



FUTURE OF WORK: POST-PANDEMIC FLEXIBLE WORK POLICIES

The pandemic has forever broadened the scope of flexible work. Many employees have learned to effectively work flexibly and/or remotely during the COVID-19 crisis and have experienced the benefits of flexible work. Organizational leaders are now considering how/what types of flexible work to offer after the pandemic. The Alliance has a number of recommendations for flexible work policies post-pandemic, so these initiatives can reap the greatest benefits in terms of work productivity, and recruitment/retention of top talent:

- 1. Holistic Flexible Work** – We strongly recommend implementing holistic flexible work policies, including reduced hours, telecommuting, flextime, compressed work week, asynchronous hours and job sharing options, as employees have individual flex needs. Additionally, by providing holistic flexible work options, employees who may not be able to utilize certain forms of flex due to their job function can still use other types of flex (i.e. a receptionist may not be able to telecommute due to his/her function but may be able to work reduced hours, flextime or compressed work week).
- 2. Written Policy** – The Alliance has always advocated for written policies, allowing for creativity in the design of individual schedules. By having a written policy, employers enhance their ability to specify parameters/expectations (i.e. communication protocols, privacy concerns, home office set-up, etc.), employee awareness of flex options and resources/support around flex, consistency of application (i.e. limiting disparate treatment based upon supervisors), and the possibility of gaining awards/recognition.
- 3. Organization-Specific Business Case/Features** – Policies should state the firm's unique business case for flex up front, to gain support/traction. Right now, we strongly recommend that organizations develop their business case by surveying/checking-in with their employees to understand what worked and what didn't in terms of flex during the pandemic.
- 4. Eligibility** – Organizations should specify any eligibility requirements to utilize the flexible work policy. Will your flexible work policy require that employees have met a tenure requirement? Do employees need to meet expected performance standards to be eligible for flexible work? The Alliance strongly recommends that flex policies are open to all employees, and that eligibility requirements are not too onerous.

- 5. Reason-Neutral Proposal Process/Approval** – We recommend that policies clearly specify the process to submit a flexible work proposal, and who to contact with questions. We strongly suggest that the proposal process is reason-neutral (i.e. the approval process does not require a reason for the proposed flexible work schedule), requests should typically be approved unless a competing business need exists in which case another flexible work option should be offered, and proposals are submitted first to Talent/Human Resources Professionals who can serve as the gatekeeper to ensure the approval process is consistent.

- 6. Any Effect on Compensation/Advancement** – If flexible work affects compensation/advancement, you should specify this in the policy so that employees are aware beforehand. We strongly recommend that full-time flexible work arrangements (i.e. telecommuting; compressed work week; flextime) have no effect on compensation/advancement. For part-time flexible work arrangements (i.e. reduced hours; job sharing), compensation/advancement timing should be at least pro rata. Also, organizations should include a “true-up” process for part-time employees who work more than their agreed upon schedules to compensate them for any additional work.

- 7. Review of Flexible Work Schedule** – The policy should specify how long the schedule would remain in effect prior to a review of such schedule, unless an issue is raised beforehand. We recommend instituting a review procedure, such that there are regular, periodic check-ins with the flex workers during the first year and at least annually thereafter. This way, the organization can remedy any issues that arise and can evaluate annually whether the flexible work arrangement is working from both the employee’s and department’s perspectives.

The Alliance is here to provide organizations with trends and best practices regarding flexible work so they can create/update flexible work policies. Members have access to several Alliance resources as part of their benefits: the [Resource Library](#), [Strategy Calls](#), [Policy Reviews](#), [Advisory Hours](#) and [Signature Seminars](#). Take a look at our action step, [Leverage Alliance Benefits](#), which discusses ways to partner with us and most effectively utilize your benefits. To discuss specific strategic advice/resources regarding your flexible work policy post-pandemic, contact [Manar Morales](#).