



# WAEPA CHECKLIST

Worldwide Assurance for Employees of Public Agencies, Inc.

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## Tips for Part-Time Employment & Job Sharing

The Federal Government has long recognized the value of part-time employment. In fact, legislation encouraging part-time employment for Federal employees has been in place since 1978. Part-time employees are represented across occupational fields, pay plans, grade levels, and agencies.

The key to achieving a family-friendly workplace is to make full utilization of all the personnel flexibilities and resources currently available – and that includes part-time employment and job sharing.

There are many reasons why you should consider working less than the traditional 40-hour workweek. A few reasons might include that you want to:

- balance routine and/or unexpected work and family demands;
- recover from an illness;
- pursue an education;
- devote time to a volunteer activity in the community;
- participate in a special hobby or interest; or
- simply make time for yourself.

### Part-Time Employment

Part-time employment is also beneficial to the government. Offering employees part-time employment opportunities can:

- attract or retain highly qualified

employees or those with special skills who may not be able to or may not want to work a full-time schedule;

- serve as a performance incentive;
- increase employee effectiveness;
- provide work coverage during recurring workload surges;
- reduce employment expenditures when employees voluntarily reduce their work schedules

### Job Sharing

When agencies must staff a position on a full-time basis, job sharing is an option. Job sharing is a form of part-time employment in which one position is filled with two or more part-time employees. Job sharing has added benefits for management. At an agency's discretion, and within available resources, each job sharer can work up to 32 hours per week. Agencies also benefit from having the special skills and abilities of two unique individuals!

The Federal Employees Part-time Career Employment Act of 1978 encouraged a greater Federal commitment to utilizing employees who wish to work less than the traditional 40-hour workweek.

### What the "Typical" Permanent Part-Time Employee Looks Like

Based on the latest government statistics:



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Age: 42.9 Years  
Length of Service: 10.0 Years  
Education (Bachelor's or higher): 41.8%  
Women: 72.4%  
Supervisor/Managers: 1.7%

### 5 Tips for Making a Full-time Job a Part-time Job

#### 1. Keep a detailed record of what you do:

- Could all your most important tasks be done in fewer hours?
- Could less important tasks be discontinued or done by someone else?
- Could your job be shared with another part-time employee?

#### 2. Get information about your salary and benefits:

- Assess changes to salary, leave earning, health insurance cost, and retirement and life insurance benefits.
- Could you afford to earn less pay and pay more for insurance?
- Could you do with less leave and potentially less retirement?

#### 3. Research policies and practices:

- Study Governmentwide policies in this guide.
- Consult your supervisor about your agency's policies and programs.

- Talk to part-time employees about their experiences.

#### 4. Devise a strategy:

- Propose restructuring your full-time job into a part-time job.
- Find a partner and propose a job sharing arrangement.
- Apply for any part-time/job sharing vacancies.

#### 5. Make a written proposal:

- Propose a schedule and explain how your duties would be handled.
- Focus on employer's needs, not your own.
- Suggest a pilot test where managers, clients, and co-workers could assess the arrangement.

### Fitting Part-Time Employment into Your Group

#### 1. Governmentwide policy.

Governmentwide policy on part-time employment gives agencies the flexibility to decide where part-time positions best fit into the organization. In some cases, job sharing enables management to staff a full-time position and also provides part-time schedules which would otherwise not be available.

Agencies are strongly encouraged to develop job sharing programs in



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partnership with their unions and other stakeholders. Furthermore, when job sharing programs are planned for organizations where employees are represented by a labor organization with exclusive recognition, by law, agencies must notify the union and bargain in good faith on any negotiable proposals the union submits.

A departure from the 40-hour workweek often creates questions and concerns for part-time employees, their and managers. Employees should consider the following personnel issues when thinking about reducing his or her work hours.

2. Part-time Employment Defined. A part-time permanent employee has a career or career-conditional appointment (or a permanent appointment in the excepted service), works between 16 and 32 hours each week (or between 32 and 64 hours a pay period) on a prearranged schedule, and is eligible for fringe benefits. Part-time permanent employees are eligible, on a prorated basis, for the same benefits as full-time employees: leave, retirement, and health and life insurance coverage.

3. Job Sharing Defined. Job sharing is a form of part-time employment in which the schedules of two or more part-time employees are arranged to cover the duties of a single full-time

position. Generally, a job sharing team means two employees at the same grade level but other arrangements are possible. Job sharers are subject to the same personnel policies as other part-time employees. Job sharing does not necessarily mean that each job sharer works half-time, or that the total number of hours is 40 per week.

### 4. Profiling the Part-time Position.

There is no law or regulation that limits part-time employment to specific jobs or grade levels. In fact, any job may be filled by a part-time employee or a team of job sharers when the arrangement meets the needs of the organization and the employee(s). Part-time employees are currently working in professional, administrative, technical, clerical, and blue collar positions at many grade levels. Job sharers, though fewer in number, also work in a wide variety of positions.

### 5. Appointments and Other Personnel

Actions. Appointment procedures for part-time employees are the same as for comparable fulltime employees. Agencies process individual personnel actions for each employee in a shared position; for example, an SF-50, Notification of Personnel Action, would be issued to appoint or promote each job sharer.

### 6. Who Exactly Benefits? Employees,



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their managers, and agencies can benefit from using part-time work schedules. Employees could spend more time with their children, pursue educational opportunities, care for an aging parent or ill family member, participate in volunteer or leisure activities, or continue working when illness or physical limitations prevent working a full-time schedule. Managers and agencies could retain highly qualified employees, improve recruitment, increase productivity, and reduce absenteeism.

Job sharing offers additional benefits to managers and employees alike. Employees are provided the opportunity to work part-time in jobs where full-time coverage is required. Supervisors gain flexibility in managing their offices. Job sharing team members may bring a wide range of skills and strengths to a job, be able to fill in for each other's absences, and be able to work extra hours when there are unexpected workload surges.

7. Making the Switch. Employees should carefully consider all the personal issues involved in switching to a part-time or job sharing schedule, such as a reduction in pay, increased share of health insurance premiums, and the change in leave earnings. Although procedures vary from agency to agency, the first step is usually to discuss the idea with the immediate supervisor.

Job sharing may be an option for employees who wish to reduce their hours but find that such a schedule is inappropriate for their current position. If part-time requests cannot be accommodated, agency personnel offices may be able to help employees identify other positions in the agency which could be filled on a part-time or job-shared basis.

8. Part-time Hours. To meet the needs of the office or the employee, an agency may temporarily or permanently change the total hours of a part-time employee. However, generally part-timers have schedules within the 16 to 32 hours-per-week range required by law.

### What are the Benefits for Part-Time Permanent Employees?

Part-time employees under permanent appointments are eligible, on a prorated basis, for the same benefits as full-time employees: leave, retirement, and health and life insurance coverage. The following describes eligibility, coverage, and limitations.

1. Leave and Holidays. Employees earn annual and sick leave on a prorated basis depending on the number of hours worked per pay period. An employee with less than 3 years of service earns 1 hour of annual leave for each 20 hours worked; with 3 but less than 15 years of



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service, the employee earns 1 hour for each 13 hours worked; and with 15 or more years of service earns 1 hour for each 10 hours worked.

Part-time employees earn 1 hour of sick leave for each 20 hours worked. Part-time employees are also eligible for other kinds of leave and are covered by the rules governing the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 and the Federal Employees Family-Friendly Leave Act.

If a holiday falls on a day the employee normally works, the employee is paid for the number of hours he or she was scheduled to work, not to exceed 8 hours, except for an employee on a compressed work schedule. A part-time employee is not entitled to a holiday which falls on a day the employee is not normally scheduled to work.

**2. Retirement.** Retirement annuities are based on an employee's length of service and the highest annual base pay received for any three consecutive years. Each year of part-time service counts as one full year toward the length of service requirement. However, the annuity calculation for periods of part-time service after April 6, 1986, is prorated to reflect the difference between full-time and part-time service. Employees who are considering a change to a part-time work schedule should obtain an estimate of their retirement benefits from their

agency's benefits office.

**3. Health Insurance.** Part-time employees who participate in the Federal Employees Health Benefits Program receive the same coverage as full-time employees but pay a greater percentage of the premium because the Government's share is prorated based on the number of hours the employee is scheduled to work each week. For example, an employee on a 20-hour-per-week schedule receives one-half the Government contribution towards the premium.

**4. Life Insurance.** A part-time employee is eligible to participate in the Federal Employees Group Life Insurance Program. The amount of insurance for which an employee is eligible is based on the part-time employee's annual salary applicable to his or her tour of duty.

**5. Qualification Determinations.** Part-time work is prorated for determining qualification requirements. (An employee who works 20 hours a week receives credit for 6 months of experience at the end of 12 months of work.)

### **Other Personnel Policies You Should Know About**

Other personnel issues such as computation of pay, reductions in force, adverse actions, service credit,



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performance appraisals, and personnel ceilings that may affect part-time employment:

**1. Pay.** Gross pay is computed by multiplying the employee's hourly rate of basic pay by the number of hours worked during the pay period. Except for certain employees on alternative workweek schedules, overtime rates apply only to the hours in excess of 8 hours in a day or 40-hours in a week. Non-overtime hours above those normally scheduled are paid at the basic rate of pay (5 U.S.C. 5542 and Fair Labor Standards Act).

**2. Reduction in Force.** In a reduction in force (RIF), part-time employees compete separately from full-time employees. A part-time employee can compete only for other part-time jobs and has no assignment rights to full-time positions. Similarly, a full-time employee has assignment rights only to full-time positions and cannot displace a part-time employee.

**3. Adverse and Performance-based Actions.** Part-time employees have the same rights as full-time employees when disciplinary actions or performance-based actions are taken against them. Adverse and/or performance-based actions include suspensions, removals, furloughs, and reductions in grade. (A reduction in scheduled hours is not

subject to adverse action procedures.)

**4. Service Credit.** A part-time employee earns a full year of service for each calendar year worked (regardless of schedule) for the purpose of computing dates for the following:

- retirement eligibility;
- career tenure;
- completion of probationary period;
- within-grade pay increases;
- change in leave category; and
- time-in-grade restrictions on advancement.

**5. Personnel Ceilings.** Regular, non-overtime hours worked by part-time employees count toward an agency's full-time equivalent (FTE) work year personnel ceiling. A part-time position counts as a percentage of a full-time job. For example, an employee who works 24-hours a week is counted as 0.6 FTE.

### 10 Tips for Sharing a Job

Although job sharing is a form of part-time employment, it presents you with unique considerations not encountered by the part-time permanent employee. Job sharers, their managers, agencies, and anyone interested in participating in a job sharing arrangement may find the following information useful:

**1. Advertising Job Sharing.** By law,



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5 U.S.C. 3402, nearly every Federal agency is required to have a program for part-time employment. It would be appropriate for agencies to incorporate references to job sharing in all materials relating to part-time employment.

A special notice to employees (and periodic reminders) or mention in newsletters or other issuances would let employees know they can request job sharing. Information could include the name and telephone number of a contact point in the agency's personnel office.

In addition, OPM encourages agencies to include a statement in vacancy announcements for full-time positions saying job sharing teams within the area of consideration may apply. (Job sharing may be used for non-permanent appointments as well.)

2. Characteristics of Successful Job Sharers. The experience reported by employers of job sharing teams suggests that job sharers must be good communicators, be willing to consult and cooperate as members of a team rather than as competitors, be flexible, and have a strong commitment to the job and to making the job sharing arrangement work. They must have complementary skills, knowledge, and abilities and compatible work styles.

3. Position Descriptions. When two job sharers at the same grade level are

jointly responsible for all the duties and responsibilities of the full-time position, there is no need to restructure the position. Each team member should have a copy of the original position description to which a statement has been attached to show that the incumbent is a job sharer jointly responsible for carrying out all the duties and responsibilities of the position.

When the job sharers will be individually responsible for portions of the job, or when the job sharers are at different grade levels, separate position descriptions are required to reflect the actual duties and responsibilities of each employee. Each job sharer must have a position description that accurately reflects his or her duties and responsibilities.

4. Dividing and Sharing Responsibilities. The decision on whether job sharers should be jointly responsible for the entire position or only for separate functions depends on the job and the abilities of the job sharing team. To determine the arrangement for a particular job, the supervisor (with assistance from the personnel office, if needed) should examine the position description and decide which tasks will be shared. In other words, some tasks may be handled by the team member on duty while other tasks may be handled by a specific individual based on his



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or her skills and experience. In some cases, tasks will be divided between the sharers, but overall responsibility for the position may be shared.

At one end of the spectrum is a clean division of duties between two people who have little or no interaction with each other. At the other end, two people are jointly responsible for each and every responsibility and function. Most job sharing arrangements will probably fall somewhere in between with the job sharers individually responsible for certain aspects of the job and jointly responsible for others. A good management practice is to have the supervisor and the job sharers sign a job sharing agreement.

5. Scheduling Work Hours. Specific work schedules depend on the nature of the job and the needs of the office and the job sharing team. Almost any reasonable arrangement is possible if it meets the needs of the supervisor and the job sharers. Scheduling should take advantage of the fact that two or more people rather than one are filling the job; these possibilities include overlapping time, split shifts, or working in different locations at the same time. Work schedules for job sharers can be from 16 to 32 hours per week and can be varied in the same way as other part-time employees. Additionally, part-time employees are eligible to participate in

flexible and compressed work schedules if the agency permits it. The number of scheduled hours each employee works as well as the amount of scheduled overlap time depends on the needs of the particular position and the resources available as determined by the agency.

6. Performance Evaluations. Each member of a job sharing team must have his or her own performance standards. These will be identical if the job sharers are jointly responsible for the entire position. Each job sharer must be evaluated separately although the evaluation will often be based on work to which both have contributed. To make the supervisor's job easier, it would be wise to build in a mechanism for determining the relative contributions of each job sharer.

7. Shared Space and Equipment. In some agencies, the availability of space and equipment will be tight. Job sharers who use the same desk, telephone, computer, etc., will need to agree on the basics so they do not lose time searching for or rearranging items. Agencies may choose to permit job sharing employees to telecommute under the agency's general authority to specify employee duty stations. Federal telecommuting programs allow employees to fulfill their job responsibilities at a site other than their principal office one or more days a week.



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**8. Communicating.** For job sharing to be truly successful, everyone with whom the job sharers have contact must be able to assume that any information given to one team member will reach the other. In other words, supervisors, co-workers, and clients expect to communicate with both job sharers via the person on duty at the time. The job sharers must have a workable communication system which serves the purpose without detracting from their ability to get the work done.

**9. Ending or Changing a Job Sharing Arrangement.** The decision to approve or to terminate an arrangement is at management's discretion. To avoid misunderstandings, this point should be made clear before the job sharers begin work. In addition, it should be decided in advance what will be done if one partner is unable to maintain the agreed-upon schedule, goes on extended leave, resigns or takes another job. It is wise to clearly state at the beginning whether the remaining partner will be expected to work full-time until another job sharer is found. If it is necessary to end a particular job sharing arrangement, the agency may reassign one or both of the job sharers to other part-time positions or to other full-time positions.

**10. Applying for Merit Promotion Vacancies.** Agencies may not refuse to accept applications from individuals

solely because they are part of a job sharing team. Each job sharer must be evaluated individually to determine eligibility. If both are among the best qualified, they must be referred as a team to the selecting official.

However, in situations where a job sharing arrangement would not be appropriate, the selecting official can select a single candidate from among the best qualified. (A member of a job sharing team may also apply as an individual and be considered on that basis.)

### **Searching for Part-time Jobs Through USAJOBS**

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Employment Service has a part-time job search on USAJOBS, the United States Government's official source for jobs and employment information. This allows job seekers to quickly and easily locate a consolidated list of jobs that are being or may be filled on a part-time basis. Employment Service added this enhancement in response to a growing interest from users about part-time opportunities. [Visit USAJOBS](http://USAJOBS) to learn more.

### **Scheduling Options for Job Sharers**

Ideally, the supervisor and the job sharing team should jointly determine



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how the workweek will be divided. While the needs of the office are paramount, a successful arrangement will take into consideration the needs of the employees as well. Several options are possible, including split days, alternate days or weeks, and flexible or compressed work schedules if the agency permits it.

For example:

- One employee could work Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday; the other, Thursday and Friday. The next week the team could reverse so that each would work a total of 5 days per pay period. (Note that the number of hours worked by each team member may be the same or different, and the combined hours may total 40 hours or more or less.)
- Each sharer could work consecutive weeks beginning on a Wednesday.
- One member of the team could work Monday, Tuesday; the other, Thursday and Friday. On Wednesday, both employees could work a full or half day, depending on the need for overlapping time. (A certain amount of overlap time may be necessary.)

When job sharers want to work on alternate weeks, certain scheduling requirements must be met. In order for

a part-time employee to be regularly scheduled -- and eligible to earn leave-- he or she must have one hour of work scheduled in each week of the bi-weekly pay period. Also, a part-time employee may not be scheduled for more than 32 hours per week. Within these requirements, one job sharer could be scheduled for 32 hours in week A and in week B. The employees would have to take annual leave (or granted leave without pay) for the one hour in the week he or she wanted to be off. Job sharing on a 6- months on, 6-months off basis should be handled differently. In this situation, the employees would be considered full-time and could be granted leave without pay at the agency's discretion.

The example might give the impression that job sharers' time on the job must be mutually exclusive. While this may be true in most cases, employees can overlap some or all of the time, depending on the nature of the work and the availability of space and equipment.

Job sharing offers supervisors considerable flexibility in scheduling. Temporary rearrangement of hours does not require paperwork, but consideration needs to be given to employee concerns such as childcare or class schedules. Job sharing also allows the supervisor to match the work schedules to workload peaks. For example, one job sharer could



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work an early morning tour and the other, a tour late in the day, with no coverage in the middle of the day. Further, since job sharers can often swap schedules to cover for each other's absences, the office has the benefit of a built-in backup system.