



Department of Employee Relations

November 16, 2017

Tom Barrett
Mayor

Maria Monteagudo
Director

Renee Joos
Employee Benefits Director

Nicole Fleck
Labor Negotiator

To the Honorable
Milele Coggs, Chair of the
Committee on Finance and Personnel
Common Council-City Clerk
Room 205, City Hall
Milwaukee, WI 53202

Re: CC File #170944 Substitute resolution directing City departments to develop plans for implementation of alternative work arrangements for their employees

Dear Committee Members,

In March of 2016 the Common Council adopted a resolution directing the Department of Employee Relations (DER) to create the infrastructure for alternative staffing and scheduling models for City of Milwaukee departments to consider and implement when appropriate for their business models. The resolution required the DER to report back to the Common Council within 120 days of adoption.

In June of 2016 an amendment to Chapter 350-209-3 of the Milwaukee Code created the legislative authority for employees to request and for departments to approve alternative work arrangements. The ordinance directed the DER to create guidelines and procedures in relation to alternative staffing models and encouraging department heads, at their discretion, to implement alternative staffing models consistent with the guidelines and procedures established by the DER, when such models support or enhance departmental productivity and efficiency.

The administrative guidelines developed by the DER were shared with City departments and a survey of key departments was conducted to assess the availability and use of alternative work arrangements and to identify potential challenges with implementation. Some of the most critical findings of the survey and specific recommendations regarding those findings were reported to the Finance Committee in July of this year in conjunction with Common Council file #170400 and included the following:

Findings

- AWAs are permitted and encouraged in a number of departments to allow employees to address health issues, educational commitments and interests, childcare and other family needs and transportation issues;
- AWAs are used to assist in recruitment and retention efforts, to improve morale and to expand services to hours when clients and customers are available;
- Factors influencing the availability and use of AWAs in specific departments related to the compatibility of the service provided and the availability of the clients, the type of technology necessary to perform the work, the size of the department, the nature of the services



provided, staffing levels and the degree of oversight or supervision needed to ensure the quality and timeliness of the work product and

- Telecommuting options are used on a limited basis, primarily in response to a personal need, in conjunction with an accommodation or to help transition an employee back to work after an extended leave.

Recommendations

- Departments should document AWA options in an employment handbook or work rules or have a standing policy documenting options and protocols for approval.
- DER should prepare and issue guidelines for departments to use in determining the feasibility and viability of AWAs and implementation considerations.
- Departments should implement an annual review of AWAs to ensure the justification for use and participation is consistent with department's mission and the delivery of critical services.
- Departmental policies should ensure that security, productivity, accountability, availability requirements are established and complied with when approving an employee's participation in an AWA.
- The City should consider creating positions at less than 1 FTE but more than .5FTE to achieve savings in salary and benefits while providing opportunities for greater work life balance.
- DER should highlight availability and use of AWAs in recruitment efforts.

As you may recall from the DER's July 7, 2017 presentation regarding Workforce Planning, the topic of alternative work arrangements (AWAs) was added to that policy initiative, given the importance of identifying ways to better allow employees to balance their personal and family needs and work responsibilities. DER met with all departments early this fall to both implement the Workforce Planning initiative and, as part of that discussion, to further evaluate the use of AWAs.

Departments are required to submit their workforce plans to the DER by March 15, 2018. Accordingly, the DER staff will be prepared to present examples of departmental Workforce Planning initiatives to the Finance and Personnel Committee in early 2018, which will include an update on AWAs.

Very truly yours,



Maria Monteagudo
Employee Relations Director

