

Office of Inspector General City of Jacksonville, Florida



Management Review

COJ Directive 0510—Work From Home/Telecommuting Policy 2025-0075

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Inspector General

Executive Summary

In July 2025, this office initiated a review of the Employee Services Directive 0510 Working from Home/Telecommuting Policy. This was a narrow-scope review to determine whether City of Jacksonville (COJ) employees and their supervisors were adhering to the directive established on July 24, 2017, and revised on July 24, 2024. The review period was limited from January 1, 2025, to July 2025.

Our review was initiated but not completed, partially due to a lack of unilateral adherence to the policy by COJ Departments. We found that some departments had their own policy, and some relied on previous agreements from prior administrations. During our review, we learned that one Director was deemed exempt from the policy, and another did not provide the necessary information to conduct our review. We also discovered that the Mayor's Office was aware of the confusion surrounding this policy and had taken steps to draft a new policy that would provide a framework for employees to telecommute.

Based on this information, we decided to terminate our review and will consider revisiting this matter when the new policy is approved and in effect.

Background

Directive 0510 applies to "Appointed Officials, Appointed Employees, Managerial and Confidential, and other non-Represented SPEs under the Mayor's Authority." It is a restrictive policy with specific conditions, including eligibility, duration, and responsibilities for both the employee and management. It is noted that this directive does not apply to Constitutional officers and independent authorities who are authorized to either use this policy or create their own. For the sake of brevity, we will not cite each of the restrictions articulated; however, we have listed some of the more important points directly from the directive.

"Under no circumstances is an employee allowed to work from home without receiving permission from his/her supervisor, division chief, department director, and the Chief Administrative Officer prior to working from home."

"This policy is intended for short-term work under circumstances such as an employee being unable to travel to work due to a mobility issue, which may include medical reasons."

"Requests are not granted for more than two weeks at a time. Requests may be extended beyond two weeks if requested on an intermittent basis for the benefit of the city."

"The City assumes no liability for injuries occurring in the employee's dedicated home workspace outside of work hours. Workers' compensation does not apply to non-work-

related injuries that may occur in the home, even if they occur during the employee's agreed-upon work-from-home hours.

To be eligible for telework, the directive tasks management with evaluating the employee's position and job responsibilities to determine the appropriateness of the arrangement before approving a work-from-home agreement. The directive further states, "To work from home, management policy dictates that an employee must:"

- have clearly defined tasks and objectives.
- complete work at full performance.
- adhere to City policies.
- be provided with equitable treatment.
- have a measurable work product.
- be accessible to answer questions.
- minimum required face-to-face interaction with the public.
- have completed a minimum of 90 days of employment and be in good standing in their current position, which means that an employee must not be on a performance improvement plan; and
- have the availability of a dedicated, adequately sized, and hazard-free work site suitable for telecommuting using a city-approved remote access solution to access the City's network (Citrix);
- have no current restrictions related to a workers' compensation claim, with a status of Temporary Total Disability or Permanent Total Disability.

Employees seeking to work from home under this agreement must submit an Employee Work from Home Request, where the employee lists the work hours and dates covered under the request, the daily/weekly work assignments, a justification, and the name of the supervisor to whom the employee would report the details of the work accomplished. After being submitted by the employee and routed to the supervisor, division chief, and department director.

We initiated our review by requesting that Human Resources (HR) provide a list of all approved Employee Work-From-Home Agreements since January 1, 2025. Our goal was to contact the department directors of those offices and verify the number of agreements, as well as sample some of them to determine adherence to the policy. The information received from HR reported that approximately 11 employees had approved work-from-home agreements. However, there were approximately 80 additional employees in Technology Solutions who had work-from-home approval, which was authorized under a separate policy reportedly approved by HR under a former administration in 2019. We did not include these additional employees in our review.

We contacted the directors of Administrative Services, Finance, Neighborhoods, and Public Works, who were the only departments that reportedly had approved telework agreements during the review period. All other departments reported that they had no approved work-

from-home agreements. To verify the accuracy of the information obtained from HR, we requested that each of these directors provide all their approved work-from-home agreements from the beginning of the year to the present. The respective Departments provided the following:

Administrative Services

Director Richard Reichard initially reported that he did not have any employees who had approved work-from-home agreements. He then realized that he had one employee who had been approved for telework, but the request had not received the proper approvals. He realized this oversight and took steps to comply with the policy.

Neighborhoods

Director Thomas Waters reported that they had an employee who was authorized for telework, but the approval process was not followed. The employee is no longer employed with the COJ.

Public Works

Director Nina Sickler did not respond to repeated requests for information. The information from HR reported that approximately five Public Works employees have sought approval for telework. We do not know if Public Works is complying with the HR Directive. The Jacksonville Ethics Code, Part 3, Section 602.303(H) requires all city officials to provide records upon request to the OIG. Since we chose to curtail this review, we did not seek to compel Director Sickler to provide the requested information.

Finance

Director Anna Brosche reported that she had five employees who had requested telework, including herself. She was only able to provide one signed agreement for an employee who had a medical reason for intermittent telework. She reported that she did not have a formal telework agreement for herself because the Mayor approved her to work from home due to family-related issues. We sought to confirm this information and were told by Chief of Staff Mike Weinstien that Director Brosche is exempt from the work-from-home policy.

Records reviews discovered numerous other work-from-home requests submitted for Finance employees since January 1, 2025, that were not reported by Director Brosche. We reviewed these approved agreements and found a concerted effort to comply with the policy. We did find one instance where an employee received approval to work from a location in Illinois. The current directive does not prohibit this, but we believe that it is implied that the employee will work from their primary residence.

We found additional information related to Director Brosche indicating she has been teleworking since November 2024 without a written agreement. Additionally, at various

instances during this time frame, Director Brosche teleworked from locations outside of the local area to include Virginia and South Carolina.

Governing Directives/Findings

1. HR Directive 0510 is not being followed uniformly by all COJ Departments.

Recommended Corrective Actions

1. COJ should draft a universal Work from Home policy that should be acknowledged and followed by all COJ personnel.
 - a. Directors who seek to draft their own policy may only make their departmental policy more restrictive than the COJ policy.
 - b. This policy should have clear information related to the locations where employees are allowed to telework.

Inspector General Standards

This report/review has been conducted in accordance with the ASSOCIATION OF INSPECTORS GENERAL Principles and Quality Standards for Investigations.

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