

**Telework Program Changes  
Effective October 1, 2018**

**Frequently Asked Questions  
Updated July 31, 2018**

1. **What is telework?**  
The Telework Enhancement Act defines telework or teleworking as a work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of such employee's position, and other authorized activities, from an approved worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work.
2. **Can employees working a 5-4-9 schedule telework under the new telework program? If so, how many days will they be allowed to telework?** Yes. 5-4-9 employees may be granted a maximum of one (1) day of telework per pay period. The one day of telework cannot be in the same week as the Regular Day Off (RDO).
3. **If I have a Maxiflex, Variable Day, or Variable week schedule, can I telework?** Yes. However, employees on these schedules must still work in the office a minimum of four (4) days per week.
4. **If I have a 4-10 schedule, can I telework?** No. Employees on a 4-10 schedule are not eligible to telework.
5. **If I work a part-time schedule, am I eligible to telework?** Yes. Part-time employees who currently work five (5) days per week may be eligible to telework a maximum of one (1) day per week.
6. **Why is the Department modifying the Telework Program?** ED desires a greater physical presence in its offices to enhance collaboration between Program Office Components and strengthen our delivery of customer service internally and externally. In addition, the increased onsite presence will assist the Agency in successfully implementing the multi-phased reorganization strategy.
7. **Will supervisors have the discretion to approve situational/episodic telework requests?** Yes. First-level supervisors will have *“limited authority”* to approve situational and episodic (e.g., short-term surgery recovery, inclement weather, etc.) telework arrangements on a case-by-case basis where an individual is able to work but unable to travel to, or is otherwise restricted from being in, the office. However, such authority may not be exercised in a manner that could result in the employee failing to comply with the four-day in office work requirement on a regular or reoccurring basis. Supervisors **do not** have the authority to permit their employees to have a permanent work schedule allowing them to telework more

than one (1) day per week. In the case of OIG, the Inspector General determines which positions will be subject to the new Telework Policy.

8. **Are employees required to have a telework agreement?** No. The Telework Program is a voluntary program and only employees who elect to participate in the Telework Program are required to have a telework agreement.
9. **Is there a minimum number of hours I have to work each day in order to meet the four-day in office work requirement?** Yes. Unless you are on a Maxiflex schedule or a part-time schedule, in order to meet the four day in-office requirement, you must work a minimum of 5 ½ hours each day and your schedule each day must encompass ED's core hours (9:30am – 3:00 pm).

Employees on a Maxiflex schedule must meet the ED core hours' requirement for a minimum of three (3) days per work week and are still required to work four (4) days in the office. Bargaining Unit employees may not Maxiflex. Part-time employees are not required to meet core hours' requirement.

10. **I have a telework agreement. Where is my "official worksite?"** The "official worksite" for an employee covered by a telework agreement is the location of the regular worksite for the employee's position (i.e., the place where the employee would normally work absent a telework agreement).
11. **What is my "duty station"?**  
Your "duty station" is the city/town, county, and State in which you work. For most employees, this will be the location of the employee's official work site. The duty station is established from the posting of the job position and is identified on the employee's Standard Form (SF)-50 located in Block 39.
12. **What if the duty station on my Standard Form (SF)-50 is incorrect?**  
Employees should notify their supervisor and/or their Executive Officer (EXO).
13. **What problems could occur if my duty station/official worksite is listed incorrectly on my SF-50?** Certain location-based pay entitlements (such as locality payments, special rate supplements, etc.) and travel, transportation, and relocation benefits and entitlements are based on the location of the employee's official worksite. As a result, employees with incorrectly listed duty stations/official worksites may incur liability, e.g., related to federal or state taxes, salary overpayments, etc.
14. **Impact on Transit Benefits and Park Share**
  - a. **What should I do regarding my transit benefits?** Employees should update their transit benefits to reflect their new in office schedule. Please contact the Transportation Services Division at [OMMSTransportationservices@ed.gov](mailto:OMMSTransportationservices@ed.gov) with any additional questions and/or concerns.

- b. **I participate in the Park Share program; how will ED's new Telework Policy impact my participation in the Park Share Program?** In light of the changes to the telework policy there may be changes to the Park Share Program. Please contact the Transit Team at [OMMSTransportationservices@ed.gov](mailto:OMMSTransportationservices@ed.gov).
15. **Will employees with approved telework agreements still be required to telework if the Federal government is closed on a day that is not their normal telework day?** Yes. In accordance with ED's Telework Policy, employees with approved telework agreements are required to telework when the government is closed. Such employees may request unscheduled annual leave, compensatory time, credit hours or leave without pay if they are unable to work on a day the government is closed.
16. **If employees are approved by their supervisor to telework due to weather or emergency-related building closures, can they still telework on their regularly scheduled telework day that same week?** Yes. In this scenario, supervisors may approve employees to telework on their normal telework day and during the weather emergency or emergency-related building closure.
17. **If a Federal holiday falls on the employee's regularly scheduled telework day, can the employee still telework one (1) day that week?** Yes. If approved by their supervisor, employees may change their telework day that falls on a Federal holiday to a non-holiday in the same work week.
18. **Are employees in telework exempt positions and employees not on a telework agreement required to telework when the government is closed?** No. Employees in telework exempt positions and employees who do not have an approved telework agreement will be granted administrative leave during government closures.
19. **Will OIG employees be subject to ED's new Telework Policy?** In the case of OIG employees, the Inspector General determines which positions will be subject to the new Telework Policy.
20. **What is a Reasonable Accommodation?**  
A reasonable accommodation, as required under the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and its subsequent amendments, is any modification to the job, the work environment, or the way things are usually done that allows a qualified individual with a disability to apply for a job, perform job functions, or enjoy equal access to the benefits and privileges of employment.
21. **Will the new Telework Policy impact ED's compliance with legal requirements regarding the acceptance and review of reasonable accommodation requests?** No. ED will continue to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, rules, policies and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations.

22. **Can my request to telework as a Reasonable Accommodation be denied?** Yes. As part of the interactive reasonable accommodation approval process, and depending upon the individual facts and circumstances of each case, a determination may be made that telework is not the most beneficial reasonable accommodation option. ED will continue to comply with all applicable laws, regulations, rules, policies and procedures regarding reasonable accommodations.
23. **Will I have a dedicated space to work in the office?** Yes. POCs are currently assessing space and will make the appropriate adjustments to ensure all employees have dedicated workspace for the days they work in the office.
24. **Will ED's information technology (IT) infrastructure be able to handle any increased IT needs generated by the four-day in office work requirement?** Yes. ED's information technology infrastructure has sufficient capacity to accommodate all ED employees working on-site on any given day.
25. **Are spouses of active duty military service members excluded from the new Telework Policy's restriction on 100% telework?** Yes. Employees who need to relocate for a set period of time to accompany a spouse on his or her tour of duty will be allowed to telework 100%, if the spouse's duty station is outside of the official worksite of all ED office locations.
26. **Will my annual telework renewal date for FY 18 be moved?** Yes. Telework agreements expire one year after approval. In order to ensure that all telework agreements comply with the four (4) day per week work requirement, all employees electing to participate in ED's Telework Program will need to sign new agreements which incorporate the new program requirements by August 15<sup>th</sup> with an effective date on or before October 1.
27. **May organizations start renewing telework agreements now?** Yes. Employees may immediately begin the process for renewing their telework agreements.
28. **If I have additional questions who may I contact?** Bargaining Unit employees should contact their Union Representative. Non-Bargaining Unit employees and managers may contact the Workforce Relations Division Telework Team at [BenefitsandWork/Life@ed.gov](mailto:BenefitsandWork/Life@ed.gov).