

Family Friendly Workplace Information

Are you struggling to balance the demands of your work life with that of your home life?

The Department of Commerce (DOC) is committed to providing Family Friendly programs that strive to improve the quality of life by helping employees balance their indisputably linked work and family lives. The Department's goal to ensure a model Family Friendly workplace can be achieved, but only by acknowledging our diverse, talented, and productive workforce, and by creating a work environment that recognizes the importance of employer involvement in maintaining strong, healthy families. To this end, the following Family Friendly information is offered to assist you in balancing these needs:

WORK ARRANGEMENT PROGRAMS

Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) - offer employees the flexibility to adjust the traditional fixed work schedule of 8-hours per day, 5-day per week. Two different work schedule variations are available - flexible and compressed. A flexible schedule means one of several types of work schedules all of which consist of core hours (when an employee must be at work) and flexible time bands. Employees on flexible schedules (except Senior Executive Service members) may, with supervisory approval, earn and use credit hours to vary the length of another day, workweek, or pay period. A compressed schedule means a fixed schedule in which an employee can complete the biweekly work requirement in less than 10 working days.

Part-Time Work Arrangements - allow employees to work between 16 and 32 hours each

week on a prearranged schedule. This type of work arrangement is used when the workload will not support full-time employment or when an employee may not be able to work a full-time schedule. Part-time employment is currently available in a wide variety of positions at all levels throughout the Department.

Job-Sharing Work Arrangements - are a form of part-time employment where the schedules of two part-time employees are set up to cover the duties of a single full-time position, with the work proportionally divided between the two.

Telework Work Arrangements - permit employees to work at home, at a telecenter, or at a satellite office. Telework arrangements can be made on a continuing basis - where the employee works a specified portion of each workweek at the alternative workplace and the remainder of the workweek at his or her conventional office. Telework arrangements can also be made on an ad hoc basis - to complete a project more efficiently, or to accommodate an employee who is temporarily incapacitated.

Please note that some positions may not be compatible with certain work arrangements. Because of this and the need to balance work arrangements with mission objectives, customer service requirements, or other considerations, supervisory approval is required. Also, some work arrangements may not currently be available in all agencies.

LEAVE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Emergency Leave Transfer Program - allows for the mass transfer of pooled annual leave to other Federal employees adversely affected by a major disaster or emergency (e.g., floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, bombings, etc.), as

declared by the President. Employees are not required to exhaust accrued annual or sick leave before receiving donated annual leave and family members of the Federal employee may benefit if they have no reasonable access to other forms of assistance.

Leave Transfer Program - allows employees to voluntarily donate annual leave directly to other Federal employees (or family members of the Federal employee) who have personal medical emergencies and who have exhausted their own leave. Donated annual leave may be used to cover periods of absence caused by the medical emergency.

Sick Leave for General Family Care - (formally Family Friendly Sick Leave) allows full-time employees to use 40 hours (5 days) of sick leave each leave year (prorated for part-time employees) to care for a family member or to arrange for or attend the funeral of a family member. An additional 64 hours may be used if the employee maintains an 80-hour sick leave account balance.

Sick Leave for Expanded Family Care - allows full-time employees to use 480 hours (12 weeks) of sick leave each leave year (prorated for part-time employees) to care for a family member with a serious health condition, if the employee maintains an 80-hour sick leave account balance. Any amounts of sick leave used for general family care must be deducted from the entitlement for expanded family care.

Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) - allows employees to use 12 work-weeks of unpaid leave during any 12-month period for the birth and care of a son or daughter; the placement of a son or daughter (with the employee) for adoption or foster care; the care of a son, daughter, spouse, or parent (of the employee) with a serious health condition; or the serious health condition of the employee that

renders the employee unable to perform the essential functions of his or her position. The law authorizing this leave ensures that leave for family and medical purposes is available on a gender-neutral basis and mandates job security for employees who take the leave.

Please note that under the Emergency Leave Transfer Program, the Leave Transfer Program and sick leave for general family care and expanded family care, family member includes any individual related by blood or affinity whose close relationship with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship. For FMLA purposes, family member is a son, daughter, spouse, or parent of the employee.

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Employee Assistance Program (EAP) - is a confidential resource for information, referral, and counseling. Available to all employees and their families (including any individual related by blood or affinity whose close relationship with the employee is the equivalent of a family relationship), EAP provides solutions for today's challenging situations such as job-related stress, family conflicts, and other personal problems; information about community resources; referrals to a variety of service providers; training on various topics; and management/supervisory consultations on employee performance and behavioral issues.

Child Care Centers - provide convenient relief for employees with children. Each Center is staffed by qualified professional care givers and many of the Centers offer financial aid through scholarships to those employees in need. DOC has several quality Child Care Centers located at various facilities across the country.

Public Transportation Subsidies - are programs that encourage employees to commute to and from work via mass transportation or car pooling. The goal of these programs is to save energy, as well as reduce traffic congestion and air pollution.

For additional information on Family Friendly work arrangements and programs, contact your servicing human resources office or visit the following Websites:

DOC/OHRM:

http://ohrm.doc.gov/employees/Fam_Fr_workplace/Family.pdf

OPM:

<http://www.opm.gov/html/topics.asp>

WORK ARRANGEMENT PROGRAMS

Alternative Work Schedules
Part-Time Work Arrangements
Job-Sharing Work Arrangements
Telework Work Arrangements

LEAVE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Emergency Leave Transfer Program
Leave Transfer Program
Sick Leave for General Family Care
Sick Leave for Expanded Family Care
Family and Medical Leave Act

EMPLOYEE BENEFIT PROGRAMS

Employee Assistance Program
Child Care Centers
Public Transportation Subsidies



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