



Operational Procedures for Variable Work Schedule, Flexible Work Schedule, and Remote Work

Introduction

The Baby Fold is able, in some situations, to provide flexible and/or remote working arrangements for an employee, based on each department's operational and client service needs. Flexible or remote working arrangements are intended to enhance an employee's ability to serve clients, meet Agency and Department goals, and balance personal and professional responsibilities. Participation in a work arrangement that provides opportunities for flexible/remote work, is a privilege and not a right.

When evaluating a flexible/remote work request from an employee, the supervisor must determine that the employee can effectively perform the job duties of the position while working in this manner. The supervisor must also determine that the flexible/remote work arrangement conforms to applicable regulations and policies. Certain positions may still be required to meet clients or donors in-person, or during the evening and on weekends, even when working remotely.

If an employee is unsure that their position meets the criteria to access flexible or remote working arrangements, they should seek guidance from their supervisor for clarification. Supervisors may need to confirm/consult with the Department Director in unique circumstances.

Requests to work remotely as a disability accommodation are handled through a separate process. Please contact the VP of Human Resources regarding this type of request.

Statement

Flexible/remote working arrangements are optional work schedules that may be discontinued at any time. After consultation with the employee, managers determine the employee's work schedule, and the employee must maintain the agreed upon schedule. Unless a condition of employment contains a remote-work option, all employees should be employed with the agency 4 months before submitting a formal remote work arrangement request and 3 months to request an informal (day) remote work arrangement.

Remote work schedules should not cause a non-exempt employee to work overtime or cause any employee to work on existing holidays or conflict with leave allocation practices.

Supervisors must carefully evaluate the feasibility of a proposed flexible/remote-work arrangement with each employee. The arrangement is intended to benefit the employee without unduly burdening the department and the needs of the agency. To be finalized, the remote work arrangement requires Director/VP approval, including approval by the Vice President of Human Resources.

The key to remember is that this process and review of the viability of the request, is not personal. Why an employee wants the work arrangement, is not the primary determinant for approval. How the client work, department operations, and agency services are impacted, is the major criteria for approval.

Definitions

Variable Work Schedule: A variable work schedule is defined as a schedule that typically encompasses a five day work week, but has variations as to a worker's designated time "on" or "off" the clock due to specific work tasks or direct service delivery, and/or client appointment schedules. This type of work schedule has always been in effect at The Baby Fold, and typically exists in certain type of job categories that primarily have a work schedule driven by client appointment schedules. Primary examples of these types of job categories that might experience a Variable Work Schedule would include, but not be limited to, ASAP Therapists, Early Childhood Mental Health Consultants, Foster Care and Intact Caseworkers, and Foster Care Case Assistants. To a lesser degree, positions such as Hammitt Family Advocates and Hammitt School Counselors might also experience variable work schedules, but typically on a more intermittent basis as compared to the other job categories listed.

Variable Work Schedules do not require a formal, signed remote work agreement, to maintain an "out-of-office" schedule that is required to deliver client services out in the field, or to client homes. Field-based or in-home client service delivery is not remote work. A formal, signed remote work agreement may apply if the worker is consistently delivering tele-health therapy services and/or completing the paperwork portion of their job responsibilities remotely (see remote work schedule definitions below).

Variable work schedules should include clear expectations that are mutually understood by both the employee and the supervisor. At a minimum, work schedules on the employee's Outlook calendar should be kept up-to-date and readily accessible by supervisory personnel. The employee's supervisor should always be kept informed of any immediate changes that may occur to the work schedule that is posted on an employee's Outlook calendar. The notations on an employee calendar should indicate if an employee will be "off the clock" and not working during typical work hours, due to their variable schedule. This is permissible if the employee is adjusting their normal DAILY work hours during the same work week, in order to comply with Wage and Labor guidelines. This information on the employee Outlook calendar will assist supervisory personnel with verifying data submitted on the employee timesheet. Hourly paid employees should always be paid for their actual hours worked, and any OVERTIME AS APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THEIR SUPERVISOR.

Flexible Work Schedule: A Flexible Work Schedule consists of a permanent work schedule that does not reflect the standard daily work hours for that position, and the work schedule is not variable due to client appointment schedules.

Remote Work Schedule: Remote work can be formal or informal. Informal remote work arrangements consist of a temporary work arrangement that will last less than 5 days. Informal remote work arrangements do not require a written, Remote Work Agreement. An informal remote work arrangement can be approved by a supervisor, but should also be PROMPTLY communicated to Department Managers and Department Directors/VPs.

A formal remote work arrangement is any semi-permanent or long term change to the employee's work location (i.e. remotely, outside the office location) that will last longer than 5 days and up to 12 months. This type of formal Remote Work Arrangement should include a written, Remote Work Agreement.

To help ensure that the employee continues working effectively under a remote-work arrangement, supervisors should develop a remote-work plan with the employee, based on the specific job position and departmental guidelines. With a good plan in place, remote-work arrangements can benefit the employee, the department, and the agency in general.

Types of Flexible Schedule and/or Remote Work Arrangements:

- **Flextime**- Full or part-time employees may vary the start and end times of their workday that differs from their normal working hours, with supervisory approval. This may occur if the employee is adjusting their normal DAILY work hours during the same work week, in order to comply with Wage and Labor guidelines. This information should be indicated on the employee's Outlook calendar and will assist supervisory personnel with verifying data submitted on the employee timesheet. Hourly paid employees should always be paid for their actual hours worked, and any OVERTIME AS APPROVED IN ADVANCE BY THEIR SUPERVISOR, irrespective of altering their starting or ending work times on any given work day.
- **Compressed Work Week**- Full-time employees may request to compress their work hours into fewer than five days per week. Departments must still maintain coverage during regular hours Monday through Friday, or 24/7 if required by the program.
- **Part-time**-Employees decrease their hours to less than the standard work week and reduce their workload and/or responsibilities accordingly, with a corresponding reduction in pay and an adjustment to benefits. This option could be applied in a "job share" between two previously full-time employees.
- **Hybrid Remote Work**-Employees perform some of their responsibilities at a location other than the primary office work location, on a regular basis. If an employee does hybrid remote work more than three days a week, they may be required to share a work station.
- **Total Remote Work**-Employees perform full-time job responsibilities exclusively from a location outside the primary work site/location with no individually designated work station at an agency office location.

Evaluation Process:

1. The employee should first schedule a time to meet with their supervisor to discuss the feasibility of a Flexible or Remote Working Agreement. Department Managers, if applicable, should be included in this conversation.
2. Based on the outcome of the discussion, the employee must complete the Flexible Working Arrangements Agreement and submit it to their Supervisor/Department Manager. If the flexible working arrangement being requested includes remote work, the employee must also complete the Remote Work Agreement. The Human Resources department is available for questions or to provide assistance in preparing the form(s).
3. The Supervisor/Department Manager will review the request and make a recommendation for approval or denial. The request will then be submitted to the Department Director, or VP for approval or denial.
4. The Department Director or VP will submit the request to the Vice President of Human Resources for final approval or denial. Human Resources will be verifying the business reason for denials and the consistency of approvals per department.

5. The supervisor may recommend an alternate working arrangement if the submitted Flexible Working Arrangement Agreement, as proposed by the employee, does not meet the need of the department or the agency.
6. In determining whether to approve or deny any work arrangement, the supervisor must consider the organization's service goals and should approve the agreement(s) only if the arrangement permits these goals to be achieved.
7. If the Flexible Working Arrangement is denied the employee will continue to work standard hours.
8. If the arrangement is approved, Human Resources will send the final approval back to the Department Director or VP, the Department Manager, and the employee's immediate supervisor. If a Remote Work Agreement is applicable, the VP of Human Resources department will sign the document and it will be submitted back to the department along with the signed Flexible Working Arrangement Agreement. A copy of the Flexible/Remote Work Request Form will be maintained in the employee's personnel file.
9. If Human Resources and the department do not agree on the final decisions, the President and CEO will review the documents and make a final decision.
10. All employees should receive an approval or declination within 14 calendar days of the submission. The exception to this timeline is when the President and CEO has to render a decision. In those cases, the employee should receive an approval or denial within 21 calendar days.

Determine the Employee's Readiness for a Flexible/Remote Work Arrangement

Employee work styles and job duties vary. Some employees or positions may be better suited for a flexible/remote work arrangement than others. So when evaluating a flexible work request, consider how well the employee has demonstrated the skills and work habits that lead to a successful flexible work arrangement including the employee's:

- Current productivity and past history of success
- Punctuality and ability to adhere to a work schedule and report absences from work
- Ability to accomplish job duties that could be affected by daily or weekly task-specific deadlines
- Remaining probationary or trial period that needs to be completed
- Overtime eligibility

After determining that an employee is likely to succeed in a flexible/remote work arrangement, assess how well the rest of the department will function when an employee begins the flexible work arrangement, including:

- Anticipated benefits to the department
- Anticipated changes to team dynamics
- Backup personnel necessary when the flexible/remote work employee is out
- Effects on team goals and commitments

Ultimately, the Supervisor/Manager needs to carefully consider the work configuration that functions best for the department. Each department is different. Some departments are successful with frequent flexible/remote work among team members, while other departments must limit opportunities based on operational and client service needs. If unsure about what will work best, start with limited

flexible/remote work options for a department, then make changes after gaining experience. *(Please consult with the Department Director and the VP of Human Resources when assessing options.)*

Consider whether a flexible/remote work arrangement will affect:

- Clients, customer service, safety, security, or operational costs
- Time worked and benefit usage record keeping, especially holiday-related benefits
- Equipment and technology needs

Manager and Supervisor's Response to the Flexible/Remote Work Request

If the flexible/remote work request is approved, your next step is to create the flex-work plan in conjunction with the employee.

If you're unsure that the proposed flexible/remote work arrangement can be successful, consider allowing the employee to pilot the work arrangement on a trial basis. Designate an initial review period after which you will make a final decision on the flexible/remote work arrangement.

If you cannot approve the flexible/remote work request, explain your decision based on both the proposal's impact on your department and, if relevant, the employee's work record in your department.

Document the Flexible/Remote Work Agreement

The flexible/remote work agreement should be thoroughly completed. The agreement should explain:

- The purpose of the flexible/remote work agreement. This is to ensure that both the supervisor and the employee have a clear, common understanding of the flexible/remote work arrangement.
- The work schedule that specifies flexible work days and times
- The duration of the flexible/remote work agreement
- How the flexible/remote work arrangement may be terminated
- When the employee is required to be in the office
- How/when/where supervision of the employee will take place while working under the flexible/remote work agreement

The employee should be made aware that the agreement is subject to immediate revision based on the departmental work requirements or lack of productivity. The supervisor should also make the employee aware that the flexible/remote work arrangement is contingent upon it working effectively for both the employee and the department.

The supervisor, in conjunction with the employee, should complete a flexible/remote work plan. The format of the Work Plan will comply with departmental guidelines. The plan will outline how communications should be handled upon the start of the new flexible/remote work arrangement. Employees should be required to:

- Update their email stating their hours of availability and what to do in case of urgent issues, if an alternate schedule of work days is part of the plan.
- Update the voicemail outgoing message to contain the same information as the outgoing email.

- Discuss a plan on how work will be completed to minimize conflicting needs when the employee is not readily available during normal business hours of other departments within the organization
- Maintain a schedule that allows for some supervisory sessions to occur in-person. It is not permissible to have all supervisory sessions occur remotely. Exceptions to allow for all supervisory sessions to occur remotely should be limited based on unique efficiencies due to service geographies, and only with the approval of the Department Director.

Once your flexible/remote work plan is finalized, give a copy to the employee and place a copy in the employee's supervisory file.