

# TELEWORK

Telework, also known as **remote work**, is on the rise, particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a flexible work arrangement in which employees are able to work from somewhere other than the traditional workspace—such as from their **home office**. This arrangement can help **address life demands** and improve **work–life balance**. Although the most common telework location is an employee’s home, an employee can also telework from a **satellite office or another off-site location**. Although telework can also include **flexibility in time**, it does not always do so.

When a telework program is in place, it provides the opportunity for employees to work remotely **using technology** such as the Internet, computer software [e.g., virtual private networks (VPNs)], videoconferencing, and phone systems. Telework programs can be implemented differently **based on the needs** of organizations and employees.

## Types of Telework



**Full-time telework** includes **always working away from the office/worksites**, except for occasional work in the office/on-site for specific meetings or events. This option allows employees to work from the comfort of home and eliminate a long commute to and from work.



When **hybrid telework** is implemented, an employee **both teleworks and works in the office/on-site** throughout the week. This may involve following a **set schedule** every week in which the employee teleworks and goes to the office or site on scheduled days (e.g., M/W/F in-office and T/TH telework) but can also be **less structured** such that the employee chooses when they telework.



**Ad hoc hybrid telework** describes a situation in which an employee almost always works in the office/on-site but can **telework as needed or under special circumstances** such as when writing a report or completing a virtual training.

## Best Practices

- The agency should clarify which jobs are **suitable** for each telework arrangement.
- **Clear expectations and goals** should be set for employees who are teleworking, particularly for how the employee should communicate with their manager and clients.
- Ensure that appropriate **resources** are in place to support employees while working remotely. This may include needed **technology** and documented **guidelines** to help ensure success.

## Benefits

- Cost savings for both the employee (e.g., gas from lack of commute) and the organization (e.g., reduced utility costs).
- Organizations can hire individuals outside of the local commuting area, which expands the potential applicant pool.
- Improves work–life balance and employee engagement.
- Increases employee productivity due to fewer distractions, comfortable environment, and no commute.
- Increases employer ability to meet accessibility needs.
- Decreases workplace violence, discrimination, work-related injuries, and harassment.

## Challenges

- Ensuring that the employee and manager have the necessary resources to effectively telework and supervise remotely can be difficult. Employees need the requisite technology to successfully telework, and managers should be trained on how to supervise an employee who teleworks.
- Managers often struggle to supervise employees they cannot see or meet with in person. Some managers find it difficult to assess progress and performance virtually.

# FLEXIBLE TIME

Increasingly, more employees are looking for additional **flexibility in the hours they work**—outside of the traditional Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. schedule. Employees may have personal commitments that conflict with a traditional fixed work schedule; flexible time—also known as flex time and schedule flexibility—is one approach to addressing this need.

Flex time allows employees to **choose when their workday starts and ends**—as long as they meet their daily, weekly, or monthly work hours or production levels as set by their organization. Although there are several options when it comes to flex work, the idea behind all of them is to provide employees with **more freedom and flexibility in their work schedule**. When an employee has more control and feels that their organization trusts them, it typically leads to **better organizational outcomes**.

## IMPLEMENTING FLEX TIME

### *Types of Flex Time*



Employees generally keep a Monday through Friday schedule but have the **flexibility on the start and end times** of their workday **around a core set of hours** (e.g., 10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.). This option provides time within the day to communicate and collaborate with colleagues while still providing the employee with freedom in their schedule.



Employees are **required to work a set number of hours within a given time frame** (e.g., 40 hours in one workweek, 80 hours in two workweeks) but **can decide when they want to work those hours**. This allows employees to work during nontraditional times (e.g., at night or on weekends), work longer hours at a time (e.g., 12 hours), or break their hours into shorter increments (e.g., two to three hours a few times a day).



Similarly, organizations may allow employees to work whichever hours best suit their needs as long as they are **delivering the position's required products, deliverables, or outputs**.

### *Best Practices*

- The agency should clarify which jobs are **suitable** for flex time, how **coverage** will be maintained, the required **core hours**, and **communication expectations** prior to implementation.
- Managers should receive **training and resources to help manage employees** who work varying hours in order to improve implementation success.

### Benefits

- Allows employees to better meet nonwork or personal demands.
- Helps to increase job satisfaction by giving the employee more control.
- Promotes a healthy work–life balance.
- Increases the number of productive work hours because employees can conduct their work at different times of the day, overlapping other staff as needed.
- Promotes the organization as a supportive place to work, which can attract employees, improve retention, and reduce turnover.

### Challenges

- It can be difficult to coordinate adequate coverage across employees. Communicating needs for coverage, setting expectations, and making sure there is adequate staffing are important ways to ensure that an organization's needs are met.
- It can be challenging to communicate and collaborate with colleagues when needed if they work nontraditional hours.

# PART-TIME

Employees who might not otherwise be able to commit to a full-time job due to **personal preference or ongoing and long-term commitments** may be suitable for part-time work, which describes an employee who works **fewer than 40 hours** per week. This can allow the employee to **maintain employment** while also balancing personal time or other demands that do not allow for a traditional 40-hour workweek.

Organizations can use part-time work to **hire or retain valued staff** as well as to provide support to employees with high or fluctuating nonwork demands. Additionally, part-time work can be beneficial for organizations that require tasks to be completed **beyond the traditional work hours or workweek** in order to

## IMPLEMENTING PART-TIME WORK

### *Types of Part-Time Work*



Part-time work can involve working **fewer than normal hours** each workday, **fewer than normal days** each workweek, or a combination of both. For example, an employee may work five 4-hour days, three 8-hour days, or three 4-hour days, depending on the needs of the organization and employee.



Many organizations also allow employees to use part-time work **before, during, or after a major life event**. For example, a new parent returning to work after having a child may return as part-time for a set time period to allow for an easier transition. Additionally, an employee who is retiring may go from full time to part-time before fully retiring. This enables an organization to **retain talent** while also **meeting the employee's needs**.

### *Best Practices*

- Managers should discuss with the employee the **hours and tasks** that are expected of them. They should also have guidelines for **managing and assessing the performance** of part-time employees.
- To reduce perceptions of inequity, the organization should **identify and communicate benefits** for part-time employees relative to those of full-time employees. **Career development opportunities** should also be considered for part-time employees to ensure that they feel included and valued.

### **Benefits**

- Employee work–life balance can be improved because of improved flexibility to meet outside demands.
- Gaps in schedules can be more easily filled at times when an organization needs additional help.
- Recruitment options can be expanded because skilled or specialized employees who might not be able to work a full-time job can be hired.
- The length of work hours for the organization can be increased if a part-time employee is able to work nontraditional hours.
- High workload and burnout are less likely to be experienced by part-time employees.

### **Challenges**

- Equity in compensation and benefits are important considerations regardless of an employee's part-time or full-time status. Some organizations use part-time work to avoid having to provide benefits (e.g., health care, dental care).
- Part-time employees can be challenging to manage, especially for those managers who have to solve scheduling conflicts and have to assess the performances of both full-time and part-time employees.

# JOB SHARING

Similar to part-time positions, job sharing may be suitable for employees who might not be able to commit to a full-time job due to **personal preference** or **ongoing and long-term commitments**. Job sharing refers to a full-time position that is **split between two individuals** who each work a part-time schedule. The employees have the responsibility of working together to complete the duties and responsibilities of the entire job by either allocating individual tasks or by working different days.

This arrangement benefits the organization by **maintaining the workload** and keeping the **tasks of a full-time position intact** while also giving **flexibility to employees** to attend to other demands or to meet their personal needs.

## IMPLEMENTING JOB SHARING

### Types of Job Sharing



When using the **twin model**, each employee performs the **same tasks and has the same responsibilities**. They work together as a team to ensure that all work gets done and to complete projects and assignments on time.



The **islands model** involves each employee having **different responsibilities and performing various tasks**. This model splits the work and responsibilities of the job between the job-sharing employees based on their individual skill sets.



In a **same-shift** arrangement, both employees work the **same days and hours**. This arrangement works best for organizations that can split the responsibilities of a position between two employees, do not need coverage for the job at different times, and do not require more hours than each employee is working.



**Split arrangements** include (1) the employees working different hours on the same day (if the organization needs coverage for the full workday) or (2) the employees working the same hours but on different days (if the employees have availability to work a full day but prefer to work only a few days per week).

### Best Practices

- Deciding **which hours and days** each employee works and how they **divide their duties and responsibilities** are the most important factors to consider when determining how to make a job-sharing arrangement work.
- The organization should have a **formalized policy** and clearly **outlined role expectations** to avoid conflict or confusion within the role. Managers should have guidelines for **managing and for assessing the performances** of employees sharing a job.

### Benefits

- Employees are more likely to have improved work–life balance because they are able to meet demands that prevent them from working a full-time job.
- Employees are less likely to experience high workload or burnout.
- Organizations may be able to retain highly skilled employees who otherwise would not be able to maintain the workload of a full-time job.
- Organizations are seen as supportive places to work, which can attract employees, improve retention, and reduce turnover.

### Challenges

- There may be discrepancies in the job-sharing employees' work and outputs if they are not at an equal or similar level of experience or ability.
- There may be an increase in some expenses for the organization—such as equipment and overhead costs—because it is supporting two employees for a single position.

# COMPRESSED WORKWEEKS

Often referred to as **4-10s** or **9-9s**, compressed workweeks allow an employee to work **more hours in a workday** in order to work **fewer workdays**. This allows the employee to have **more consecutive days off** while maintaining productivity because they are still working the same number of hours in a week. However, this option does not offer as much flexibility for unexpected events and emergencies.

Similar to flex time, a compressed workweek allows employees to address personal commitments that conflict with a traditional fixed work schedule and provides employees with **more freedom and flexibility**. When an employee has more control and feels that their organization trusts them, it typically leads to better **organizational outcomes** and improved **employee satisfaction and well-being**.

## IMPLEMENTING COMPRESSED WORKWEEKS

### *Types of Compressed Workweeks*



One common compressed workweek is known as **4-10s** and refers to an arrangement by which an employee works **four 10-hour workdays** each workweek to total 40 hours and has the fifth day off. This provides the employee with an extra day off every week.



Another common option is known as **9-9s**, which is like 4-10s except that it occurs over two weeks instead of one. This is an arrangement by which an employee works **nine 9-hour workdays over two workweeks** to total 80 hours and has the tenth day off every other week.

### *Best Practices*

- The agency should clarify which jobs are **suitable** for compressed workweeks, how **coverage** will be maintained, and what the **communication expectations** are prior to implementing this arrangement.
- Managers should receive **training and the resources needed to manage employees** who work varying hours in order to improve implementation success.

### **Benefits**

- Allows employees to better meet nonwork or personal demands.
- Helps increase job satisfaction by giving the employee an additional day off.
- Promotes a healthy work–life balance.
- Increases the number of productive work hours on the days in which employees work extended hours.
- Helps to reduce overtime work because employees have more time in their workday to complete tasks.
- Promotes the organization as a supportive place to work, which can attract employees, improve retention, and reduce turnover.

### **Challenges**

- It can be difficult to coordinate adequate coverage across employees. Communicating needs for coverage, setting expectations, and making sure there is adequate staffing are important ways to ensure that an organization's needs are met.
- The employee may experience burnout or physical strain from longer workdays. Extended hours without breaks can impact psychological and physical health.
- The employee may not feel that they have more autonomy or work–life balance if they do not have a choice over which workday they have off. Without the flexibility to choose, the employee has less ability to meet their life demands.