

Guidelines for Managing Remotely

Background

In an effort to contain the spread of COVID-19 the Center for Disease Control and Prevention has recommended the implementation of social distancing strategies within the public and private sector. Along those lines, the Mayor has implemented a citywide telework policy.

Managing Remotely

A sudden shift to a remote working schedule can be challenging for managers. It's natural to worry about disruptions to your workflow, productivity and your ability to provide customer service. Many public sector managers believe they need to be physically present to manage their work and employees effectively. Additionally, in-person management has historically been viewed as a way to foster greater accountability and as means to engage with teams. Toward that end, we are providing the below best practices to support you in your transition to this new work arrangement.

Communication

- Communication should be consistent, clear and timely to foster a successful reporting relationship.
- Best efforts should be made to mirror the current frequency of your communication with your direct reports and teams.
- At the onset of remote work, consider daily check-ins with your direct reports to confirm that work is being performed throughout the day, and to address any concerns or issues they are experiencing. A weekly check-in with established teams should also be considered.

Setting Expectations

- Set expectations (e.g. explain the duties assigned, the quality standard and the deadline) early. Proceed with timely follow-up if it appears that expectations are not being met or remain unclear.
- Establish protocols to monitor timekeeping and productivity.
- Clarify with all employees that leave requests will continue be handled in accordance with current leave policies. If you require clarification, please contact Human Resources (**ADD TELEPHONE NUMBER OR EMAIL ADDRESS FOR HR DEPARTMENT**).
- Establish expectations regarding the frequency and preferred mode of communication with your staff.
- Questions to consider:
 - What are the *normal* working hours for the employee? How will time worked beyond the normal schedule be handled?
 - How would you like to be notified when an employee is taking a lunch hour?

- Is the employee allowed to run errands/attend appointments during the workday? If so, how should they notify their supervisor?
- When will the workday begin, and when will it end?
- Regarding email communications, what is the expected response time (Within an hour? By the end of the day? Will the response time vary based on the communication channel?)
- Aside from scheduled check-ins/meetings, should an employee only call when there's an urgent matter?

Effective Use of Technology and Meetings/Opportunities for Collaboration

- Test and use the technology available to you:
 - A smartphone and portable work device, like a tablet or laptop
 - Remote access to your network – Office 365 or VPN
 - Ask employees to move relevant documents to the One Drive
 - Place priority on using Webex, Facetime, Skype to provide face- to- face interaction with employees. This will keep the employees engaged, keep teams connected, and will address concerns about exclusion.

Engagement

- Be mindful that all employees react differently to remote work - some feel isolated when working alone, while others feel liberated.
- Engage your remote employees on a daily basis through some kind of communication. Use multiple channels to communicate (e.g. emails, conference calls, face-to-face remote meetings).
- Maintain your meeting schedule with direct reports and the larger team to ensure a consistent connection with the project(s) at hand, timelines and to the LOS' mission.
- Create group emails to keep teams aligned and projects moving forward.
- Say “thank you” often – we are entering new territory as a team. All of us will experience growing pains during this transition, and we need to keep each other motivated during this challenging time.

Should you require additional support, please contact Human Resources.