



COMP TIME GUIDANCE and SCENARIOS (for Contracted Staff)

Guiding principles:

- 1) To meet work obligations and job responsibilities professional staff often work beyond 40 hours in a week.
- 2) To recognize extended hours involved with professional services, comp time is provided in the Master Contract and is available for direct service client interactions.
- 3) Work activities and responsibilities distinguish between professional and hourly employees. Conscientious efforts are made to provide flexibility in the work day to meet school and client needs, however comp time is not intended to regard professional staff as hourly employees.
- 4) The general guideline for earning comp time involves those instances where there's a need for staff to work in direct service outside the regular business hours of 8am-4:30pm.
- 5) To ensure quality services, employees shall be routinely available during the regular business hours. If their direct services are also needed outside of those business hours, then those situations may be eligible for altering (flexing) their work day or earning comp time. Altered (or flex) time is an adjustment in the employee's regular scheduled work week (for example, an employee may work 9 hours in one day due to direct service needs and alter or flex their schedule for another day within that same work week to work 7 hours).
- 6) Comp time is to be used in a manner that ensures quality service is maintained and not compromised. Employees are to exercise professional judgment, sensitivity and discretion when earning or using comp time (clients and other exempt-level staff may not have comp time available).
- 7) Employee work schedules, including earning and using comp time, shall be approved by the supervisor. Schedules are generally expected to be client focused and accommodate regular business hours.
- 8) The normal work day includes time necessary for work-related travel, however travel to and from work is considered commute time under IRS rules and therefore this travel is not eligible for earning comp time. To support itinerant staff who may serve multiple locations during the week (considered "temporary assignments" for mileage purposes) across the 7-county area, which may involve extensive travel to arrive for and return from work, work-related travel that extends beyond an employee's regular commute to the assigned Agency Center and results in a longer work day may be supported through an altered (or flex) schedule for that work week. As a general rule, travel time within Area 10 is not eligible for accruing comp time.

Scenarios:

Example 1: Betsy began her work day in her assigned school at 8am. Later that day an IEP meeting that began at 3:30pm ended at 5pm. *There was a direct client need for Betsy to work beyond regular business hours (4:30pm) and Betsy would be eligible to earn 30 minutes of comp time.* If the IEP meeting had ended at 4:30pm and Betsy stayed in the building until 5pm to work on paperwork, this would not be eligible for comp time since no direct client interaction occurs during this time.

Example 2: Fae has a home visit that is regularly scheduled on Wednesday afternoons from 5-6pm. *There is a direct client need for Fae to work beyond regular business hours (4:30pm). Since this home visit is part of Fae's regular work schedule, Fae is encouraged to first consider and request, if possible, an altered (or flex) schedule each Wednesday to begin her day at 9:30am and end at 6pm. Alternatively, up to 90 minutes of comp time may be earned.*

Example 3: Abe is expected to be available for one evening of Parent-Teacher conferences. *There is a direct client need for Abe to work beyond regular business hours (4:30pm). Abe is to first consider and request, if possible, altered (or flex) time to accommodate this scheduled direct service need. Alternatively, Abe would be eligible to earn comp time.*

Example 4: Kitty meets with GWAEA colleagues after business hours to plan for district services. *This is not eligible for comp time since no direct client interaction occurs during this time. Kitty may request an altered (or flex) schedule for this day.* If this meeting included district staff, the additional time spent with district staff would be eligible for comp time due to the direct client interactions that occurred.

Example 5: Gabby will be attending a meeting in Des Moines for Agency-directed travel. *The normal work day includes time necessary for work-related travel. The additional travel time outside of normal work hours (and beyond the employee's regular commute) for Agency-directed reasons to and from Des Moines is eligible for comp time (up to 4 hours in this example).*

Example 6: Vera will be attending a conference in Des Moines for Professional Leave travel. *Additional travel time for Professional Leave reasons is not eligible for earning comp time.*

Example 7: Rex serves multiple districts in the northern region of the AEA. Rex is assigned to the Cedar Rapids 6th St Center, resides in Van Horne and travels to Belle Plaine 1 day per week. Rex is expected to begin work at 8am in Belle Plaine. It takes Rex 30 minutes to travel from his home to his Agency Center; it also takes Rex 30 minutes to travel from his home to Belle Plaine. *The normal work day includes time necessary for work-related travel, however commuting time is not to be counted. Rex's direct route from his home to his first assignment takes 30 minutes. Since the travel time does not exceed 30 minutes, this travel is considered commute time, is not part of the work day and is not eligible for earning comp time or altering (flexing) the work schedule.*

Example 8: Lottie serves one district in the southern region of the AEA. Lottie is assigned to the Coralville Agency Center, resides in Wellman and works in the Mid-Prairie school district. *Although travel time from the Coralville Agency Center to Wellman is 45 minutes, Lottie takes the direct route from her home to Mid-Prairie schools and the travel takes 10 minutes. This travel is Lottie's commute time, is not considered work travel and is not eligible for earning comp time or altering (flexing) the work schedule.*

Example 9: Thea meets with teachers when the teachers are available during their lunch break. *To be eligible for comp time there is to be a direct client need for staff to work outside the regular business hours of 8am-4:30pm. Unused lunch breaks are not intended or available for earning comp time or for altering (flexing) the work day. If an employee chooses not to use or adjust their lunch break to work through lunch or to attend meetings scheduled over the lunch break, the unused lunch time is not eligible for earning comp time or altering (flexing) the day to leave work early.*

Example 10: Pearl has accumulated 16 hours of comp time and has 16 hours of personal leave remaining at the end of the year. Pearl requests to take 4 consecutive days off at the end of her work year. *Under the Master Contract, no more than 16 hours of comp time are to be used consecutively. The use of comp time and paid leaves is subject to approval of the supervisor. To maintain quality, appropriate services; meet client needs; and promote positive, productive client relationships, employees have an obligation to approach their work schedule in a professional manner and supervisors have the responsibility to deny requests they determine do not meet this expectation. Multiple consecutive days off at the end of the year, or at any point during the regular school year, may disrupt services, place a burden on other colleagues and/or negatively impact the Agency and such a request may most likely be denied. Employees are relied upon to plan and request comp time and personal leave days in a manner that is sensitive to client needs and does not compromise services.*

Example 11: Warren's professional duties include serving on a community advisory committee that meets in the evening. *There is a direct client need for Warren to work beyond regular business hours (4:30pm). When possible, Warren is to first consider altering (or flexing) his work day for the dates the committee is scheduled to meet. Alternatively, Warren would be eligible to earn comp time.*

Example 12: Zena lives in Washington and concludes an appointment in Highland at 4pm. *Employees are expected to be in their assigned building(s) during regular business hours and Zena is to remain in Highland until 4:30pm to conclude her work day. If, however, Zena provides services in Highland that are home based and not school based, Zena may conclude the last 30 minutes of her work day at another designated location in Highland since it would not be a good use of Zena's time to return to the Coralville facility and then go home to Washington. There is no 'work from home' program in place for employees. In this example though, when home-based services occur at the beginning or end of the work day, Zena may request to return home to Washington from Highland (which would be considered commute time) and then conclude the final 30 minutes of her work day after returning home. While work from home is not routinely to be considered part of the work day, a supervisor may approve a schedule for this to occur in order to maximize the use of an employee's time. In these situations, an employee's commute may occur within the work day but not be counted as part of the work day when an employee is beginning or ending their work day at their home.*

Additional Notes:

- 1) Comp time is to be earned and used in increments of 30 (thirty) minutes.
- 2) When it's necessary for an employee to work on a non-work day for a direct client need, it's important for the employee to request a calendar change (to a half day or full day of work) or email both the supervisor and secretary of the need to work **before the work occurs**. This documentation:
 - a) verifies the employee is authorized to provide Agency services on a non-scheduled work day, and
 - b) helps to ensure the employee is eligible for:
 - ◆ coverage under the Agency's travel, worker's compensation, liability and other related insurance
 - ◆ reimbursement of appropriate expenses that may be incurred during that time

With this documentation, approved work that is not adjusted through a calendar change may then be eligible for earning comp time.

- 3) Clarification between work-related travel and commute
 - a) All employees have a commute to and from work. IRS rules prohibit employees from being paid or reimbursed for their commuting time.
 - b) Employees are responsible for managing their time and resources most efficiently and effectively. As a result, employees most often travel from their home to their first temporary assignment and from their last temporary assignment to their home.
 - ◆ When travel to the first and last temporary assignments takes as much time or less than travel to the employee's assigned Agency Center, the travel time is considered the commute and is not counted as part of the work day.
 - ◆ When travel to the first and last temporary assignments takes longer than travel to the employee's assigned Agency Center, the travel time beyond the employee's usual commute is considered work-related travel and may be counted as part of the work day.
 - c) As a general rule, work-related travel within AEA 10 that results in a longer work day is to be managed through an altered (or flex) schedule for that work week.
- 4) Employee weekly schedules are subject to supervisor approval. To ensure accurate reporting of work time and document supervisor approval for an employee's comp time or altered work schedule, employees are responsible for:
 - a) Reflecting altered (or flex) work time on their weekly schedules.
 - b) Reflecting on their weekly schedules comp time earned and comp time used.
 - c) Including work travel time (beyond the regular commute) on their weekly schedules.
- 5) Due to the interest, need and/or commitment of professional employees to meet work obligations and responsibilities, it's recognized and understood staff may not or cannot use the comp time or altered (flex) schedule options that are available to help support them. If, however, an employee believes it is not feasible for them to utilize these options on a periodic basis, the employee should have a conversation with their supervisor to discuss other supports, strategies and/or options for managing and prioritizing their workload.

This guidance and information was jointly developed by a work group that included the following Agency and Association representatives:

- 1) Liz Hooley, Association President
- 2) Julie King, School Social Worker
- 3) Kim Lestina, Itinerant Teacher of the Deaf/Hard of Hearing
- 4) Marsha Reitzler, Regional Administrator
- 5) Jackie Schreder, HR Coordinator

For questions or clarification regarding this guidance, please feel free to contact your supervisor or any of the work group members.