

STATE OF COLORADO

JOB SHARING

Maximizing Human Resource Potential



Prepared by the Division of Human Resources in the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration. Revised September 17, 2007.

What is job sharing?

Job sharing is a flexible means of pooling the talents and energies of two part-time employees to perform the work of one full-time position. Employers can use this option to accommodate the changing workforce and business needs.

Is job sharing an option in the state personnel system?

Job sharing is an option that has had executive support in the state personnel system since 1977. Two governors, through executive orders, have endorsed it as an appropriate and beneficial practice. Appointing authorities are urged to utilize this flexible management tool whenever appropriate.

When is job sharing appropriate?

There are almost no situations or jobs where job sharing is inappropriate, even supervisory or managerial jobs. It can be used in any number of situations, on an ongoing or as-needed basis, including the following examples:

- Alternative to layoffs and temporary help;
- Apprenticeship or training programs;
- Potential accommodation for those with permanent or temporary disabilities;
- To retain valued employees during life changes, e.g., parenting, elder care, approaching retirement, continuing education which benefits the employer, etc;
- Method for utilizing talent that is also in high demand in the private sector; and,
- Means of attracting workers from a shrinking, changing labor pool, especially in hard-to-fill positions.

What are the benefits of job sharing?

An increasing number of workers are deciding that part-time work is most suitable in meeting their career and personal circumstances. Job sharing allows the State to accommodate these desires while capitalizing on the skills, energy, and talent of these employees. Several studies document the advantages of well-planned job sharing.

- *Increased productivity.* Studies show that job sharers may be more productive than their full-time counterparts who are affected by stress, fatigue, burnout, etc. Job sharing employees tend to be more motivated because of a personal interest in the success of this voluntary arrangement. Reports also say that less supervision is actually required of these employees.
- *Lower turnover and higher morale.* Generally, employees perceive their jobs more favorably in shared situations and because the arrangement meets their needs, they are less likely to separate employment. Increased job satisfaction results in increased customer satisfaction.
- *Lower training costs.* A trained partner is on hand to provide stable performance and to train a replacement.
- *Lower overtime costs.* Two highly motivated part-time employees working close to 100% capacity can reduce costs and the need for overtime from one full-time employee.
- *Better job coverage.* The partners have the flexibility to schedule time to cover for each other's vacations and illnesses, which can potentially reduce disruption from leave. The workload can be better managed and may even decrease the need for layoffs and the use of temporary employees.
- *Improvement in quality.* The collaboration of two highly motivated people with complementary backgrounds and skills can improve work processes and the quality of problem solving and decision-making. Complementary backgrounds and skills of the partners can enhance the talents brought to the job and the work unit.
- *Competitive edge.* With the demographics and changing values in the workforce, recognizing and accommodating personal and work needs gives the employer the competitive edge in recruiting from a shrinking pool of talent. The scarcity of skilled workers is not expected to ease in the foreseeable future.

What are the costs of job sharing?

There may be some additional costs to job sharing. They are marginal and studies indicate they are quickly offset by improved productivity and other benefits. The arrangement can actually result in a net savings depending on parameters.

- *Record keeping.* Either two part-time positions must be created or one is created and the current full-time position reduced. Two sets of paperwork will be needed for payroll, leave records, job descriptions, performance documents, etc.
- *Salary.* There is no additional cost. In fact, this is an area where savings may be realized if the new job sharing employee is at a lower base pay rate (same pay range or a lower-level class).
- *Benefits.* Benefits premiums and unemployment insurance are required for both employees. There may be no additional cost and could be a potential savings for the employer's contribution to retirement depending on the salary of the new job sharing employee. Because the State does not prorate medical and related benefits contributions for part-time employees, there could be increased cost for two employees sharing one job.
- *Leave time.* There is no additional cost. If employees fill in for each other when absent, there is less disruption and lost productivity from the leave.
- *Equipment and space.* There is no additional cost unless schedules overlap significantly.

How is job sharing created?

Careful planning and patience is needed if job sharing is to succeed. Current employees, applicants, a supervisor, or manager may initiate job sharing, but implementation is always at management's discretion. Many times, when employees and managers actively work together, it results in a better, more effective arrangement. The following steps are offered as assistance in establishing the arrangement and their order should be adjusted to fit the specific circumstances.

1. **Find a partner.** A partner can be someone in the organization or outside. Preferably, it is someone you have worked cooperatively with before. Consider backgrounds, which can be similar or complementary. Consider compatibility, e.g., like and respect for each other, the other person's flexibility, ability to communicate openly and easily, similarity of work styles and the ability to work through differences together. Consider and discuss personality traits, e.g., personal preferences, career goals, work habits, past work histories, expectations.

2. **Find a job to share.** Prepare a joint resume listing combined knowledge, skills, and abilities. Talk about work activities you enjoy. Find a job or several potential job classes of interest. Make initial contact with the department or manager.
3. **Develop a plan.** Consider all the aspects and potential issues of job sharing for the work unit. Create a work plan that outlines the specifics of the arrangement for the work unit. Some considerations include the following.
 - *Objectives.* Define what the goals of the arrangement are and why it is good for the work unit. Think about all perspectives: the partners, co-workers, customers, and managers.
 - *Schedule.* Determine the actual work times. Consider the adequacy of staffing and any impact on the schedules of others (e.g., co-workers, subordinates). If swapping of work schedules is allowed, prior approval may be required.
 - *Division of duties.* How will the work of the job be divided? Job sharing consists of two basic options, paired (same class) or split level (different classes), which will impact how the work is divided. Consider the degree of interchangeability or individuality desired. Also consider equipment needs and usage.
 - *Communication.* Work this out ahead of time. The goal is to keep the work moving on schedule. How will job sharers communicate with each other, e.g., notes, log or diary, phone, e-mail? How will the partners communicate with others, e.g., take calls for each other? How will the supervisor communicate with them, e.g., talk to one or both for a given assignment?
 - *Supervisory arrangements.* Consider what things will require more or less of the supervisor's time. The employees' personal interest in protecting the arrangement can make it easier to supervise.
 - *Criteria for review of requests.* The manager should determine what would be considered when reviewing a request. Consider under what circumstances the arrangement may need to be terminated.
 - *Potential issues.* Consider other factors that may impact the arrangement. For example, identify costs, any extra training, length and permanency of the arrangement, times to reevaluate the arrangement, what will happen if one partner quits (how long to allow for a replacement), how to handle accountability and any differences in quality or production of work.

4. **Sell the plan.** Employees submit a written request and meet with the manager in person to discuss it. Reach an understanding and document the specifics of the arrangement. Be prepared to discuss the details of the plan and remain flexible. Discuss concerns and jointly resolve any differences. Remember that job sharing is a privilege, not a right, and may need to be modified for business reasons.

Hint: Try a pilot or trial run and address issues as they arise. Expect some adjustments along the way.

For more information, contact your department human resources office. The Statewide Work-Life Coordinator can also provide information. Call (303) 866-2391 and ask for help with job sharing.

SAMPLE FORM

JOB SHARING REQUEST

I. (Employees complete this section.)

Department _____ Division _____ Date _____
Name _____ Name _____
Class Title _____ Class Title _____
Position # _____ Exempt ___ Non-Exempt ___ Position # _____ Exempt ___ Non-Exempt ___

Describe your proposed work schedules:

	Start/Stop Times		Start/Stop Times
Sunday	_____	Sunday	_____
Monday	_____	Monday	_____
Tuesday	_____	Tuesday	_____
Wednesday	_____	Wednesday	_____
Thursday	_____	Thursday	_____
Friday	_____	Friday	_____
Saturday	_____	Saturday	_____

Total Weekly Hours _____ Total Weekly Hours _____

How will the duties be divided or shared? Attach a listing of the duties and responsibilities (e.g., PDQ) for the two positions.

How will your proposed job sharing sustain or enhance your performance and that of the work unit?

What potential barriers could your arrangement cause, in regards to:

(1) External customers: _____

(2) Internal customers: _____

(3) Co-workers _____

(4) Your Manager: _____

How do you suggest overcoming any challenges with these groups?

(If applicable): Describe any additional work-related equipment/expense that your arrangement might require. Detail any short- or long-term cost savings that might result from your job share.

What communication methods do you propose for you and your partner and you and your supervisor?

What is your plan for covering absences?

What do you propose to do if you need to replace a partner?

What review process with your manager do you propose for constructive monitoring and improvement of your job share? Are there measurable outcomes to use in the review process?

II. (Manager completes this section.)

Request for job sharing is ___ Approved OR ___ Declined. If declined, please describe why _____

Date _____ Manager's, or delegate's, signature _____

Date _____ Employee's signature _____

Effective Date of job share: Beginning _____

(If option is time limited or terminated): Ending _____

Manager: Please send copies of this form and any attachments to the human resources office for the official personnel file.