



WOMEN'S BUREAU
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

ISSUE BRIEF

WORKPLACE FLEXIBILITY INITIATIVES

The following is a compilation of traditional and innovative flexible arrangements that merit additional consideration as options to address the needs of employees and business in various industries. The examples for each flexible option are not exhaustive. Prior to implementation of any of these strategies, employers may want to consult with the U.S. Department of Labor for additional compliance assistance.

SCHEDULE FLEXIBILITY

Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Flextime	Workday start and end times differ from standard (same number of hours/day).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows for commute outside of peak hours Improves efficiency if employee works when they are most productive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Daily flex: Work 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. instead of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. Summer flex: Work hours during summer only. Core hours: Establish specific hours when all employees work (e.g., 9:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.); start and end times may vary. Day-of-the-week flex: Work hours are flexed on one specific day each week. Flexible breaks: Adjust or extend break times to attend to personal matters and make up time before or after the workday.
Just-In-Time flexibility	Being able to take some time off during the workday to respond to unexpected needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows employee to respond to last minute emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report late: Call in late (up to 30 minutes) and make up time at the end of the workday, without repercussions. Co-worker coverage: Coordinate to adjust schedule or cover shift.
Employee scheduling	<p>Team: Seek employee input and control into scheduling and involve team in determining schedules and shift coverage.</p> <p>Individual: Set parameters for mandated coverage and allow employees to schedule remaining hours to meet their personal needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives an employee more control over his/her time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fixed scheduling for students and those with second jobs. Smart phone app for schedule viewing. Using scheduling software, employees set their own schedules without the need for supervisor intervention. Self-scheduling/bidding that honors shift or trip preferences and accepts change request.



Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Shift and trip flexibility	Amending work shifts or allowing employees to trade work shifts with coworkers to adjust one's schedule.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives an employee more control over his/ her time • Allows employee to respond to last minute emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advance notice of regular, assigned schedules and schedule changes. • Trade, drop or pick up shifts or trips by coordinating with co-workers (in advance or day of). • Cross-training and cross-utilizing to enable employees to pick up available shifts in other positions or locations/sites to maximize hours worked. • Split shifts that allow a break of several hours in the workday to attend school or manage other personal commitments. • Shift hour changes such as allowing a production employee in an 8-hour shift environment to work a full shift starting at 9 a.m. instead of 6 a.m. or 2:30 p.m. • Full-time floater positions to reduce the need for temps and mandatory overtime. • Relief pool positions for employees trained on all jobs within a team who can cover staffing shortages due to vacations and other time off. • Overtime notifications sent to employees to solicit volunteers. • Shift change requests with a simple process that allows employees to easily.
Compressed workweek	Full-time option with longer workdays for part of a week in exchange for shorter days or day(s) off during the pay period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for commute outside of peak hours • Improves efficiency if employee works when they are most productive • Gives an employee more control over his/ her time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-day workweek (4/10): 10-hour shift. • 3-day workweek (3/12): 12-hour shift. • 4 ½ day workweek: Four 9-hour days and one 4-hour day. • 9-day biweekly (9/80): 80 hours in 9 workdays (typically 8 days at 9 hours and 1 day at 8 hours). <p>*Prior to implementation, it is important to review federal and state legislation regarding compressed workweeks.</p>



FLEXIBILITY IN THE AMOUNT OF HOURS WORKED

Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Part-time (reduced work schedule)	Working fewer than 35 hours per week to accommodate second jobs, school schedules or family/personal responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives employee more time for family obligations or personal interest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of full-time (32 hours/week), 60% of full-time (24 hours/week). • 50% of full-time (20 hours/week). • Temporary move from full time to part time. • Weekend hours only. • Float positions that cover breaks and meal periods. • Shorter shifts within the existing shift structure.
Part-year work	Number of hours worked are calculated on an annual basis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables flexibility in scheduling blocks of time off 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal Work • Teacher works a 9-month year.
Part-time compressed workweek	Enable part-time employees to work a compressed week of their choice.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows for commute outside of peak hours • Improves efficiency if employee works when they are most productive • Gives an employee more control over his/her time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Five 4-hour days • Four 5-hour days • Two 8-hour days/One 4-hour day • Weekends only • “Non-extendable” part-time schedule with limited benefits, guaranteed days and hours of work, and no mandatory overtime.
Job sharing	Full-time position, role or shift shared by two people, each working part-time hours (not necessarily an even split of hours).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gives employee opportunity to: • Balance routine or unexpected work and family demands • Pursue an education • Devote time to a volunteer activity in the community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alternate weeks with each working one week on, one week off. • Share workdays with each working four hours. • Overlap schedules with each working 2½ days a week with a mid-week overlap.



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FLEXIBILITY IN THE PLACE OF WORK

Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Job transfer	Transfer to other work locations when relocating household for personal reasons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employee can maintain benefits eliminating gaps in coverage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enables employee to change job or position • Transfer to a different location
Telework	Occasional telework from home during inclement weather or urgent family/home situations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminates commute • Limits office based distractions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At-home offices in jobs such as reservations agents, financial services, customer service, billing, marketing, etc.
Flex-place	Working from more than one location in a local area or other geography.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows employees to optimize hours and help fill in gaps in various work locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work from home full time • Telework on set days
Job relocation	Periodically, or seasonally, changing the place of work.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows employees to select the most suitable geographic location based on their personal obligations and preferences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Snowbird programs enable employees to work in warmer climates during the winter months.



Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Job sharing hires	Hire job share teams and base them at the same work location.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates part-time opportunities in a full-time position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each employee works 2.5 days per week. Senior-level executive share a 70+ hour/week and share benefits.
Remote production	Work done away from the formal worksite.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminates or reduces commute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some parts assembly work performed at home or from a remote location such as a satellite production center.

LEAVE FLEXIBILITY

Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Leave policies & banks	Time off for vacations, rest and relaxation, and personal business or emergencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives an employee more control over his/her time Allows employee to respond to last minute emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paid time off bank that includes the entire allotment of days off to use for any reason. Paid sick leave to care for dependent children and adults. Extended leave policy to allow employees time to visit home countries. Updated attendance policies that consider work-life needs and allow excused absences. Floating holidays to enable employees to take different holidays off.
Other time off	Time off for vacations, rest and relaxation, and personal business or emergencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gives an employee more control over his/her time Allows employee to respond to last minute emergencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day-at-a-time vacation Vacation buying or borrowing Vacation donation enables employees to give unused paid time off to a co-worker in need. Paid personal/emergency days off, typically one to three annually. Unpaid time off to attend parent-teacher conference or other personal commitments. Voluntary time off during down time. Staffing models with continuous shifts that build in extra people and offer unpaid time off if coverage is not needed on a particular day.



CAREER FLEXIBILITY

Arrangement	Description	Benefit	Examples
Phased retirement	Gradual reduction of work hours and responsibilities for the purpose of easing into full retirement.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides a higher income than if the employee leaves entirely 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part-time work Seasonal or part-year work Job sharing Project work
Sabbatical	Paid or unpaid time off for personal enrichment, volunteerism or other activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds skills Helps employee to identify opportunities for performance improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Typically leave for more than 4 weeks for travel, volunteering, learning, research, goal attainment, personal growth, or innovation.
Retiree Pool	Create retiree pool as a source of labor to help meet short-term demands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creates opportunities for retirees to earn additional income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Re-hiring retired workers
Re-careering	On-the-job training programs, to teach new skills and offer resources to transition to different practice or project areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds skills Helps employee to identify opportunities for performance improvement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Career coaching
Customized Career path	Redesign or scale back job responsibilities, such as moving to a job without supervisory responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allows employee to “step back” or “step ahead” or “step sideways” as responsibilities or career desires change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit and reentry programs
Job rotation	Move to another position for a specific period of time or number of days a week; often develops out of cross-training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Builds skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flex staffing pool for workers who want to take a break from a regular, full-time job, but want to stay engaged in project work in a professional workplace

Source: Roundtree, L. (2005). *Approaches to workplace flexibility*. Prepared for DOL, Women's Bureau, Flex-Options Project incorporating previous unpublished client work by author; Madoo, N. (February 2014), work-life consultant and expert in hourly flexibility, personal interviews; Williams, J. (February 17, 2011). *Hourly workers*. Presentation at the National Dialogue on Workforce Flexibility, Pasadena, CA; Workplace Flexibility 2010, Georgetown Law and The Institute for Workplace Innovation, University of Kentucky (May 2011). *Flexible Workplace Solutions for Low-Wage Hourly Workers: A framework for a national conversation*. Retrieved from: <http://workplaceflexibility2010.org/images/uploads/whatsnew/Flexible%20Workplace%20Solutions%20for%20Low-Wage%20Hourly%20Workers.pdf>; Social Dynamics, LLC. (October 21, 2011). *Research and Analysis of Workplace Flexibility: National dialogue synthesis report*. Unpublished manuscript prepared for U.S. Department of Labor, Women's Bureau.



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