



BENTON COUNTY

Telecommuting Policy

November 2025

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform standards for implementation, selection, supervision, and evaluation of employees who are authorized to telecommute.

I. Application

Telecommuting is an alternative work arrangement available to qualifying employees in eligible positions, through a mutual agreement between the employee and their Elected Official/Department Head (EO/DH). An employee may work one or more days from home or another alternative worksite instead of commuting to a centrally located worksite. Telecommuting is intended to enhance employee job performance without impairing productivity or service to the public.

II. Authority

EO/DH may implement telecommuting arrangements when it is necessary to accomplish County business.

- a. Telecommuting is not an employee benefit, but rather a management right that provides an alternative means to fulfill work requirements.
- b. Telecommuting is not appropriate for all positions and no employee is entitled to or guaranteed the opportunity to telecommute.
 - i. Human Resources (HR) shall maintain a listing of positions eligible for telecommuting, based on the assessment of the EO/DH, for the purposes of supporting the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) interactive process.
- c. The Information Technologies (IT) Department shall be consulted to identify what technology services can be provided prior to the execution of a Telecommuting Agreement by creating an IT support ticket via IT's Support Portal.

III. Telecommuting Agreements

No telecommuting arrangement shall commence until a Telecommuting Agreement has been executed between the EO/DH and the employee. Telecommuting Agreements require mutual consent by both the County and the employee and can be terminated by the County at any time. When practicable, the County will provide two weeks' notice of termination of the agreement. Copies of fully executed Telecommuting Agreements shall be filed within the employee's personnel file.

- a. An employee wishing to request a telecommuting arrangement shall submit a written request to their EO/DH for consideration.
- b. Telework requests as a reasonable accommodation under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be handled in accordance with the County's ADA Policy.

- c. Employees engaged in telework prior to the adoption of this policy must comply with this policy as required in Section XI – Existing Telecommuting Arrangements.
- d. Except for Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)-exempt employees or in the case of an urgent need, as described in Section V – Temporary Work Site Change, telecommuting shall be scheduled in full day increments, based on an established worked schedule.
- e. Agreements shall be set up so that they expire on a routine basis (maximum of 12 months) to allow for regular review of arrangements by both the County and the employee.
 - i. Upon expiration, a new Agreement must be executed for the telecommuting arrangement to continue.
 - ii. If at any time the Telecommuting Agreement lapses and is not renewed, all remote access will be terminated.
 - iii. Any changes to a Telecommuting Agreement must be made in writing and filed in the employee’s personnel file.
- f. Telecommuting Agreements are not required for occasional, or emergency only use for (FLSA)-exempt employees. It is understood that the nature of the job duties of FLSA-exempt employees may require remote work on occasional or emergent situations.
 - i. A Telecommuting Agreement will be required for FLSA-exempt employees if the occasional or emergent situation requires more than five consecutive days of remote work unless an emergency has been declared by the County.

IV. Associated Costs

Departments will incur all expenses associated with telecommuting arrangements.

V. Temporary Work Site Change Due to Operational Need

An employee may, at the discretion of their immediate supervisor, be called to work at their centrally located worksite on a day they are scheduled for telecommuting during their regular work hours to meet workload requirements.

- a. If an employee is notified prior to the end of the previous workday that they need to report to their centrally located worksite, travel time between their telecommuting worksite and the centrally located worksite will not be considered hours worked.
- b. If an employee is called in without notice to their centrally located worksite on a day they are scheduled to telecommute, the travel time between their telecommuting worksite and the centrally located worksite will be considered hours worked.

VI. Work Rules While Telecommuting

The duties, obligations, and responsibilities of a telecommuting employee are the same as employees working at a centrally located worksite. A set procedure and schedule for regular communication between a telecommuting employee, staff, and customers must be identified in a Telecommuting Agreement.

- a. Work hours while telecommuting shall be the same as if the employee is reporting to their regular worksite, unless otherwise determined by the EO/DH in accordance with applicable policies and collective bargaining agreements.

- i. Telecommuting employees shall handle all absences/leave requests in accordance with their department's policy and procedures.
 - ii. Accrual of overtime or compensatory time, if applicable, shall receive prior approval from EO/DH.
- b. Employees must make arrangements for proper dependent care during telecommuting work hours so as not to distract or interfere with scheduled work.
- c. Unauthorized non-County work during schedule telecommuting hours is prohibited.
- d. Telecommuting employees shall not hold in-person meetings at their residence.

VII. Maintaining a Safe Workspace

Telecommuting employees will be covered by workers' compensation for all job-related injuries occurring at their designated worksite as scheduled. The employee will be responsible for maintaining a safe and ergonomic work environment, including work area, restroom, and other areas that may be necessary for work during the telecommuting arrangement.

- a. In the event of a job-related incident, accident, or injury during telecommuting hours, the employee must report the incident to their supervisor as soon as possible, following established procedures for reporting.
- b. Workers' compensation will not apply to non-job-related injuries that occur at the designated work site and the employer will not be responsible for injuries to third parties on the employee's telecommuting premises.
- c. The employee must allow home office inspections conducted by the County or Labor & Industries if a job-related incident, accident, or injury has occurred.
- d. Management shall retain the right to visit the home office worksite during business hours.
 - i. Such visits will be made with a 48-hour notification form EO/DH or designee, except in the case of an emergency.
 - ii. Failure to maintain a safe work environment or ensure that County owned equipment is secure will result in termination of the telecommuting arrangement.

VIII. Telecommuting Eligibility

To be considered eligible for telecommuting an employee's work must be of the nature that face-to-face interaction with internal or external customers or project workgroups is minimal, and the employee's tasks can be performed successfully away from the County worksite. The employee's position must be identified as eligible for telecommuting and documented in accordance with Section II.

- a. Employee must be able to continue to perform all the essential functions of their position.
- b. Employee must be currently performing at an overall satisfactory level or above in their position.
- c. The need for specialized material or equipment needed to telecommute should be minimal.
 - i. Employees interested in telecommuting must already had a safe and ergonomic home office environment, as indicated in Section VII.
- d. Employees shall participate in any County-sponsored telecommuting or technology training as requested by the employee's supervisor.

IX. Supplies, Hardware, Software, and Telephone

Employees who telecommute are subject to the same internal County policies regarding the use of County provided equipment and services as that of employees at the centrally located worksite. Although the need for specialized material or equipment should be minimal, as indicated in Section VIII; the County may provide equipment (hardware and software) and services (such as technical support) if it is approved in advanced by the IT Director or designee, as requested by the EO/DH.

- a. SUPPLIES: General office supplies (such as paper and pens) will be provided by the County and should be obtained by the employee at the centrally located worksite.
 - i. Any out-of-pocket expenses for supplies normally available at the centrally located worksite will not be reimbursed.
 - ii. Office furniture will not be provided to employees who telecommute.
- b. HARDWARE: Employees working remotely shall utilize only County owned computers for work purposes. In no case will a personal computer be permitted to connect to the County network.
 - i. Employees shall not take their standard keyboard, mouse, monitor, and pc setup home. Approval from the EO/DH is required before the County owned laptops can be taken home for remote work purposes.
 - ii. Employees may not take County owned scanners/printers/copiers home. Employee-owned scanners/printers/copiers/multifunction devices will not be permitted to be added to County owned devices.
 - iii. All supplies and equipment must be returned to the County as soon as the telecommuting arrangement is no longer valid, if the equipment will no longer be needed by the employee to perform their job duties, or if the employee separates from County employment.
- c. SOFTWARE: Any software purchased to facilitate remote working shall be approved by the Benton County Information Technology Department pursuant to Resolution 2020-948 or any replacement resolutions. All software shall be owned entirely by Benton County.
 - i. All employees working remotely shall first be approved for remote access and be expected to comply fully with the Benton County Portable Electronic Communication Device Usage Policy (Resolution 2016-162 or any replacement resolutions).
 - ii. The County will not purchase or reimburse employees for the cost of an internet service provider or internet use. If the County's remote access system includes internet access or VPN services, the employee may only use the County provided internet access or VPN services in a manner consistent with that of employees at the centrally located worksite.
 - iii. In rare cases where an employee does not have an internet connection the County may be able to provide a wireless hot spot. Provision of a hot spot is on a case-by-case basis and is contingent on availability through the IT Department and each Department's available budget. If a wireless hotspot is provided it is for work use only and not for the employee's private use or benefit.
- d. TELEPHONE: Telecommuters will check their voice mail messages or contact the office on a regular basis throughout the day and will return calls promptly. Phones at the alternate worksite will be answered in a business-like manner during business hours.

- i. Employees may or may not be provided with a County owned cell phone. Employees who are not assigned a phone will be required to utilize their own phone for phone calls. The County will not reimburse the cost of phone service in these cases.
 - ii. Conducting County business on personal devices may subject the personal device to public records request searches.
 - e. In the event of equipment or software failure the employee shall notify their supervisor and the IT Department immediately.
 - i. The County will not provide off-site technical support but may be able to provide remote support over the phone (509-222-2399) or through video conference Monday through Friday from 7:30am-4:30pm. Support is limited to County owned devices.
 - ii. Employees are encouraged to submit a ticket using the IT Support Portal that is on the desktop on all County owned devices to request technical help.
 - iii. If repairs cannot be made timely, and failure results in the employee not being able to fully perform their work, the employee will be required to report to their regular worksite or use applicable leave banks until repairs can be completed.

X. Confidential Information and Records Management

- a. Telecommuting employees will maintain the confidentiality of County information and documents, prevent unauthorized access to any County system or information, and dispose of or retain work-related documents in a manner that will not jeopardize the interests of the County.
 - i. Employees shall protect confidential information and documents subject to public disclosure in the same manner as they would at their centrally located worksite.
- b. Departments are responsible for maintaining leave and timecard records for each employee, in accordance with applicable retention schedules.
- c. HR is responsible for maintaining records related to position eligibility for telecommuting, and retention of the Telecommuting Agreements in employee personnel files for offices/departments whose primary personnel files are maintained in HR.

XI. Existing Telecommuting Arrangements

Employees currently in telework arrangements must comply with all requirements of this policy, including the executing of a Telecommuting Agreement, within 60 days of the adoption of this policy.

Approved and accepted by the undersigned Benton County Elected Officials:

**BENTON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

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