

Administrative Policy

Subject: Remote and Hybrid Work

Section: 1 – Employment Practices

Adm: 2-125

Issued: 04/26/19

Revised: 10/01/21

POLICY: As described in the [cover memo](#), beginning November 1, 2021, the Department of Social Services (DSS) will begin participating in a pilot program to assess the effectiveness of a distributed work team approach. DSS may allow employees working in [eligible job classifications/assignments, in specified locations](#), that demonstrate a proven ability to meet expectations to work in a distributed work team environment in approved situations. In a distributed work team environment, employees may work in different approved physical locations from one another including in the office and/or remotely, whether on a regular or an as-needed basis. All approved employees must work a minimum of two days a week in their designated DSS office/facility.

Based on an employee's request, qualifying employees may be assigned to a hybrid work arrangement (a combination of working in a remote work location and a DSS office). Supervisors should inform employees requesting a hybrid work arrangement of the requirements of such arrangement. Employees in approved hybrid work arrangements must agree to temporarily suspend their arrangement as instructed throughout this policy. Decisions regarding dependent care and personal responsibilities should not affect an employee's ability to return to the office upon request. Approval of a hybrid work arrangement by the [appointing authority](#) (divisional human resource manager) or their designee is dependent upon an employee's essential job duties as not all positions are appropriate for remote work (e.g., employees providing direct care); DSS needs; suitability of the employee; impact on the office and other DSS employees; and, provision of services. Offices must ensure office and phone coverage is maintained at all times during normal operating hours. Working in a hybrid work arrangement does not change the basic terms and conditions of employment with DSS.

REQUESTS FOR HYBRID WORK ARRANGEMENT

Employees may request approval for a hybrid work arrangement by submitting a completed [Hybrid Work Arrangement Application \(Exhibit 1\)](#) to their immediate supervisor. Requests will be forwarded through the divisional chain of command for review. The [appointing authority](#) or designee may grant exceptions to the requirement of completing this form if a specific situation does not allow adequate time (e.g., inclement weather, natural disaster, office closings or a pandemic). Temporary changes in approved job assignment, remote work location or defined work schedule must also be reviewed and approved by the immediate supervisor. Permanent changes to an employee's position or job functions require the employee to submit a new [Hybrid Work Arrangement Application \(Exhibit 1\)](#) to their immediate supervisor. A copy of the final determination from the [appointing authority](#) or their designee will be returned to the immediate supervisor who will provide a copy to the employee. The appointing authority

or designee will also send a copy of the completed form to the Human Resource Center (HRC) for retention in the employee's official DSS personnel file.

Eligibility and Suitability Criteria

Supervisors and the divisional chain of command are responsible for determining eligibility and suitability for a hybrid work arrangement. Review the [Remote Work Checklist \(Exhibit 2\)](#) to assist in determining if the employee and their workspace are eligible. Employee requests for a hybrid work arrangement will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis with consideration of essential job duties, customer service, office coverage and other factors, not prohibited by law, bearing on the decision at the time the decision is made. This includes consideration of the following criteria and a determination made about the eligibility of the position and suitability of the employee:

- The employee's job duties can be successfully completed, including meeting established deadlines, while working remotely on a partial basis with minimal supervision.
- The position does not require regular in-person interaction and/or collaboration with co-workers or clients in an office setting.
- Allowing the employee to work in a hybrid work arrangement does not compromise the productivity of DSS, other employees, or the provision of services. Approval of a hybrid work arrangement must not adversely affect the employee's job performance or the duties and responsibilities of co-workers.
- Has worked for a minimum of three months after their hire date in a job classification and have had a minimum of two monthly [ENGAGE](#) meetings.
- The employees' direct supervisor has completed onboarding as outlined by their manager (remote work may be temporarily suspended during the onboarding of a new immediate supervisor, not to exceed three months; refer to the Termination/Modification of a Hybrid Work Agreement section of this policy).
- Demonstrates strong communication skills.
- Has no performance, conduct or attendance concerns, is not on a performance improvement plan or corrective action plan and has not received formal discipline within the last 12 months.
- Employees agree to temporarily suspend their arrangement as instructed throughout this policy. Decisions regarding dependent care and personal responsibilities should not affect an employee's ability to return to the office upon request.

For an additional resource with determining eligibility and suitability, supervisors may also utilize the [Distributed Teams Assessment Tool](#).

The DSS department director, deputy department director, division directors, deputy division directors and other designated DSS director's office employees, and other

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employees as determined appropriate by division directors will not be approved for a hybrid work arrangement.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

Employee job expectations and responsibilities will not change due to a hybrid work arrangement. Employees working remotely must not be in a physical or mental condition which renders them incapable of performing their job responsibilities. Employees working remotely must manage dependent care and personal responsibilities as necessary to meet their job responsibilities. For example, individuals at a remote work location in need of care must have that care provided by someone other than the employee during the employee's working hours. Employees may be asked to provide proof of dependent care. Employees are expected to comply with all DSS policies, including but not limited to, [Policy 2-110 \(Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace\)](#), [Policy 2-115 \(Work Rules\)](#), [Policy 2-119 \(Confidentiality\)](#), [Policy 2-500 \(Conflict of Interest\)](#).

Employees in a hybrid work arrangement are responsible for determining and complying with all state and local income tax requirements regarding their specific situation and work location, and if needed should consult a tax advisor.

Work Hours and Schedules

The amount of time an employee is scheduled to work will not change due to working in a hybrid work arrangement. Employees must adhere to established work hours agreed upon and approved by supervisors. Employees must request and receive approval for any deviation from the established hybrid work schedule, including meal periods. Any employee wishing to request a flexible work schedule should complete a [Work Schedule Change Request form](#) and submit it through appropriate channels to the division director or designee for a final determination. For more information, refer to [Policy 2-118 \(Daily Work Periods/Flexible Work Schedules\)](#). All overtime worked by Code 1 and Code 2 employees must have prior approval from the immediate supervisor or designee as described in [Policy 2-108 \(Overtime/Compensatory Time\)](#). Failure to obtain proper approval for overtime work may result in removal from working in a hybrid work arrangement or other appropriate action.

Absences and Availability

The process for requesting leave will not change due to a hybrid work arrangement. For unplanned absences, in accordance with local call-in policy, employees should request approval from their immediate supervisor or designee as far in advance as possible, but no later than within one hour of the beginning of the employee's work shift. For more information, refer to [Policy 2-108 \(Overtime/Compensatory Time\)](#), [Policy 2-300 \(Annual Leave\)](#) and [Policy 2-301 \(Sick Leave\)](#). While on approved leave, employees should not complete work from a remote location without prior supervisory approval.

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Employees are expected to remain available and productive during designated work hours. Employees should meet responsiveness expectations (e.g., e-mail and phone inquiries) established by the supervisor and divisional leadership. The work schedules for employees in a hybrid work arrangement must be communicated to local office employees by either the supervisor or the employee, as determined by the supervisor. Employees may still be required to attend in-office meetings or come in to the office as determined necessary by supervisors or managers including on days they would normally work remotely. In-person meetings may not be held at an employee's remote work location. In-person meetings must be held at a State office/facility, or other appropriate public location (e.g. restaurant, hotel business center, etc.). When participating in virtual meetings, all employees with video capability should have their video on unless there are documented information technology (IT) reasons. Employees must keep their out-of-office messages up-to-date when they are on leave. Outlook calendars, or other shared calendars, must be kept up-to-date and be shared with applicable employees.

ENGAGE and REFLECT meetings should be held in-person unless extenuating circumstances exist. Supervisors should make an effort to schedule ENGAGE and REFLECT meetings on a day when the employee is working in the office/facility.

Employees must use a call forwarding option from their office phone number to the phone at their remote work location. If calls are received on switchboard lines for an employee working remotely, office staff will directly forward the call to the employee at their remote work location. The telephone at an employee's remote work location must be answered in a business-like manner during the employee's scheduled work hours. In the event voicemail is used, the message should identify that the caller has reached the employee and reference the applicable department and/or division. An employee's voicemail message should not indicate that the employee is working at a remote work location. The employee must be readily available to provide a prompt response to external contacts (e.g., phone calls and e-mails) within established timeframes by divisional management. Employees calling clients and customers may prevent them from seeing the telephone number at their remote work location by using the [Jabber Softphone](#). Employees should refer to supervisory direction and/or divisional policies regarding phone numbers for individuals returning calls for work related reasons.

Clients will not be given the remote work location address of an employee working in a hybrid work arrangement. This will eliminate the potential for clients attempting to reach employees during non-business hours at the remote work location.

If an employee working remotely is unable to perform their duties (e.g., cannot electronically connect to the office because of power outages or telephone/wireless service does not function properly), the employee must contact their supervisor within 15

minutes to determine if they should return to their official domicile until the issue is resolved. The employee will be expected to report to the official domicile within an established timeframe. The employee must utilize leave (e.g. annual and/or compensatory time) or make-up time (if applicable) in the same workweek for periods where the hybrid work arrangement results in the employee being unable to perform work.

Work Environment/Safety

Employees in a hybrid work arrangement must take precautions to create a disruption free work environment at their remote work location (e.g., other individuals at the remote work location being disruptive, dogs barking, etc.). Individuals should be unable to distinguish an employee's remote work location from work locations in a DSS office/facility.

Employees are expected to maintain the same standards of health and safety at their remote work location as they are at their DSS office/facility. For more information regarding an employee's workspace, review the [Remote Work Checklist \(Exhibit 2\)](#).

If an employee working in a remote work location sustains a work-related injury, workers' compensation laws and rules apply. The employee is responsible for following the established procedures to report such an injury and complete all required forms in accordance with [Policy 2-204 \(Workers' Compensation\)](#). DSS does not assume any liability except to the extent required by law. If a workers' compensation claim is filed for an incident occurring in an employee's remote work location (e.g., residence), the employee may be required to make the site of the incident available for inspection or investigation. DSS assumes no responsibility for an employee's personal property. Employees working from their residence remain solely liable for injuries to members of their family or any other third party, or any damages to real or personal property that occurs on the employees' premises.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Supervisors and appropriate management staff are responsible for the following:

- Being present in the office for a time period determined by management while onboarding and training a new employee.
- Routinely monitoring the employee's work time and quality of work to verify the employee is productive and working efficiently while in a hybrid work arrangement.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the hybrid work arrangement on the employees' performance. DSS will end the hybrid work arrangement if it is determined that the arrangement is no longer time or cost effective; the employee is not meeting performance or conduct requirements; the work unit is being negatively impacted; or the provision of services to clients is diminished.

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- Conducting a quarterly review of the employee's expenses (e.g., requests for a reasonable amount of office supplies and materials) to ensure they are in compliance with DSS policy and that the hybrid work arrangement is not creating a financial hardship on DSS.
- If the employee leaves DSS employment or discontinues their hybrid work arrangement, ensuring all state property is returned and inventoried in a timely manner. This must be done by the termination date or the date the employee will no longer be working remotely. Refer to the Supplies, Equipment, Computers and Support section in this policy for more information.

SUPPLIES, EQUIPMENT, COMPUTERS AND SUPPORT

DSS is not responsible for operating costs, home maintenance, or any other incidental costs associated with the use of the employee's residence for remote work (e.g. utilities, internet, and phone service). Telephone, data and voice lines that meet DSS' established standards, as well as high-speed internet (dial-up service is not adequate for remote work) must be provided by the employee at their own expense. Employees working in a hybrid work arrangement are responsible for providing a safe and appropriate workstation, including a chair or desk, for their needs when working remotely. For more information regarding the necessary equipment and supplies at an employee's remote work location, review the [Remote Work Checklist \(Exhibit 2\)](#).

Out-of-pocket expenses for materials and supplies normally available at DSS offices such as computer paper, pens, etc. will not be reimbursed to employees working remotely. On a case-by-case basis, reviewed by the employee's immediate supervisor and appropriate management staff, employees in a hybrid work arrangement may take a reasonable amount of office supplies, equipment, and materials to the remote work location to be used in the performance of their remote work. State owned printers and scanners are not to be removed from state offices or facilities. Employees working in hybrid work arrangements utilizing state equipment are responsible for bringing this equipment into the office on days they are working at the office/facility. All state property taken to an employee's remote work location must be inventoried in a timely manner. Divisional guidance regarding inventory for temporary relocation of equipment to other work locations should be followed. Requests for workplace accommodations should be made to the [divisional human resource manager](#) or designee. For more information, refer to [Policy 2-123 \(Work Adjustment/Accommodation Requests\)](#).

To request an equipment transfer or to report unused or excess equipment that needs to be sent to surplus and/or transferred, refer to [Policy 3-403 \(Inventory of Non-Expendable Property\)](#).

For the purpose of DSS hardware and software security, employees may only use state issued software and the Office of Administration Information Technology Services

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Division (OA ITSD) must approve the systems utilized. Any hardware or software purchased by the state remains the property of the state. Hardware and software support will be provided by the OA ITSD Help Desk online or by phone at 573-751-3811. If a technical problem cannot be resolved while working remotely, the employee will arrange to bring their equipment to the DSS office/facility for service. OA ITSD and DSS will not provide support for software packages not outlined above, including; hardware support for the employee's own personal computer equipment and/or peripherals (i.e., printers, hard drives); software installation other than those outlined above; and printing to any non-state-owned printer and/or printer configuration. Employees using state-owned software must adhere to the manufacturer's licensing agreements. For more information, refer to [Policy 6-100 \(Information Security Management\)](#).

Employees working at a remote work location will take all precautions necessary to secure sensitive information and prevent unauthorized access to any DSS system. Restricted access materials (such as confidential client records, payroll, official personnel files, etc.) may not be taken out of the office, copied, or compromised in any way. Additional guidance may be obtained from the employee's immediate supervisor. Work product developed while working remotely remains the property of DSS. Employees in a hybrid work arrangement are expected to comply with applicable DSS policies (e.g., [Policy 2-119 \(Confidentiality\)](#), [Policy 2-115 \(Work Rules\)](#), etc.

Employees working in a hybrid work arrangement are subject to the same requirements as office and facility employees regarding the use of state owned property. DSS equipment and software may not be used for personal purposes. For more information, refer to [Policy 2-119 \(Confidentiality\)](#), [Policy 5-103 \(Personally Identifiable Information and HIPPA Protected Health Information\)](#), and [Policy 6-100 \(Information Security Management\)](#).

If state property is lost, damaged, or destroyed, refer to [Policy 3-403 \(Inventory of Non-Expendable Property\)](#). If the employee terminates from employment or discontinues their hybrid work arrangement, all property is to be returned to DSS in working order with no damage. The employee will be responsible for payment if property is not returned or is damaged. For more information, refer to [Policy 2-403 \(Separation from Employment\)](#).

DESIGNATION OF OFFICIAL DOMICILE

All employees have a designated official domicile. An employee's official domicile will normally be the DSS office/facility where an employee performs their work when not working remotely, minimally two days a week. Requests for exceptions to this must be submitted through the supervisory chain and approved by the [divisional human resource manager](#). Travel reimbursement for DSS business will be based on travel from the employee's official domicile to their destination and return; or from their remote work location to their destination and return, whichever is closer. Travel between an

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employee's remote work location and official domicile is not reimbursable. For more information, refer to [Policy 7-101 \(Reimbursement of Travel Expenses\)](#).

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The ongoing professional development of employees is a critical aspect to the success of distributed work teams. Training is offered to employees in a variety of formats. Employees working in a remote location or responsible for supervising an employee working remotely, must complete [required training](#) as outlined on their [Employee Learning Center](#) training plan.

For additional resources with managing employees in hybrid work arrangements, supervisors may utilize the [Show Me Distributed Teams website](#). Refer to the [HRC Training page](#) or [MO Learning](#) for more information on available trainings.

TERMINATION/MODIFICATION OF A HYBRID WORK ARRANGEMENT

DSS reserves the right to modify or terminate a hybrid work arrangement at any time, for no reason, or for any reason not prohibited by law.

An employee's hybrid work arrangement may be temporarily suspended during the onboarding of a new immediate supervisor as outlined by their manager. This suspension should be for a period no longer than three months unless there are extenuating circumstances.

In the event a hybrid work arrangement is terminated, written notice should be provided to the employee by the appointing authority or designee. Upon terminating a hybrid work arrangement, the employee will be required to work at a designated DSS office/facility. Employees that have a hybrid work arrangement terminated for performance, conduct or attendance concerns, including employees placed on performance improvement plans or corrective action plans, and employees who receive discipline are not eligible to apply for a hybrid work arrangement for 12 months after the initial hybrid work arrangement is terminated.

Employees working remotely who are unable or unwilling to report to a designated DSS office/facility as directed may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal or separation from employment. Employees may request to terminate the hybrid work arrangement through their immediate supervisor, which will be forwarded through their chain of command. The approval or denial of the request is entirely within the discretion of the appointing authority or their designee. Notice will be sent through supervisory channels and to HRC to be retained in the employee's official DSS personnel file.