

Survey to Chief APOs

Issue: Work From Home Policy

Question: (from Lehigh County)


The Judiciary in Lehigh County is considering implementing a work from home policy. Our President Judge has asked if any other county probation departments currently allow work from home privileges for their staff and if they do, what policies do they have in place. If work from home is available in your department, I would love to hear how you have implemented it.

Chester County

Supervisors are 100% on-site. Officers and Support Staff are permitted to work from home 1 day per week. This day must be prescheduled with their supervisor, one week in advance. A plan is supposed to be discussed as to what will be completed on the telework day. If the person has a scheduled vacation day that week, they are not permitted telework in the same week. If they call out sick in a week after taking a telework day, they cannot telework the following week. Officers on probationary periods are not permitted to telework. Telework is permitted as per the need of the office, if we are short staff telework can be denied. Telework plans are updated twice per year. Those who opt out of telework received one additional personal day per 6-month period, and a closer park spot. PS it is a headache to manage, I like that the Philly mayor ordered all city works back to the office.

York County

See addendum

	YORK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PROBATION SERVICES	Section: Office Policy
	ADULT/JUVENILE OFFICE	Subject: Remote Location Working
Policy No. I-00013		
Rule No. N/A		
State Standard N/A		
Effective Date September 28, 2021		
		Revised February 1, 2024

Mobile Workforce Policy

I. PURPOSE: Advancement in technology has given Probation Services expanded resources in the supervision of clients. Working remotely (in the field, from home or other remote locations), has proven to be an effective method for caseload management. This policy will outline criteria needed for approval to work remotely, expectations of the employees working remotely, expectations of the supervisor for the employee and the expectations of the department.

II. POLICY:

- a. Approval to work remotely must be authorized by the Chief of Probation Services.
- b. Working remotely is a privilege and its utilization is at the discretion of the Chief of Probation Services and managed by the employee's direct supervisor. Even though an employee may have authorization to work remotely, they may also be required to report back to the office if needed. The direct supervisor may also decline a staff person's request to work mobile.
- c. Working remotely carries all the same expectations as if the employee were working in the office. Job expectations, policies and procedures apply as if the employee were working in the office. If called for an emergency, the employee will be expected to respond as soon as possible to the office or to handle the situation.
- d. Employees are expected to attend in person any scheduled Court Sessions, cover day in responsibilities, trainings, monthly unit meetings, monthly supervision times staff meetings, initial and secondary appointments (adult office), risk/needs assessments and reassessments, and any other meeting or event where the supervisor, deputy director, director or committee chairs require in person attendance. Officers may on rare occasions where there are extenuating circumstances conduct reassessments over Zoom/remote only with supervisor approval. If the supervisor approves completion of the assessment over Zoom, the supervisor will enter a note in JCMS/Monitor.
- e. All probation officers (except for administrative officers) are required to cover their own Court hearings unless on vacation, out sick or other extenuating circumstances arise where supervisor approval is given to find coverage for the hearing. If the officer receives 4 or

more hours' notice of the hearing, they will be expected to attend in person (excluding bench warrant hearings). In person attendance at Court hearings supersedes field work or other mobile work.

- f. Any employee who wishes to work remotely shall keep their supervisor apprised of their daily schedule. Proposed and actual schedules will only be maintained in Outlook. Schedules must be updated in outlook and an email sent to your supervisor letting them know your schedule for the following week is ready for approval. An officer's updated outlook calendar along with the email to the supervisor must be completed by Friday at noon. The schedule will be reviewed, then approved or denied by the officer's supervisor.
- g. The direct supervisor of the employee expressing the desire to work remotely will determine if an employee is eligible based on reasons the employee provides, current work ethic and past remote work experiences (if applicable). New probation officers will not be eligible to work remotely until successful completion of their six-month probationary period. Thereafter, their ability to work mobile will be phased in beginning with eight hours per week, if appropriate, to ensure the employee is able to manage the expectations of mobile work. At the one-year mark, if the employee has shown they are able to meet work expectations from home, they may be increased to two mobile workdays per week.
- h. When working from the home, any children must be in school, in day care or be under the care and control of another adult in the household. Employees may not be responsible for the direct care and control of children during the hours they are working remotely. Employees should review their childcare plan with their direct supervisor notifying the supervisor if there are children in the home and what the childcare plan will be when they are working from home.
- i. Once the employee receives approval to work remotely, it is the responsibility of the employee to make sure they have all technology needed to work, which includes, but is not limited to, updated computer programs such as Citrix VPN, Jabber phone system and ability to communicate with clients and/or supervisor via zoom or other virtual communication.
- j. Use of laptop computers is mandatory when working mobile. Officers must take their surface book in the field and utilize throughout the day to document contacts. The laptop will be on so calls may be transferred to them via Jabber.
- k. An employee shall document all work functions completed while working remotely on their traditional time sheets. The employee shall document their start and end times on their time sheet as well as location where they started and ended their days. Employees must punch the online electronic time clock when they start and end work. The officer's time sheet must provide detail as to specifically what work was completed while working mobile.
- l. Any hours worked beyond the approved eight-hour shift, must be approved as per the Court Administration/Probation Services compensatory time policy.
- m. Due to Federal Labor Laws, hourly employees must shut down their computer at the end of their eight-hour shift. At the completion of their shift, employees are not permitted to monitor or respond to emails. Should an employee work beyond their approved eight-hour shift without approval by their direct supervisor and documentation of compensatory time,

they may have their eligibility to work remotely revoked indefinitely and may face discipline.

- n. While working remotely, employees shall utilize their breaks and lunches as per contracts and policy.
- o. Any communication from clients through personal or work devices should not be responded to after-hours unless approval is given by the employee's direct supervisor. Any time spent after the approved eight-hour shift to communicate in any way with a client, police, or supervisor must be documented on employee's time sheet and compensatory time will be accrued as per policy.
- p. When conducting video meetings and/or phone meetings employees should move to an area where civilians (children, parents, friends, spouse, the public, etc.) cannot hear the conversations of the meeting. In addition, earbuds should be used if others are in the residence/location.
- q. Minimum office expectations
 - o. Probation Officers may work no more than 16 hours per week remotely. Officers are expected to be in the office for their day in coverage, court hearings, trainings, unit meetings (unless held off site), supervision time, staff meetings and any other event where the officer is instructed to be on site by their supervisor or another member of management. Any changes to this schedule must be approved by the supervisor.
 - o. Support Staff may work remotely no more than 16 hours per week on a rotating basis to be determined by the Office Manager.
 - o. Intake Support Specialist may work remotely no more than 16 hours per week on a rotating basis to be determined by their direct supervisor.
 - o. Management may work remotely no more than 16 hours per week and will notify their direct supervisor of their planned schedule. During the first three months on a new staff person's employment, the individual's direct supervisor should increase their time in the office to be available to train the new officer/staff person. When the supervisor is not in the office, they should ensure the employee is working with other staff.
 - o. When reporting to the office to work, officers and supervisors will either start or end their day in the office. Officers will only be paid for one way of travel. The only exceptions are emergency situations that are approved by management. Officers may not start or end their day with travel (example: Officer leaves JC at 2:30pm, arrives at home 3pm and then clocks out or officer clocks in at 7:00am then leaves to travel to their office at 7:30am).
 - o. Working in the office is defined as working in the individual's primary work location (out based office, jail, or the Reentry Opportunity Center) or the Judicial Center.
 - o. Mobile work is defined as working from home or other appropriate remote location as deemed appropriate by the supervisor.
 - o. Employees who are unable to report to work due to medical injuries, health issues, weather emergencies, or when the courts are closed for business may not work remotely. The employee will be required to use vacation, sick, paid time off, or compensatory time if they are unable to report to the office for work.
 - o. Flexible work scheduling is at the discretion of the management team. Staff should generally be available between 8:00 and 4:30 Monday through Friday in order to

address any emergency issues that may arise. Employees may not work other part-time or full-time jobs that interfere with these work hours.

- Nothing in this policy precludes an employee from reporting to work in the main office or out based offices more than the minimum requirement.
- Officers should continue to conduct office appointments as necessary for detainments, adult/juvenile intakes, individuals who are struggling with addiction, mental illness or housing, administrative hearings, Gagnon II Waiver Hearings, conditions signing, Megan's Law registrations to name a few.
- Officers should continue to conduct most arrests in the office when possible.

III. PROCEDURE:

- a. Employees shall communicate within a reasonable time frame to their direct supervisor their desire to work remotely. The employee shall keep their supervisor up to date on their daily schedule and what duties they will perform remotely. Any change in the employee's plan will need to be coordinated with their supervisor. The supervisor has full discretion to approve or disapprove the request.
- b. While working remotely, the employee shall maintain a confidential workspace and shall properly dispose of confidential documents. If an employee does not have access to a shredder, all confidential material should be brought to the office to be disposed of. At the end of the workday, any confidential information should be secured in a locked cabinet or other locking storage device such as the trunk of their car until the employee returns to the office.
- c. The employee shall check all equipment needed to work remotely to make sure all technology is functioning properly and updated. It is strongly recommended that employees attempt to connect remotely while in the office to make sure all systems are functioning as they should. Any technology that is not functioning properly, that prevents the officer from effectively working remotely, may preclude the officer from working at a remote location such as their home. If at any time an employee's computer access or programs stop working, they must immediately report the issue so that an IT ticket can be entered, and the issue resolved. If the issue cannot be resolved within two hours, they will be expected to report to the office.
- d. The employee's time sheet shall clearly reflect the date and hours the employee worked from home as well as a detailed accounting of the work completed. Any compensatory time MUST be approved as per the compensatory time policy.
- e. Supervisory staff will conduct thorough audits per probation policy to ensure that employees are working effectively and efficiently while mobile. Any concerns that arise because of these audits or other performance concerns will result in the immediate revocation of an employee's ability to work remotely.
- f. Employees will document on the EIO Board the location of their work: Judicial Center, Out Based Office (Dillsburg, DRC, Hanover, or Stewartstown) or Mobile Work so support staff are aware of the officer's location.
- g. While working remotely, the employee shall be available for communication from clients, employees, supervisors, Courts, etc. through the jabber phone system, their cell phone or

some other form of remote communication. A supervisor may request zoom or other virtual meetings to ensure the employee is working from home.

- h. The employee shall be expected to continue to participate in scheduled meetings via zoom or other method of advanced technology **with camera on** while working remotely. Employees must be available to respond to an emergency immediately during work hours. Employees may not work out of County or State unless their home residence is out of County or State.