



**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
AGENDA LETTER**

Agenda Number:

Clerk of the Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Suite 407
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2240

Department Name: Human Resources
Department No.: 064
For Agenda Of: 7/12/2022
Placement: Administrative
Estimated Time: N/A
Continued Item: No
If Yes, date from:
Vote Required: Majority

TO: Board of Supervisors

DocuSigned by:
Maria Elena De Guevara

FROM: Department Maria Elena De Guevara, Human Resources Director, 805-568-2817
Director(s) 2817
Contact Info: Natalie Alvarado, Interim Administration & Operations Division Chief, 805-319-8201
Katie Torres, Benefits & Wellness Division Chief, 805-698-1945

SUBJECT: Update “Teleworking” Policy to “Hybrid Remote Work” Policy

County Counsel Concurrence

As to form: Yes

Other Concurrence: Risk Management

As to form: Yes

Auditor-Controller Concurrence

As to form: N/A

Recommended Actions:

That the Board of Supervisors:

- a) Approve an updated Teleworking Policy, now referred to as the Hybrid Remote Work Policy as outlined in Attachment A, and
- b) Determine that the recommended actions are not a “Project” that are subject to environmental review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15378(b)(5), because they are organizational or administrative activities of the government that will not result in direct or indirect physical changes in the environment.

Summary Text:

In Spring 2021, the County Human Resources Department (CoHR) presented to the Board the impacts of the pandemic on the workforce and identified post-pandemic county workforce strategies to keep the organization and its employees resilient and operational in a changing world. The Board adopted the Statement to Commitment on Workplace Flexibility, reviewed the proposed Distributed Teams Hybrid Work Model, and directed CoHR to revise applicable County policy in the area of remote work. The revised policy includes updated language to reflect a broader and modernized definition of “teleworking,” the integration of three levels of remote work known as the Distributed Teams Hybrid

Work Model, deletes outdated terminology and procedures, and streamlines the process for requesting and reviewing remote work agreements. The draft policy was circulated to all recognized employee labor groups for meet and confer prior to being finalized.

Background:

The County has a rich history of supporting clean commute initiatives such as the original Teleworking Policy and the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program, which all work toward reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The pandemic challenged the County to re-evaluate how services to our community are delivered and forced us to quickly adopt a more robust remote work model for almost one-third of our employees. As the County expanded its experience with remote work during the pandemic, the existing policy was evaluated to identify revisions that would enhance the County's commitment to workplace flexibility. Remote work is neither a right nor an entitlement, but a tool to allow flexible work options. The recommended updates have the goal of better meeting department and community needs through increased and effective remote work utilization.

Key proposed policy revisions:

- Replaces outdated “teleworking” and “telecommuting” terminology with broader and expanded language of remote work;
- Confirms that remote workers remain Disaster Service Workers regardless of work location and are expected to respond during emergencies;
- Clarifies the scope of the policy by limiting approval of remote workspaces to within the state of California;
- Furthers workplace flexibility by offering three types of remote work arrangements outlined in the Distributed Teams Hybrid Work Model;
- Adds information on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Fair Employment and Housing Act (FEHA) reasonable accommodation requirements for remote work agreements
- Updates and refines the necessary employee characteristics and job/position criteria, the request and decision workflow, and associated forms;
- Outlines the scope of authority the department has in reviewing, approving, modifying, and managing agreements, while also providing more autonomy for departments to create supplemental guidelines that support their business needs and align with the overall policy;
- Adds clarifying language to remedy conflicts between MOUs and the Hybrid Remote Work policy on decision appeal rights;
- Requires remote workers to complete an ergonomics training and maintain an appropriate ergonomic working environment; and
- Enhances training for supervisors/managers on leading a hybrid remote workforce.

Fiscal and Facilities Impacts:

None

Fiscal Analysis:

There are no new costs associated with the updates to the Hybrid Remote Work Policy.

Attachments:

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Authored by: Natalie Alvarado, Katie Torres

cc: Mona Miyasato, County Executive Officer
Rachel Van Mullem, County Counsel