



U.S. ABILITYONE COMMISSION
51.110 Remote Work Policy

Policy 51.110
Effective Date: October 2, 2023

TITLE: REMOTE WORK POLICY

1. PURPOSE.

The U.S. AbilityOne Commission (Commission) is a remote work agency. This policy establishes the guidelines, requirements, and expectations for working remotely.

2. APPLICABILITY.

This policy applies to all Commission employees and staff.

3. AUTHORITY.

- (a) 5 U.S.C. § 65, Telework
- (b) 41 C.F.R. Subtitle F, Federal Travel Regulation
- (c) 5 C.F.R. § 531, Pay Under the General Schedule
- (d) 5 C.F.R. § 550, Pay Administration (General)
- (e) 5 C.F.R. § 630, Absence and Leave
- (f) 5 C.F.R. § 2635, Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch
- (g) 41 C.F.R. § 302, Relocation Allowances

REFERENCES.

- (a) Guidance on Hours of Work for Telework and Remote Work Employees, U.S. Office of Personnel Management, CPM 2023-16

4. DEFINITIONS.

Definitions, abbreviations, and acronyms frequently used throughout this policy system are provided in Policy 51.102, Definitions. Terms unique to this policy are defined below.

TERM/ACRONYM	DEFINITION
Alternative Duty Station (ADS)	A work location, other than the official worksite, that satisfies all requisite Federal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to the workplace, where an employee performs their official duties.



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Commuting Expenses	Costs incurred by taking any form of local transportation, including bus, commuter buses, train, trolley, subway, taxi, transportation network company (TNC) such as Uber or Lyft, or privately owned vehicle, between an employee's residence and their official worksite.
Dependent Care	The support and nurturing of persons who cannot meet their own needs such as children, elders, or other dependent adults.
Local Travel	The Commission's local travel policy covers travel required for official business within the 50-mile radius of the Commission's on-site office, using the most direct route. Local travel does not include official travel approved via a travel authorization, including round-trip travel to a common carrier terminal in the employee's local travel area in conjunction with a temporary duty (TDY) assignment.
Official Duty Station (ODS)	The management-approved location where the employee regularly performs their duties as determined under 5 C.F.R § 531.605. For a remote employee, the approved remote work location is the employee's official duty station for location-based pay entitlements (e.g., locality payments and cost of living allowances).
Remote Work	Remote work is defined as a flexible work arrangement in which an employee, under a written remote work agreement, is scheduled to perform work at an alternative worksite and is not expected to perform work at an agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis. For a remote employee, the approved remote worksite is the employee's official duty station for location-based pay entitlements (e.g., locality payments and cost-of-living allowances), even if that location is their home.
Remote Employee	Employees who have been approved to regularly work from a location other than a "brick and mortar" worksite provided by the agency and who are not required report to the Commissions on-site office on a regular basis. A remote employee is not considered a teleworker.

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Telework	A work flexibility arrangement under which an employee performs the duties and responsibilities of their position, and other authorized activities, from an approved alternate worksite other than the location from which the employee normally works. The key difference between a telework and remote work arrangement is how the official duty station is determined for the employee. For a remote employee, the approved remote worksite is the employee's official duty station. This distinction is important because a remote employee receives locality pay and other entitlements based on the approved remote worksite.
Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel	Temporary duty travel is pre-authorized official travel, usually of a short-term duration, to a location farther than 50 miles from a traveler's official duty station and residence.

5. RESPONSIBILITIES.

(a) The Chief of Staff is responsible for:

- i. Overseeing policy guidelines and developing requirements for implementing remote work arrangements within the Commission.
- ii. Advising Commission leadership on the administration and effectiveness of the Commission's status as a remote-only agency.

(b) The Chief Information Officer is responsible for:

- i. Developing strategies and providing guidance for enterprise information technology capabilities and data security required to support remote work arrangements.
- ii. Overseeing the evaluation of new and emerging technologies that facilitate remote work and approving them for Commission-wide use, as appropriate.
- iii. Establishing criteria and guidelines for using and protecting Government-furnished equipment (GFE) and non-GFE, including personally owned equipment to access Commission information systems and networks from a remote location and what printing is permitted from the remote worksite.

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(c) Directors are responsible for:

- i. Reviewing and approving remote work arrangements with employees to ensure that each employee has the necessary tools he or she needs to perform job requirements effectively.
- ii. Holding subordinates accountable for implementing remote work arrangements in accordance with this policy guidance and applicable Commission implementing procedures.
- iii. Determining position suitability for remote work and each employee's continued compliance with the agency's remote work policy.
- iv. Establishing and communicating clear expectations for working in a remote environment regarding methods of communication (e.g., customer service, time frames for returning phone calls, email communication), meeting attendance, duty hours, and requesting leave.
- v. Establishing clearly defined performance standards and using existing quality and quantity standards to evaluate work performance of a remote employee.
- vi. Treating employees equitably when implementing remote work arrangements.
- vii. Ensuring employees protect and secure agency records and sensitive information consistent with established Commission policies.
- viii. Reviewing and recertifying remote work arrangements on an annual basis.

(d) Remote Employees are responsible for:

- i. Providing the same level of support, availability, accessibility to customers, coworkers, and supervisor as if working at the regular worksite. This includes, but is not limited to, meeting organizational and individual work requirements, participating in staff meetings, working assigned duty hours, and responding to phone calls, emails, and voicemail in a timely manner.
- ii. Ensuring there is no diminishment of individual performance or agency requirements.
- iii. Complying with all Commission policies while working at the remote worksite. These policies include but are not limited to: Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of

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the Executive Branch and other applicable ethics laws and regulations; Acceptable Use of the Internet; Conduct and Discipline; Time and Attendance; and Records Management.

- iv. Properly protecting and securing GFE, agency records, and sensitive information in compliance with Commission policies and guidance.
- v. Ensuring the remote worksite is safe, free from hazards, and provides an adequate work environment regarding connectivity, technology, and privacy (as appropriate). Employees are expected to provide internet service and other general utility costs at their own expense.
- vi. Ensuring appropriate arrangements for the care of dependents while working from the remote location.

6. POLICY.

- (a) Remote Work Policy Guidelines. These guidelines establish the minimum requirements for implementing remote work arrangements. Directorates may supplement these minimum requirements in their implementing procedures, as appropriate.
 - i. Employee Availability. Employees are in a duty status when working remotely and are expected to have the resources necessary to perform their jobs and concentrate on official duties without interruption. Employees may not use duty time for any purpose other than performing Commission-assigned work. Management is responsible for supervising work in accordance with the Fair Labor Standards Act. Employees must ensure that they remain in a “green” available status during normal duty hours, unless the employee is attending a meeting, temporarily away from the desk, or out of the office. Any absence, during normal business hours, greater than thirty minutes must be approved by the employee’s supervisor. Microsoft Teams is the preferred method for assessing employee availability, but supervisors may approve other means to ensure compliance.
 - ii. Virtual Meetings. Employees are expected to attend all virtual meetings at which their attendance is required and engage in full participation, including but not limited to keeping cameras on unless otherwise authorized, wearing appropriate attire, and being on time. Employees must wear at least business casual attire when attending agency-wide and inter-agency engagements or engaging the public in the performance of official duties (i.e., no tank tops, graphic T-shirts, sleepwear, ball caps, etc.).

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- iii. Inclement Weather. An employee on a remote work agreement whose home is considered the employee's official duty station (i.e., a remote employee) will generally not be granted weather and safety leave unless the employee is unable to safely perform work at their official duty station.
- iv. Remote Station Problems. Employees will promptly inform management of any disruptions at the remote work site. This includes but is not limited to equipment failure, power outages, telecommunication difficulties etc. that impact the employee's ability to perform Commission assigned duties. In these situations, management may require the employee to report to the Commission's site office if within a 50-mile radius or the employee may request leave. If the disruption (e.g., loss of electrical service or internet connectivity at the remote work site) is through no fault of the agency, the employee will be in a non-duty status from the time of the disruption to the end of the scheduled workday. The employee may request leave for the non-duty period.
- v. Work Site. The employee is responsible for maintaining the remote worksite in a manner that is conducive to business and is free of hazards and shall include furniture/equipment necessary to perform the employee's duties. The Commission will provide technical equipment and supplies necessary to perform work (e.g., printer, work phone, computer monitor).
- vi. Accountability and Evaluation of Work. Management will evaluate work performed at the remote work site in accordance with the Remote Work Agreement.
- vii. Employee Conduct at the ADS. All laws, government-wide rules, government-wide regulations, and Commission policies governing employee conduct apply at the remote work site.
- viii. Commission Owned IT Equipment. The Commission will determine the appropriate IT equipment for remote employees. The Commission retains ownership and control of any agency furnished hardware, software, and data and is responsible for maintaining, providing support and repairing the equipment; however, there will be no on-site IT support provided in employees' homes. The employee is not responsible for costs related to maintenance of government owned equipment.

Employees have a continuing responsibility to safeguard Government property and are responsible for the care, security, and effective utilization of the Government property they use. In accordance with Agency policy, employees may be required to reimburse the Agency for failure to exercise reasonable care of Government property.

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Management may require that employees working at an approved ADS obtain (at their own expense) high-speed/broadband internet access sufficient to support the accomplishment of the employee's assigned duties.

- ix. Remote Work Suspensions. Employees may be required to report to the Commission on-site office for training, conferences, meetings or other operational needs. Employees may resume remote work as soon as the suspension of remote work is over. Employees are eligible for reimbursement of commuting expenses due to remote work suspension for training, conferences, meetings or other operational needs at the on-site office.
- (b) Remote Work Agreement. The Commission will provide a remote work agreement that outlines the expectations between the Directorate and employee. The agreement should be signed by the employee, their Director, and the Chief of Staff. The remote work agreement may be found in the Appendix of this policy.
 - i. All remote work agreements must be reviewed on an annual basis by the employee and Director. If any changes are needed, a new agreement should be prepared and executed as soon as possible.
 - ii. Employee requests to change the terms of a current remote work arrangement (e.g., employee is approved to be a remote employee in Boulder, CO but then wants to move to Tallahassee, FL) must be approved in advance and require the employee to submit a new remote work agreement to document the new agreement terms. A new remote work agreement must be approved before the employee implements the requested change.
- (c) Other Requirements and Conditions for Remote Work.
 - i. Locality Pay. Remote work arrangements usually involve a change in duty station where the employee's duty station is designated as the remote work location (i.e., where the employee performs their official duties), even if that is the employee's home. Such changes may affect an employee's pay (5 C.F.R § 531.604). The Chief of Staff and Directors will notify an employee of any change in pay prior to a change in the remote work site being approved.
 - ii. Relocation Expenses. An employee-requested relocation to a remote work location is for the employee's own convenience and benefit. Therefore, pursuant to Federal Travel Regulations (41 C.F.R. § 302), the agency is prohibited from paying relocation expenses to a new remote work location.

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- iii. Temporary Duty (TDY) Travel Expenses. Payment of TDY travel expenses is determined by the employee's official duty station. The agency is responsible for travel expenses incurred by the remote employee for TDY travel away from the employee's official duty station. Therefore, management should consider the cost of business travel from the employee's requested remote location to other worksites/locations, as well as any travel to Commissions office location. Depending on the travel distance and frequency of travel, payment of TDY expenses may increase significantly.
- iv. Remote Location Utility Costs. Remote work may increase certain costs to the employee. The Commission assumes no responsibility for any costs associated with the employee's home residence, including home maintenance, insurance, utilities, internet access, and telecommunication costs.
- v. Equipping for Remote Work. To the extent permitted by Commission policies and procedures, the Commission will provide the equipment and supplies the Directors determine necessary for the employee to perform official duties from the approved remote location. The equipment and supplies should be deemed necessary for the performance of the employee's assigned duties, reasonably available, cost effective, and subject to availability of funding. The Commission agrees to service and maintain any GFE issued to the remote employee. Directors should identify what equipment/supplies will be provided to the remote employee in the remote work agreement.
- vi. Designated Workspace. Remote employees must have a designated workspace that is safe and conducive for the performance of their duties at the approved remote work site. At a minimum, an employee must have access to high-speed internet and be able to communicate via telephone; participate in video conferencing, as applicable; and send, receive and respond to electronic mail and instant messaging chats.
- vii. Dependent Care. Remote work is not a substitute for dependent care. Remote employees are expected to use their time performing official duties as if they were in the official office location. Generally, employees cannot personally care for a dependent while working from the remote worksite and are responsible for securing appropriate arrangements for any dependents who are unable to care for themselves independently. This does not preclude a remote employee from having a caregiver in the home who provides care for the dependent(s) while the employee is on duty, provided the arrangement does not disrupt the employee's ability to work effectively. Also, a dependent may be permitted in the home, provided they do not require constant supervision or care (e.g., older child or adolescent) and their presence does not disrupt the employee's ability to work effectively.

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- viii. Dependent Care Arrangements During Weather or Emergency Events. If a remote employee cannot arrange for appropriate dependent care because of a weather or emergency event affecting the remote worksite, any time spent providing personal care to dependents cannot be considered hours of work. The employee is expected to accurately account for work and non-work hours during their tour of duty and to take the appropriate leave (paid or unpaid) to account for any time spent away from normal work-related duties during their scheduled tour of duty.
- ix. Work-Related Injuries or Illnesses. Remote workers may be covered by the Federal Employees' Compensation Act for an on-the-job injury or occupational illness sustained while conducting official Government business at the remote worksite. Employees must inform their immediate supervisor of any on-the-job injury or occupational illness sustained at the remote worksite at the earliest time possible and provide their supervisor all relevant medical documentation related to the injury or illness. Remote workers must also visit the Department of Labor's Employees' Compensation Operations & Management Portal to file a workers' compensation claim with the Office of Workers' Compensation Programs.
- (d) Remote Work Overseas. Generally, remote work for overseas duty is not authorized.
- i. Employee requests for remote work arrangements outside of the United States and its territories and possessions require extensive coordination within the Commission and with the U.S. State Department (at least three to six months of preparation) and should only be considered in limited circumstances. The Commission must carefully consider the implications of permitting an employee to conduct official government business outside of the jurisdiction of the United States. When considering such requests, Directors must address issues such as, but not limited to, how the employee will adhere to the Department of State's Chief of Mission's security requirements and standards; whether the employee has the proper documentation such as passports, visas, etc. required to perform work in the foreign location; whether the employee will derive protections and immunities provided for through bilateral or multilateral agreements; and contingency planning should problems arise with the overseas remote work arrangement.
- ii. In addition to the normal review/approval process, requests for overseas remote work arrangements must be approved by Executive Director of the Commission, ***and the U.S. State Department.*** The U.S. Department of State has established an approval process for such overseas arrangements:

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- a. Requests of Less than One Year. Bureaus/Offices intending to establish an overseas remote work arrangement for a period of less than one year must obtain Chief of Mission approval through the country clearance process. Unclassified country requests must be sent through the State Department's automated eCountry Clearance (eCC) system at <https://ecc.state.gov/security/EccLogin.aspx>. A Chief of Mission is the principal officer in charge of diplomatic mission of the U.S. or of a U.S. office abroad which is designated by the Secretary of State. The Chief of Mission is often an Ambassador. Extensions of these arrangements such that the total duration of the arrangement would be more than one year will require a National Security Decision Directive 38 (NSDD 38) request (see Paragraph 7.D(2) for additional information).
- b. Requests of One Year or More. Activities that require or envision a Commission employee conducting official business in a foreign country for one year or more are considered permanent. If a Director intends to establish an overseas remote work arrangement for one year or more, they must follow the procedures outlined in the NSDD 38. NSDD 38 requests must be submitted via the online application at <https://nsdd38.state.gov/>. Requests should be submitted by the Commission official responsible for funding the arrangement, on behalf of the employee in the employing agency.

7. PROCEDURES.

- (a) Establishing a Remote Work Agreement. Employees must agree and sign a remote work agreement approved by their director and the Chief of Staff detailing the expectations and responsibilities of working at a remote work site.
- (b) Procedures to Modify a Remote Work Agreement.
 - i. Commission employees may request to change an existing remote work agreement by submitting a new remote work agreement.
 - ii. The employee requesting a change to an existing remote work arrangement must:
 - a. Discuss the request with their supervisor. Changing the employee's duty station may affect the employee (e.g., locality pay).
 - b. Submit a request for a change to remote work arrangement in writing. The request must include the proposed duty station and effective date. The employee's director may consider, however, whether there is a need to limit the

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geographic location of the duty station for the remote arrangement due to travel or other mission requirements.

- iii. Following approval, notify their supervisor of any changes in address within 48 hours of the official change of location and ensure locality pay is accurately reflected in the official documentation. Failure to notify the supervisor of any changes in address may result in disciplinary action.
 - iv. The official worksite must be in the United States.
 - v. Denial of a remote work modification request should not prevent employees from requesting to telework on a regular, recurring, or ad hoc basis or performing their assigned duties.
 - vi. Working from anywhere other than one's approved remote location may be done on a temporary telework basis. Although no formal agreement is required to work on a telework basis, employees must request and receive approval from their supervisor in advance of assuming duties at a telework location.
- (c) Working On Site. All work on-site must be approved by the employee's supervisor and pre-coordinated with the Chief of Staff or designated representative.

8. EXCEPTIONS.

Any exceptions to this policy must be made in writing and may be approved by the Executive Director or the Chief of Staff on a case-by-case basis. Supervisors may not make exceptions to this policy, but they are permitted to tailor specific remote work agreements at the Appendix in a manner most conducive to the efficient operation of their Directorates.

9. SUPERSESSION

None.



APPROVED: Kimberly M. Zeich Date: 10/2/2023
Kimberly M. Zeich
Executive Director

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Appendix 1

Remote Work Agreement

This agreement is voluntarily made between _____ (employee's name) and the U.S. AbilityOne Commission.

On _____ (month, day, year)
_____ (employee's name) certifies their official duty station is _____ (employee's address).

By signing this Agreement, I certify that I have read the Commission's Remote Work policy and will comply with the requirements.

I understand all pay entitlements (including locality-based pay) are based on the official worksite identified above. I understand certain benefits and state taxes may be affected by this locality and that pursuant to the Remote Work Policy that I must follow the procedure for notifying my Director of a change in remote worksite.

I understand all costs associated with a move to a new remote worksite are the responsibility of the employee.

I also understand that this agreement will be assessed annually, though it can be reevaluated at any time.

I understand the Commission will furnish the employee a government-issued phone and provide funds for any required temporary duty travel away from the official remote worksite.

I understand all Commission equipment will be returned to the Commission in the event of my separation.

Employee Signature and Date

Director Signature and Date

(Chief of Staff) Signature and Date

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Annual Renewal/Review of Remote Work Arrangement

Review Date	Director Signature	Employee Signature

The Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled Operates as the U.S. AbilityOne Commission

