NACDD Telecommuting Policy

In certain circumstances, NACDD policy permits employees to telecommute with approval from the employee’s manager. With a thoughtful plan in place, telecommuting can benefit not only the employee, but also the manager, the team, and NACDD, in general. Telecommuting often improves job satisfaction by increasing job flexibility. It also can reduce commute time and address office space restrictions.

Managers have discretion in deciding whether an employee is a candidate for telecommuting. Some employees may not be eligible due to specific job requirements, impact on a team, or performance concerns. When evaluating an employee’s request to telecommute, the manager must determine that the employee can effectively perform the job duties of the position while telecommuting. The manager also must determine that the telecommuting arrangement conforms with applicable regulations and policies.

**Definition of Telecommute:** Refers to paid employment performed away from the conventional office, either at home or at an alternative office site for an agreed period. Individuals who are approved to telecommute must be in positions where the employee’s daily presence in the office is not required and where the responsibilities of the position principally involve independent work. Telecommuting is a management option to provide an additional benefit to the staff. Employee salary, benefits, worker’s compensation, paid time off, and employee insurance benefits shall not change due to telecommuting status. Likewise, the duties, obligations, and responsibilities of telecommuting employees shall remain the same.

There are two types of telecommute:

1. **Routine** telecommute, which occurs as part of an ongoing, regular schedule.
2. **Situational** telecommute that is approved on a case-by-case basis, where the hours worked were not part of a previously approved, ongoing, or regular telecommute schedule. (As a result of inclement weather, a doctor’s appointment, etc.)

**Telecommuting is a voluntary option and benefit; no employee is required or guaranteed the option to telecommute.**

NACDD recognizes that telecommuting is a means to achieve the following:

1. Helps reduce commute time goals
2. Creates an environment for employees to increase productivity and job satisfaction
3. Provides flexibility in meeting employees needs and organizational goals
4. Promotes employee retention and development
This policy describes considerations for remote workplace arrangements. This policy applies to all telecommuting activities of the Association. All employees should be familiar with the contents of this policy.

**Evaluation Process**

Managers should work with the employee to evaluate their request to telecommute, taking into consideration the business needs of the department, communications needs, and the impact of remote work on other team members. Considerations also may include the employee’s readiness for telework. Some employees may be better prepared than others to manage the unique requirements of telecommuting. When evaluating a telework request, managers should consider whether the employee has a record of satisfactory performance and has demonstrated the ability to:

- Prioritize work to meet deadlines
- Accomplish job duties with minimal supervision
- Communicate effectively with staff, consultants, Members, and other stakeholders
- Manage time effectively

a) **Consideration for Remote Workplace Arrangements**

In determining what positions are suitable for this type of arrangement, managers and employees should consider:

- the extent to which the job requires face-to-face, or in-person interaction with other people, both internal and external to NACDD
- the nature and extent of managing requirements relevant to the position
- the need for access to resources that only are available on site

b. **Eligibility for Remote Workplace Arrangement**

- the employee must be on the job at least 30 days
- the employee must work in the NACDD office at least two days a week
- part-time employees may be considered for telecommute on an individual basis (varies on actual hours worked)

c. **How to Request Remote Workplace Arrangements**

To request a telecommuting arrangement, the employee should first discuss the request with the employee’s manager. The employee must then submit a written telecommute agreement to the manager for review and approval. If eligibility requirements are met, the manager, alone, decides whether to grant a request.

d. **Considerations Regarding Remote Workplace Arrangements**

Both managers and employees must understand and comply with the following considerations:
i. **Work regime:** The mix of days/hours to be worked at the remote workplace and at NACDD’s main office should be identified to establish employee-manager-colleague contact points and hours that will be maintained. Telecommute hours may be different from office work hours; however, employees and their managers must agree on the designated work hours. The employee must establish and receive managerial approval for a regular telecommuting schedule, including specific days and hours to be worked.

ii. **Performance standards:** It is especially important in remote workplace arrangements that the job requirements and the performance standards and accomplishments are clear and well understood by all parties. The employee must maintain the same or an improved level of productivity and work quality while telecommuting. If productivity and/or work quality begin to decline, the telecommute agreement will be reevaluated to determine if changes can be made or if the agreement needs to be terminated. Telecommute allows a high amount of flexibility for an employee to complete their work in a timely and proper manner, and it is expected that the employee will not abuse this opportunity by allowing their productivity or work quality to decline.

iii. **Workspace:** Employees should establish a workspace to provide for privacy and freedom from interruptions. No employees engaged in telecommute will be allowed to hold business meetings with Members, the public, office staff, consultants, or professional colleagues in an employee’s home. NACDD will not be responsible for any operating costs associated with the remote worksite, including maintenance, insurance, or utilities.

iv. **Communication and personal interactions:** The employee must be available at the remote location by phone and email during their regular scheduled business hours and must be able to satisfy the NACDD commitment to prompt excellent customer service. Managers retain the right to require employee to return to the NACDD office on a regularly scheduled telecommuting day should work situations warrant such an action.

v. **Equipment:** Equipment provided by NACDD may not be used for personal purposes. Such equipment may include but is not necessarily limited to a computer and printer. In those cases where NACDD purchased equipment, the employee must take care of the property and will be responsible for any damage resulting from misuse. The Senior Director of Operations should be notified immediately if maintenance or repair is needed for any equipment owned by NACDD. Further, all equipment provided by NACDD must be returned upon termination of the remote work arrangement or separation from employment at NACDD (by either resignation or termination), or earlier upon request.
NACDD doesn’t assume liability for loss, damage, or wear and tear to a home office and/or employee-owned equipment.

vi. Security: The employee is responsible for maintaining confidentiality and security at the alternate workplace, as the employee would at the NACDD office. The employee must protect the security and integrity of data, information, paper files, and access to NACDD computer systems. The employee must never provide non-employee access to the organization network or share network access passwords.

vii. Safety: The employee shall maintain a telecommute workplace that is safe and free from hazards and other dangers to the employee and equipment. The employee is required to report immediately any injury incurred while working at home for NACDD, just as an employee injured in NACDD’s office would be required to do so. NACDD will have the right to inspect the telecommuting premises after any injury to the employee that occurred during performance of work for NACDD, or at any other time with reasonable notice to the employee.

viii. Dependent care: Telecommuting is not a substitute for dependent care. Employees with children or other dependents in the home must have appropriate childcare or other arrangements for their dependents. Although an individual employee’s schedule may be modified to accommodate dependent care needs, the focus of the arrangement must remain on the job performance and meeting business demands. Employees are encouraged to discuss expectations of telecommuting with family members prior to entering into this agreement. An employee with a sick dependent on a scheduled telecommute day may use paid time off for that portion of the day when caring for the dependent.

ix. Office supplies: Office supplies necessary to complete work assignments should be obtained during the telecommuter’s in-office days. The employee will not be reimbursed for supplies normally available in the office. The employee must have prior approval from his/her manager for the purchase of any supplies that cannot be obtained through normal supply channels. Without prior approval, such purchases will not be reimbursed.

x. No personal business: An employee who is telecommuting shall not conduct personal business during work hours unless during their break time or lunch. No personal business may be conducted on Association-owned equipment and supplies provided by the Association cannot be used for personal business.

xi. Complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA): In some situations, telecommute can provide a method of accommodating employees with special needs, such as those covered by ADA. Whether or not telecommute is a
reasonable accommodation is a decision that will be made by the Association on a case-by-case basis after evaluating all of the circumstances.

xii. *Taxes:* The employee understands that he or she is responsible for tax and insurance consequences, if any, of this arrangement, and for conforming to any local zoning regulations.

e. **Approval of Remote Work Arrangement**

NACDD, in its sole discretion, may approve or deny any proposal for a remote workplace arrangement. If NACDD grants any such request, the proposal must be signed by the manager and the employee. Any changes to the proposal must be made in writing and signed by both the manager and the employee.

NACDD reserves the right, upon notice to the employee, to modify or terminate the remote work agreement, in part or in full, at any time for any reason (or for no reason).

f. **NACDD Policies Continue to Apply**

Unless otherwise specified in the remote work agreement, employees working from a remote location will be entitled to the same benefits (including leave accruals) as employees working onsite. Similarly, to the extent applicable, all policies and procedures that apply to onsite NACDD employees shall continue to apply to NACDD employees working remotely.

The telecommute agreement may be modified at any time by the manager, based on their assessment of the employee’s work performance, change in the requirements of the job, or other business reasons. The employee should be given sufficient notice of a change to the telecommute agreement so that the employee can make appropriate arrangements to alter a routine or logistics to report to work.

**HOTELING**

**Definition of Hoteling:** Hoteling is an alternative workplace arrangement in which two employees share a workplace at their official workspace. For example, if an employee telecommutes three days a week, another employee could be assigned to work in the telecommuting employee’s workspace during those days, and vice versa.

a) Managers will attempt to give an employee sufficient prior notice that their space may be co-inhabited, either temporarily or on a long-term basis.

b) Once the employee has been notified, the employee should put away and secure any personal or valuable items when they are not working on site.
**TELECOMMUTING BEST PRACTICES**

**CO-CREATE YOUR TEAM’S PRACTICES.** The entire team should discuss the telecommuting policy. To set the tone and foster confidence within teams, managers should engage in dialogue with their teams and address any questions related to telecommuting:

- How will we connect with each other?
- What are the procedures for coordinating team projects?
- How can we manage Member/consultant expectations while telecommuting?
- How can we use technology to help us communicate better?
- Can we create a sense of workplace and community when we are working away from the office?

**ENCOURAGE TEAMWORK.** If more than one employee on the team is telecommuting, treat telework as a team activity rather than an individual one, whenever possible. For example, make sure that team members who are not physically present are included in meetings via conferencing services. Develop a team schedule that everyone on your team has access to and identify ways to telecommute that meet the needs of the department. This may mean that if an important meeting needs to be held in person, employees who are normally scheduled to telework that day may have to come to the office on a scheduled telecommute day.

**VIRTUAL PRESENCE.** Team members can use instant messaging systems (Microsoft Teams) to check in regularly. Team members are encouraged to change their status when they will be away from the computer for more than a few minutes. Transparent communication tools like shared calendars also can be useful. Advanced collaboration tools such as video conferencing (ZOOM) also should also be used. Establish daily check-ins, but keep in mind that micro-monitoring of daily activities hinders productivity and creates an environment of distrust.

**CUSTOMER SERVICE.** When interacting with NACDD Members, consultants, and other stakeholders, make sure to clearly define what is needed to provide a high-level of customer service support when communicating during telecommuting. For example, commit with each other to an acceptable response period for email inquiries or phone calls. For example, make efforts to acknowledge emails, phone calls, and voice messages within the same business day that they have been received and provide a timeframe as to when someone can receive a complete response.

**BE MINDFUL.** Participate in conference calls from a quiet space, and when participating in video calls, dress professionally. Plan to attend major office meetings and birthday lunches in person.

**KEEP EvOLVING.** Managers should think of a telecommute program as a continual work in progress. Remain flexible, evaluate frequently, and adjust the arrangements as needed.