

Grinnell Public Library District

Telecommuting Policy:

Grinnell Public Library District (GPLD) considers telecommuting to be a viable alternative work arrangement in cases where current job duties and assignments are regularly accomplished in such an arrangement. Telecommuting allows employees to work at home for all or part of their regular workweek. Telecommuting is a work alternative that may be appropriate for some employees and some jobs. It is not an entitlement, it is not a GPLD-wide benefit, and it in no way changes the terms and conditions of employment with GPLD.

Procedure

1. Either an employee or the Director can suggest telecommuting as a possible work arrangement.
2. Definitions
 - a. Telecommuting can be informal such as working from a home worksite/office for a few hours, a day, or a short-term project. Other informal, short-term arrangements may be made for employees on family or medical leave, to the extent practical for the employee and GPLD and with the consent of the employee's health care provider, if appropriate. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.
 - b. Telecommuting can be formal in which working from a home worksite/office occurs on an ongoing, regular work schedule. Individuals requesting telecommuting must hold GPLD positions where current job duties are assigned to be accomplished in such an arrangement as determined by the Director. Any formal telecommuting arrangement made will be on a trial basis for two weeks, and may be discontinued, at will, at any time at the request of either the telecommuter or the Director.
3. GPLD will determine, with information supplied by the employee, the appropriate equipment and software needs for each telecommuting arrangement on a case-by-case basis. Employee supplied equipment and/or software may be used if deemed appropriate by GPLD, subject to change at any time. Equipment and/or software supplied by GPLD will be maintained by GPLD. Equipment and/or software supplied by the employee will be maintained by the employee. GPLD accepts no responsibility for damage or repairs to employee-owned equipment and/or software. Equipment and/or software supplied or subsidized by GPLD is to be used for business purposes only except in the case of a shared use agreement. The telecommuter should sign an inventory of all office property and agree to take appropriate action to protect the items from damage or theft. Upon termination of employment all GPLD property will be returned to GPLD, unless other arrangements have been made. This does not guarantee a telecommuter will receive GPLD equipment and/or software.
4. Consistent with GPLD's expectations of information security for employees working in the office, telecommuting employees will be expected to ensure the protection of confidential information accessible from their home office or when the employee is on the road for business. Steps include use of locked file cabinets and desks, regular password maintenance, and any other steps appropriate for the job and the environment.
5. The employee will establish an appropriate work environment within their home for work purposes. GPLD will not be responsible for costs associated with initial setup of the employee's home worksite/office such as remodeling, furniture or lighting, nor for repairs or modifications to the home office space.

6. GPLD telecommuting employees may not meet in their home with another person(s) in the conduct of any GPLD business.
7. Injuries sustained by the employee while at their home worksite during documented work times and in conjunction with their regular work duties are normally covered by the GPLD's workers' compensation policy. Telecommuting employees are responsible for notifying the Director of such injuries as soon as possible. Failure to notify GPLD within 30 days after the accident can result in denial of benefits in accordance with NYS Insurance Fund procedures. The employee is liable for any injuries sustained by visitors to his or her home worksite. GPLD is not responsible for any incident that may occur in the employee's home. GPLD recommends employees working at home review their homeowner's insurance's liability coverage and discuss with their insurance agent their coverage for all situations associated with working at home.
8. GPLD will supply the employee with appropriate office supplies for successful completion of job responsibilities. GPLD will also reimburse the employee for all other business-related expenses that are reasonably incurred in accordance with job responsibilities.
9. For a formal telecommuting arrangement, the employee and the Director will agree on the number of days of telecommuting allowed each week, the work schedule the employee will customarily maintain, and the manner and frequency of communication. For formal and informal telecommuting arrangements, the employee agrees to be accessible by phone or email within a reasonable time period during the agreed-on work schedule, and to post work hours and location to GPLD in an agreed upon manner.
10. For formal and informal telecommuting arrangements, telecommuting employees who are not exempt from the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act will be required to record all hours worked in a manner designated by GPLD. Telecommuting employees will be held to a high standard of compliance due to the nature of the work arrangement. Hours worked in excess of those specified per day and per workweek, in accordance with state and federal requirements, will require the advance approval of the Director. Failure to comply with this requirement can result in the immediate cessation of the telecommuting agreement.

Formal Telecommuting Agreement

Before entering into any formal telecommuting agreement, the employee with the assistance of the Director, will evaluate the suitability of such an arrangement, paying particular attention to the following areas:

- a. Employee suitability. The employee and the Director will assess the needs and work habits of the employee, compared to traits customarily recognized as appropriate for successful telecommuters.
 - b. Job responsibilities. The employee and the Director will discuss the job responsibilities, scheduling issues, and determine if current job duties are assigned to be accomplished in such an arrangement. If current job duties are assigned to be accomplished in such an arrangement the position will be identified by GPLD as eligible for telecommuting.
 - c. Home worksite/office. The employee and the Director will discuss the home worksite/office space and equipment needs for the employee to work at home.
 - d. Tax and other legal implications for the business use of the employee's home based on Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and state and local government restrictions. Responsibility for fulfilling all obligations in this area rests solely with the employee.
1. If the employee and the Director agree, a draft formal telecommuting agreement will be prepared and signed by all parties, and a two week trial period will commence.

2. For formal telecommuting arrangements, valuation of telecommuter performance during the trial period may include daily interaction by phone and e-mail between the employee and the Director, and weekly face-to-face meetings or virtual meetings to discuss work progress and problems. At the conclusion of the trial period, the employee and the Director will each complete an evaluation of the arrangement and make recommendations for continuance or modifications. Evaluation of telecommuter performance beyond the trial period will be consistent with that received by employees working at the office in both content and frequency but will focus on work output and completion of objectives rather than on time-based performance.
3. An appropriate level of communication between the telecommuter and the Director will be agreed to as part of the discussion process and will be more formal during the trial period. After the conclusion of the trial period, the Director and telecommuter will communicate at a level consistent with employees working at the office or in a manner and frequency that seems appropriate for the job and the individuals involved.
4. Telecommuting is not designed to be a replacement for appropriate family care. Although an individual employee's schedule may be modified to accommodate child care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on job performance and meeting business demands. Prospective telecommuters are expected to discuss the requirements of telecommuting with family members prior to entering into a trial period.
5. Employees entering into a telecommuting agreement may be required to forfeit use of a personal office or workstation in favor of a shared arrangement to maximize GPLD space needs.
6. The availability of telecommuting as a flexible work arrangement for employees of GPLD can be discontinued at any time at the discretion of GPLD. Every effort will be made to provide 30 days' notice of such a change to accommodate commuting, child care and other problems that may arise from such a change. There may be instances, however, when no notice is possible.

Informal Telecommuting Procedures

1. All informal telecommuting arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis, focusing first on the business needs of the organization.
2. Informal telecommuting may be requested by an employee and granted by the Director.
3. If the employee and the Director agree on an informal telecommuting arrangement, the employee may be required to complete and submit the online Informal Telecommuting Request Form, at the discretion of the Director.
4. The Director must approve an informal telecommuting request PRIOR to the date/time of the request.
5. An informal telecommuting arrangement may not conflict with any other GPLD personnel policy.

This policy is determined by the Grinnell Public Library Board of Trustees and is subject to periodic review and/or revision at the discretion of the board.

Adopted by the Grinnell Public Library Board of Trustees on June 17, 2020.