



Alameda County General Services Agency Alternate Work Arrangements Guidelines

INTRODUCTION / OVERVIEW / BENEFITS

The County of Alameda (County) implemented a Telecommuting Program in March 1995. Alternate work usually means office-based employees working at their homes or at a nearby alternative office instead of commuting to work.

Alternate work arrangements may result in certain costs being reduced or avoided. Benefits may accrue for both the employee and the employer in successful alternate work arrangements. Some of these benefits are tangible and some are intangible and include: 1) conserving energy; 2) preserving the environment; 3) promoting safety by reducing the number of cars on the road; 4) improving health; 5) allowing closer proximity to and involvement with family; 6) allowing proximity to extended family; 7) increasing employee morale; 8) improving productivity; 9) reducing “job hopping”; and 10) attracting new employees looking for such benefits.

PURPOSE

These guidelines are for GSA managers and supervisors to manage employees when they are permitted to work at home or at an alternate location. Employees with alternate work arrangements need to have a signed agreement that defines the terms and conditions of such arrangements.

APPLICATION / AGREEMENT PROCESS AND OTHER TERMS

To become eligible for an alternate work arrangement, an employee is to submit an Alternate Work Arrangement Agreement to his/her supervisor requesting approval of a regular or special project alternate work arrangement schedule. Supervisors should review the Application/Agreement, and make a recommendation to approve or deny and forward to the Personnel Administrator who will review for consistency with the guidelines, and forward to the supervisor and or department head for approval or denial.

If approved, Application/Agreement must be signed by the employee and supervisor which sets forth the terms, including work schedule, work location, work to be performed, method of communicating with the office, use of County equipment and supplies, and any other terms agreed to by the employee and his/her supervisor.

The need for administrative support will be identified and addressed in the Application/Agreement between the employee and his/her supervisor. Alternate work tasks are to be chosen and planned so they do not create a greater demand for support than normal, i.e. the need for other staff to retrieve subject or project files and/or provide information to the employee over the phone or via e-mail. The supervisor and employee should work together to minimize the direct costs associated with alternate work arrangements.

ELIGIBILITY / SELECTION CRITERIA

It may be necessary for all assigned functions to be done while working at an alternate location. The key to a successful alternate work arrangement is the understanding that exists between the employee and supervisor and in organizing the work to be done while working in an alternate location. The following criteria must be met in order to be eligible for alternate work arrangements:

1. Employee job duties must be appropriate for alternate work consideration.
2. Employee must have achieved job evaluation ratings of at least “satisfactory” (on the most recent performance evaluation).
3. Employee must have a consistently high rate of productivity, and a high level of skill and knowledge of job.
4. Employee must be able to work with minimal direct supervision, and be able to obtain feedback when needed.
5. Employee must have good organizational and time management skills.
6. Employee must agree to comply with all guidelines required and arrange work agreement with supervisor.
7. Employee must be aware that the agreement can be terminated at any time by the supervisor or by the employee.

WORK SCHEDULE / BENEFITS

Work hours, compensation and vacation schedules will conform to the County Salary Ordinance, MOU provisions, Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) provisions, and to terms otherwise agreed upon by the employee and his/her supervisor. No employee shall work more hours than his/her scheduled work week as a result of an alternate work arrangement unless he/she has received prior overtime authorization.

All existing benefits will remain the same for employees working an alternate work arrangement. An employee is covered by Workers' Compensation whether working at the office, home, attending meetings, and work-related travel.

Requests to use sick leave, vacation or other leave must be approved by the employee’s supervisor in the same manner as the employee who does not work an alternate arrangement. If an employee is on an alternate work arrangement and becomes ill while working at home, he/she must immediately report to his/her supervisor, complete a leave request once he/she returns to the office and report the hours actually worked and use sick leave for those hours not worked.

ALTERNATE WORK ARRANGEMENT WORK PLAN AND REPORT

An employee and supervisor are to use the “Alternate Work Plan/Report” for each alternate work period. Employees and their supervisors will use this to measure productivity and identify tools to increase effectiveness.

TYPES OF ALTERNATE WORK ARRANGEMENTS

REGULAR ALTERNATE SCHEDULE

An employee may request a regular work schedule which allows him/her to work from an alternate location on a specific day(s) each week or each pay period. Typically this schedule is approved by the supervisor at least one week prior to commencement. Some departments may establish “core” days when employees are not allowed to work in an alternate location and staff is expected to be in the office. It is the employee’s responsibility to adhere to department-specific limitations. Participation can be terminated at-will by employee, supervisor, or Agency/Department Head at any time. An employee shall notify the supervisor and/or the supervisor will notify the employee if the arrangement is terminated.

Where feasible, meetings will be scheduled with conferencing capabilities to enable employees working alternate schedules to connect remotely. However, in some situations, meetings will be scheduled that require in-person attendance. Staff scheduling meetings must communicate to attendees whether in-person attendance will be required or whether teleconferencing will be an option. Alternate work arrangements should not affect the abilities of others to schedule meetings and perform their duties.

SPECIAL PROJECT

An employee may submit a request to his/her supervisor, using the Alternate Application/Agreement to allow the ability to work at an alternate location for a defined period of time to complete a “special project” or meet a specific deadline. Typically this schedule should be approved by the supervisor at least one week prior to commencement, unless circumstances do not allow for the advance approval.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The employee remains obligated to comply with all County rules, policies, practices, and instructions. Violation may result in preclusion from participating in an alternate work agreement and/or disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment. Employees are responsible for clarifying any questions regarding the applicability of rules, policies, practices and instructions through discussions with their supervisor prior to commencement of working at an alternate location.

An employee agrees to be as responsive as if he/she were in the office. The employee must be able to respond in a reasonable amount of time to County e-mail and voice mail messages.

An employee and his/her supervisor must agree on the objectives and work assignments to be accomplished during the defined period. The agreement will also identify the method of measuring productivity.

EQUIPMENT AND MATERIALS

The equipment and materials necessary to participate will be supplied by the employee, the department, or a combination of both. It is not the responsibility of the County to provide laptop computers or any other equipment for the sole purpose of providing for alternate work options. An employee, who submits an Alternate Work Agreement is expected to possess the tools necessary (computer, internet access, necessary applications, telephone, etc.) to complete all work assignments. It is the employee's responsibility to ensure that their alternate work environment is set up to meet ergonomic standards similar to those present in their County work space.

The cost of repairs for employee-owned equipment will be the responsibility of the employee.

If County-owned equipment is provided to the employee, it is the employee's responsibility to ensure that the equipment is used properly and safeguarded at all times. If there is a problem with County-owned hardware, the employee should notify his/her supervisor as soon as practical. The department will decide whether or not to repair or replace any items identified. The department will evaluate the repair costs for equipment owned by the County and may pay for such repair, unless due solely to negligence of employee. The employee must immediately notify his/her supervisor if County-owned equipment is damaged or lost and must complete the necessary forms to report such damage or loss. If there is a delay in the repair or replacement of the equipment or any other circumstances under which it would not be practical to work off-site, then the employee will be reassigned to their regular County facility until circumstances are re-evaluated.

TERMINATION OF ALTERNATE WORK

Alternate work arrangement may be terminated at-will at any time by the employee, supervisor or Agency/Department Head.

ALTERNATE WORK ARRANGEMENT APPLICATION/AGREEMENT

INSTRUCTIONS: Applicants for alternate work arrangements complete this form and submit to supervisor for review and approval. Alternate work arrangements are not approved until both the employee and supervisor have signed the agreement.

Employee Name:	
Employee Classification:	
Date of Request:	
Term of Agreement	to
Proposed schedule (indicate day(s) requested per pay period and hours of work and total work hours per day)	Day/Hours: Week 1: _____ Day/Hours: Week 2: _____
Special Project Request (indicate date and hours):	
County equipment to be used while telecommuting:	
Employee-owned equipment to be used while telecommuting:	
Type of work to be performed (be specific):	
Employee has access to a computer and will be able to read and respond to e-mails during telecommuting hours. This is required.	Yes _____
Employee agrees to check voice mail and respond as needed to calls during telecommuting hours. This is required.	Yes _____

I have read the GSA Alternate Work Arrangement Agreement and agree to abide by the terms and conditions therein. I understand that:

1. Alternate work arrangements are a privilege, not a right.
2. I am expected to work my full hours unless otherwise authorized.
3. I am not expected to work more than a normal work day on days when I work at an alternate location.
4. I will receive prior authorization from my supervisor for overtime work.
5. I am expected to comply with all applicable County rules, policies, practices and instructions.

- 6. This agreement does not affect my employee benefits. Requests for vacation, sick leave, or other time off will be handled according to existing County and departmental policies.
- 7. This agreement may be terminated by either party at any time.
- 8. I agree to respond to any surveys and inquiries conducted by the county or agency to evaluate the effectiveness of alternate work arrangements

Employee Signature: _____ Date: _____

Recommended by **Supervisor:** Recommended: _____ Not Recommended: _____

If not recommended why? _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Date: _____

Next-level Supervisor/Deputy Director or designee: Recommended: _____ Not Recommended: _____

Recommended as submitted: _____

Recommend approval with modification noted: _____

Recommend Denial;

Comments: _____

Chief Human Resources Administrator or designee: Date Reviewed:

Comments: _____

Chief Deputy or designee: approval of application as accepted: _____

Approval with modification noted: _____

Denial. Comments: _____

ALTERNATEWORK PLAN/REPORT

Alternate Worker:

1. At least one day prior to working an approved alternate work schedule, complete the Alternate Work Plan/Report and give a copy to supervisor.
2. The day following the alternate work period, the employee should submit the completed form (completed/progress on tasks, comments, different tasks completed if any) to his/her supervisor.

Supervisor:

1. The Supervisor should review the Alternate Work Plan/Report and discuss with employee if necessary, before the designated time period. Supervisor will determine whether the workload seems reasonable, priority work is accomplished; the work can be performed without office resources, etc.
2. The Supervisor should review work accomplished and comments and discuss with employee if necessary, after the designated time period. Supervisor will determine whether the amount of work accomplished seems reasonable, what issues arose and how to resolve them if needed.

ALTERNATE Work Plan and Report

Employee Name:

Date:

TASK (Be specific. Complete and submit copy to supervisor prior to telecommuting period.)	COMPLETED (Check off if completed during telecommuting period; add other tasks not originally identified).	COMMENT (Describe why "task" differs from "completed").
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		
11.		
13.		
14.		
15.		