

Part-Time Employment and Job Sharing Guide

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Introduction

The key to achieving family-friendly workplaces in the Federal Government is to make full utilization of all the personnel flexibilities and resources available. As an employer, the Federal Government has long recognized the value of part-time employment. 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. These employees might need or desire to work less than the traditional 40-hour workweek in order 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
- make time for themselves.

The use of part-time employment is also beneficial to employers. Offering 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; and
- support agency affirmative action goals.

When employers 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. Recently, President Clinton strengthened that commitment because of his belief that supporting the concerns of family members in the workplace is vital to good government and productivity.

President Clinton's July 11, 1994, memorandum directed executive departments and agencies to establish a program to encourage and support the expansion of flexible

family-friendly work arrangements, including the use of career part-time employment and job sharing. On June 21, 1996, the President also directed executive departments and agencies to review their personnel practices and develop a plan of action to utilize flexible policies already in place.

This OPM guide is intended to assist agencies and employees in utilizing part-time employment and job sharing effectively and to the fullest extent possible.

The "Typical" Permanent Part-Time Employee

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

Data Source: OPM's Central Personnel Data File (CPDF). Data includes Federal civilian part-time employees in the executive branch but excludes Postal Service employees.

Making a Full-time Job a Part-time Job

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?

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?

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.

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.

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.

*This information was adapted from Flexibility at Work ... 5 Steps To Get You Started, a brochure produced by the Association of Part-time Professionals.

Fitting Part-Time Employment into the Organization

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 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. An employee should consider the following personnel issues when thinking about reducing his or her work hours.

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.

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.

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.

Appointments and Other Personnel Actions

Appointment procedures for part-time employees are the same as for comparable full-time 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.

Who Benefits?

Employees, 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.

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 an employee who wishes to reduce his or her hours but finds that such a schedule is inappropriate for his or her 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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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.

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.

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.

Qualification Determinations

Part-time work is prorated for determining qualification requirements. For example, an employee who works 20 hours a week would receive credit for 6 months of experience at the end of 12 months of work.

Additional Personnel Policies

Other personnel issues such as computation of pay, reductions in force, adverse actions, service credit, performance appraisals, and personnel ceilings that may affect part-time employment are discussed below.

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).

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.

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.)

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.

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.

Sharing a Job

Although job sharing is a form of part-time employment, it presents participants 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.

Advertising Job Sharing

By law, 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.)

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.

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.

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 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. (See Appendix A.)

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. (See Appendix B.)

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.

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. For additional information, contact your agency personnel office.

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.

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.

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 Employment Through USAJOBS

The Office of Personnel Management's (OPM) Employment Service recently implemented a new part-time job search on USAJOBS, the United States Government's official source for jobs and employment information. The new search 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.

Employment Service also added an employment information fact sheet on part-time employment to the General Information component on USAJOBS. The information fact sheet contains policy information about part-time Federal employment in an easy-to-read, user friendly format. It also provides a link to the Family-Friendly Workplace Advocacy Office's web pages on the OPM website for more detailed information. The website address for USAJOBS is www.usajobs.gov.

Appendix A

Sample One Job Sharing Agreement

MEMORANDUM FOR:

FROM:

SUBJECT: Proposed Job Share for Employee A and Employee B

SUMMARY

This memorandum proposes the establishment of a job share for the position _____ currently encumbered by _____. The proposed job share would partner **Employee A** with **Employee B** in management of the _____ Program and the _____ Program. In addition to strengthening the staff, this action would ensure the retention of two highly experienced employees with specialized area and program backgrounds. The proposal has been discussed informally with the staff involved and they have concurred with the proposal. We ask that the action be approved under the terms and specifications suggested below.

BACKGROUND

This proposal is made as a one-year pilot project whose continuation will depend on a formal evaluation by management at the end of the 12-month period. If deemed successful by the evaluating elements, the arrangement would be continued indefinitely. In the unlikely event that the pilot is evaluated as unsuccessful, management would propose that the unit be combined with the Division staff and that all supervisory responsibilities would be assumed by the Division and Deputy Division Chiefs. In any event, the pilot project and any subsequent extension are proposed as experimental and non-precedent setting.

With regard to the assignment of responsibilities, supervisory and management assignments and scheduled work hours, we propose the following:

Employee A and **Employee B** will each work three days per week (48 total hours) with Wednesday as the overlapping day of the week.

Employee A will be assigned primary responsibility for the _____ Program. In that role, she will be the direct supervisor of the Program Officer and will rate her performance and approve her leave request. She will function as selecting officer for the position and any other position that might be assigned to the _____ Program in the future (subject to approval by the Division Chief). **Employee B** will have secondary responsibility for the _____ Program.

Employee B will be assigned primary responsibility for the _____ Program. In that role, she will be the direct supervisor of a still-unnamed Program Officer. She will also be the responsible supervisor for the Unit Secretary. She will rate the performance of both employees, approve their leave requests and serve as selecting officer for both positions (subject to approval by the Division Chief).

On the overlapping work day, management and supervisory responsibilities will not differ from the other days of the week. Each will report directly to the Division Chief or Deputy Division chief on activities that relate to their primary program assignments. In the absence of one job share partner on the overlapping work day (or any other day), accountability for the secondary program assigned is automatically assumed by the partner present.

All time and attendance recordkeeping and reporting for the Unit will be handled by the Division Secretary, with approval of the Division Chief or Deputy.

In the event that one of the job share partners decides to resign or transfer from the unit, the position will automatically revert to a full-time position with the expectation that the remaining job share partner will assume the full time requirements of the above position, including a 40-hour work week.

DISCUSSION OF CREDENTIALS

The candidates for this proposed job share are both exceptional employees with crucial backgrounds and experience and excellent performance records.

Employee A has been Unit Chief since March, 1990. She holds an MA in public administration and joined the Agency as a Presidential Management Intern in 1980, rotating through a number of Agency offices until she joined this Unit. She has a wide general knowledge of Agency exchange programs and is the expert on these programs.

Employee B holds an MA in Public Administration and joined the Agency as a Presidential Management Intern. She started work in the Bureau as a program officer, developing an impressive background and expertise in the area which lead to her promotion to Senior Program Officer. In order to assume a part-time schedule, she requested a voluntary reassignment where she is currently a program officer in the grants unit. She is eligible for re-promotion on a non-competitive basis. In her current position, she has accrued wide experience with its Programs and has some responsibility for unit affiliations, making her particularly valuable to the unit which has expanding programs.

ACTION REQUESTED

That management concur with the establishment of a job share for the position under the conditions outlined above.

CONCUR _____ **Date** _____
DISCUSS _____

Sample Two Job Sharing Agreement

To: Manager

From: Two Branch Managers

Re: Job Sharing

This represents an initial proposal for implementing job sharing for the position of Branch Manager. While job sharing may be done in many ways, the one we feel best relates to our situation as two equally qualified Branch Managers is to share between us one entire job, including all of its responsibilities and duties. Each of us will be accountable for everything.

Individual systems and methods will be integrated by consensus. A diary system is to be set up for all routines and strictly adhered to. At least one representative will attend all manager meetings, conferences and training seminars. Audit will be shared jointly except in areas that can be clearly distinguished. With respect to staff and personnel matters, there is a strong need for clear communication of joint expectations and objectives to all staff, open-door policy for staff, communication between partners and joint feedback, joint preparation of performance reviews and joint presentations. Campaigns will be the responsibility of both partners -- work schedules will accommodate peak periods and deadlines for major campaigns.

Both partners will take vacations at the same time or stagger their vacation, whatever method works best for the particular time chosen. The partners agree that any maternity leave would be limited to 17 weeks. The working partner would work full-time to cover the leave. Normal procedures are to be followed for sickness, operating short staffed unless unusual circumstances occur, in which case the other partner would cover.

The work schedule would be prepared one month in advance and a copy forwarded to the Manager for reference. All scheduling would be completed by the two partners and any necessary changes would be worked out between the partners.

Each partner will work two full days and one five-hour day. The excess cost would be \$2,581 per year in terms of salary. This does, however, allow for overlap of 2.5 hours per week, which we feel is important in making job sharing a success.

If one partner were to leave the agency or request full-time work, we propose that if a compatible partner could be found and it is agreeable to the employer and both employees, the system could continue. If no compatible partner is available, and an original partner left the agency, then the remaining partner would return to full-time employment. If one or both partners request full-time employment, then they would be considered for the next available opportunity.

We have given this concept a great deal of thought and are prepared to commit ourselves to job sharing for a period of five to ten years. We have known each other for four years and feel comfortable with each other. We have similar backgrounds with respect to education and bank management training. We want job sharing to work and we are both committed to work out any problems that may arise.

We agree to a four-month trial period with ongoing assessment and feedback from employer and partners. Customer assessment will be incorporated into the standard Customer Service Survey, and staff assessment will be incorporated into the standard Employee Relations Survey. Feedback modifications to the system are to be mutually agreed upon by both partners and employer. If the agency decides to terminate the Job Sharing Agreement, a notice period of eight weeks will be given, and both partners will be offered comparable full-time positions in the area or given a choice of part-time management if the individual desires.

Sincerely,

Appendix B

Scheduling Options for Job Sharers

Ideally, the supervisor and the job sharing team should jointly determine how the work-week 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 child care or class schedules. Job sharing also allows the supervisor to match the work schedules to workload peaks. For example, one job sharer could 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. (Advance arrangements should make clear the conditions under which one team member would be

expected to work additional hours in the absence of the other and how work will be performed if one of the job sharers were to leave the position.)