



GUIDELINES FOR TELEWORK ELIGIBILITY

SCOPE: This procedure applies to all employees of the Bellingham Symphony Orchestra

In certain cases, BSO considers teleworking a viable and flexible work option. The Executive Director is tasked with the final determination of eligibility for telework. Following are questions that can be used to determine when telework might be allowed.

In no way should the answers to these guiding questions be considered a straight “Yes/No” to the question of eligibility. Each situation is different; each employee is different; each position’s responsibilities are different. Each of these differences may create changes in how these factors or questions are prioritized or even interpreted, or may change whether or not some of these factors even apply to the situation at hand. So, while these factors can be used to help the discussion, in no way should these guidelines be considered the “end all, be all” of a discussion.

Other factors may weigh into the discussion. Some of these factors can also be used *during a period of telework* to ascertain that performance goals are being met, and to adjust whether or not an employee remains in a teleworking role. The employee and supervisor may wish to consider a telework trial period to test out the arrangement.

Questions for Supervisor

1. Can all/part of the responsibilities of the employee’s position be accomplished via telework?

The employee’s Job Description should certainly be used as one tool in the discussion.

2. Can all/some/none of the responsibilities of the Job Description under which the employee works be reliably and consistently accomplished offsite?

If all of the responsibilities can be met, it certainly is an indicator that the employee may be a better candidate for telework than someone who can meet only some or none of their responsibilities offsite.

3. Is a high level of in-person oversight of an employee’s work required to maintain a high level of performance with any of the Job Description’s responsibilities?

Some employees require more oversight than others with the same job responsibilities. Some staff are better at certain tasks than others. Some require more direct oversight to ascertain a high level of accuracy or efficiency. Supervisors must judge if the work done by the employee at remote locations is effective, and continue to do so even when the employee is working offsite.

4. Is the employee’s work largely collaborative?



Some job responsibilities require in person collaboration and participation of others, some can be accomplished with remote collaboration, and some can be accomplished with little or no participation from others. Some employees enjoy a work environment that includes other employees doing common (or disparate) tasks alongside them. Others perform best in a quiet environment. Knowledge of the work requirements, the employee, and even the supervisor should be one guide to determine whether or not an employee will likely be successful, or even enjoy working, in a remote environment.

5. Does the employee have a proven track-record of success in fulfilling their position's Job Responsibilities?

It is highly recommended that the employee in question will have been employed by BSO for enough time that a supervisor can draw conclusions about the probability of the employee's continued success in a teleworking environment. Both supervisor and employee should be comfortable with the entirety of the employee's performance in reliably meeting all job responsibilities before telework is discussed.

6. How will it affect my team? How will it affect BSO?

Any teleworking arrangement will have some effect upon the work environment of the rest of the team, workgroup or department. For example, the very nature of staff meetings changes when one or more participants is offsite. Communication with a teleworker becomes something different than simply turning your chair and asking them a question when they are onsite. Communication adjustments will need to be made should workers be split between those who telework and those who don't.

Some employees are more amenable to change than others. Team supervisors should consider whether or not adding telework into the mix is likely to be successful or disruptive to the work that needs to get done. This includes consulting other workgroups or departments regarding the work and interaction of the employee, and consideration of the effect of telework to outside groups and even to patrons.

Other considerations

Equipment availability: administration budgets for and plans for equipment deployment during the yearly budgeting process at the end of the fiscal year. As a result, plenty of lead time may be required to plan for appropriate equipment to be allocated to a new telework employee. All equipment requests should be made during the budget planning cycle, which generally begins around February of each year in prep for the next fiscal year.

BSO workspace: Space in BSO facilities is limited. As such, a teleworking employee may not be assigned a separate, dedicated workstation at a BSO facility. The employee and supervisor will determine workstation needs, including a shared workspace at a BSO facility.

Fiscal Responsibility: In order to allocate resources in the most fiscally-responsible manner possible, it makes sense to recognize that resources such as staff support time, equipment, supplies and the like should be allocated in such a way where the most benefit to patron service can be derived. Priority for these kinds of resources may be given to those who can use them the most, or to those employees whose responsibilities provide the most benefit to patrons. In other words, allocating



equipment to an employee who will be teleworking full time may be more efficient than allocating the same equipment to an employee who only works off site for a short period.

Questions for the Employee

Telework is a voluntary work alternative. Most employees who wish to telework will bring it up themselves to a supervisor, and of course the discussion should be welcomed. Here are a few questions for the employee that may help that discussion along.

1. Are you self-motivated and independent?

While teleworking, you won't have your colleagues or your supervisor around to check your work. You'll have better success as a teleworker if you aren't prone to procrastinate, and if you have been successful in past performance reviews.

2. Are you a social individual?

If you like daily and regular in-person communication more than working in isolation, then teleworking might not be for you. If you are more comfortable using phone, instant messaging and Zoom for business online meetings, it's more likely you will hear what you need to hear (and be heard!) in a telework environment.

3. Do you have a home office?

If not a separate room, you will need a quiet area separate from busier areas to be able to do work. The environment must be a safe, quiet and ergonomic space for you to perform and be successful. Review the Safety and Ergonomics information provided in the Telework Agreement with your supervisor to determine if your home work environment is safe and suitable for work. Many Job Responsibilities will require internet access speedy enough to access the BSO network, attend online meetings and field telephone calls successfully. Note that internet service and other utilities are the responsibility of the employee.

Lastly, while BSO is willing to consider telework, the BSO does not maintain a budget to pay for such things as furniture, internet upgrades or building alterations to accommodate remote work. Such costs borne by the employee could be considered deductible expenses from your Federal taxes, and employees are encouraged to consult with a tax professional.

4. Are minors/dependents in your household properly supervised while you telework?

Your supervisor's expectations regarding your performance and availability for work will not change depending upon your work location. You must continue to satisfy your job responsibilities at a high level, and doing that means being available, undistracted and working during your scheduled work period. Employees who work at home are expected to manage dependent care and personal responsibilities in a manner that allows them to successfully meet their job responsibilities.