United States Department of Agriculture
Research, Education, and Economics

ARS □ ERS □ NASS □ NIFA

Bulletin

Title: Telework Training and Agreements (ARS only)

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Administrative and Financial Management
Agricultural Research Service

This Replaces: New

Distribution: All ARS Employees

This Bulletin contains the ARS requirements for fulfilling telework training policy and creating and approving telework agreements.

1 Purpose

This bulletin covers two key topics in the second phase of implementing an expanded ARS telework program. It establishes the policy, responsibilities, and procedures for 1) fulfilling the mandatory training requirements to be able to participate in telework, and 2) creating and approving telework agreements. The new revised Policy and Procedure (P&P) 402.5 is being prepared and will be published at a later date. All other provisions of the current P&P 402.5, dated November 13, 2008, remain in place until the new policy is issued.

2 Telework Program Training Policy

2.1 Telework training is required for all teleworkers and supervisors of teleworkers prior to signing/approving agreements and/or beginning to participate in telework for the first time. Teleworkers on an existing agreement must also complete the training prior to establishing a new agreement. There is no annual telework training requirement. The training only has to be taken one time. In addition to telework training, all employees must have completed the annual training requirement for Information Security and Personally Identifiable Information.

2.1.1 All supervisors of teleworkers must complete the course *Telework 101 for Managers* prior to allowing teleworkers under their supervision to begin teleworking. It is available in AgLearn, and may be accessed at: https://aglearn.usda.gov/plateau/user/deeplink.do?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=USDA%2dTELEWORK%2dMAN&componentTypeID=Web+Based&revisionDate=1302292800000

NOTE: Supervisors in the Washington, DC area who completed the course *Going Mobile: Telework Insights for Managers* offered by the Department in March 2011 will be considered to have satisfied the supervisory training requirement.

2.1.2 All teleworkers, including supervisors who also wish to telework, must complete the course *Telework 101 for Employees* prior to beginning telework or to being placed on a new agreement. It is available in AgLearn, and may be accessed at: : https://aglearn.usda.gov/plateau/user/deeplink.do?linkId=ITEM_DETAILS&componentID=USDA%2dTELEWORK%2dEMP&componentTypeID=Web+Based&revisionDate=1305136800000

2.1.3 All employees and supervisors must have satisfied the most recent annual training requirement for Information Security and Personally Identifiable Information in order to be approved to telework. Employees will receive annual electronic notification about the due date for this training, and the module will appear as a required training item in employees' AgLearn learning plans.

3 Telework Agreements

3.1 All employees determined to be telework eligible may participate in the Telework program either on a core or situational agreement at the supervisor's discretion. Approved telework agreements are required for all teleworkers prior to beginning to telework. All employees currently on an approved telework agreement on the old form must be converted to the new agreement form (REE-45, 06-2011) and routed for approval no later than June 30, 2011. Employees who are eligible to telework for the first time should work with their supervisors to establish an agreement and route it for approval in accordance with the procedures described in this Bulletin in an orderly manner. Under no circumstances should supervisors allow employees to work from an alternate location unless there is an approved telework agreement on file.

3.2 All telework eligible employees must complete a telework agreement. Employees who do not wish to participate in telework must officially "opt out" by completing the form REE-45 through Section A item #10, signing in Section D, and submitting to the immediate supervisor. Supervisors will sign and provide a copy to the local telework coordinator. A telework eligible employee who chooses to opt out may choose to initiate an agreement at a later date.

3.3 The ARS Telework Agreement form, REE-45 (06/2011) (Appendix A), has been developed to establish clear expectations between the supervisor and employee. It is available as a screen-fillable form in eForms. Agreements should be developed jointly by the employee and supervisor and routed for approval as described below. In addition, the form has been designed to include all the information currently required to meet mandatory Departmental and Office of Personnel Management reporting purposes.

4 Approval Process

4.1 All parties to a telework agreement must read and certify that they have understood and will abide by the Telework Agreement Terms and Conditions identified in Appendix B. These Terms and Conditions are also available as a link directly from the ARS Telework Agreement form at **http://www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/worklife/telework/terms.htm** In addition, managers and/or employees may identify any additional conditions that apply and document them in Section D of the form.

4.2 Agreements must be signed by the employee, immediate supervisor, and designated approving official.

4.3 The date for beginning to telework will be established to be no earlier than the first day of the pay period immediately following final approval.

4.4 Copies of approved telework agreements will be forwarded to the designated Telework Coordinator(s).

4.4.1 For Headquarters organizations, the designated Telework Coordinator is currently Elizabeth Jackson, Management Analyst, National Agricultural Library.

4.4.2 For Administrative and Financial Management organizations, the designated Telework Coordinator is currently Liz Parker, REE Work/Life and Wellness Program Manager, Human Resources Division.

4.4.3 Field offices should send copies of approved agreements to their designated Local Telework Coordinator.

4.5 Telework Coordinators / Local Telework Coordinators will:

4.5.1 Enter the beginning date of the agreement at the bottom of the last page of the agreement, if not already entered;

4.5.2 Distribute copies of the final, approved version of the agreement to the employee and supervisor.

4.5.3 Local Telework Coordinators will also scan and email approved agreements to the Area Telework Coordinator.

5 Telework Program Approving Officials

5.1 It is ARS policy to keep final approval of agreements at the lowest possible level, generally the second level supervisor. In cases where the immediate supervisor is also a designated Approving Official, only the signature of the Approving Official is required.

HQ/AFM/NAL:	Deputy Administrators Office/Staff Directors or their delegates

	AFM Division Directors (may be re-delegated to second level supervisors) Associate Director, NAL (may be re-delegated to second level supervisors)
Area Office:	Area Directors Associate Directors Deputy Area Directors
Centers/Locations:	Highest Level Official (may be re-delegated to second level supervisor)

6 Authorities

H.R. 1722, Telework Enhancement Act of 2010, dated 12/09/10.

Departmental Regulation 4080-811-002, USDA Telework Program, dated 01/25/11.

/s/

CAROL I. SHELTON
Acting Deputy Administrator
Administrative and Financial Management

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE RESEARCH, EDUCATION AND ECONOMICS	**TELEWORK AGREEMENT**

Section A. Basic Employee Information and Telework Arrangement

INSTRUCTIONS: All telework eligible employees must complete a telework agreement. Eligible employees who wish to telework must complete the entire agreement form. Employees who wish to opt-out of the telework program must complete only items A1 through A10 of this form and return the form to supervisor. Eligible employees who initially decide to opt-out may request to telework at a later date and must complete a new agreement at that time.

1. This constitutes a Telework Agreement between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and _____ detailing the terms/conditions of the telework program.
   (Employee Name: Last, First, MI)

2. Division/Branch/Section/Location/Management Unit: _____

3. Official Duty Location Address: _____
   _____
   _____
   _____ _____ _____

4. Position Title, Pay Plan, Series, Grade: _____

5. Tour of Duty: ☐ Standard ☐ Compressed (5-4-9) ☐ Compressed (4-10) ☐ Flexible (Maxiflex or other variation)
   ☐ Other (specify): _____

6. Work Schedule: ☐ Full-Time ☐ Part-Time ☐ Other (specify): _____

7. Type of Appointment: ☐ Permanent ☐ Temporary ☐ Term ☐ Student
   ☐ Other (specify): _____

8. Is the employee designated Emergency Essential (MI) during unique situations and emergencies? ☐ Yes ☐ No

9. Is the employee currently a Supervisor? ☐ Yes ☐ No

10. Check one of the following: ☐ New Agreement ☐ Change to existing agreement ☐ Opt-out
    (NOTE: Employees who are opting out of participating in the telework program should stop here, sign in Section D, and submit it to your immediate supervisor)

11. Employee completed Telework Training? ☐ Yes ☐ No Date Completed: _____

12. Employee will participate on the following basis: ☐ Core Telework (Regular/Recurring) ☐ Situational/Ad hoc/Unscheduled
    ☐ Medical Reasons

13. Number of days authorized per Pay Period (if on Core agreement): _____

14. Designated Telework Schedule: ☐ N/A (Situational/Ad hoc only):

Week 1 of Pay Period:	☐ Monday	☐ Tuesday	☐ Wednesday	☐ Thursday	☐ Friday
Week 2 of Pay Period:	☐ Monday	☐ Tuesday	☐ Wednesday	☐ Thursday	☐ Friday

15. Workdays at Traditional Office: ☐ N/A (Situational/Ad hoc only):

Week 1 of Pay Period:	☐ Monday	☐ Tuesday	☐ Wednesday	☐ Thursday	☐ Friday
Week 2 of Pay Period:	☐ Monday	☐ Tuesday	☐ Wednesday	☐ Thursday	☐ Friday

16. Telephone number that will be provided to internal/external customers when calling the teleworker (typically the work number of the official duty station): _____. This must be different from a dial-up modem line.

17. Telephone number where the immediate supervisor may reach the employee right away when urgent matters arise (if different from #16 above): _____

18. Primary Telework Location: ☐ Residence ☐ Satellite Office ☐ Telework Center
    a. Provide Telework Physical Address: _____
    _____

This form was electronically produced by USDA/ARS/OCIO/ADB.

b. For residential telework only, please provide a detailed description of the designated work area, including where the work area is located in the home:

19. Distance from Official Duty Station to Primary Telework Location: _____ miles.

20. Estimated total number of commuting miles saved each year: _____

21. What type of commuting will you avoid by teleworking (car, bus, rail, etc.)? _____

22. Is employee participating in the Transit Subsidy Program? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Section B. Physical and Information Security Checklist

1. Has the employee completed the required annual Information Security and Personally Identifiable Information (PII) Training?

   ☐ Yes ☐ No Date Completed: _____

2. How does the employee obtain his/her Internet connection (check one)?

   ☐ DSL ☐ Cable Modem ☐ Telephone Modem ☐ Telecenter ☐ FIOS

3. Do the duties of the position involve working with Sensitive But Unclassified/Sensitive Security Information that may require additional security measures or training? (Example: Handling sensitive information) ☐ Yes ☐ No

   a. If yes, please describe briefly the type of SBU/SSI involved:

   b. If applicable, has the employee been instructed to recognize and handle securely SBU/SSI? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

   c. If job duties require securing SBU/SSI, has a locked file cabinet been identified/provided at the telework site to secure SBU/SSI files, records, papers, or electronic media? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A

   Description:

4. Employee has been issued the following government furnished equipment (GFE) specifically for the purpose of telework. (NOTE: The government is obligated to issue equipment only when the employee is required to telework, e.g., he/she has been designated as "emergency essential" and is required to work in emergency situations. Equipment may be issued in other circumstances in accordance with budget constraints and management discretion.)

   ☐ No GFE Issued ☐ Desk-top computer or laptop ☐ Modem ☐ Printer ☐ Fax

   ☐ Software (specify): _____

   ☐ Other (specify): _____

   NOTE: If the employee has been issued GFE, please complete and attach an official property form.

Section C. Terms and Conditions

The *Terms and Conditions* listed at (www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/worklife/telework/terms.htm) are considered an integral part of all telework agreements. All signatories to a telework agreement are required to read these *Terms and Conditions*. Signing an agreement constitutes certification that you have read, understood, and will abide by all *Terms and Conditions* of the ARS Telework Program.

Section D. Signatures

In the space below, please provide any additional comments, explanations, and/or provisions that have been established by the employee and/or supervisor for this agreement:

Immediate supervisor: ☐ N/A

Employee: ☐ N/A

I certify that I have read and understood the telework arrangement described above in this agreement. I further certify that I have read and understood the *Terms and Conditions* listed at (www.afm.ars.usda.gov/hrd/worklife/telework/terms.htm) and agree to abide by them, in addition to any other terms and conditions contained above in Section D. Failure to abide by all *Terms and Conditions* pertinent to this agreement may result in a termination of the telework agreement.

Employee's Signature	Type or Print Name and Title	Date
Supervisor's Signature *(Required)*	Type or Print Name and Title	Date
Approving Official's Signature *(Required)*	Type or Print Name and Title	Date

Beginning date of this agreement (No earlier than the first day of the pay period immediately following the latest date of the signatures above): _____

Appendix B

TELEWORK AGREEMENT TERMS AND CONDITIONS

General Provisions

1. Employee volunteers to participate in the program and to adhere to the applicable guidelines and policies. Agency concurs with employee participation and agrees to adhere to the applicable guidelines and policies.

2. Employee agrees to participate in surveys and data calls relative to the USDA/ARS Telework Program, as requested.

Alternate Work Site

3. Employee understands the requirements for an adequate and safe office space and will maintain the designated telework area in a safe manner.

4. With a minimum of 24 hours advance notice, employee agrees to periodic home inspections of the alternate work location by the Government at periodic intervals during the employee's normal working hours to ensure proper maintenance of Government-owned property and worksite conformance with safety standards and other specifications in these guidelines.

Equipment and Security

5. Employee understands that he/she must have an Internet Service Provider (ISP) at the telework site and that this ISP must be fully functional during scheduled telework hours.

6. Employee will utilize Government equipment, if provided, for official business only and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, policies, etc., as well as safeguard said equipment. The agency is responsible for maintaining all Government-issued equipment, and the employee is responsible for servicing and maintaining employee-owned equipment.

7. Employees who are required to telework, such as those designated as "Emergency Essential," will be provided with the necessary government equipment to perform their tasks adequately at the alternative worksite.

8. Employee will apply approved safeguards to protect Government records from unauthorized disclosure or damage and will comply with the provisions set forth in the Privacy Act of 1974, Public Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579, codified at Title 5, U.S.C., Section 55a.

Pay, Leave, and Benefits

9. Employee's official duty station, as documented in Section A of the ARS Telework Agreement, is used for purposes of determining pay, special salary rate, locality pay, travel, etc.

10. Employee is covered under the Federal Employee's Compensation Act in the course of performing official duties at the alternate work location or official duty station. Any accident or injury which happens to the employee while teleworking at the designated alternate work location must be brought immediately to the attention of the supervisor.

11. Employee's Time and Attendance (T/A) for all official duty time spent in a telework status will be recorded using the proper Telework time code.

12. Employee's official tour of duty must include at least a 30-minute uncompensated lunch.

13. Employee understands that USDA may require participating employees to work from their telework site, e.g., home, satellite office, or other location, during periods of Unscheduled Telework authorization due to area closures, dismissals, unforeseen emergencies or other reasons as authorized by the Supervisor. If Unscheduled Telework is authorized during times when a Federal facility is closed to the public, teleworkers are required to work from their Telework site, or request Unscheduled Leave if unable to do so.

14. Employee understands that this telework agreement shall be coordinated with the employee's approved transit subsidy benefits. It is the employee's responsibility to adjust and re-certify their transit subsidy authorizations to ensure alignment with time spent in telework status.

Standards of Conduct and Performance

15. Employee agrees to follow established policy and procedures for requesting and obtaining supervisory approval of leave.

16. Employee agrees to perform only officially assigned duties at the alternative worksite during their telework time. Failure to comply with this provision may result in loss of pay, termination of the telework agreement, and/or other appropriate disciplinary action.

17. Employee must maintain a performance level of at least "Fully Successful" in order to continue teleworking.

18. Employee agrees to complete all assigned work according to work procedures mutually agreed upon with the supervisor and according to guidelines and standards stated in the performance plan. Employee's job performance will be monitored to ensure that the arrangement is working.

19. Employee must provide a seamless customer service experience while teleworking. For example, he/she must be available to his/her coworkers, supervisor, and customers in the same manner as if they were in his/her duty location; phone calls and emails must be answered in the same timeframe as if the employee were working in their duty location, etc. The employee and supervisor will monitor service to determine where adjustments in mutual expectations may be necessary.

20. Either the employee or the supervisor can terminate the telework agreement. Management shall terminate the telework agreement should the employee's performance not meet the minimum performance standards, or the arrangement fails to meet the needs of the agency. Terminations, whether initiated by the employee or supervisor, must be in writing.

21. Employee understands that telework is not a substitute for dependent care (child care or elder care) and that appropriate arrangements must be made while performing official duties in a residential office to accommodate children and adults who cannot care for themselves.