current tasks, scope of work, and expected results are specific, measurable, and can be monitored by the supervisor.
- 7.1.7. *Communication and Client/Co-Worker Contact*
- Employee has demonstrated the ability to successfully use technology to establish effective methods of communication with supervisor, co-workers, vendors, and clients.
 - The need for physical face-to-face meetings with internal/external customers and contacts is minimal.
 - The employee's supervisor has the necessary time and ability to provide regular guidance and feedback with minimal face-to-face interaction.
 - Equipment Needs
 - The need and cost for specialized material or equipment must be minimal, and any such equipment must be easily installed for remote working use, as determined by the IT Manager.
- 7.1.8. *Safe Working Environment*
- Employees who are requesting remote work will be required to provide that they have a safe place to work and that there are no hazards that may cause harm. Departments may prohibit employees from printing confidential information in alternative worksites to avoid breaches of confidentiality.

7.2 Work Schedule, Benefits and Compensation

Unless otherwise approved in advance, remote working employees are expected to work and be accessible during their regular working and business hours. Remote work schedules for non-exempt employees may not begin before 6 AM or end after 6:30 PM, unless agreed upon by the employee and Department Director. Remote working employees are required to attend regular meetings, training sessions, or work at the office or other designated locations, as requested and with little notice. No overtime may be incurred without the advance approval of the employee's supervisor.

Each remote working arrangement will include hours of work within an established work week. Remote working involves a cooperative, good-faith agreement that the teleworking employee will maintain the assigned schedule and perform productive work during the designated business hours or confirmed schedule. The remote working employee must agree to minimize engaging in personal business or activities beyond the extent considered reasonable at a THA worksite. When the established hours of work and work week fall outside the typical hours/days, the IT Department will be consulted to ensure that adequate support and system availability may be provided. Just as the employee would do at a primary worksite, a non-exempt remote working employee being paid hourly must accurately record hours worked using the time-keeping method applicable to their department (including recording meal periods, sick, vacation, etc.) as required by employment status. If a remote working employee is unable to work due to illness or personal issues, that time must be reported, just as it would on a non-remote working schedule. Any overtime hours require pre-approval of the teleworking employee's supervisor.

When remote working, it is important all parties understand the expectations regarding communication, responsiveness, and availability during the employee's workday. A remote

working employee must be available during regular or core office hours by phone, email, or other specified methods of communication with their supervisor, coworkers, and others with whom job-related communication is necessary. Communication between a remote working employee and their supervisor will be in a manner and frequency appropriate for the position and individuals involved.

Within each workday, non-exempt employees are required to take rest breaks and meal periods, consistent with employment status and THA policy Working hours, HR-25.10.

Non-exempt employees must keep accurate records of their hours worked on electronic timecards which must be submitted on a bi-weekly basis. All employees must also take their regular breaks and meal periods and notify their supervisor if they will not be working during regularly scheduled work hours. Supervisors will also have to arrange Supervisor Check-ins to review work, have discussions, and ensure that the employee is maintaining productivity and customer service standards, and are taking lunch and rest periods. Overtime will only be permitted with prior Supervisor approval. Non-exempt employees who work overtime without Supervisor approval will be counseled on the need to maintain their regular schedule. Repeated overtime violations will result in the telework arrangement ending.

The employee's compensation, benefits, leave accruals, work status and work responsibilities do not change due to participation in the remote working program. Any time taken off work (annual leave, sick time, floating holidays or leaves of absence) must be arranged in advance with the employee's supervisor in accordance with THA's current policies and procedures.

Although working from home may provide some flexibility in child or dependent care, teleworking is not to be used as a substitute for such care. The focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business needs. Employees who telework from home, except during Emergency telework, are expected to maintain appropriate child and dependent care arrangements.

Remote working employees are members of a department team and the larger THA organization. Teleworking employees must maintain the same level of coordination, communication and connectivity with their coworkers, customers, and partners as would be expected in an office environment. Becoming proficient in the tools necessary to do this in a virtual environment is essential.

7.3 Remote Workplace, Safety, and Injuries

Remote working employees must designate a separate room or at least part of a room at their teleworking work site as their Remote Workspace. Unless called out in an Executive Action, THA will not reimburse the employee for any costs associated with furnishing, renovating, or constructing a home office or Remote Workspace.

Remote working employees must complete the Safety Checklist, which self-certifies that their designated workspace is safe and meets the standards set forth in the Checklist. At the employee's request, the Risk, Safety and Emergency Manager or designee is available for consultation in setting up a workstation designed for safe and comfortable work. Potential health or safety hazards at the teleworking work site may result in a delay in the approval of a remote working arrangement or the immediate suspension of an ongoing teleworking arrangement.

The employee's Remote Workspace is considered an extension of THA's workspace and therefore is covered by THA's worker's compensation insurance. Employees who work outside their designated work area and suffer an injury may not be eligible for worker's compensation insurance.

THA may be liable for job-related injuries or illnesses that occur during the employee's agreed-upon work hours when job responsibilities are fulfilled from within the designated work area only. THA assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the employee's home workspace outside agreed-upon work hours.

THA is also not liable for loss, destruction, or injury that may occur in or to the employee's home because of the employee's participation in the remote work program. This includes family members, visitors, or others that may become injured within or around the designated work area.

Employees who are injured while working in their Remote Workspace during work hours must immediately report the injury to their supervisor or Human Resources. Teleworking employees are not permitted to invite vendors, suppliers, third party contractor's, service providers, customers, residents, or other employees to their home to conduct business. Instead, such meetings must take place at THA offices, web meeting, or phone conferencing.

7.4 Equipment, Hardware, Software, and Supplies

Internet service connections are the responsibility of the employee and are an eligibility requirement. THA does not reimburse employees for any Internet service charges. Employees must secure their home Internet connection from unauthorized outside use.

Employees may choose to use their own equipment, or their THA assigned laptop, in order to perform work at home. Employees shall not be reimbursed for the use of their own equipment. All equipment used for work purposes is subject at any time to inspection and copying by THA or its designees of any records that are contained in or related to the use of such equipment to respond to Public Records Act requests, subpoenas, or other legal requirements for the production of records or information. Employees should be aware that work-related texts, voice messages, and other electronic communications on personal devices may be subject to the Public Records Act. Employees have a duty to maintain such records in accordance with the Washington Local Government Record Retention Schedules. All software used will be licensed and virus protection on employee owned computers will be functioning and up to date. THA will not provide repairs or support to employee-owned equipment. THA will determine on a case-by-case basis any specialized type of office equipment necessary for each remote working arrangement and typically will not provide any office furniture.

Employees agree to the following with regards to THA equipment used for THA business:

- Equipment shall be used for THA business only and may be inspected remotely by the THA IT Manager or designee to ensure compliance. Use of THA equipment for purposes not related to THA business may be grounds for termination of the Remote Work Agreement and/or disciplinary action.
- The employee will take reasonable precautions to protect THA-owned equipment from theft, damage or misuse and must not alter or modify any of these items without prior IT management authorization. Employees must immediately report to THA any loss or damage of such property. If the Remote Workspace is the employee's home, it is the

employee's responsibility to ensure that his or her homeowner's or rental insurance policy adequately covers equipment used for teleworking purposes.

- If repairs or support is needed, employees must return equipment to the Information Technology (IT) Department at the 902 office for repairs. Employees may work from a THA office workspace while this equipment is being repaired, or may be issued loaner equipment, at THA's option.
- Remote workers may not add any hardware or software to THA-owned computers without the express written permission of the IT Manager.
- At the termination of employment or the Remote Work Agreement, the employee must return all THA-owned equipment to IT before the employee's last day of work.

THA will supply reasonable office supplies as needed, except ink for printers.

7.5 Security, Confidentiality and Record Retention

Consistent with THA's expectations of information security for employees working at the office, remote working employees are expected to ensure the protection and safeguarding of any confidential information accessible from their workspace. Employees may not disclose confidential or private files, records, materials, or information, and may not allow access to THA networks or databases to anyone who is not authorized to have access.

Security steps may include locking your computer when away, regular password maintenance, and any other measures appropriate for the job and the working environment.

The employee is responsible for the security of all confidential information consistent with THA's Information Technology Appropriate Use Policy and THA's Confidentiality Agreement. When handling particularly sensitive materials, a department may require teleworking employees to work in a location consistent with the employee's certification/s. The use of paper should be minimal, taking advantage of electronic means for storing documents. Departments may prohibit employees from printing confidential information in alternative worksites to avoid breaches of confidentiality. The IT Department will serve as a resource for paperless solutions. Documents must be disposed of in a manner appropriate with the content and consistent with THA and departmental policies.

All files, records, papers, or other materials created while remote working become THA property and must be retained (either in hard copy or electronically) consistent with the Washington State Archives CORE record retention rules and/or THA policy. All electronic documents must be saved to the THA network, and not maintained on an employee's personal computer. Each department will determine the appropriate storage method and location for documents not electronically saved.

7.6 Work at a THA Work Location

There may be times when the remote working employee's physical presence is necessary at a THA office. When requested, the teleworking employee will attend job-related meetings, training sessions, etc. at the THA location designated by the supervisor. When possible, THA will provide at least one-day notice to report to a THA work location.

When a non-exempt employee is required to report to their primary worksite at the beginning of their scheduled workday, the travel time between the employee's alternative location and the primary worksite will be considered their normal commute and the time will not be compensable; similarly, if an employee ends their workday at their primary worksite, the drive

home afterward is their normal commute. When a non-exempt employee begins their scheduled workday by performing work at the alternative worksite and is then required to report to the primary worksite mid-shift, the time spent traveling between the alternative worksite and the primary worksite will be considered hours worked. If the non-exempt employee, then returns to the alternative worksite to complete their scheduled shift, the time spent traveling between the primary worksite and the telework location will be considered hours worked.

Any employee utilizing their personal vehicle for work travel during their scheduled workday is required to comply with all conditions listed in Staff Driving on THA Business policy, including but not limited to insurance coverage requirements and completion of Defensive Driver training every two (2) years. Reporting to/from their primary worksite mid-shift is considered work travel.