



# County of Essex Policy and Procedures Manual

## Work-Life Integration (WLI) – Non-Union Employees

<b>Policy Number:</b>	2023-001
<b>Policy Type:</b>	Corporate Policy
<b>Approval Authority:</b>	Essex County Council
<b>Office of Responsibility:</b>	Human Resources
<b>Issuance Date:</b>	2023-03-15 (Pending)
<b>Revised on Date:</b>	N/A
<b>Scheduled Review Date:</b>	2027-01-01
<b>Replaces Policy:</b>	N/A

### 1.0 Introduction

The Corporation of the County of Essex (the County) is committed to offering flexible work arrangements for non-union employees, depending on their roles and responsibilities. It is recognized that some roles, due to their essential nature, are not able to utilize this policy.

### 2.0 Scope

This policy/procedure pertains to all non-union employees of the Corporation of the County of Essex, depending on the nature of the role requirements and in consultation with the applicable Leader and Department Head. Employees who are in training, may not be eligible during their training period.

### 3.0 Purpose/Description

To create a policy that provides custom flexibility that enables accountability within our organization. With the continued merge and integration of work and life, the objective is to find the right balance between both daily flexibility and custom flexibility that drives individual accountability. The approach is to achieve the most flexible design desired by both the County and our employees, with full consideration for roles, responsibilities & accountabilities.

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We know these considerations are different for every role, so not every flexible design will always work for every employee within our various departments.

We seek to inspire and trust our people to do what they think is best for the County, giving flexibility, empowerment and information in support of decisions and actions. In turn, we expect a sense of responsibility and accountability that drives great work that benefits both employees and the County.

### 4.0 Policy/Procedures

#### 4.1 Daily Flexibility

The daily approach to WLI is to provide as much flexibility as possible. Commitments such as appointments, last minute schedule changes or sick family members are all a part of life. We encourage independent decision making and openness between employees and their Leader to make sure they feel supported. As circumstances change and situations arise, employees may be able to utilize daily flexibility in their start time, work hours or work location to accommodate needs.

With the promotion of individual empowerment, the expectation is individual accountability and results that will provide the necessary balance.

#### 4.2 Custom Flexibility

Providing options for people to design a flexible, unique approach, aligns with our belief that WLI at the County is key to the achievement of both organizational and personal goals.

The following options seek to provide flexible options with full consideration for roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities. These considerations are different for every role, so not every flexible design will work for every employee or for every department within the organization.

Options	Description
<b>Flexible Location</b>	Flex the work location up to two days a week
<b>Flexible Start Time</b>	Flex the start and end times of the workday
<b>Flexible Work Period</b>	Flex the regular work hours during a two-week period - working the total hours within that time period

### 4.3 Application Process

Employees interested in taking part in a WLI should follow the process as set out below:

- 4.3.1 Review the options in 4.2.
- 4.3.2 Complete a Self-Assessment (Appendix 1).
- 4.3.3 Complete a WLI Proposal based on Self-Assessment Results (Appendix 1).
- 4.3.4 WLI Proposals should be emailed to an employee's Leader for consideration of support. Leaders will review all WLI Proposals with Department Heads for their approval.
- 4.3.5 If changes are required, an employee should review and resubmit their WLI Proposal and secure support from their Leader and subsequently Department Head approval.

## 5.0 Amendments

This Policy may be amended from time to time at the Corporation's sole discretion. In the event the Corporation amends the Policy, it will provide an amended copy of the Policy to employees as soon as possible.

## 6.0 Summary of Amendments

Date	Amendment(s)
2023-03-15	Approved by Council (Pending)

## 7.0 Appendices

1. Self-Assessment/WLI Proposal
2. Frequently Asked Questions

## APPENDIX 1 – SELF ASSESSMENT AND WLI PROPOSAL

### SELF-ASSESSMENT

These questions are meant to guide thoughts and conversation. Reflect on and answer each question. Your ability to accurately self-assess your role and your request, will ultimately impact your Leader's ability to support your request.

Does my role allow for independent work? (Consider the degree to which you can work independently, reflect that consideration in your WLI proposal. )	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Are there cyclical periods during a week, month or year that would result in your proposal negatively impacting COE?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Will my key accountabilities, work deadlines, & achievement milestones be easy to measure and communicate to my Leader with my proposal?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A

### **WILL MY WLI PROPOSAL....**

Affect my ability to support my customer/clients (internal & external)?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Affect the coverage & support within the department?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Affect coworkers?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Affect any projects I am a part of?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Affect my ability to supervise and lead my team?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Affect my ability to collaborate & work effectively with my team?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Affect productivity and efficiency?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A

### **CUSTOM WORK LOCATION:**

Does my role require the use of equipment and/or technology I won't be able to access offsite?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Do I have a safe, ergonomically proper, and comfortable space to work from?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Do I have the ability and quiet non-distracting space to hold video calls or conferences?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A
Will I still be compliant with our privacy & security policies?	Yes	Somewhat	No	N/A

	FLEX LOCATION	FLEX TIME	FLEX WORK PERIOD
TYPE OF FLEX			
LENGTH REQUESTED (1, 3, 6 months)			
PROPOSAL DETAILS			
POTENTIAL CONCERNS & MITIGATION			
TECHNOLOGY REQUIRED (IF APPLICABLE) *WLI should not have a significant impact financially to COE and any request will need to be reviewed by IT.			

I have read and understand the Work Life Integration Framework and Guide and agree to the terms and conditions (the fine print below) indicated in this proposal/ arrangement.

Employee Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Leader Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Department Head (Approval): \_\_\_\_\_

**The Fine Print:**

1. This is a mutual voluntary flexible agreement and can be amended or discontinued by either party at any time with reasonable notice.
2. Adjustments to the design will be made on occasion in order to meet business emergencies, operational demands, project requirements, and learning and development sessions.
3. No design will result in banked lieu time, paid overtime, additional expenses or costs to the County.
4. The flexible work arrangement must be compliant with all legislative requirements including the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.
5. The flexible work arrangement must be compliant with all County policies, procedures and guidelines including Privacy & Security

## **APPENDIX 2 – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. CAN MY REQUEST BE DENIED?**

The County of Essex is responsible for setting work schedules and can deny a request for business reasons. Flexibility in work schedules and times is a voluntary arrangement between the employee and COE.

### **2. CAN I USE MULTIPLE FLEXIBLE OPTIONS AT ONCE? FOR EXAMPLE, FLEXIBLE START TIME AND FLEXIBLE LOCATION**

As long as you're following the guidelines, and your Leader and Department Head support your design proposal, you're all set.

### **3. CAN I FORGO MY BREAKS AND SHORTEN MY DAY?**

We believe it's important to take an effective break in your day to refresh and re-group, it's part of wellness. Our philosophy is to encourage your breaks. Reducing this break from time to time (no more than 1x per week) is understandable and okay. Building no lunch or reduced lunch into proposal design is not.

### **4. WHAT IF NONE OF THE OPTIONS SEEM TO FIT MY NEEDS OR THE NEEDS OF MY DEPARTMENT?**

If you or your department need more options, work with your Leader and HR Consultant to create the right design for you. If your role is essential, it is understood that this framework, unfortunately, may not apply.

### **5. DO I TRACK MY FLEXIBLE SCHEDULE IN TIME MANAGER/COUNTY TIME SHEETS?**

Tracking your flexible schedule in the system is not necessary, it's between you and your Leader. Leaders might have specific requests for tracking and you need to find what works best to ensure you are accountable for working your total hours within the work period.

### **6. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I CALL IN SICK OR TAKE A VACATION DAY?**

Vacation and other days like sick days are based on your regular work day. For example, if you take a vacation day or a sick day on a day you were scheduled to work a flex (either more or fewer hours) you will be paid your regular hours (vacation or sick time) and your schedule will need to be adjusted for the two-week period to ensure you're meeting your total workweek hours.

## **7. HOW DO I REQUEST DAILY FLEXIBILITY?**

Daily Flexibility is ad-hoc, situational flexibility and therefore not planned far in advance. This type of request is dependent on your role and may or may not be feasible based on business needs. Speak with your Leader about whether this might be an option.

## **8. CAN I WORK FROM 10 PM TO 6 AM? OR SATURDAY & SUNDAY?**

We want to make sure staff are working as close to regular business operating hours (for their role or department) as possible. For some roles, weekend and evening work (i.e. Sun Parlour Home) would be part of flex time.

## **9. CAN I SUBMIT THE COSTS FOR MY HOME INTERNET PROVIDER OR OTHER COSTS THROUGH AN EXPENSE REPORT?**

Working from a flexible location is voluntary and cannot create additional costs for the COE. Since working remotely is a choice, you are responsible for ensuring you have the right work tools at home or elsewhere to work effectively and efficiently. In addition, COE will not be issuing a T2200 as working from home is not a requirement.

## **10. CAN I WORK FROM HOME TO BE AVAILABLE TO A SICK FAMILY MEMBER OR CARE FOR A CHILD?**

Un-planned, last-minute things happen, we get it. Taking care of your family is a part of our culture. Plan accordingly and communicate transparently. Taking care of a family member from time to time is part of daily flexibility. Regardless of your work location, **it is expected that during your working hours you are available and working.**