

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Flexible Work Arrangements

The Flexible Work Arrangements policy was established to standardize remote work and flexible scheduling options across state agencies while continuing to provide great government service. The Flexible Work Arrangements policy authorizes agencies to evaluate and permit up to 15 hours of Remote Work for employees whose work may be performed outside of state facilities.

#### **How am I supposed to report and document Remote Work?**

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You must accurately report and code all work performed remotely, the location where you worked, and all leave time taken in PeopleSoft. When reporting Remote Work hours through PeopleSoft Time and Labor, you must select “REMOTE WORK” from the look up feature for User Field 5 in addition to reporting the hours as “Regular Work Hours – REG.”

#### **How will an agency determine whether an employee’s performance is satisfactory for purposes of contemplating Remote Work?**

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This evaluation will be made by the employee’s manager, considering all pertinent aspects of an employee’s current performance. Performance Appraisals are considered by managers in making this determination.

#### **Should I have my camera on during meetings?**

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Engagement in virtual meetings is often much better when cameras are on. Sometimes bandwidth limitations, or number of participants, make it unfeasible to have all cameras on. Presenters and speakers, however, should at least utilize video when speaking. Dress and appearance standards set by the state and/or your agency still apply to virtual meetings and work.

#### **How may the allowed 15 hours be used by employees?**

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Remote Work hours may be scheduled in the manner determined appropriate by your manager. The intent of the policy is to provide flexibility to state employees while continuing to ensure we are available to both the public and our colleagues. While this policy does not restrict usage of Remote Work to certain days, agencies should limit the combination of Alternative Work Schedules (AWS) and Remote Work arrangements in any way that would enable an employee to be away from their Office more than two days per work week. Accurate reporting of hours worked and the location of the work is required by the employee.

## **How would mileage be calculated if working remotely and traveling to another site?**

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Mileage will be calculated from the location of a designated Remote Work Site and will be reimbursed at the most recent mileage reimbursement rate determined by the state. See reimbursement rates here: [www.in.gov/idoa/state-purchasing/travel-services](http://www.in.gov/idoa/state-purchasing/travel-services).

## **Where can I perform Remote Work?**

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Remote Work may only be performed from an approved Remote Work Site agreed upon by you and your manager.

## **What documents/steps must I complete before I can start Remote Work?**

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INSPD recommends managers collaborate with employees by using the state's Remote Work Feasibility Worksheet and Remote Work Safety Checklist to determine if Remote Work may be appropriate. If approved by the agency's appointing authority, you and your supervisor must sign the Remote Work Agreement. To effectively fill out the agreement, please use the Remote Work Worksheet as a tool to aid you.

## **Can my manager deny my request or rescind prior approval for Remote Work?**

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Yes. Remote Work is a privilege and may be denied or rescinded by manager.

## **Do I have to work remotely on the same, specific schedule every week, or can the agreement be for more irregular situations?**

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If approved to work remotely, it is recommended that employees communicate with their managers and agree to maintain a routine schedule for the sake of consistency and availability to colleagues and customers. However, managers may agree to allow employees to deviate from hours and/or schedules as set forth in their Remote Work Agreement. In making such a determination, the manager must consider the employee's productivity and schedule, as well as the business of the agency and the needs of the agency's clients, customers, and stakeholders.

## **Will I have to fill out a Remote Work Agreement if I already have an ADA accommodation to work from home?**

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No. This policy will not impact ADA accommodations.

## **Do I need to keep a remote work log on the days I work remotely?**

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Employees and managers are responsible for accounting for the work performed remotely. This policy does not mandate a particular method to do this, but the Remote Work Log is a useful tool for serving that purpose. Continuous Performance Management through SuccessFactors is also a very useful tool to track outcomes and productivity.

## **Can I use my own laptop/equipment while I work from home?**

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Using a state-owned device for Remote Work is strongly encouraged. If approved by your agency and provided you comply with the law and with IOT policy for accessing and storing confidential information, you may use personal equipment. You must not store or access confidential information on any personal device and should consult with your manager and IOT on how to securely work remotely using a personal device.

## Education Reimbursement

The State of Indiana is introducing a new Education Reimbursement policy as part of the overall employee compensation package to encourage state employees to grow through advanced academic or professional licensing by providing financial reimbursement for eligible education expenses. Now, full-time employees who have been employed by a state agency for 12 consecutive months may be eligible for reimbursements of up to \$5,250.00 annually.

### **Can I be enrolled in several different certifications/courses/institutions at the same time and have them be reimbursed?**

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Yes, but reimbursement cannot exceed \$5,250 per calendar year.

### **With this reimbursement, am I eligible to apply for other scholarships?**

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Yes, you are encouraged to find other scholarships and to deduct those from the cost of tuition before requesting reimbursement. Employees interested in pursuing academic or professional education are encouraged to file a [FAFSA](#) as they may qualify for federal loans, grants, and other scholarships.

### **What costs are eligible for reimbursement?**

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Eligible costs for reimbursement are limited to tuition and required course fees. If you have or will receive a grant, scholarship, or other funds that cover these costs, you may apply this funding to cover these ineligible costs while reserving Education Reimbursement for tuition expenses covered under this policy.

### **Do courses, degrees, or certifications I enroll in need to be related to my current work for the State of Indiana?**

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No. This is a compensation benefit available to our full-time employees as part of their overall employment package. This commitment to education betters our workforce and strengthens Indiana as a state.

### **What does an accreditation for a certification or a course mean? Can I take a course online?**

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For a course to be eligible for Reimbursement, the organization offering the course must be accredited by a regulating/neutral body. INSPD will determine the validity of endorsement or accreditation if agencies are unsure.

### **How long must I work for the state before being eligible to apply for Education Reimbursement?**

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You must be employed full-time and without a break-in service for 12 consecutive months prior to submitting your reimbursement application. Time spent off work on short-term disability or worker's compensation leave is considered continuous for purposes of this policy.

### **When must I turn in my grades?**

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Grade submissions are required no more than 30 calendar days after the completion of the course.

## **What grade must I receive in order to qualify for reimbursement?**

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You must complete the course with a grade of at least a “C” or above. For pass/fail courses, you must receive the equivalent of a “pass” grade.

## **If I did not pass a course, and I did not get reimbursed, can I take the course over and get reimbursement?**

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No, courses that were failed in the past will not be reimbursed.

## **Does this policy limit other professional development training for which agencies pay?**

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Courses offered to employees, and paid by the state, as part of an agency’s normal professional development training and certification policies/procedures are not courses eligible for Reimbursement. Such costs will not count against the annual \$5,250 limit.

## **Do I have to pay taxes on the reimbursement?**

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The IRS allows an employer to exclude up to \$5,250 of education assistance from an employee’s wages in a calendar year. Therefore, you will not see this reflected on your W-2.

## **The course I am taking begins prior to my one-year anniversary but ends after my one-year anniversary. Is this course eligible for reimbursement?**

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Eligibility is determined based off the submission date of your application. You must have been employed for at least 12 continuous months with the state before your application date—which needs to be submitted 30 days prior to the end of the course (receiving your final grade).

## **If my university uses a flat fee model, and I do not meet the C or higher requirement on one course, am I then ineligible for the entire amount?**

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No, the state will pro-rate the amount of reimbursement to account for the non-passing grade.

## **Referral Bonus**

To encourage employee engagement in recruiting talented applicants, the state has developed a program to offer a financial incentive for referrals that result in successful hires. A current employee is eligible to receive a \$500 referral bonus for each referred candidate hired for a full-time position, \$250 for each referred candidate hired for a part-time position, and \$100 for each referred candidate hired for an intermittent position.

## **Am I eligible for a Referral Bonus if I refer a candidate to an agency other than the one for which I work?**

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No, you may only receive a Referral Bonus for applicants successfully referred to your own agency.

## **Can several people receive a Referral Bonus for the same employee?**

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No, a Referral Bonus may only be issued once per referred applicant. It will be issued to the eligible employee submitting the completed form first.

## **Am I eligible for a Referral Bonus if I refer a former state employee?**

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Yes, as long as the applicant has not worked as an employee or contractor for the hiring agency in the prior 12 months or submitted an application to the hiring agency in 6 months prior to application.

## **Can I refer family members or friends?**

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Yes, but the state's prohibition against nepotism still applies to contractual and employment relationships.

## **I work as a recruiter. Will I be eligible for a referral bonus?**

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You will not be eligible for a referral bonus for those who you recruit as part of your job duties. However, if you refer an individual to your employing agency for a position that is not within your scope of responsibility, you may be eligible for a Referral Bonus.

## **Once the Referred Candidate is hired, how long will it take to receive the Referral Bonus?**

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The Referred Employee needs to remain employed for six (6) months after hire, and the Referral Bonus should be processed at that time.

## **Is there a minimum amount of time I need to be with my agency before I can refer a candidate?**

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No, you are eligible to refer a candidate to your agency as of your first day of employment.

## **If I refer an employee for seasonal or intermittent employment, lasting less than the required 6 months, will I be eligible for a Referral Bonus?**

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Yes, as long as the referred employee remains employed through the duration of their seasonal assignment.

## **Am I eligible to receive a Referral Bonus if I have left state employment prior to 6 months of employment by the Referred Candidate?**

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No, eligibility is determined at the time the Referred Candidate has been employed 6 months and the policy requires the Referring Employee to also be employed at that time.

## **What if I move to another agency 6 months after successfully referring a candidate? Will I still be eligible for the Referral Bonus?**

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Yes.

## **Does this bonus impact my taxes, income, or W2?**

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Yes, the bonus will be included in your taxable wages and taxes withheld will be reported on your W-2.

## Is there a limit to how many referral bonuses I can receive?

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No

## WHOLE Employee Policy

The WHOLE Employee Policy normalizes employee Wellness, Health, and Opportunities for Learning and Engagement (WHOLE) programming. It states that agencies may conduct many WHOLE related activities utilizing state property and during compensable work hours. The policy encourages agencies to inform employees of relevant learning and development opportunities and permits employees to engage in voluntary activities relevant to their jobs during compensable work hours.

### **Who will be responsible for soliciting ideas, planning, implementing, and approving employee participation in WHOLE activities and initiatives at each agency?**

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Appointing Authorities will be responsible for authorizing activities, and for creating a process for the collection of ideas, planning, implementing, and approving employee time related to WHOLE activities. Employees are always encouraged to share their ideas with their agency.

### **How will WHOLE related activities be approved for employees?**

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Employees are responsible for following agency approval processes for before participating in wellness, community service, and engagement activities during work hours.

### **Can I exercise or participate in outside wellness activities unrelated to the state's wellness programming during work hours?**

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No, the intent of the WHOLE Employee Policy is to allow flexibility in employee time to engage in the state's wellness activities/programs. Performing activities other than those related to state employment during work hours may constitute ghost employment and are prohibited.

## New Employee Leave Time

Vacation leave time is currently not available for use by new hires in the first six months of employment, and this, for many, can be a barrier to maintaining their employment. To address this, the Indiana State Personnel Department (INSPD) will engage in the rule change procedures that will allow for the accrual and use of vacation time by new employees.

In the interim, Governor Eric Holcomb's executive order that will temporarily credit all employees hired on or after the date of this Order with 22.5 hours of personal leave available for use immediately consistent with the state's standardized leave policies. Also, recently hired employees who began employment before March 7 will be credited with hours as follows:

1. Employees hired between December 6, 2021, and March 6, 2022, will be credited with 22.5 hours of personal leave.
2. Employees hired between October 25, 2021, and December 5, 2021, will be credited with 15 hours of personal leave.
3. Employees hired between September 8, 2021, and October 24, 2021, will be credited with 7.5 hours of personal leave.

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### **Is it different for Law Enforcement and Firefighters who accrue leave at a different rate?**

No, 22.5 hours of leave will be credited to new employees regardless of the rate at which they accrue leave.

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### **Are rehires eligible for this leave?**

No. Rehires resume employment where they left off with regards to leave—meaning that they will have access to leave time they had accrued in previous employment with the state upon starting with the state again, and may use vacation leave immediately upon accrual.

## **Community Service Leave**

Maximizing our teams' engagement in charitable activities is a service to our state and our communities. The Community Service Leave policy will remove administrative barriers to charitable service and raise the individual service cap to 15 hours annually for full-time employees and 7.5 hours annually for part-time employees.

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### **Will agency-wide volunteer activities count against individual employees' service hours?**

Yes.

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### **What will be considered a volunteer activity?**

Service that ultimately results in benefit to a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization or another government entity. Written documentation from the agency or charitable organization must be provided.

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### **How will volunteer service hours be approved?**

Service hours must be approved by your agency's appointing authority or their designee.

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### **Do I still have to "give a day to get a day"—volunteer first and then ask for the leave?**

No, you no longer need to volunteer first. With manager approval, you can code community service leave hours appropriately as you would other leave hours in PeopleSoft.

## Bridge to Retirement Policy

To foster a smooth transition for our retiring employees and their agencies, the Bridge to Retirement program will allow agencies to double-fill positions of long-term employees who have a target retirement date. This will enable a more successful knowledge transfer between the retiring employee and their identified successor.

**Will this practice allow for the double filling of any position where a long-time employee indicates their intent to leave state government for other reasons besides retirement?**

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No, this only allows for double filling positions for employees who have a set retirement date.

## New Retired State Employee Classification

Our long-term employees are a wealth of knowledge in their roles as public servants, and their continued contributions are an asset to our teams. To further engage our long-term employees and retain team members with years of experience in public service, the state has created two Retired State Employee intermittent classifications (overtime eligible and overtime exempt) and formalized a program to re-employ team members who want to return to the State of Indiana post-retirement.

**Is there a limit to how many hours an employee with intermittent classification may work per year?**

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Yes, intermittent employees may not work more than 180 days per year.

**Do employees have to wait a certain amount of time before they may be hired into this classification?**

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No, there is no required waiting period for filling this classification.

**How will the pay rate be determined for these roles?**

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Employees will be compensated at the same hourly rate that earned when they retired.

**Are employees in an intermittent classification eligible for health insurance with the state?**

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Eligibility for health insurance among intermittent employees is determined in accordance with FMC 2.5. Generally, intermittent employees are not eligible for health insurance.

**Can a retired state employee still access their Retirement Medical Benefits Account (RMBA) if they return to employment?**

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Access to RMBA funds are [suspended](#) during any time of employment, including as an intermittent employee.